

ordered the cement, "the U. S. Government practically worked for the British companies, and the cost today, taking equal prices into consideration, is higher for American flour."

This is a startling reminder of the action of our own trans-continental railroads, which, when the California fruit growers had secured higher Protection in the Aldrich tariff, advanced their freight rates to absorb it.

It is also an illustration of the power of transportation companies over the production and distribution of wealth. Ships of all nations compete for our trade with Europe. It is there that our four steamships ply—the sole remnant of our once great trans-Atlantic fleet. But between this country and South America, where the service is so largely in the hands of the British companies, it is not surprising that there should be discrimination. It is to meet this condition of affairs that the Pan-American Mail was formed this year to operate ships between New Orleans and Brazil and Argentina.



The condition of American over-sea shipping would be amusing, were it not so pathetic. Our exports to Brazil for the year ending June 30, 1911, amounted to \$26,431,857,¹ of which English ships carried \$19,473,855, and American ships, \$136—one hundred and thirty-six dollars. We did better with Argentina, where \$577,954 was carried in American bottoms, and \$39,120,509 in British. Of our imports from Brazil for that year \$93,191,117² came to us in British ships, and \$620—six hundred and twenty dollars—came in American. How the British ship owners must smile when they see us raving over the Monroe doctrine!

Whoever it was that said Americans had lost their sense of humour spoke without regard for the fact. We have humour in abundance; but it has been commercialized, and our Artemus Wards have taken to writing Protective tariff schedules and shipping laws.

STOUGHTON COOLEY.

CONDENSED EDITORIALS

SCHOOLS FOR FOLK CENTERS.

Louis F. Post in the Chicago Daily Press of September 6.

Two Presidential candidates urge the use of school houses for political meetings. Good. There

¹Table No. 6, page 771, of the Annual report on Commerce & Navigation for 1911, U. S. Dept. Com. & Labor.

²Table No. 3, page 361, of the Annual Report on Commerce & Navigation for 1911, U. S. Dept. Com. & Labor.

is no reason for shutting out political education. It is the most important kind, and the best place for it is at neighborhood meetings in schoolhouses.

Objections to such meetings were well enough in a way, when politics were in the "dirty pool." Perhaps, though, the "dirty pool" wouldn't have lasted so long if such meetings had been common; political education earlier might have ended political skulduggery sooner. But, anyhow, those objections don't hold now. People are more democratic in the fundamental sense.

Didn't the election in Ohio prove it? Those "Buckeyes" were undemocratic enough to vote down woman suffrage. But they adopted the Initiative and Referendum. They made Ohio the first old and big State east of the Rockies to welcome this advance agent of fundamental democracy. We ought to install that mechanism of people's power in Illinois before we permit any other Constitutional reform. The people of Illinois could then get anything they want, and head off anything they don't want. But it will be installed in Illinois. It is coming in every State. Parasites of politics may delay it, but nothing can stop it. How to use their power for the common good is now the question for the people throughout the Union.

What better way of learning could there be than at folk centers in school houses? Of course the rooms would have to be cared for specially. They must be made as orderly and clean for school children the morning after a folk-center meeting as the morning before. But this is only a matter of money, and not much money, either. And it would be the most profitable kind of investment for everybody.

Folk centers in schoolhouses would dry up the local ginmills and saloons, almost the only hospitable folk centers we have now. They would center attention upon the public affairs of neighborhood, city, county, State and Republic. The folks about home would grow familiar with common interests and turn from heedless citizens into intelligent and eager voters. We should have politics for political principle instead of graft. Under the Initiative and Referendum, the people would rule; and at their schoolhouse centers they would learn to rule wisely and fairly.

The schools themselves would progressively improve, in accommodations for children and in educational service to children, if the advice of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roosevelt to open the schoolhouses for political folk centers were adopted.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, September 24, 1912.

Presidential Campaigning.

The Progressive Party's candidate for President, Mr. Roosevelt, is on a continental speaking tour. At Tucson, Arizona, on the 17th, he made