

municipal election next spring are favorable to the inner circle's plans and harmonious with its pre-election bargainings, both offers, like a monarch's invitation, will be in the nature of a command. But prophecies of this kind are not always realized, even as pre-election bargains are not always carried out.

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The Proposed Income Tax Amendment.

Regarding the income tax, there is this to be said. It is a kind of tax which, if honestly enforced, falls alike upon the man who earns his income and the man who does not—upon workers and parasites, upon producers of wealth and beneficiaries of special privilege. It is a kind of tax that cannot be honestly enforced, and the burden of unfair enforcement falls most heavily upon scrupulous citizens. It is a tax which, therefore, cannot upon its own merits, be ethically defended. But it is a direct tax, and, as has been sensibly said, the worst direct tax is better than the best indirect tax. Moreover, the clearing of the way constitutionally for the income tax, may open the door for fiscal progress along that line, in consequence of which indirect Federal taxation may come to be wholly abolished, and the best kind of direct taxation be permitted to take its place.

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The Star of Federal Empire.

The significance of the three Supreme Court decisions noted in News Narrative this week is probably more serious than most readers will at first infer.

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Perhaps the least serious of the three is that which nullifies the Arkansas law penalizing inter-State railroads for furnishing insufficient cars. Inter-State railroads are national in character; and at any rate, this decision is hardly more advanced in the direction of imperialism than numerous preceding decisions. It is an old story.

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But the decision which nullifies the Nebraska elevator switch law is another matter. Elevators, be it known, are storage and loading places for grain. If for railroad shipments they may be placed nowhere but upon railroad land, railroads can monopolize all grain-shipping terminals. The same thing is true if, though they be placed off railroad land, the railroad may connect them with switches or maroon them, as it pleases. It was to check this monopolizing power of the railroads, by putting all Nebraska elevators upon an even

footing, that the Nebraska law compelling railroads upon demand to connect any grain elevator with a switch was enacted. Its nullification by the Supreme Court restores the whip hand to the railroads over the farmers.

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Serious, however, as that decision is in political significance, the decision relative to correspondence schools, the most innocent-looking of the three, is probably much more serious. It lays the foundation, if it is what it appears upon the face of the telegraphic reports to be, for an assumption by the Federal government of complete jurisdiction over nearly every kind of business. If a correspondence school having correspondence pupils in other States than its own is therefore engaged in inter-State commerce within the meaning of the Federal Constitution, it is difficult to think of a business that might not fall under Federal jurisdiction. Even a village grocery business crosses State lines to get its stock and to sell its truck. A more sweeping yet less sensational basis for imperializing business regulations than this correspondence school decision, as the Washington dispatches report it, could hardly be desired by the most ardent of American imperializers.

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AMERICA'S FREE TRADE EXPERIMENT.

The Federal Constitution contains a clause which is little understood, yet in far reaching consequences is not matched by any other provision in that instrument. The clause is this: "No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws; and the net produce of all duties and imposts laid by any State on imports or exports shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress." Simply interpreted, the substance of that clause may be put into these words: "There shall be no tariffs between the States of this Union."

Very few Americans realize what an important influence this provision has had upon the maintenance of the Union of the States. It is the real ligament which binds them together. It is this more than any other influence that is responsible for America's industrial and commercial greatness.

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Commerce is trade. "Business" is production

and exchange—that is all legitimate business is or can be,—and production on its present scale is impossible without trade.

Trade! the foundation of civilization! the beginning of all progress!

Make it universal by making it free, and the death knell of war will be sounded! Most of the quarrels of men and of nations are the result of misunderstandings and the lack of common interests. Trade will make interests universal, interwoven and inextricable.

War is impossible between our States today because of the vital mutual interests resultant from free trade. We simply cannot afford to fight, and our common interests destroy also such desire. Our several States stand today the highest example and most forceful demonstration of the power of trade to harmonize the tempers, interests and desires of men. Their free intercourse is the greatest experiment in free trade in the history of the world, and their practice proves the theory sound.

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The so called higher wages of this country are due to the higher productiveness of labor and to labor unions; not to foolish, wasteful, and worse than useless tariffs.

To complete this circle of ever widening beneficence we need not only free trade, but free production. All products come from land, but so surely as land is monopolized and vast areas of it held out of use for speculation, just so long shall we be hampered as a nation, as an industrial quantity, and our progress will always be threatened by prospective commercial adversity.

One little clause in the same Constitution (a companion piece to the other) would solve the problem—a simple provision like the other. Let us add it: "There shall be no tariffs between the States of this Union; *neither shall taxes be levied upon any product of labor for any purpose.*" Just thirteen words. But if they were embodied in that instrument, they would work a revolution—social, economic, political and moral.

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To the statement, "I do not see it," as a response to the above assertion, let us say that you cannot see anything unless you look at it. This is true of a great waterfall, a great picture, a great building, a great man, and—a great idea.

Stop taxing industry for the support of government. Tax monopoly only; it is the child of government. Why should not the child do something for the parent when it is old enough—and

monopoly is very old and very strong. Government supports monopoly; labor supports itself. Just leave labor alone. Stop taxing it; that's all, and that's enough.

HENRY H. HARDINGE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SECOND ELECTION UNDER THE DES MOINES PLAN.

Des Moines, Ia., Apr. 4.

The second municipal election in Des Moines under the new "Plan" occurred March 28th.

At the primaries there had been only 24 candidates, against 40 at last election. Three out of the four old commissioners were re-elected, throwing out John L. Hamery, commissioner of public safety, who had won the enmity of the city traction company during a former administration by his detecting them in giving a bribe, and the hatred of the vice trusts during his recent term, by his vigorous prosecution and abolition of the red light district.

The new Mayor, Prof. James R. Hanna, a municipal ownership man, won out by a narrow margin of sixteen votes over Mayor Mathis.

John MacVicar, a former municipal ownership mayor, of whom much was expected two years ago (but who completely reversed himself after he was elected commissioner), with Schramm, his coadjutor or "me too," was re-elected by a large majority.

The other two men, Ash and Roe, were also believed to be corporation candidates. They had no platform but that political platitude "a square deal for every man"; however, they are young enough to respond to better influences, and Mayor Hanna may contrive a majority to obstruct some bad legislation.

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In the recent campaign every trivial question was paraded, while the real one pertaining to the street car franchise, was dodged by all but the three municipal ownership men, two of whom did not sift through the primaries.

One of these, L. J. Kasson, is a single taxer. The other, A. D. Pugh, a socialist, and an astute lawyer, had, months ago, drawn up an ordinance which, among other things, provided that "no franchise or right for the use of the streets, alleys and public places of said city for street railway purposes shall be granted, renewed or extended by said city," and that the rights, if any, claimed by the street car company should be speedily and finally determined; it further arranged details for the assumption and maintenance by the city of the street car business. A petition of 2,100 names was secured to have this ordinance put to vote under the referendum feature of the Des Moines Plan, which was upheld by Judge Howe and the Supreme Court of Iowa as a proper delegation of legislative authority to the people of the city. Mr. Pugh took care in drawing up the instrument that "every step in the proceedings was legislative and beyond the power of the judiciary to supervise and superintend. That if the ordinance was beyond the power of the city it would be void