

minal facilities, they control the cities, and are thereby masters of the country. To regard this situation, as some newspapers and public men do, as being good or bad according to the manner in which the terminal owners may manage the property, whether for the better accommodation of the public or not, is sheer fatuity. The real question is not what use these potentates may make of their unprecedented privileges, but what use they can make of them. These men, with the privileges they possess, are stronger than an absolute monarch. And their power is not dissimilar. They are not business men uniting their business interests. They are owners of sovereign power, of governmental power, of power which originates not in business but in law. The cars, rails, station houses and other railway equipment—which belong to them as business assets—are trifles in comparison with their rights of way and terminal rights, which belong to them as creations of sovereignty. Indeed, the time is coming when they will retain no interest in rolling stock, but will lease to business men the business privilege of running trains, while they themselves retire upon the landlord's function of collecting rents for rights of way and terminals. It is evident now that the highways of the country will soon be directed by one master mind whose power, greater than that of any other man on earth, will control ballot box and cartridge belt as well as rail and tie, unless—and only this can prevent it—the people themselves resume the ownership of their highways and terminals. Such a man, holding the livelihood of all railway employes in the hollow of his hand, would be a spoilsman infinitely more dangerous than the worst boss that political spoils could possibly develop.

The celebration of Marshall day was in reality a tribute to the triumph of federalism—the triumph, that is, of Hamilton's policy of empire in contradistinction to Jefferson's policy of self-government. It was not so much

Marshall's greatness, and he was indeed a great man—so was Napoleon, so was William the Conqueror, so was Alexander,—that his eulogists praised, as his use of his powers in changing the constitution from a federal compact into an imperial charter. To read the speeches of the day is to realize that Hamilton's programme has revived in the American mind; or, at least, that the orators of the day thought it had. Even democrats, or men who so label themselves, applauded federalism in Marshall's name; while republicans, who once had learned from Abraham Lincoln to respect the name and principles of Jefferson, were swift to take advantage of the opportunity to belittle his name and to sneer at his principles.

Our corporate masters are becoming as reckless as cynical when they feel secure enough in their places of plutocratic power to do what Thomas W. Lawson, of Boston, one of the Standard Oil crew of pirates, but better known as the "copper king"—for having, in connection with Rockefeller, organized the copper trust—has done. Apropos of a gas investigation proposed by Representative McPherson, of the Massachusetts legislature, Mr. Lawson has issued an astounding address. He cynically advises Representative McPherson that—

the Massachusetts legislature, the present one or that of any of the four or five years past, is, or has been, as absolutely at the command of those who control it as those of either New York, Montana or Pennsylvania.

That—

when it is settled, as it is this session, that there shall be no investigation of gas corporations, or any other corporation affairs, there will be none.

That—

Mr. McPherson or other legislators of this kind may rant and fume, but they must, I repeat, take the medicine prepared by those who control legislatures.

And he asks Mr. McPherson if he knows that—

a certain enterprise paid \$30,000 to

simply shunt his investigating order from his committee to the one on rules.

That—

in the last day or two of the last session of the legislature it cost some one over \$100,000 to see that the work of his committee came to naught, and that in the one before that it cost over \$150,000 to see that the committee's work did not become real soul-stirring.

That—

if a real investigation was held by simple men like himself it would be demonstrated that this one enterprise has spent over \$2,000,000 to see that the Massachusetts legislature was properly educated as to its duties, and that on its books would be found a single item of \$1,000,000 paid for that laudable purpose.

Finally Mr. Lawson assures Mr. McPherson that it is a waste of time for him to try to get real gas investigations this year, for he cannot have any—

because it has been so decreed by those who have more to do with legislation than legislators.

The farcical character of personal property taxation is further exposed by the comptroller of the state of New York, who in his report to the present legislature shows that the proportion of state revenues from personal property taxation has fallen from 22 per cent. in 1870 to 11 per cent. in 1900. If the truth were known, this dwindling personal property tax comes almost wholly from widows and orphans and men of moderate means. The rich escape with comparatively light payments. It is because they escape that the proportion of revenues from personal property taxes diminishes. And that is the experience of the centuries. Personal property taxes cannot be fairly collected. Yet we struggle on, experimenting with more and more drastic and less and less effective measures, trying to make personal property values bear public burdens that ought to rest wholly upon other kinds of property. The values of monopolies such as railroad rights of way, and the values of especially desirable land—kinds of property that now contribute but little toward maintaining the institutions which