

# The Public

Dr. H.J. Woodhouse  
Nov 2-01 Box 541

Third Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1901.

Number 148.

**LOUIS F. POST, Editor.**

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

Ex-Senator Towne is to be congratulated upon his speech in the senate for freedom. As soon as he had delivered it his successor was sworn in, and Mr. Towne's brief term in the senate closed; but the speech places him in the front rank of great democratic democrats.

A Wisconsin legislator has introduced two bills intended to increase the population of that state. One would impose a tax of \$10 annually upon all unmarried men over 30 years of age. The other would give annual pensions ranging from \$10 to mothers of six children up to \$35 to mothers of 12 or more. Yet there is poverty in Wisconsin, as elsewhere; and there, as elsewhere, it is frequently explained upon the theory of overpopulation. Why put a premium upon the cause of poverty?

It is not altogether certain that the latest eminent convert to the single tax doctrine, Lyman Abbott, is a valuable acquisition to the single tax cause. If this were the first step toward a general reform in Dr. Abbott's ideas of government, it would be different; but he still exploits his autocratic theories of government by the best, which can mean nothing, when analyzed, but government by the mightiest. The single tax doctrine rests upon more democratic foundations.

Harry Thurston Peck, of the Bookman, suggests the institution of a "scribe killer, to put an end to any writer's literary existence as soon as he shows markedly the symptoms of

incipient decay." The suggestion is part of a criticism of Mark Twain. But why limit the "scribe killer's" jurisdiction to incipient decay, when premature decay, of which Mr. Peck himself furnishes an illustrious example, is the more virulent literary disease?

No full report of Pope Leo's encyclical on socialism is yet at hand. It is impossible, therefore, to give it intelligent consideration. If the abstracts of the cable dispatches should prove to be a correct version, the encyclical will have little influence with workingmen in America, except in the direction of undermining their religious convictions. These abstracts suggest fatherly advice from the representative of One who is no respecter of persons less than they resemble the delicate work of some fine patrician hand. But whatever the text of this encyclical may be, intelligent Catholics fully understand that it is not an ecclesiastical command to be obeyed, but a solemn letter of advice to be respectfully considered.

Trusts to be secure must have their "feet upon the ground." In its recognition of and conformity to this principle lies the strength of the Standard Oil trust. Its ownership of landed privileges makes it invincible. How alert its managers are to retain these advantages is shown by their haste to control the new oil fields of Texas. They have just acquired 100,000 acres of newly-discovered oil territory in that state.

One of the Washington correspondents who excuses congress for proposing to repeal the telegraph and express company tax of one cent per package or message, makes a poor job of it. He says that this exemption is

proposed because there is no way of collecting these taxes "from the companies without indirectly imposing them upon the public." That assertion is true, whatever be the fact about it as an explanation. But it is true also of nearly all congressional taxes. It is true of the tobacco tax, true of the beer tax, true of all taxes upon market commodities. These express and telegraph taxes do not differ from other taxes, both internal revenue and customs, in that they are indirectly paid by the people. They differ in that the process is so simple that the people know they are paid by them.

Democratic Englishmen will, if they are wise, put themselves upon guard against encroachments of imperialism under cover of public mourning for the departed queen and public rejoicings over the incoming king. There is food for their reflection in the reports that the king is adopting the manner of Emperor William, and that he desires to be styled "imperial majesty" so as to emphasize the fact that he is not only a king but also an emperor. Nor are these reports unfounded. In his message to the navy, the king signs himself "Edward, R. I." (Rex, Imperator)—Edward, king and emperor. Noticeable also is the intense military spirit that pervades all the proceedings connected with the queen's funeral. These demonstrations, including the king's exploitation of his empty Disraelian title of emperor of India, might be ignored as part of the historical mummery inseparable from such occasions, were it not that less formal things testify to a reaction in England toward absolute monarchy. By no means the least of these indications was the tenor of Balfour's speech in moving the address of con-

dolence in reply to the message of the king. Mr. Balfour is first lord of the treasury and tory leader in the house of commons. His words, therefore, when not perfunctory repetitions of mediaeval forms, must be taken to express conviction and purpose if they import conviction and purpose; and in this speech they imported both. He spoke of the death of the queen as ending a great epoch during which "the influence of the crown in the British constitution" had been "not a diminishing but an increasing factor," and went on to declare that it—

must continue to increase with the growth and development of the self-governing communities over the sea which were founded by Great Britain through the person of the sovereign, who was a living symbol of the unity of the empire.

It is not true that the influence of the crown has been an increasing factor in Great Britain, though it is true that tory leaders have aspired to make it so. They have not yet realized this aspiration because public sentiment in England has not appeared ripe for a turning toward absolutism. Nor will they realize it without securing popular approval. The people govern England, and govern it so easily under the system of parliamentary responsibility that no radical change can be made without their assent. But there are possibilities that under the influence of thrilling pageantry in connection with the death of the queen and the coronation of the king, the people may submit to a reactionary movement. That some such thoughts are taking hopeful shape in tory brains may with reason be suspected. It behooves British democrats of all parties, then, not only to be on their guard against a reviving absolutism, but to be bold in proclaiming the democratic characteristics of the British constitution.

Sir Wilfried Laurier, the premier of the liberal government of Canada, has wisely seen fit to guard the dominion against encroachments. Lord Minto, the governor general, was ar-

ranging for a state memorial service in Christ church, Ottawa, the principal Anglican church of the diocese, when Sir Wilfrid intimated that the dominion ministry could not sanction a proceeding so well adapted to create an impression that the English church is the state church of Canada, and that no public money would be voted for the memorial service. As Canada has no state church, the premier's caution is to be warmly commended. It is a small matter of itself, but one pregnant with important consequences.

Unless signs fail, the Spooner bill is about to be pushed through congress. This is a bill giving the president greater power in the Philippines than any civilized monarch has anywhere. If passed it will invest him with that species of discretionary power which is universally conceded to be most dangerous—the power to make laws and to execute the laws he makes. The signs that the president is preparing to get it passed are numerous. First comes the Taft commission which wants the Spooner bill passed immediately. Next comes a petition from the directors of a native party organized under Taft's fostering care, the fundamental tenet of which is acquiescence in American sovereignty; and they want the Spooner bill passed immediately. Then comes a cable request from the German consul to his government asking that the German ambassador at Washington be instructed diplomatically to urge the passage of the Spooner bill. Mr. McKinley himself, with becoming delicacy, and the secretary of war less reservedly, also hint at the advisability of passing it. This sudden and significant demand for the Spooner bill must have a cause, and the cause is not far to seek. The Taft commission reports that the Philippine islands contain 73,000,000 acres of land, of which less than 5,000,000 are held under private ownership. The Spooner bill is needed to enable the president to distribute that public land. It is needed also

to enable him to grant franchises and other privileges. The German consul tells in his cable dispatch of two German mining corporations that are anxious to begin operations, but dare not until they can get mining privileges from some stable authority. The Taft report alludes also to capitalistic jackals that are waiting for franchises. This is the explanation of the urgent need for the Spooner bill. The Filipino patriots having been killed off, it is now time to throw down the bars and allow the herd of hungry monopolists that flock about McKinley to get at the franchise spoils. What a disgustingly sordid policy the bloody policy of "benevolent assimilation" is fast proving itself to be.

History repeats itself not only in similarity of events but in similarity of thought. The thinkers, however, get strangely mixed. A century and a quarter ago, British officers engaged in carrying out George III.'s policy of benevolent assimilation in the American colonies, wrote home that the majority of Americans would accept British sovereignty but for fear of the American rebels. These docile Americans were known to our patriotic forefathers as tories. And now that instructive British correspondence is paralleled by the Taft commission, which reports from Manila that a majority of the Filipinos would accept United States sovereignty, but for fear of the Filipino rebels. Even down to that detail the American attempt to subjugate the Philippines is identical with the British attempt to subjugate the American colonies. The war in the Philippines is the American revolution down to date, with the Filipinos in the role of the American patriots and President McKinley playing the part of the royal George.

The press dispatches from Manila announce the sailing on the 28th from that port of George T. Rice, as a military prisoner. He is ordered to be held as a prisoner until his arrival at