

NEWS

would soon have gladly accepted the benefits of the power of eminent domain even at the cost of agreeing to turn over the roads to the public when their tolls had fully compensated them.

But, though we have been deprived, by this unfortunate pioneer decision of the old Court of Errors of New York, of the benefits of a self-operating solution—prevention, rather—of our public service problems, we have only to recognize and assert the underlying principles of that decision to secure the public against further aggressions by railroad corporations and to recover the authority they have usurped.

According to that decision railroad corporations are agents, officers or trustees of the state, in possession of rights of way over land seized from private owners by authority of the state, for public uses, under the power of eminent domain, and placed in their control to enable them to recover their investments. These rights of way, then, belong to the state, subject only to the equitable claims of the companies to be allowed to compensate themselves fairly out of the tolls. Their rails, their cars and engines, their pipes or wires, their station houses and power houses, all their plant are their private property, and to be respected as such. But the rights of way they control are public property. As to these they are not owners, they are trustees. This is the true relation of public service corporations to the rights of way they have secured through the exercise of the power of eminent domain; and that this is, and always has been their true legal relation to that kind of property, should be kept green in the public mind.

As possessors of rights of way, they are not private business organizations managing their own private property. They are public agents, officers, servants, or trustees, managing public property; and like other public servants they are accountable to the public for the tolls they receive, for the services they render, and for the property itself. It is neither confiscation nor "socialism," therefore, for the public to dismiss them from office and resume its functions.

A Political Pointer.—If you don't want a thing done, appoint a commission to consider how to do it.—Puck.

In some respects the Democratic state convention of Illinois, held on the 17th, was the most important political gathering thus far of the coming political campaign, though in others it was of minor moment. The highest office on the ticket is state treasurer, and there was no contest for the nomination; but over the platform and party leadership in the state there was a vigorous struggle and a decisive and significant result.

The struggle for leadership was between Mayor Carter H. Harrison and ex-Mayor John P. Hopkins, of Chicago. Hopkins was a member of the old state committee and its chairman, and Harrison sought to prevent his being a member of the new committee, first, by defeating him as a member from his senatorial district, and then by running against him as member from the state at large. In the first step, Mayor Harrison was successful. In the district caucus he elected Thomas J. McNally as district member over Hopkins by a vote of 27 to 23. But in the convention, the list of candidates for committeemen at large which was headed by Hopkins and upon which the name of Ben T. Cable also appeared, defeated that headed by Harrison, by 862 to 397. This is regarded as a triumph of Hopkins over Harrison for state leadership.

In the choice of committeeman there was nothing especially significant of the attitude of the convention toward the pledges of the national party in the platforms of 1896 and 1900. Hopkins "bolted" the national ticket in 1896 and supported it reluctantly in 1900; and while Harrison supported it both years, he is not regarded as having done so with enthusiasm. His defeat therefore was not a defeat of the silver men. But the platform committee, whose report was adopted by the convention, did ignore that issue. No mention of Bryan is made in the platform, and the nearest approach to any allusion to the campaigns of 1896 and 1900 is in the declaration of—

adherence to the fundamental principles of the Democratic party laid down in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and repeatedly affirmed by past national Democratic conventions, particularly noteworthy among which at this time is the doctrine of equal

rights for all and special privileges for none.

While the Illinois platform has thus ignored the free silver issue, it is outspoken in other respects. Besides favoring legislation directly against trusts it denounces "the Republican tariff as the prolific mother of trusts," and demands—

thorough revision of the tariff and the abolition of all special privileges, and as the first, most obvious and most effective means of eliminating special privilege from our laws and of restoring to American citizenship the equality which is its birthright, that every product of a tariff-protected, competition-destroying trust be placed in the free list.

It also denounces the imitation by this country of "the British system of colonization, by means of which powerful selfish interests are enabled to employ the resources of the people to enslave inferior races and to enrich themselves," and describes the various measures adopted by the Republicans for the government of the Philippine islands as "monopolistic and undemocratic and dangerous to liberty at home as well as to liberty abroad." The affirmative Philippine policy it advocates is that—

the American Government should at once announce to the Philippines that it is not our policy to permanently retain their country, but as soon as hostilities cease and a stable government has been established the United States will recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands, as was done in the case of Cuba.

On questions of local taxation the platform declares:

We believe that under the constitution all property and property rights should be assessed and taxed justly and proportionately, and we are in entire sympathy with the movement which has for its object the compelling of all persons and corporations to pay their just proportion of the taxes.

But the most advanced pronouncement is on the subject of the initiative and referendum and of home rule with reference to public utilities. On this point the platform reads as follows:

Local self-government being a fundamental Democratic principle, we favor the extension to municipalities and towns, under proper safeguards, of the right of submitting to a vote of the people all important questions, particularly those relating to grants and franchises and the public ownership and control of properties and enterprises used or enlisted in the public service; and we favor the enactment

of such laws as will enable municipalities to acquire, control and operate any or all of the public utilities therein in case they decide so to do.

Then comes a demand in the platform for jury trial in cases of "contempt of court committed out of its presence," which is its way of opposing "government by injunction." This is followed by demands for merit laws in the civil service, for the abolition of convict labor, and for liberal pensions. After congratulating the Republic of Cuba, expressing admiration for "all our brave soldiers and sailors," referring with "horror and deep regret" to "the monstrous crime which removed from the nation its much-loved and mourned president, William McKinley," the platform closes with the following tribute to the late Gov. Altgeld:

We deplore the untimely death of the late John P. Altgeld. An exemplary citizen, a sterling Democrat, a great governor, a firm friend of the oppressed, an uncompromising foe of shams and pretenses, an unyielding opponent of special privileges, he died as he lived, fighting for human freedom and liberty and the uplifting of earth's races.

The candidates named by the convention were George W. Duddleston, of Chicago, for state treasurer; John L. Pickering, of Springfield, for clerk of the supreme court; Anson L. Bliss, of Mount Vernon, for state superintendent of public instruction, and Dr. Julia Holmes Smith, of Chicago, Dr. J. E. White, of Champaign, and S. S. Maxwell, of Monmouth, for trustees of the state university.

Republican politics now oscillates about the question of reducing the tariff on Cuban sugar (vol. iv, pp. 673, 792, 822), the party in Congress being divided on that question and the President having now become involved in the controversy. It seems that when the Cuban delegates came to this country (vol. iv, p. 56) to consult President McKinley with reference to the Cuban constitution, Mr. McKinley promised that if Cuba would accept the Platt amendment, "he would use his influence"—we are quoting from Walter Wellman, in the Chicago Record-Herald—"to secure commercial concessions from Congress." To that promise, says Mr. Wellman, "there are plenty of living witnesses," and "the Cubans accepted it at par value." President Roosevelt has undertaken to redeem it. Accordingly, on the 13th, he sent

a message to Congress, in which he called attention to the recommendations in his annual message for a reduction of duties on imports from Cuba, and embodied a cable dispatch sent through the American minister to Cuba by President Palma asking for legislative relief before Cuba is financially ruined. President Roosevelt then discusses in his special message the object of the tariff law, and objecting to the proposition to relieve Cuba by collecting full duties and paying a bounty in the nature of a rebate over to Cuban exporters, asks for "that open-handed help, of a kind which a self-respecting people can accept." Although not specific, his message is evidently intended to further the plan of making a 20 per cent. reduction of the tariff on imports from Cuba.

The conflict in the Republican party which has called out this message, is one between the beet sugar interests, which do not want their protection interfered with, and the refined sugar trust, which wishes to weaken the beet sugar interests by lowering the duty on raw sugar from Cuba. The trust is accidentally supported by tariff adversaries and by Cuban sympathizers, because what they believe in the trust happens to want. When the House bill came before the Republican caucus on the 13th of March the beet sugar interests were defeated by a vote of 85 to 31 (vol. iv, p. 793), the caucus agreeing to introduce a bill, such as the President now indicates his desire for, reducing tariff rates on Cuban sugar 20 per cent. That bill was introduced March 19. The committee on ways and means of the House agreed (vol. iv, p. 822) to report it favorably, the vote being 9 Republicans and 3 Democrats in the affirmative, and 2 Republicans and 3 Democrats in the negative. On the 18th of April this bill came to a vote in the House, but by a union of Republican protectionists who oppose reduction on Cuban sugar, with Democrats who oppose protective tariffs, an amendment prejudicial to the sugar trust, reducing the tariff on refined sugars no matter whence imported, was first adopted, against the Republican majority (p. 44), by a vote of 199 to 105. The bill as so amended was then passed by 247 to 52. But the Senate committee refuses to recommend this House bill, the Republican majority having agreed upon the Spooner compromise bill which proposes a 20 per cent. re-

duction for five years. That was the situation when the President sent in his special message noted above.

It was hoped that the message would secure favorable action on the Spooner compromise, but that hope appears now to have been abandoned. Senator James K. Jones states the Democratic position when he says:

In my judgment there will be a solid Democratic vote against the Spooner bill as agreed to by the Republican members of the committee. If the Senate were given the chance to vote on the measure as it passed the House, including the striking off of the differential duty on refined sugar, then, I am sure, every Democrat would have been glad to vote for the bill. But that proposition has been eliminated by the action of the Republican managers.

As to the possibility of getting a majority from the Republican vote alone, the administration senators are reported as admitting that agreement is impossible. Mr. Wellman, the correspondent already quoted, who is friendly to the administration, writes in the same issue of the Chicago Record-Herald, June 18:

President Roosevelt has met with his first serious defeat. Cuban reciprocity is beaten. . . . Defeat for the President. That is what it is. An unmistakable defeat. He has failed to carry his party with him on the most important issue of his administration up to date. He has been slaughtered in the house of his friends. But it is a defeat for the party, too. It is a confession that the Republican party is so wedded to high protectionism that it can do nothing in the way of a revision or a reformation, however slight. Confronted by the conflicting demands of two greedy trusts—a sugar refining trust on one side and a sugar growing trust on the other—it could not choose between them. So it does nothing and "lets well enough alone." With a large majority in the House, and nearly two-thirds of the whole membership of the Senate, it is forced to admit its impotency.

This prediction was partly verified on the 18th, when at a Republican Senatorial caucus, 18 senators, under the lead of Senator Elkins, declared that they would not support the President's policy. Decisive action, however, was not taken, and the caucus adjourned until the 20th.

Nothing very definite in connection with the anthracite coal strike has transpired since our last report (p. 138), though the condition is evidently becoming more tense. As a