

question in American politics as the life of a republic whose ideals are human equality. We regret it especially in the case of Prof. Herron, than whom no one has perceived more clearly nor denounced more vigorously the imperialism of McKinley. But we are obliged to admit the consistency of the position, though this consistency is maintained at a fearful price.

Samuel Alschuler, whose nomination for governor was a genuine and unexpected concession to the true democratic sentiment of Illinois, has made a campaign which justifies the fullest confidence in his ability as a public administrator and his courage and intelligence as a progressive statesman. But these qualities have been displayed no more impressively in any stage of the campaign than at the Central Music hall meeting in Chicago on Tuesday. The meeting had been called by a nonpartisan body, composed for the most part of well-known local republicans, and both candidates for governor were invited to appear before it and answer a series of questions regarding civil service reform and local government, which had been submitted to them. The republican candidate, Mr. Yates, declined to come. He answered the questions, however, though with almost categorical brevity and at a partisan republican meeting. Mr. Alschuler adopted the opposite course. He appeared before the nonpartisan meeting in question, which, by the way, was presided over by a well-known republican, and in a remarkably able speech declared himself at length upon the questions regarding which he had been interrogated.

In respect to the merit system of civil service, he defended the present law as to municipalities and advocated its extension to the state at large. But his speech was devoted principally to the question regarding the street car system. On this point he reminded the people that the

streets are theirs, and that it is "the great prosperity and progress which has been made by the great city of Chicago that has made possible the traction companies, and not the traction companies that have made the city of Chicago." Premising further that he had "no quarrel with capital, no feeling against corporations, no desire unnecessarily to oppress traction companies or any other great organizations of capital," he plumply declared for public ownership of private monopolies, saying:

What these great traction companies have done in the way of affording transportation facilities in the city of Chicago I believe the people of Chicago can do themselves. I am one of those who believe sufficiently in the people themselves to express the opinion they can do it. The streets are yours and the conduct thereof ought not now, with your eyes open, with the revelations before you, to be turned over voluntarily to any private monopolies.

And to meet a common objection he added:

They tell you, and with some degree of reason, that if these and other public utilities were conducted by the municipality there would be great danger of the building up of a powerful political machine. I now appeal again to this same civil service, and I say that with a properly conceived and a justly enforced system of civil service there could be no political machine in the conduct of these great affairs.

The gubernatorial candidate who could so unequivocally propose and defend the principle of public ownership of natural monopolies, along with an equally direct advocacy of the referendum and local self-government, as Mr. Alschuler did at the Central Music hall meeting, is a candidate who should command the support of every voter, of whatever party, who believes that it is better for the public to own monopolies than for monopolies to own the public.

The general and quite natural feeling which finds expression in some such phrase as that American voters who do not like Bryan must vote for McKinley, while those who do not like McKinley must vote for Bryan, since nobody but one or the other of these men can be elected, is described by the New York Nation as

"a confession of the failure of the democratic system." That description is egregiously misleading. A confession it certainly is, but not of any failure of the democratic system. It is a confession of the failure of Hamiltonian efforts to obstruct democracy. We do not elect presidents in this country by a democratic system. Democracy has, indeed, undermined the Holy Roman empire methods of our electoral college, and made that system a barren formality; but it has not yet succeeded in asserting the supremacy of a system of its own. To do that, two constitutional changes should be made. In the first place there should be a provision for electing presidents by direct popular vote; and in the second, a system of first, second, third, etc., choices should be adopted. If these constitutional reforms were now in operation no one who objects to both McKinley and Bryan would be driven to voting for either; nor could either be elected if in fact a majority of the people preferred a third candidate. Only the second change needs explanation. For illustration: Suppose a voter who prefers Bryan to McKinley, yet whose first choice would be the prohibition candidate. Or, for extreme illustration, suppose that he prefers every other candidate to either Bryan or McKinley, but would rather elect Bryan than McKinley if driven to the alternative. This man would then vote, let us say, for Mr. Woolley as first choice, for Mr. Debs as second, for Mr. Barker as third, for a straight-out anti-imperialist as fourth, and not for Bryan except as his final choice. When the ballots came to be counted, if Mr. Woolley failed of election—this voter's ballot would count for Debs; if Debs failed, it would count for Barker; if Barker failed, it would count for the anti-imperialist; and only in case he failed, would it count for Bryan. As all other votes would be treated similarly, the suffrages of all the people would from miscellaneous minority preferences converge upon two men. No plan could be more simple in operation;