

The Public

Dr. HJ Woodhouse
Nov 2-01 Box 541

Third Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1901.

Number 156.

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.

The dinner of the "Get-Together Club," which was attended on the 25th at Madison Square garden concert hall, New York city, by 500 people, who listened sympathetically to patronizing speeches from rich men on "movements for improving the condition of the employed," recalls Tolstoi's famous saying about the rich classes being so tender in their sympathies that they are willing to do anything for the poor—except get off their backs.

Extensive quotations from the Pennsylvania press, made by the Johnstown Democrat, show that Pennsylvania also is awakening to the importance of the movement in this country in favor of the Australian tax system—so much of it, at any rate, as allows localities to decide for themselves what kind of local property they will tax for local revenues. In bringing this reform to the attention of American legislatures, through his report upon the subject and his success in securing favorable action by the Colorado legislature, Senator J. W. Bucklin, of Colorado, has rendered a most useful service, not only within his own state but to the people of other states.

Pernicious governmental interference with individual concerns receives a new exemplification from Minnesota. The senate of that state has passed a bill which would require, of every person about to marry, a physician's certificate that "neither such person, nor the father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, or any brother or sister of such person, ever was af-

flicted with chronic imbecility or insanity." With the theory of heredity running mad, and the craze for regulating other peoples' lives and doing them good by law growing by fits and starts, the goal of such legislation as this Minnesota bill is easy to foresee. That some one in the lower house may stigmatize the bill as it deserves is to be sincerely hoped. Of all the "scientific" fads, statutory stirpiculture is the most abhorrent.

According to a Honolulu correspondent of the New York Evening Post, the Hawaiian legislature is likely to adopt two important reforms, one political and the other economic. The political reform is proportional representation. This alone is one greatly to be desired everywhere. It is a system of minority voting which would make legislative bodies proportionately representative of the conflicting views of their constituencies. The economic reform mentioned is also likely to be adopted in Hawaii, is the single tax. Of this the Post's correspondent says that it "would throw almost the whole burden of taxation on the sugar interests," which own "nearly all the cultivable land." A single plantation in one of the islands is 30,000 acres in extent. It seems that the single tax measure is supported by the native members. The white members oppose it, but are in the minority. We shall be no less surprised than gratified, however, if the white members do not disorganize the majority on this matter. Though in the minority, they represent the landlord class; and, as Carlisle would say, that means much.

Judge Dunne, of Chicago, has made a sensible decision on the question of excluding unvaccinated children from the public schools. He holds that this cannot be done unless

smallpox is so prevalent as to create an emergency. There is no compulsory vaccination law in Illinois. Therefore, according to Judge Dunne, the health and school authorities can restrain unvaccinated persons only in the exercise of a reasonable discretion. "Children infected with or exposed to smallpox," he says, "may be temporarily excluded, or the school be temporarily suspended; but like the exercise of similar power in other cases such power is justified by the emergency, and like the necessity which gives rise to it, ceases when the necessity ceases." The principle of this decision apparently ignores the question of vaccination for school children altogether, and properly so. Essentially, that is, it ascribes to the school authorities legal power to make rules for the prevention of contagion during epidemics. In such times, therefore, they may exclude unvaccinated children. But they might also exclude vaccinated children.

Democratic opposition to Mr. Harrison's reelection as mayor of Chicago found its most pronounced expression on the 28th at a public meeting at the Auditorium, at which Altgeld was the principal speaker. What effect this negative movement may have upon the result at the polls it is impossible to predict. It may be impossible to judge even after the event. But it is certain that in no other way can the democrats of Chicago disentangle themselves from responsibility for the city hall ring. The situation is a difficult one. If the republican candidate were worthy of popular confidence, the democratic ring might be kicked out of power in the democratic party and thereby in the city, by voting for the republican, which in that case could be done without re-