

The Public

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EDITORIAL

Bryan's Leadership.

In his letter to Judge Thompson and his address to the Democrats of Illinois, published in our News Narrative this week, Bryan again confirms the confidence of his friends and demonstrates the worthiness of his leadership. To huckstering politicians, this is a new and puzzling kind of politics. They stand aghast at what they regard as the fatuity of Bryan in pointing his fin-

ger at a skillful political organizer of his own party, who is withal a wealthy monopolist, and with whom Bryan is not on hostile terms personally, and telling him that in official position in the party he discredits its declarations of principle, and that he must leave its national committee or Bryan himself will appeal to the Democratic voters of Illinois to oust him. But this is typical of Bryan. He is a Democrat who is democratic, a man who wishes to be right, and a leader who knows how to lead and dares to lead in the right way regardless of consequences to himself. Once more Bryan proves that his first consideration is not for himself but for his cause.

* *

Campaign Funds.

It is gratifying to learn that the campaign committees of both political parties are suffering for want of funds. This is gratifying because it means that the plunderous financial interests that have been in the habit of bribing public officials through large campaign contributions have drawn in their purse strings. But unless the people now support their party organizations, these financiers will be stronger than ever with political managers. If legitimate funds cannot be obtained in small sums from the rank and file of the parties, then the politician who quietly collects them in large sums of beneficiaries of special privilege will again have an advantage, both within his party and without, over the honest politician who serves the public faithfully but at his own expense. In these circumstances we advise every democratic Democrat, rich or poor, who reads these lines to send one dollar (net), neither more nor less, to J. M. Griggs, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee, Munsey Building, Washington; and we hope that every Democratic editor who is working for genuine democracy will not only send his own dollar, but will pass the word along through the columns of his paper.

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Senator Howe's Story.

In this issue of The Public we begin the publication of "The Confessions of a Monoplist," an original serial story of business in politics, by Senator Frederic C. Howe, of Cleveland, the author of "The City the Hope of Democracy." No subject could be more opportune for a capable writer of fiction, and few if any writers are as

well equipped with both political knowledge and literary skill as Mr. Howe. Only two chapters of this story have been published before. They appeared as independent short stories in *The World's Work*, where they attracted marked attention for their shrewd insight into political and economic conditions and their faithful and picturesque character drawing. The serial now appearing in these columns is as interesting throughout as were those two short chapters; and the picture of business and political conditions and leaders is vastly improved by the greater variety and complexity of political incidents and business experiences which it enables the author to introduce. "The Confessions of a Monopolist" invites the reader in charming fashion into the sanctum sanctorum of the business man to whom politics is a valuable commercial asset.

* *

The Open Door to Wealth.

When any bright young man can make \$30,000 in a few days at an outlay of a 2-cent postage stamp, what is the use of pitying the poor? Are they not poor because they lack business intelligence? Behold! One bright young man, Samuel Beverly, to be specific, put in a bid for \$5,800,000 Panama canal bonds. No deposit was required; he couldn't have made one if it had been required. So the bid cost him only a 2-cent postage stamp. A few days later he sold his bid for \$30,000 profit. As long as men are so dull as to overlook opportunities like this, is it not folly to pity them? Nobody is so poor that he can't get rich in a country like ours, if he has a little capital and the gumption and energy to use it wisely. Beverly's case proves it. Go to!

* *

Taxation in Illinois.

As Mr. Lawson Purdy of the New York tax commission points out with reference to Prof. Merriam's proposal that the Charter Convention of Chicago recommend a tax commission for Illinois, there is nothing of importance that such a commission could do so long as the Illinois Constitution forbids every departure from the antiquated, unfair and impracticable personal property tax. This tax increases the tax burdens of the farmer, the small business man, and the thrifty wage worker, and is dodged by the privileged rich; the richer the man, the easier and the more fully does he escape his share of personal taxes. But true as all this is, it does not minimize the importance of a tax commission for Illinois. Even if such a commission adjourned

within an hour, yet if it sat long enough to discover its own weakness under the present Constitution and to make the deplorable situation known, it would have served a most useful purpose.

* *

Successful Municipal Ownership in Chicago.

Critics of the municipal ownership movement will find still further food for reflection in the ninth annual report of the department of electricity of the city of Chicago, which has just been issued. From this report it appears that in consequence of owning and operating a city lighting plant for the last 18 years, Chicago has saved \$323,305 in comparison with what it would have been obliged to pay if it had procured all its public lighting from private corporations. This estimate of saving makes full allowance for interest on the plant, and the taxes that would have been received from private companies. The only item it omits is depreciation charges. The report estimates that the cost of operating the municipal plant last year, was \$352,547 less than the city would have had to pay a private corporation. This is especially worthy of consideration in view of the fact that one of the criticisms of the department is that it pays higher wages than are paid by private companies. Isn't it better for the city to pay high wages to workmen than to pay enormous profits to corporations that pay lower wages? Considered with reference to the expenditure per lamp, the cost to the city for its own plant during the past year is reported to have been \$52.63, whereas the amount it paid to the private company for lamps needed in excess of its own during the same year was \$103.

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LABOR CO-PARTNERSHIP SOCIETIES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

In the opinion of many shrewd economic thinkers the ultimate solution of the labor question will be some form of industrial co-operation which will break down the hard barriers between capital and labor; some arrangement not necessarily amounting to state socialism, but working rather along voluntary lines, which would attract the intelligent sympathy of both interests and make them see the true line of their common advantage. Of course not much has been done in this direction up to the present, especially in the United States, where the gigantic industrial factors act as if they believed that the interest of each lay in reducing the other to impotence. The idea of labor being a partner in production has