

more dangerous to his political associates than a man like Hopkins. Put the matter in its worst light for Hopkins and in its best for Harrison, and still the old saw holds good that a candid enemy is safer than a treacherous friend. That was the way in which the matter appeared to Gov. Altgeld, and that was the reason Altgeld encouraged and aided in organizing Hopkins's now well-nigh successful contest against Harrison. Although he realized the objections to Hopkins, he believed that they were of minor and temporary concern as compared with the importance of putting Harrison out of the saddle in local politics. There is no reason yet for supposing that Altgeld was mistaken.

A check, temporary at least, has now been put upon the postmaster general's policy (p. 84) of establishing a press censorship in the postal department. His arbitrary rulings on the admissibility of second-class matter have been enjoined by the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Judge Bradley, of that court, granted an injunction before he died (p. 84) and that injunction has now been continued by Judge Barnard, pending the trial of the case in which it has been issued. Judge Barnard sensibly holds that the power claimed by the postmaster general would make him a censor of the press and open the door to other grave abuses.

The Isthmian canal controversy is now doubtless settled; and so far as non-experts can judge it has been settled right. The way has been left open for adopting the Nicaragua route, if insuperable obstacles should prevent the adoption of the Panama route; but the latter is preferred. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the commission of experts. They were unanimous with one exception, Mr. Haupt, and he finally joined in the report. Of course the commissioners may be mistaken; Mr. Haupt's attitude is significant of that possibility. But

Senator Spooner's point, that no one with authority is competent to overrule them, is unanswerable.

As Civil Service Commissioner Foulke now states that President Roosevelt's recent interpretation of the civil service rules was issued two months before the Rebecca J. Taylor case came up, it must be assumed that the interpretation was not made to fit that case. Yet there is confusion somewhere. Miss Taylor was formally asked by the secretary of war if she had written the political letter complained of, and if so what defense she had to offer. She replied that she had written it, but that under the civil service rules she was not required to make a defense until a charge had been preferred. Evidently she had not heard of the President's wide open interpretation of the rules. Neither had the secretary of war, apparently, for he took no further action until the interpretation in question had been published as well as "issued." This occurred apropos of nothing, so far as the public could surmise, and a few days later Miss Taylor was peremptorily dismissed without charges of any kind. Despite these suspicious circumstances, however, Mr. Foulke's word is sufficient assurance that Mr. Roosevelt did not issue the interpretation with a view to Miss Taylor's case. Nevertheless, its general effect is the same. It opens wide the door for party spoilsmen; for when the head of a department can discharge without assigning cause he can discharge for political reasons. It was actually done in Miss Taylor's case.

Great ado has been made recently by the Chicago Chronicle over what it is pleased to call "socialistic" tendencies in the Democratic party. It alludes to the municipalization of public monopolies, such as the street car systems. But the Chronicle proves itself to be more socialistic than the municipal ownership Democrats at whom it fires that epithet. In one of its anti-socialist editorials it says: "If we municipalize the trac-

tion companies, we ought to be consistent and municipalize everything." Now, that is precisely the way a socialist would look at the matter. Like the Chronicle he sees no difference between public ownership of public monopolies and public ownership of private business. But precisely at that point lies the dividing line between socialistic aspirations and true individualism. The latter distinguishes the difference between public monopolies and private businesses. The former do not. They bundle them all together, just as the Chronicle does. The only difference is that the Chronicle would have public monopolies privately owned because private businesses ought to be, whereas the socialist would have private business publicly owned because public monopolies ought to be. The true individualistic principle is that of the law books, illustrated by the leading railroad-condemnation case which we summarized at page 165, and recently approved by the Inter-State Commerce Commission, that a business which in its nature requires a concession or delegation of power from the public is a public and not a private business.

"The Negro is utterly incapable of comprehending our system of government," writes Bolton Smith, a Northern man resident in Tennessee, in a pamphlet advocating the repeal of the Fifteenth amendment. Mr. Smith thereupon demonstrates, unconsciously, however, that at least one white man is in the same predicament.

#### SETTLING THE TRAMP PROBLEM— A FOURTH OF JULY REVERIE.

The substance of a recent significant news item is given in the following editorial paragraph which appeared in the Chicago Record-Herald of June 26:

The Kansas farmers have overcome the physical inertia of the hobo. They did it with a gun. The deficiency of farm hands in Kansas is estimated at about 10,000 men. The harvest fields, with their golden seas of overripe grain, are calling for men. A freight train westward bound was wrecked