

own property than to cast votes at elections. Even women themselves, some of them, were just as confident then of the incapacity of their sex for separate property rights as some women are confident now of the incapacity of their sex for voting intelligently. Doubtless these women were just as much averse to having property responsibilities and duties thrust upon their sex then as women of the same type are now averse to having political responsibilities and duties thrust upon that sex now. Yet Miss Anthony lived a whole lifetime after women had been invested fully with property rights. And she had the proud consciousness that this had been done through her work and the work of others like her.

But in another respect her work was unfinished. The thought of the injustice of denying political rights to women was with her in her dying breath. Faithfully as she had worked for that enfranchisement, she knew she could not live to see it accomplished. Yet it will be accomplished, and to her name will belong, and to her memory let us hope will be paid a just tribute of praise for having so faithfully and effectively helped it on.

#### LABOR IN POLITICS—AN INSTANCE.

Organized labor may maintain any one of three different attitudes toward politics.

It may, for one thing, hold aloof from politics altogether. If it does this it will in due time find its operations hedged in with hostile legislation and tied up with injunctions, its leaders in jail, its adversaries fortified behind impregnable special interests, their agents in places of legislative and administrative power, their lawyers on the bench, and trades unions in comparison with employers' unions as a rope of sand to a wire cable.

Instead of holding aloof from politics, organized labor may admit politics into labor unions. In this case, self-seeking politicians, and through them the gigantic financial interests with which labor is most desperately at war, will bring the labor vote into the service of its enemies, and the last

days of organized labor will be worse than the first.

The third attitude which organized labor may maintain toward politics is not to hold aloof from politics nor yet to admit politics into labor unions, but to lead labor unions into politics.

In doing this, three courses are possible. Labor may organize a new labor-class party or affiliate with one of those already existing; it may affiliate with one of the other side-parties already existing and which invite its cooperation; or it may make of the most available of the two great parties into which the mass of American citizens divide, its most obedient political servant.

In a more or less tentative way and to a greater or less degree organized labor has experimented with all these policies, and the results of that experience as well as the general tendencies of human nature impress us very strongly with reference to the relative merits of the possibilities we have outlined. But we have no intention here of discussing the matter. Our present purpose is to tell the story of one of the most intelligent, forceful, faithful and devoted labor leaders of the East, who has adopted one of these policies. He does not believe in labor's staying out of politics; he does not believe in letting politics into labor; he does believe in leading labor into politics. But he has no faith in labor-class parties, conceiving that the best party for labor would be one that stands honestly for democracy—that is, for equal human rights; he has no hope from permanent side parties; he has both faith and hope in the possibility of labor's making the Democratic party genuinely democratic. By pursuing this course he has made the labor vote of a large Eastern city a controlling element in the Democratic party there, and, forcing plutocratic Democrats to the rear or out, has made that vote an effective influence in public affairs.

The man to whom we allude, Michael John Flaherty,\* was born at Cohoes, N. Y., in 1853.

Cohoes has long been a factory town, and as Mr. Flaherty's par-

\*A portrait of Mr. Flaherty accompanies this issue of *The Public* as a supplement.

ents were hard workers in the cotton and woolen industries there and consequently, according to the social conditions which identify poverty with industry, were poor people, the boy himself was compelled at an early age to help eke out their scanty wages by leaving school and becoming a child laborer for long hours in unsanitary factory surroundings and at grinding pay. He worked in a "protected industry." Like scores upon scores of thousands of other children in that factory town and in other "protected" towns, his intellectual development was hampered by denial of educational opportunities and by severity of toil, but unlike most of them he was gifted with a physique that enabled him to break through the barriers by which the minds of so many of his fellow workers were weakened and dwarfed.

Young Flaherty was favored also with a taste for music and a natural aptitude for the cornet. To the extent that their narrow means permitted, his parents promoted the development of the boy's musical faculties, and in spite of the enervation of his toilsome work he had mastered technique sufficiently in his later youth to secure employment in a local band. It was in connection with this employment that he became a labor unionist.

Labor at Cohoes was not and never has become strongly organized; but early in his career as a professional musician, Flaherty succeeded in interesting enough of his fellow musicians to organize the Cohoes Musicians' Union, and not long afterward he was chosen its president.

At the age of 26 he left Cohoes and settled in Brooklyn, then an independent city but now a borough of the City of New York. Here he became active in the Knights of Labor, in which he was continuously a delegate to District Assembly 220 from 1887 until well into the 90's.

In the Fall of 1894, Mr. Flaherty first appeared in the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn as a delegate from the musicians' organization. The same definiteness of purpose, continuity of effort, faculty of making friends, and ca-

capacity for work which had made him a labor leader in Cohoes when yet a young man and later in the Knights of Labor in Brooklyn, singled him out only a few months after his appearance as a delegate in the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn for the important though onerous work of secretary of that body. His first election to this office took place in March, 1895. Reelected every six months since that time, he is now completing his twenty-second term.

Incidentally during the past 20 years he has served as delegate to various State conventions of labor bodies, one of which was the Knights of Labor Congress at Albany in 1889, when Father Huntington was one of his fellow delegates.

In all his service as a labor leader Mr. Flaherty has used voice and influence as loyally as any of his associates in supporting distinctively labor measures. But unlike some of his associates he has not stopped there. With the same earnestness he has always taken ground for broader measures—those that make for the common betterment regardless of class, and such as facilitate opportunities for the promotion of these. Among the latter his activities are identified with the movement for ballot reform, the initiative and referendum, the recall, etc. He is of course a pronounced advocate of municipal ownership and operation of municipal utilities, and in Brooklyn he is widely known as a disciple of Henry George.

Though a Democrat by party affiliation Mr. Flaherty took no very active part in party politics until 1896. Previous to that year he had supported candidates for legislative office with especial reference to their sympathy with the labor movement. Among these were Henry George in his campaign for Mayor of New York in 1886; Alfred J. Wolf, a single taxer whom the Democrats nominated for the legislature in 1892, and Robert Baker (afterwards Congressman), a single taxer who was an independent candidate for the legislature in 1894. But in the Bryan campaign of 1896, Mr. Flaherty took a leading as well

as aggressive part in support of Bryan; and for his activity in supporting Henry George for Mayor of Greater New York in 1897, he was expelled from the Democratic organization of his district.

Doubting the democracy of Judge Van Wyck, the Democratic candidate for governor of New York in 1898, Mr. Flaherty was inactive; but in 1899, he was in the thick of the fight for radical democracy against the Democratic machine, with a temporary county organization called the Independent Labor party, of which he was secretary. Though working almost without funds, the effectiveness of this improvised organization appeared in the defeat of five legislative and five aldermanic candidates whom it especially opposed. Flaherty was himself one of its legislative candidates, yet he disregarded district lines and devoted his time and energies to the whole county campaign. His zeal and industry may be inferred from the fact that habitually after his campaign work, sometimes lasting until midnight, he turned to his work as secretary of the Central Labor Union, and kept that continually in good shape. As he was dependent entirely upon his earnings as a musician and principally at evening engagements, this campaign work involved not only an expenditure of time and energy, but a direct pecuniary loss.

When the politics of 1900 began to crystallize with Bryan as Presidential candidate, the Democratic leaders in Brooklyn were better disposed toward fundamental democrats of Mr. Flaherty's type, and he and his friends returned to work for radical democracy within the party. It was not plain-sailing, however, for their one distinct demand, that Altgeld of Illinois be invited to speak in Brooklyn, was opposed by the Democratic manager, Patrick H. McCarren.

McCarren is now the Democratic "boss" of Brooklyn, having in 1903 supplanted his chief, Hugh McLaughlin, the "boss" of many years. A cooper by trade, McCarren is known as a lawyer; and although undistinguished as a practitioner he is in more than comfortable circumstances. It is understood and has been directly

charged without eliciting a contradiction, that he is in the regular pay, for political purposes, of the Standard Oil crowd.

When McCarren opposed the invitation to Altgeld and cut off the necessary financial aid, Mr. Flaherty and Alfred J. Boulton\* secured the funds and the Altgeld meeting was held.

During the campaign of 1900 Mr. Robert Baker, who has since become famous for his excellent service in Congress, had been repeatedly importuned to organize Brooklyn for the Citizens' Union. After the election these requests were renewed. He finally undertook the task with the understanding that it would be with the special object of enlisting the support of the radical Democrats. Two men he was particularly desirous of having with him in the work, Flaherty and Boulton, readily joined him, and the services of many of the most active of those who had taken part in former radical movements were enlisted. Writing of this enterprise, Congressman Baker says:

Without disparaging others in the slightest degree, the one man who more than all others made success possible was Michael J. Flaherty. The skill in political management which he has since displayed in so remarkable a manner was then first given full scope. The same attention to and grasp of detail, the same pertinacity of purpose, the same capacity for getting the best and most efficient work out of his coadjutors, the same farsightedness in anticipating the plans of opponents which have won him his present position of unquestioned influence not merely with the radical elements but with the regular organization Democrats, were displayed all through the year 1901. He helped organize every assembly district in Brooklyn, bringing to the Citizens' Union movement hundreds of men who had been affiliated with him in the various political and semi-political fights he had conducted in previous years. Cool and calm in every emergency, at all times resourceful, patient in his dealings with oth-

\*Mr. Boulton, also a labor leader of the Flaherty type, disagrees with him as to working within the Democratic party. Mr. Boulton was the People's party candidate for governor of New York in 1904, and was elected Register of Kings county last Fall on the ticket headed by Coler for president of the Borough of Brooklyn and Hearst for mayor of the City of New York.

ers, alert to every probable move of those who wished to confine the movement to a mere "good government" fight, he was the one force that made the victory which the radicals finally won possible.

In that campaign Mr. Flaherty proposed Mr. Baker as the Citizens' Union candidate for president of the Borough. The conservatives of the Union opposed this nomination but named Baker for sheriff. But the Republicans would not agree to that, and Baker withdrew on condition that Flaherty should be accepted as the fusion candidate for coroner. The fusion ticket was elected and for four years Mr. Flaherty held for the first time in his life a public office and experienced the sensation of lucrative employment.

It has been quite unusual to find a prominent labor representative after his election to public office devoting as Mr. Flaherty did as much time and energy as previously to labor matters. Temporarily freed from the necessity of seeking engagements so as to keep the wolf from his family's door, he was even more assiduous, devoted more time, and spent much larger sums than ever to promote labor interests and to advance the broader and more fundamental measures he advocates.

During his entire term the coroner's office was the Brooklyn headquarters for the promotion of labor and reform measures. As a result of four years of intelligent, skillful and unselfish work, under improved circumstances, he had not only increased his influence, but had widely extended it. Nor was his augmented influence due to the use of patronage. The only patronage at Coroner Flaherty's command was a half interest in one appointment, there being two coroners with only one appointee between them in the county.

In 1902 Mr. Flaherty was one of the most energetic and influential supporters of Bird S. Coler for Governor and Robert Baker for Congress. Mr. Coler was defeated by less than 10,000 votes, and Mr. Baker carried a Republican district, afterwards distinguishing himself as the pioneer leader in the anti-pass movement and doing other excellent work.

Although the radicals were now in the ascendancy in the Citizens' Union in the Borough of Brooklyn, that was not so in New York city as a whole; and for this reason Flaherty, Baker and others withdrew from it. Apparently to counteract the effect of their withdrawal a radical was nominated by the fusionists for county clerk in 1903 in the person of Alfred J. Boulton.\* Those radicals who remained with the Citizens' Union supported Mr. Boulton under fusion auspices; the others, under Mr. Flaherty's lead, supported him independently. But all the fusion candidates were defeated, mainly because, as the radicals explain, of the failure of Mayor Low's administration to recognize radical tendencies.

Recognition of Mr. Flaherty's political abilities had meanwhile grown, and his influence had strengthened accordingly. In 1904 his activities were in the direction of making the Democratic party nationally representative of the waxing hostility of the people to monopolies. These efforts were continued up to the meeting of the St. Louis convention. Upon the disappointing action of that body, believing that acceptance of its nomination would better promote genuine democracy than severance of party affiliations at that time possibly could, he refused to join the third party movement and maintained his allegiance to the Democratic party. Immediately after the Democratic debacle of 1904 that followed, and which Flaherty doubtless expected and probably did not mourn over, the Brooklyn Central Labor Union under his leadership undertook the task of organizing sentiment for municipal ownership.

One week after the Presidential election a committee of five on organization was formed with Flaherty as chairman. Twice before—once in 1895, and again a few years later—he had made similar attempts, but the officers found they were the only members to attend the meetings. So their club was disbanded. Education had spread in the meantime, however, and while the third effort did not evoke riotous enthusiasm,

\*See previous foot note.

yet it met with a far more general and hearty support than before, and the movement grew. Here again as is so commonly the case, a large part of the work devolved upon one man, and Flaherty's office in the Borough hall became for the municipal ownership movement what it had for three years been for the labor and radical movements.

In this work Flaherty is said to have been a host in himself. Almost nightly through the Winter he was engaged in visiting the different assembly districts, and urging labor officials and others to organize for municipal ownership. From lack of funds—nearly the whole cost of the movement being borne by himself—he was forced to repeat his experience of 1899, doing much of the onerous secretarial work of the movement upon his return at night from speaking at meetings. He was almost unaided, but his zeal never flagged, his courage never failed him, and when the organization was completely effected it naturally chose its most energetic, industrious, patient, persistent and resourceful worker for chairman. Quite as naturally it presented him as its candidate last Fall for the office he now holds—that of sheriff—to the other bodies subsequently formed to promote the municipal ownership cause, and without hesitation they accepted him. The campaign for municipal ownership in Brooklyn was completely successful at the election of 1905, all its candidates being elected, and Sheriff Flaherty has just been unanimously re-elected chairman of the Brooklyn Municipal Ownership League.

That Mr. Flaherty retains the confidence of the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn is evident from the complimentary banquet tendered him on the 6th of March by that body at the Labor Lyceum building, at which over 600 persons were present. Although this banquet was under labor organization auspices, the trend of nearly all the speeches was political and democratic, and in their democracy they were largely of the Henry George type. Mr. Flaherty's attitude toward the relation of labor interests to new par-

ties and old parties was indicated by his speech at this banquet, in the course of which he said:

Let us stop to think, and let us not be misled into a false step. There were over 80,000 votes cast for Municipal Ownership at the last election. Of that number 35,000 came from the Republicans and between 45,000 and 50,000 from the Democratic party. I hold the 35,000 Republicans responsible for the condition in that party, because if they had done their duty that party would have declared for municipal ownership long ago. I hold the 45,000 in the Democratic party responsible for the condition in that party, responsible for Patrick H. McCarran, because if they had done their duty he would have been driven out of the party. Let us stop and consider. Some of us have been carried away in independent movements before. Some of those movements have been successful—most of them have failed. I don't want to see the principles of municipal ownership die out. I want to see them carried out to a successful conclusion. Let us stop to think what is best to do. We have a great opportunity the coming Fall. There are congressmen, State senators, assembly men and justices of the Supreme Court to elect. There is not a representative of labor in the houses of Congress. We must try to elect men to Congress and to the State legislature.

It is a healthy political sign, this spectacle of a labor leader rising to a place of power and influence in the Democratic party and in the public administration of a populous municipality, without sacrificing principles or abandoning policies that menace great corrupt and corrupting financial interests. In his case neither he nor the labor organization of which he has so long been the secretary, has held aloof from politics. Yet politics has not been admitted into the organization he represents, in any such sense as to make it an asset of self-seeking politicians. But the organization has been led into politics in such a way as to secure the best results soonest and with reference neither to personal interests nor class interests but to the common interests of that general public of which the members of labor organizations are an important part. And with it all, the labor leader in this case has been not only true to his personal convictions but loyal to his constituents.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

How to use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives: Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue so until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Thursday, March 15.

### Final victory for Chicago in the traction case.

At last the legal question which the traction interests have most magnified and utilized for baffling the municipal ownership movement in Chicago (pp. 456, 707, 766) has been completely removed; and as a result the traction companies of Chicago have no longer even the shadow of a basis for any proprietary claims beyond their equipment and a few outlying franchises. This is the result of a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, reversing the decision of Judges Grosscup and Jenkins (p. 456) in the case of the Union Traction Company.

The decision, which is of interest to every municipality, was rendered on the 12th, with six judges concurring and three dissenting. The crucial point was the validity of the so-called 99-year act. That act, passed in 1859 and amended in 1865, gave corporate life until 1958 to the original traction companies. It also gave them property rights in and to certain street franchises, etc., "during the life hereof." The traction companies contended that the phrase "during the life hereof" gave them those property rights as well as corporate life until 1958. This contention is rejected by the court. No formal opinions have yet been delivered, but the substance of the decision on this point was stated from the bench on the 12th by Justice Day, as follows:

The act of Feb. 6, 1865, amending the act of Feb. 14, 1859, had the effect to extend the corporate lives of the Chicago City Railway Company, the North Chicago City Railway Company and the Chicago West Division Railway Company for the term of ninety-nine years. It affirmed the contracts with the city prescribing rights and privileges in the streets of Chicago in all respects as theretofore made, including time limitations as contained in the

ordinances previously passed. It recognized and continued in force the right of the city and the companies to make contracts for the use of the streets upon terms and conditions, including the time of occupancy, as might be agreed upon between the Council and the corporations. Corporate privileges can only be held to be granted as against public rights, when conferred in plain and explicit terms. The ambiguous phrase in the act of 1865, 'During the life hereof,' did not operate to extend existing contracts for a term of ninety-nine years or limit the right of the city to make future contracts with the companies covering shorter periods.

In this decision Chief Justice Fuller and Justices Harlan, Day, White, Holmes and Peckham concurred.

A dissenting opinion, to be elaborated hereafter, was announced by Justice McKenna, in behalf of himself and Justices Brewer and Brown, to the effect that they agreed with the rule of interpretation announced, but dissented from the application made of it.

### Municipal ownership in Seattle.

Municipal ownership questions, although necessarily local in their practical application, are of national importance politically, no matter where the locality may be in which the contest is waged and the victory won or the defeat suffered. For this reason the recent election in Seattle (p. 822) is as interesting to intelligent students of the general struggle, though they be as far away as San Francisco, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago or even New York, as to the actual participants in Seattle. The victory in Seattle was the result of long and laborious agitation and organization, in which George F. Cotterill, ex-Mayor W. D. Wood and Judge William H. Moore have been conspicuous leaders.

Seattle is a city of 200,000 inhabitants, and increasing rapidly. In politics it is Republican, with a normal majority (nearly doubled for Roosevelt) of 8,000. It has had successful municipal ownership of the water supply since 1890, and of an extensive and economical lighting and power plant for public service for more than a year. At the recent election, this service was extended to private consumers, by a popular vote of 9,968 to