

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

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### Facing Toward the Goal.

Whether he win or lose, the true Progressive of whatever party, will keep his face steadfastly set to the goal of national righteousness.



### National Economic League.

Economic leagues are apt to become mere paper organizations under the management of small coteries and quite unrepresentative of the membership, which, from one motive or another not always germane to the declared purposes of the organization, supplies the funds. Better such defective organizations than none at all? True. But the National Economic League (6 Beacon St., Boston) has made an innovation which seems well calculated to vitalize the organization. It has introduced preferential voting throughout its membership for the purpose of making up its programs. In preparation for the program for 1912-13, for example, a first ballot has been taken, with the result of submitting 61 subjects in order of preference, and a second ballot on the highest 12 is now under way.



"The Tariff" stands second on the first ballot, with 25 votes to its credit; "Efficiency in the Administration of Justice," with 266 votes being first. Other subjects among the highest twelve are the Monetary System, Child Labor, Governmental Control of Industrial Corporations, and

the Short Ballot. The last is twelfth in the order of choice, having received 169 votes. The relations of capital and labor and the liquor question had 167 each, the merchant marine 165, eugenics 162, election of United States Senators by popular vote and the taxation of land values 155 each, Initiative and Referendum 137, Socialism 120, recall of judges and decisions 113, public ownership of public utilities 102, equal suffrage 100, the unearned increment 94, the preferential ballot 68, proportional representation 61, and gold production and prices 45.



This League gives fair promise of becoming a good democratic substitute for the surfeit of economic leagues that have sprung up under the control of coteries. An economic league, national in scope and membership, with geographical and topical branches according to necessity or convenience, and controlled by referendums such as that under which this League operates, would be infinitely more useful at the present stage of economic progress than all the other economic leagues put together—useful though most of them have been in their day, and some of them are yet.



#### Justice for Sale.

A painfully significant report from Richmond, Virginia, appeared in the news dispatches of last week. It related to the case of Floyd Allen and Claude Allen, both under sentence of death for border-ruffian murder in a court house. Of the guilt of these men there may be no doubt, and the question of capital punishment may be put aside for all the purposes we have now in mind, as may all considerations of mercy. The point to which we wish attention directed appears in these words in the press dispatch: "Floyd Allen's wife issued a public appeal for money to aid the effort to save the men from death"! Whether that money was needed to secure a commutation of sentence, or to carry the case to the highest courts, the dispatch does not make clear. If for the former purpose, it would probably be useless; yet the very appeal for it implies that money is regarded as legitimately needful and as not always ineffective. More probably, however, the money is wanted to enable the condemned men to secure a hearing of their case in the upper courts—in other words, to prevent a miscarriage of justice.



Now, observe that the question is not a Virginia question. There is probably no State in

the Union in which some such appeal is not necessary to secure full attention from the courts in cases of convicts without much money. Neither is the question at this point a Floyd Allen question, nor even a question of guilt or innocence in a particular case. It is a question of the barter and sale of justice. If one convict may carry his case to the highest courts regardless of apparent guilt and merely because he is rich enough to pay the expense, but another, regardless of apparent guilt, cannot carry his case there because he is not rich enough to pay the expense, *then justice is for sale*. When a person is accused of crime, every facility of legal machinery designed to convict the guilty and to acquit the innocent should be at his service as freely as the same machinery is at the service of the prosecution. The primary object of judicial machinery is not to punish any one, be he innocent or guilty. *Its principal object is to protect the innocent*. That is why we have grand juries, that is why we have trials. And is an accused person's innocence less important to the community if he has a defense fund than if he has not?



#### Killing Criminals, But Making Crime.

Many folks, mostly fools, denounce Lincoln Steffens for his part in the McNamara case at Los Angeles; but wise men and women—not to say Christian men and women—will at least listen to what he says about it. The same question, essentially, arises in connection with the recent capital conviction of Becker, the lieutenant of police in New York. "Becker is to be the sacrifice for the sins of society," said Mr. Steffens in a Cincinnati interview. He went on: "Becker may be electrocuted and sooner or later another Becker will spring up. In other words, we will kill the man and do nothing to correct the conditions that are responsible for him. The conditions that made Becker were exposed in New York 20 years ago. We imprisoned the McNamaras and are doing nothing to change the conditions that made the McNamaras. The acts of Becker and the McNamaras are perfectly natural phenomena." Perfectly natural phenomena! Of course they are. And every one capable of thinking who does not think, or thinking can speak his thoughts and keeps them to himself, is personally responsible for the conditions that make the Becker and McNamara phenomena. No, we do not mean that there must be stricter enforcement of criminal laws. That's the fool way. It is the laws that make the conditions which produce such phenomena that must command attention. Do you profit