

designed to cheat the people out of their right to their own streets and decent street car service. They grant perpetual franchises to the traction monopoly. No worse scheme of plunder was ever attempted in Chicago by false public servants in behalf of greedy corporations. And while the people, as a whole, are thus being betrayed these ordinances are especially intended to injure organized labor. No protection whatever is given in them to the employes of the street railways. On the contrary, the car men are left wholly at the mercy of their employers. More work is to be required of them without increase of pay, and hard-earned privileges are to be taken away. The companies would not consent to the insertion in the ordinances of a single word that would safeguard the interests of the men who run the cars. It is said on good authority that should the ordinances be approved at the polls, the wages of the car men will be cut. There is evidence that a dangerous conspiracy is on foot to attack organized labor and the wage scale in the city of Chicago, the attack to begin upon the street car men. These ordinances are the entering wedge. Labor must be vigilant. We must defeat these artful ordinances. They are honeycombed with fraud. Little investigation of them is needed to expose their dishonest character. They are so outrageous that every workingman, every honest citizen, every friend of Chicago, and every upholder of the rights of organized labor should be against them.

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#### The Chicago School Board versus the Chicago Tribune.

A suit was begun on the 20th by Clarence N. Goodwin, Esq., in behalf of the Board of Education of Chicago against the Chicago Tribune for the purpose of invalidating the 100 year ground lease which the Tribune holds from that Board (p. 939), on the ground, among other things, that the re-valuation clause in this lease, requiring readjustments of ground rentals every ten years, was struck out in 1895 through collusion and fraud. In consequence of that act the Tribune now pays only \$31,500 a year for land worth \$60,000 a year. The Tribune's own attorney was a member of the school board at the time, and extremely active in procuring the alteration of the lease.

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In his opinion, pursuant to which the suit was authorized, Mr. Goodwin said: "I am, therefore, of the opinion that this action of the Board in striking the re-valuation clauses from the leases, and at a time of great depression, without more than a colorable consideration, was the direct result of powerful pressure from without, and equally powerful influence from within; that while the mere inadequacy of consideration is not alone sufficient in all cases to vitiate such a transaction, yet when inadequacy of consideration is accompanied by circumstances such as exist in this case, the court will set the transaction aside. This principle is supported by the authorities, and its application to the present facts was confidently asserted by the late Lyman Trumbull in a bill filed by him as solicitor, seeking to enjoin the action taken. Before this application could be passed upon by the court the leases had been authorized by the Board and signed by the President and Secretary of the Board, and recorded. It may be remarked in passing that the haste with which this action was taken by the Board for the apparent purpose of preventing any scrutiny of its acts by the court at the hearing, which had been set for the following morning, is a fact which

cannot be overlooked in determining the fairness of the transaction."

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#### The Chicago Industrial Exhibit.

The Industrial Exhibit held during last week at Brooke's Casino was brought to a close on Sunday, the 17th. The Federation of Labor adjourned its regular meeting to attend the afternoon conference at the exhibit, at which Mrs. Raymond Robins presided, and Miss Mary McArthur, Secretary of the British Woman's Trade Union League, spoke on the unity between men and women workers as well as among the various trades. Wm. J. Bryan, who was passing through the city, took the opportunity to visit the exhibit, and was invited to address the conference. He spoke especially of the good accomplished by the labor unions, saying:

The good they have done far outweighs their mistakes. I shall not speak of what the unions have done to increase wages or of what they have done to reduce the hours of labor. But there are two things I wish to say for the unions. It was largely through the agitation of organized labor that the Australian ballot system was adopted in this country. Under the Australian ballot system the workingman can exercise his citizenship without fear of losing his employment. That has been one of the greatest reforms ever adopted in this country. The next thing for which I commend the unions is their attitude on the subject of child labor. If labor unions had never done anything else than raise the age limit under which children cannot work in mills and factories, they would have fully justified their existence and all the money they have spent.

Much of the material of the exhibit is to be shipped to Boston, where a similar showing is to be held during the week beginning April 15.

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#### The Ohio Valley Floods.

The greatest flood ever recorded at Pittsburg culminated on the 15th. Ten square miles were inundated by the waters of the Monongahela, Allegheny, Ohio, Youghiogheny, Kiskiminetas and Clarion rivers, which had been swollen abnormally by the combination of warm weather, melting snows, and general rain throughout western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Between 20,000 and 30,000 persons were made homeless, and thousands of families were driven to the second stories of their homes. Most of Pittsburg's great steel, iron and electrical plants were flooded and compelled to shut down. Wheeling in West Virginia, and towns all down the Ohio valley suffered greatly. Eighteen persons met death in a panic in Wheeling because of flood conditions. At Pittsburg there were 14 fatalities; at Athens, Ohio, 12; at Mingo Junction, Ohio, 10; and 14 at other scattering points. The pecuniary loss in the Pittsburg district is estimated at \$10,000,000.

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#### Great Britain.

English papers now at hand make enlightening comment on the defeat of the Progressives at the London County Council elections on the 2nd (p. 1165). The London Tribune declares that the reasons of the defeat "are to be sought in the baffling psychology of crowds." And it announces that it is not hopeful of the ability of the Moderates "to realize a single one of their incompatible promises.

They cannot lower the rates unless they mean to starve the public services which they have promised to respect." A Tribune interview said: "The Socialists have lost seats for the Progressives by setting up hostile candidates of their own in perfectly hopeless constituencies. The revolution is devouring its own children. On the other hand—for it is useless to ignore facts at a time like this—many Progressives have been frightened by the growing concessions to the Labour Party and the Socialists in Parliament. . . . It would be idle to deny the magnitude of the disaster. It would be criminal to regard it as a 'knock-out blow,' and to hold our hands and do nothing between now and the next election three years hence. The results ought to stiffen the Liberal ranks and strengthen their unity and their resolution, both inside Parliament and outside it." The London correspondent of the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury wrote: "The Progressive defeat is largely due to the apathy of the working classes. Of the total electorate, only about one-half polled. There is no doubt that the middle classes voted almost to their full strength, and very largely on the Moderate side. Of the 48 per cent. who did not take the trouble to vote, the vast majority must have belonged to the working classes, who were so little interested in the cause of good municipal government that they stayed away from the poll. One feature of the election is the insignificance of the Socialist vote. Five seats were lost to the Progressive party through Socialistic candidates, though in nearly all cases they polled but a small fraction of the votes. Of the members of the Council only three are Socialist, and these, of course, owe their seats to Progressive support." An interesting deduction was made by the Tribune: "Undoubtedly one of the lessons of London's tremendous municipal turnover is the need of proportional representation. A Progressive majority of forty-nine was transformed into a minority of forty-one; but, as the article we publish to-day shows, in proportion to the votes polled by the two sides in 1904 the majority ought to have been twelve and the minority now should be seventeen. Exactly in the same way the result of the Parliamentary general election of 1906 was a huge exaggeration of the real change of opinion. Liberals were not so weak in 1900 as they seemed, nor so strong last year. Exaggerations of this kind are apt to be mischievous as depriving the majority party of the restraining influence of a really representative Opposition. It would be quite possible under the present system for the party only just in a minority to be almost annihilated."

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A motion to repeal the Irish crimes act was discussed in the House of Commons on the 13th. Mr. Birrell, chief secretary for Ireland, described the act as a "code of tyrannical laws," and said that so far as the present Government was concerned the act was dead and buried and would be formally repealed at the earliest opportunity.

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According to a dispatch of the 18th, Dr. Thomas J. McNamara, Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government board, has been admitted to member-

ship in the Dulwich branch of the United Irish League of Great Britain. This is the first instance of a member of the British ministry joining a militant Irish nationalist organization.

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#### Proportional Representation Under Consideration in France.

A bill based on the principles of proportional representation and ticket voting has been approved by the universal suffrage committee of the Chamber of Deputies, and is shortly to be brought before the Chamber for discussion (vol. viii, 874). The bill increases the period of the deputies' mandate to six years, instead of four as at present. The number of representatives is to be reduced from 591 to about 490. By the new system each department is to be regarded as a distinct electoral district entitled to return one deputy for every 25,000 voters. Each voter is to be given as many votes as there are deputies to be elected in his department or constituency, and he may either distribute them among the candidates or cast them all for one.

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#### Jewish Massacres in Rumania.

Rumania, which lies in southeastern Europe between Austria-Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria and Servia, is disturbed by peasant uprisings caused by discontent with the taxes recently levied by the parliament, and with the exactions and tyranny of the smaller land holders. In several places (just as in Russia) the revolt has taken the shape of attacks upon the Jews in the nearest towns, in one district at least with the full acquiescence of the prefect. The following cablegram was received by a Jewish paper in New York on the 17th: "Terrible massacre since last Thursday. Town totally destroyed. All the Jewish population are ruined and houses pillaged. We ask help. Marcus Getzel, Elias Solomon, Shje Sternberg." The names signed to the cablegram are said to be those of leading merchants of Podhilo. It is a place of about 6,000 inhabitants, 4,000 of whom are Jews. Podhilo is described as only about thirty miles from Kishineff, which is in Bessarabia, across the Russian frontier. At Burduzheni, after being attacked and plundered, 2,000 Jews were reported to be fleeing across the frontier into Austria.

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#### The Russian Program.

The sittings of the Douma were interrupted for a few days because of the fall of the ceiling in the room in the Tauride palace devoted to its use. The catastrophe occurred on the 15th, and seems to have been accidental. The nails and other fastenings binding the ceiling to the rafters had not been replaced for more than a hundred years, and had been strained by the weight of newly added decorations. The Douma resumed its sittings on the 19th, when Mr. Stolypin, the Prime Minister, presented a program to which the Government had given its consent, and which it asked the Douma to put into effect. "Our country," said Mr. Stolypin, according to the Chicago Record-Herald's report "must be transformed into a constitutional state. Real measures must be adopted to define and determine the rights of the state and of private individuals and