

the democracy of his Republicanism. If he could carve out a practical policy with reference to public service corporations in harmony with the principle he seems to have grasped, he would command the confidence that his speech has a tendency to inspire.

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In that speech Mr. Hughes draws very clearly the line between public privilege conferred and private property earned. He points directly at the issue that is dividing political interests and classes, and shows as plainly as could be desired that what is demanded of public service corporations is not confiscation of private property but restoration of public rights. And he seems to place himself squarely on the side of those of the people who are making these demands.

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Of the public service corporations he says: "In public privilege they live, move and have their being." Of public duty regarding them he declares: "What we have to deal with is not interference with private property, but abuse of public rights." Of the attitude of the people towards these corporations he explains that the people are justly indignant at the efforts "to secure a monopolistic grip upon a community, and then capitalize the value of the control as a basis for unreasonable exactions." These are not platitudes. They are obviously carefully framed expressions of intelligent conviction.

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But confidence in the democratic purposes of the man who utters and evidently feels these sentiments is a very different thing from confidence in his ability, with his political and business entanglements, to give them practical application. That he cannot succeed by the means he proposes is demonstrable. No extension of "governmental regulation," no possible "supervision" of public service in private hands, can prevent the capitalization and exploitation of the money-making power which that privilege confers. So long as great aggregations of private capital are arrayed in interest against public rights, just so long will the channels of governmental "regulation" and "supervision" be corrupted. The public service never has been and never can be faithfully managed as a business speculation. The only remedy for the evils to which Mr. Hughes alludes, the only method of regulation of the politico-economic principle to which he so distinctly points, is not public regulation and supervision of private management of public services. It is public owner-

ship and management of all public functions. Public duties must be separated from private speculation. The public service must be divorced from private business.

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But this is a remedy and method to which Mr. Hughes cannot resort. It would end his political career, for it would involve disruption with his party. It would ruin him professionally, for he would be rated as a public ownership "crank," and the great business interests want nothing to do with lawyers who are rated as cranks in public affairs. It would make him a traitor to the "business" class, and treason to that class is the deadliest sin that any man can commit who has ever stood in the ranks of the rich. It is a crime which is now and then though all too seldom committed; but when it is committed, the penalty falls so swiftly, so viciously, so unerringly, so remorselessly, that few who witness its infliction upon others care to challenge it for themselves. Strange enough would it be were Mr. Hughes to commit this treason and defy these penalties.

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MR. ROOT'S SPEECH ON IMPERIAL POWER.

The speech of Secretary Root last week at the banquet of the Pennsylvania Society of New York, impresses us as one of the most important public utterances of a generation. Whether Mr. Root appreciated its importance at the time may indeed be questioned. Possibly he was actuated by no other motive than the desire to make a statesmanlike speech on an occasion when such speeches are expected of men in his official station. More probably, however, he had in mind a definite purpose with reference to American politics—either the broad politics of far-seeing statesmanship, or the partisan politics of the moment. It was possibly to both. For Mr. Root is a man of great political astuteness, of transcendent ability in statesmanship, and of a cold and calculating indifference to anything but the accomplishment of his purposes.

In political principle a Hamiltonian, honest and honorable in personal motive but aristocratically incredulous and intolerant of Jeffersonian ideals, he may reasonably be supposed to have conceived a definite plan for still further realizing Hamilton's dream of a powerful American empire, and taken advantage of this occasion to put his plan in action.

Or, confronted on the one hand by a clamorous

democratic "mob," and on the other with the aggressions of plutocratic interests, his aristocratic instincts may have been excited, as Hamilton's were in his day, and as the aristocratic instinct always is in similar circumstances, to the point of throwing down the gage of battle to both. In frankly raising anew the standards of strong government, centralized and imperial, he may have been actuated only by the Hamiltonian impulse in the face of a double danger to the Hamiltonian ideal.

Or, it may be that his only conscious purpose, assuming his purpose to have been definite at all, was to shape the partisan issues for 1908 in such manner as to strengthen the Republican and weaken the Democratic party, by forcing the Democratic party into the defense of a defenseless position.

If the latter was Mr. Root's purpose, the first signs of its success must have almost thrilled even his unthrillable nature.

Before the words in which he described the obliteration of State lines and the nationalization of the police power had passed beyond the walls of the banqueting room, they were vehemently resented by two of the three or four best known leaders of plutocracy. J. Pierpont Morgan and Mr. Baer, guests at the banquet, vigorously protested against this assault upon the reserved rights of the States. And as the days went by, similar outcries rose from similar sources, the name of John E. Parsons being prominent among the men reported as having promptly announced unalterable hostility to this latest menace to the doctrine of State rights.

Mr. Parsons opposes Mr. Root in the double capacity of a special pleader for plutocracy and a traditional Democrat of the State rights school. The legal midwife of the sugar trust, he has long held a place of confidential responsibility in the councils of plutocracy. A traditional Democrat whose enthusiasms date back to the middle of the last century, he speaks in terms familiar and attractive to the survivors of that generation of men who spoke for State rights because they stood for human slavery. Democrats like Mr. Parsons are serving admirably as the ligament for uniting that pair of political Siamese twins—plutocracy and State sovereignty—to which it may be that Mr. Root has planned to turn over the Democratic party for 1908.

Should this combination be effected, not only will the Democratic party be defeated, but still

another landmark on the road to unrestricted and irresponsible imperialism will have been set up.

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Let no Democrat imagine that the old doctrine of State rights is any longer a power to conjure with in American politics. The Democratic party will fare far better if it acts upon Mr. Root's speech as an admonitory warning than if it accepts it as a gage of battle. And all the more important is it that the party should regard it as a warning and avoid a battle upon it, when the fact is considered that this speech has aroused the hostility of the great leaders of plutocracy. These are friendships which the Democratic party can best afford to forego.

Once before in the history of this country the vital democratic principle of home rule was burdened with the deadening despotic principle of human slavery. The home rule principle was then represented by the policy of State sovereignty. But the object of that policy was the perpetuation of chattel slavery, and the policy and its object went down together in a deluge of blood. While slavery was abolished, the policy of State rights was forever discredited, and the foundations of imperialism were firmly laid. It seems improbable that even the genius of Mr. Root can make political history repeat itself in this respect. Yet he seems to have made a fair start, for has he not set the plutocrats at work mouthing State rights platitudes?

Between plutocracy and chattel slavery the difference is only of form. Chattel slavery is personal: the masters know their slaves, the slaves know their masters; the labor of the slave impoverishes himself to enrich his master, and the slave works at the audible crack of a visible lash. Plutocracy is impersonal: the masters do not know their slaves, the slaves do not know their masters; but useful and honest work impoverishes the worker to enrich the plutocrat, and the worker works at the inaudible crack of an invisible but none the less stinging lash.

The coupling of plutocracy with State rights in politics now, would therefore be the same thing in principle as the union of slaveocracy with State rights fifty years ago. And it would result as disastrously to the principle of home rule, of which, after all, the policy of State rights is but an accidental and very inadequate representative.

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State lines were originally determined only by arbitrary grants of land for colonization. As home boundaries they were never much more than

arbitrary. The element of distinctive homogeneity of population was indeed present in the earlier days, but even then the distinction was largely artificial. When new States were created, that element was still less prominent. And whatever of business and social distinctiveness State lines may once have marked off, was destroyed in principle when the Constitution decreed inter-State free trade. It was destroyed in fact when railroad systems, crossing State lines without tariff obstructions, made the internal commerce and associations of our people national instead of inter-State. To this assimilation of business and social commerce in consequence of rapid communication under conditions of free trade, the outcome of the Civil War added political assimilation by subordinating State governments to the national government.

Although the nationalizing effects of these causes were not immediate, the evolution has been so pronounced that it is now plainly visible to any one who has lived and intelligently observed for a generation. The Constitution has in the process been slightly amended but strongly construed against State rights and for centralization; the national army has with impunity invaded States to suppress local disorder in times of national peace, as in Illinois under Cleveland's administration, and distant lands for conquest as in the Philippines under McKinley's. The march from federated republicanism toward centralized imperialism has been as obvious in the United States to contemporary observers as it was in Rome to the apprehension of later historians.

So obvious has it now become that Mr. Root seizes upon the fact, and boldly proclaims the very imperialism which he and his associates of less than ten years ago denied the possibility of, even while they themselves were completing its foundations.

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Mr. Root speaks the solemn truth when he says that State lines are no longer visible. He speaks as truly when he says that the people are looking no longer to State legislatures but to the national Congress for remedial police-power legislation. He prophesies with unerring vision when he predicts a still further decrease of State power relatively to national power. And he admonishes wisely, whether as political friend or political foe, when he warns the advocates of State rights of the uselessness of inveighing against national supremacy over the States. The principle of imperialism has been growing, and now the empire is proclaimed by its builders to be here.

It is indeed useless to pit the doctrine of State rights against the fact of nationalized power. It is useless because nationalized power is an accomplished fact; and it is useless because the States no longer represent, if ever they did, the vital democratic principle of home rule.

But the irrepressible conflict between home rule and imperial power is not over. The States, as States, with their arbitrary boundaries and indistinguishable interests, may have little or no practical existence; but municipalities have sprung up with interests of their own, local and distinguishable; and their autonomy must be fought for and established. Here is the point about which the conflict between home rule and centralized power—be the centralized power in the State, as seems no longer probable, or in the nation as it seems to many of us besides Mr. Root is already a fact,—will hereafter oscillate.

Our municipalities are only in a limited and very insignificant sense, arbitrary political divisions. They are distinctly homogeneous in population and localized in business and social interests. As the individual man looks from the center of his own consciousness and his own interests out upon the world with which his consciousness and his interests are related, so do those centers of population that we call municipalities. As he has individual rights and duties respecting which he must be left in freedom, so the municipality has local rights and duties respecting which it must be left in freedom. The municipality is the natural social unit. Whether in its external relations it be protected and governed by State legislatures or by Congress, is in itself of minor concern. The one thing needful is that it shall not be protected or governed by any superior power in such manner as to destroy self-government respecting its own affairs.

A free national government for national affairs, free local governments for local affairs, and freedom for the individual,—this is the democratic concept. It is opposed to Mr. Root's aristocratic concept of "good government" of the mass by a superior class. It is opposed to the plutocratic concept of exploitation of the mass by a greedy and cunning class. It may therefore hope for little that is really good from either. But those who believe in it should have the acuteness to read Mr. Root's speech aright between the lines. And they should have the political sanity to shun an alliance with plutocrats who demand State rights, not because they believe in local self-government, but because State rights is to them what it was to

the slave oligarchy half a century ago—a base for aggression and a fortress of defense.

NEWS NARRATIVE

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 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 Wednesday, Dec. 19, 1906.

The Single Tax in Scotland.

In Great Britain a parliamentary committee has just reported favorably on a measure for the introduction of the single tax in the municipalities of Scotland (pp. 60, 367, 491). As has been heretofore reported in these columns, one of the leading issues in the parliamentary elections (vol. viii, p. 748) was the question of land values taxation. Although an overwhelming majority elected to the House of Commons was pledged to measures for the taxation of land values generally, other measures, notably the education bill, have so engrossed the time and energies of Parliament that no Ministerial bill on land values taxation has yet been introduced. But a municipal bill for Scotland, substantially the same as that which has been several times introduced and voted on (vol. viii, p. 72), has been put forward by private members speaking for Scottish municipalities. This bill was brought to the attention of the Ministry on the 26th of last February by a Parliamentary deputation (vol. viii, p. 838), and on that occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in asking for time, said:

I suppose we are all agreed that, as a preliminary step, there should be a separate assessment (valuation) of site (land) values. . . . We (the Ministry) desire to have time to carefully consider the best way of giving effect to the principles I have enunciated. . . . I believe we shall arrive at a more satisfactory and more permanent result if we allow ourselves a little time and patience for the consideration of this problem, than if we were to introduce a comparatively small and piecemeal instalment of the reform we all desire.

This was understood to mean that the Ministry could not see their way clear to dealing with the question at the first session. The Municipal Councils, however, were not satisfied, and the Scottish bill was brought in on one of the days set apart for the introduction of bills by private members. On the 23rd of March it was carried on second reading by a majority of 258. By prolonging discussion the opposition had so far blocked it as to prevent its going to committee in regular order, something that could not have happened to a Ministerial bill; but the Ministry at once appointed a select committee, with the Solicitor General for Scotland as chairman, and this committee has been taking evidence at intervals ever since. It reported last week, and as we

are advised by cable the report is extremely favorable.

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A principal defect of the bill, from the single tax point of view, is said to be its limitation to municipal taxation. But this defect is only academic. It was necessitated, moreover, by the fact that only the Municipal Councils could be induced to act in concert, the County Councils being largely under the control of territorial landlords, and some even of the Liberal members of Parliament refusing to vote for the taxation of rural land values. The passage of the bill by so large a majority on second reading is reported to have fairly roused the landed classes of Scotland. They have organized and are spending thousands of dollars to discredit it. Several Scottish dukes and other great landlords are among the financial supporters of this organization, which describes its purpose to be the turning of "the question out of the arena of practical politics." The five railway companies of Scotland joined the landlords and sent the manager of the North British Railway Company to the select committee to testify against the bill. The Church of Scotland, also, engaged in the agitation on the side of the landlords. Of course this agitation has reacted upon public sentiment favorably to the reform.

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British Politics

The education bill (p. 372) continues to be the especial subject of contention between the two Houses of Parliament. On the 13th the Commons were reported as having rejected at midnight, after an all day debate, the amendments of the Lords by a vote of 416 to 107. The final scene is said to have been one of intense excitement. Nevertheless when the bill reached the Lords again on the 17th, the Earl of Crewe, Lord President of the Council, announced that though the Government was not prepared to sacrifice the main principles of the bill, concessions of a substantial character would be made. It is now thought that the bill can be saved.

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As already stated in these columns (p. 752), the London County Council elections, to be held next March, are of great significance. The Moderates, or Municipal Reformers, who represent the private utility companies, and whose victories at the recent Borough elections were widely heralded as indicating a reactionary municipal movement, were at that time announced as intending to work hard to secure at the County Council elections next March the election of Councillors pledged to oppose the program of the present Progressive Council, which includes a municipally owned electric supply for all London. The Progressives include also in their program the taxation of land values as a measure of rate relief. The Progressive campaign opened with a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at Holborn Town Hall on the 7th. The London Tribune of the 8th warns against the monopoly menaces of the Moderates, and asserts its belief that now the great opportunity of the Progressives has come:

To-day, with a Government in power which is anxious only to second its efforts, and a contingent in the House of Commons which at last represents progressive Lon-