

The Public

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EDITORIAL

Business is business.

Marshall Field, the Chicago millionaire, announces his conviction that municipal ownership is an ephemeral fad which will soon give way to the business man's ideal of private ownership. Where some of a man's treasure is, there also are some of his civic convictions.

Bribing newspapers.

In probing the legal expense ac-

count of the Mutual Life, Mr. Hughes has unearthed documentary evidence of the payment of money by the officers of that company to a newspaper correspondent for "services." If a general "show down" of evidence of this character were possible, there would doubtless be a better understanding of the editorial policy of more than one highly respectable newspaper; and some huge grafting schemes of the business type which are now in process of journalistic lubrication, might encounter unexpected friction.

The Chicago parks job.

Confused by the similarity of names and political characteristics of two Chicago politicians, we fell into the error of fact two weeks ago (p. 419) of attributing to Milton J. Foreman, of the City Council of Chicago, a piece of political jobbery which should have been attributed to Henry G. Foreman, recently president of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County. This error, however, does not affect the substance of our comment on that job otherwise than in the substitution of one Foreman for another. The park system referendum, now before the people of Chicago, calls for an adverse vote; not because there is an objection to the proposed system of parks, but because the present plan would saddle the city with another State House ring.

Franklin K. Lane for Interstate Commerce commissioner.

It is reported from Washington that the President has offered Franklin K. Lane the place on the Inter-State Commerce Commission which Gov. Fifer is to vacate at the beginning of the year. Lane is the radical Democrat who came within 2,500 of carrying California for governor (vol. v, pp. 345, 483, 724) when his party lost the State by pluralities varying from 20,000 to 60,000. No better appointment could be made. Not only is Lane a fundamental Demo-

crat, but he is a strong, broad, acutely intelligent and incorruptible man, who understands railroad grafting to its bottom principle. The fact that his appointment would give the majority of the commission to the Democrats should count as evidence of Roosevelt's good faith in his railroad policy.

Norway and republicanism.

Press dispatches have appeared in many papers alleging that Norway does not desire a republic. You may see such headings as this: The Movement in Norway Meeting with No Support. But if you will read through the dispatch, you will find as follows: "The commercial and industrial interests appear to desire no disturbance of the existing order of things. At an important meeting at Christiania of representatives of the commercial and shipping interests it was unanimously resolved to present an address to the Storting declaring that the submission of the question of a change in the constitution to a plebiscite would greatly injure the country's economic interests." What is the real meaning of this? Simply that a set of men, the saviors of society, the everlasting conservatives—who claim to represent the industrial interests of the country, but who represent only their own profits and dividends—are afraid to submit the question to a referendum vote of the people. It is an old story.

The New York campaign.

From present appearances the municipal campaign in New York will culminate in the reelection of Mayor McClellan. This is to be regretted. Although Mr. McClellan has within him the possibilities of democratic leadership, his democratic impulses have found little or no expression outside of a venture or two in literature. As a public man he has been and still is absolutely under the dominion of parasitical private interests. On more than one occasion his fealty to those interests has been

disclosed by his official acts, and his greatest strength at the coming election, apart from purblind partisanship, will be the support they are giving him. Through Mr. Murphy, the Tammany leader to whom Mayor McClellan is as obedient as a dog to his master, these interests are assured protection and further plunder. Tammany Hall, which, under the Murphy-McClellan regime is reported to have turned away from protecting and fattening upon vulgar vice, has become to the franchise grabber what it was aforetime to dens and dives. Though the lid be on in the "red light district," it is off in the prowling places of the great business grafter.

That the Republican machine is in sympathy with this situation is evident from the nomination it has made for mayor. William M. Ivins would never have been nominated by the Republicans except for a sacrifice in a losing fight in aid of Tammany Hall and the combine of great business grafters. To read Mr. Ivins's speech of acceptance is to see that an administration which he dominated would strike with panic all those business interests that are generally under Republican guardianship and which control or are allied with those that do control private ownership of public property. That this is so may be inferred from the way in which his nomination impresses the Chicago Record-Herald, which cautiously but truly said of it on the 15th that—

those who are familiar with Mr. Ivins's reform affiliations and activities in the past will find his present position on municipal issues natural and consistent. He has not only declared for municipal acquisition of every lapsed or forfeited franchise, and the relentless prosecution of franchise grabbers guilty of fraud, but he has avowed his belief in the general principle that "the wealth created by the community should be held in perpetuity for the benefit of the community." This broad phrase is used by single taxers and applies to land values generally, and not merely to franchises. Mr. Ivins may still be a disciple of George, a social radical. That he

is the candidate of the Republican party of conservative New York is certainly a remarkable circumstance.

But a heavy vote for Ivins, as the Republican candidate, would doubtless be, in spite of his ringing declaration, less effective against the franchise-grabbing interests of New York and elsewhere, than such a vote for Hearst. For Hearst's nomination sprang from sources and is supported by influences which depend upon no official for their persistence. Such a vote for Ivins would not be significant; for Hearst it would be significant. It is not lightly that we say this. We realize as keenly as anyone the embarrassments of trying to rally to Hearst's support the truly democratic influences in New York. When it is remembered that after helping to foster the movement which nominated Henry George eight years ago, his paper not only abandoned that movement and turned to the support of Tammany Hall, but also opened its columns for abusive attacks upon George personally, it is impossible to expect undampened enthusiasm for Hearst's candidacy. The record of his San Francisco paper in serving the railroad ring by defeating Franklin K. Lane, a democratic-Democrat, for governor of California, is not calculated to add to his genuinely democratic strength. His favorable attitude toward imperialism, his leaning toward protectionism, his desire for a big navy, all manifested editorially in his papers, will be a handicap. The bad character of his papers in some respects will be another handicap, notwithstanding their good character in others. His confirmed policy of making his papers so largely a medium for the fulsome advertising of his own personal vanities and political ambitions, cannot but operate as a check upon many who sympathize with the movement his candidacy represents. His linking with his own personality of every popular cause his papers advocate—as a condition at times, almost if not quite, of

their advocacy—must inevitably burden the movement with suspicions of the sincerity of its leader. But after these and all other adverse considerations are given full weight, a controlling fact remains which counts the other way. Hearst's papers in New York and Chicago have made possible such political victories as have thus far been won over plutocracy in those cities. But for Hearst's papers the Chicago referendums would have been impossible, and the traction companies would already have owned the streets practically in perpetuity. But for Hearst's papers there would be no such sentiment as now exists, both in Chicago and New York, in favor of municipal ownership—a sentiment so strong that all parties in both cities are obliged to profess belief in it, and no candidate of any party dare oppose it except in ways that are dark and by tricks that we trust may be vain. In view of this record of service to the public interest and of the political situation in New York, where Mr. Hearst is the spontaneously chosen candidate of the municipal ownership movement, much of the past should be overlooked and forgotten for the sake of what is now involved. A large vote for Hearst means added strength to the movement for municipal ownership, in Chicago as well as in New York; a small vote for him would have a tendency to check that movement in both cities. By his vote, and only by his vote, will the public opinion of New York be gauged for perhaps four years to come, on the subject of municipal ownership of municipal utilities. For this reason alone it is important that he should have the support of every voter who believes in that policy.

Lining up Chicago aldermen.

Mayor Dunne has now succeeded in making a fairly complete segregation (p. 433) of aldermanic goats on the traction question. Some goats may yet be herding on the hither side of the line, and there may still be one or two strays