

The political problems which have hitherto confronted America have usually been such as have not as yet been duplicated in the same form in the old world. This country has been left to itself and to its own experience and judgment in solving many a great problem in the past. In doing so, and in solving many of these problems in a manner creditable to the spirit of a young nation, a self-reliance has been developed, praiseworthy in itself, but liable to subtle dangers. For it has developed overconfidence in everything American, and created a public opinion which holds that we have nothing to learn from foreign nations; yes, that we have nothing to learn from history itself. In facing the issue of government ownership of public utilities, however, America is not compelled to work out this problem for herself. Here is a case where the past and present experiences of the most successful of European nations may be recorded. America, while having to work out the details for herself, can safely avail herself of the general solution as offered in the policies of the governments of any continental country in northern Europe. Proud as we may be of the past record and the achievements of this country, we should not be too proud to learn from our sister nations when they have a lesson to teach.

The lesson they teach is plain and simple. Not only does the experience of such countries as Germany, Sweden and Switzerland tell the story of the possibilities of public ownership, in some cases after an experience of more than half a century, but the present developments in Italy, where the government is now taking over some of the greatest of the private road systems, and in France and Great Britain, where the question of public ownership is becoming more and more pointed after a confessed attempt at government control—all these developments are indicative of what we can realize ourselves by a more painful experience than our present, if we do not profit by the experience of others.

\*

It is not possible in limited space to treat this issue in its details, nor is it necessary. If only at first we realize that it is an issue of utmost importance, the general discussion that will follow will give an opportunity for all the details to appear. But one objection to government ownership offered by those who disbelieve in American honesty in public affairs should be met at every step. It is claimed that public ownership would be a failure because public officials would not perform their duties honestly. This claim is an insult to every true American. It is an insult to the highest

conception of American manhood, and as such it should be met. Should we, as Americans, admit that as honest men could not be found among us as can be found among the individuals of our sister nations? Should we be so forgetful of the highest ideals of true citizenship as to be able to make such a statement without shame? Whenever Americans as a nation lose their faith in American honesty, then the word American will be meaningless. For the American nation is founded on conceptions of freedom, justice and honesty, and whenever these attributes shall be lost sight of the greatness of America and Americans will be a thing of the past, and the prophecy of half a century ago that republican government would prove to be a failure will come true.

But this prophecy shall never come true. Americans still have faith in American honesty, whatever may be the opinions of a few who have lost sight of the high ideals of Americanism. And although some of the leaders may prove faithless, the people shall learn to follow the right path. The issue before us is not the only one with which we must grapple, but at present it is the one calling for the closest attention of every true citizen; and step by step we shall, if united, establish an America where justice and sanity rule, and from which inequity shall disappear.

ERIK OBERG.

---

## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

---

### WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN NEW YORK.

New York City, Oct. 27, 1906.—The women of New York City are going to vote at the State election to be held next week. The opportunity to do so will be given them by the Harlem Equal Rights League, which will open a polling place for women at the Savigny, 2034 Fifth Ave., near 125th St., from 11 a. m. to 5 p. m., Tuesday, Nov. 6. The League invites all women who are native or naturalized citizens, residents of the State for one year, and of the counties within the limits of Greater New York for four months, to come and vote for their candidates on that day.

Our State election is being fought out over such issues as the trusts and their increasing encroachments upon the rights of the individual, a fair count of the ballot, and the labor question. Naturally women as well as men are interested in all these questions, have opinions upon them, and have a right to have their opinions counted. But under our present undemocratic State suffrage law we are supposed to be represented at the polls, on that day sacred to mankind, by our husbands, our fathers or any other man around the house. Political questions being so confused, and purposely confused as they are at present, small wonder it is that the dear man marches up to the polls and marches down again without thinking once as to how or for whom

the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart, the queen of his flat and the mother of his children, would vote. And so on election day the women are, as Henry James might say, "beautifully left."

Now these are the women we want to reach. Some women see fit to work for the Republican and Democratic parties in their clubs. But the Harlem League does not believe in working for politicians, no matter how good their platform may otherwise be, who will not work for woman suffrage. It does believe in women registering their approval or disapproval of officials and their public policy at the ballot box, and it trusts that every woman living in New York City, who reads this, will come out that day and vote. If they have realized the true meaning of their disfranchisement in a representative government, we think they will.

MAUD MALONE.

\* \* \*

### THE NEW YORK ELECTION.

New York, Oct. 30.—Hearst, in my opinion, is far from being an ideal candidate and is unreliable; but he does stand for something, while Hughes stands for nothing, and most of us here are supporting Hearst.

Hughes has behind him every monopoly-loving, reactionary force in the city and State, every newspaper but Hearst's own, and every consecrated humbug and hypocrite. It is almost impossible to avoid loving Hearst for the enemies he has made. Never before in the history of the State has such a vindictive, mendacious campaign been made against any man or ticket.

The situation was well portrayed in The Public's article on Hearst. The fact is that no matter how much we may like or dislike Hearst, we are compelled to support him. As to his chances of election, that is mere guesswork. Money is being used like water on the labor fakirs, with the result of many apparent desertions from the Hearst standard. But the Hearst managers assert that the labor fakirs have no following and control no votes but their own.

Both sides are claiming victory by large majorities, but of course that is only a bit of customary electioneering. Hearst is undoubtedly strong in New York City, and some of our friends who have toured the State (notably Alfred J. Boulton), say that the indications are for a landslide to Hearst.

However the election may go, there is no doubt that Hearst has stirred up the dry bones so that they have become living men. Never before has there been so much interest in economic discussion.

Hearst is telling the people in his speeches that if the campaign fails, he will go right on with the fight notwithstanding, and carry on a succession of campaigns until he wins.

L. T.

\* \* \*

### THE DETROIT ELECTION.

Detroit, Mich., Oct. 27.—A great struggle is going on in Detroit for a new franchise for the Detroit United Railway. Detroit has 187 miles of street car tracks. These have been built under various franchises, running from three to nineteen years; but the heart of the system occupying the main streets and carrying the great bulk of the passenger traffic, expires in three years. For a new franchise, running eighteen

years, the D. U. R. offers fares for two and a half cents five hours in the day—three hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon—and six tickets for twenty-five cents the other nineteen hours, all with universal transfers.

Opposed to the proposed franchise are two classes: those who want municipal ownership, and those who demand three cent fares at all hours, with universal transfers. The D. U. R. has put in operation its proposed rates of fare, so that the public can see how it feels to be carried for two and a half cents, but those who want a three cent fare all day are not satisfied, and demand that the company also give the public a taste of three cent fares.

The company is spending thousands of dollars "educating the public" into granting a new franchise, but at the present writing it looks as if the proposition will lose, as it is being shown that the proposed rates will enable the company to pay six per cent. interest on \$20,000,000 of watered stock, the roads being bonded for \$30,000,000 while costing only \$10,000,000. Last year the company carried 87,000,000 passengers at an average cost (its own figures) of 3.58 cents each. The general belief is that the cost has been padded; the receipts of the road from other sources, such as freighting, have been suppressed, and as the company carried 10,000 cars of freight last year, there is a general curiosity as to the profits of this business.

If the franchise proposition carries at the November election it knocks out the present three cent lines which carried nearly 30,000,000 passengers last year, and ties up the city until 1924. The proposed franchise apparently provides for public ownership in 1924, but it is coupled with other propositions that render it inoperative.

The fact of the matter is the D. U. R. is practically offering a bribe of two and a half cent fares five hours in the day for the purpose of getting a franchise that Tom L. Johnson says is worth at least \$15,000,000 anyway, and that enables the corporation to charge five cents for a single fare.

Codd, Republican, is running for mayor and supporting the proposition, while Thompson, Democrat, is in opposition. So fierce is the fight over this question that the congressional battle, where F. F. Ingram is running in the First district, is being lost sight of. And his election would be worth more to Detroit than the election of any other candidate for any other office. He is making a good fight, but has a majority of 8,000 to overcome. Denby, smooth and politic, and a lieutenant of Cannon, is his opponent.

JUDSON GRENELL.

\* \* \*

### CLEVELAND TRACTION.

Cleveland, Oct. 27, 1906.—The traction fight which has been waged in Cleveland for the past five years seems to be nearing the end, with a complete victory for the people.

The Cleveland Electric, generally known here as the "Con Con," operates 235 miles of street railway. This, together with the rolling stock, power house and car barns, is valued by street car railway experts at \$12,000,000, and is represented by bond issues to that amount. The stock of the company, which is