

it at all points where they have delivery service." If Senator Platt had really meant what he is here reported as having said, he would have ended the Chicago strike two weeks ago, by taking back the express drivers who had struck, and thereby reestablishing the effectiveness of the express service. In consequence of his action in that respect the express service into Chicago has been slower than the freight service, as any business man who has had occasion to use it could testify. The circumstances make it very clear that Senator Platt's reason for refusing to end the Chicago strike did not spring from any strong sense of public obligation, but rather from that peculiar sense of honor which makes certain classes of persons true to one another. He refused to end the strike because he was the head center of a blacklist agreement against express employers, and possibly because he represented persons whose interests and desires were to be served by a continuance of the strike.

It would be somewhat remarkable if the express companies had any such sense of public obligation as Senator Platt describes. They violate their legal duty and ignore their moral obligations to the public every day in the calendar. What are these express companies but unlawful combinations, operating under unlawful secret agreements with railroad companies? Senator Platt has much to say about the duty of express companies as to transportation, but nothing as to charges for transportation. He appears to be unconscious of any obligation, legal or moral, in that respect; and the charges these companies make for service go far to show that they acknowledge no such obligations. Although they do an inter-State business they manage to evade the law; and through influences, which are perhaps more obvious than evident, they escape the jurisdiction of the Inter-State Commerce Commission. If the lawlessness of the ex-

press and railroad combine were translated into terms of violence, the whole history of trades unionism would not furnish violence enough to match it.

One probable result of the part the express companies have played in the Chicago teamsters' strike is an overwhelming demand upon Congress for a parcels post. By means which would doubtless be exceedingly ugly if translated into terms of violence, the express companies have thus far been able to hold Congress in leash on the parcels post subject. But this postal reform cannot be much longer delayed. Other countries have it, and our own has it, through treaties, to some extent. For instance, last week a package weighing eleven pounds was mailed from Chicago to New Zealand by parcels post, at a cost of \$1.35. To have sent the same goods by mail to any post office in the United States, near or far, they must have been broken into three packages, and the postage would have been \$1.76—44 cents more than to New Zealand. This is no doubt a profitable thing for the combine of express companies; it protects them in their business. But it is decidedly unprofitable for the people, whose very obedient servants Senator Platt says these companies consider themselves to be. There is no reason why the express monopoly, a parasite of the railroad monopoly, should not be broken down and broken up, by establishing a parcels post; and the time and circumstances are now propitious. If the agitation is kept up one year longer, every candidate for Congress can be compelled to choose on this question either for the express companies or against them, so that the parcels post, if it cannot be secured from the present Congress, can be secured from the next one.

A typical argument against municipal ownership of public utilities recently made by the Cleveland Plain Dealer was promptly punctured by Edward

W. Bemis, the head of the Cleveland water bureau. Much had been made by the Plain Dealer of the usual objections to the zone system of fares in Great Britain, and to this Mr. Bemis replied: "The zone system in the English cities is as much characteristic of the privately operated roads, as of the others, and it started with the private roads. Under municipal operation these zones have been extended in size and in at least one city, Liverpool, the municipality has gone far toward the entire abolition of the system by establishing a uniform 2-cent fare within the city limits." The Plain Dealer's punctured argument in this respect was like the whole range of arguments which rest upon the statements that private street car systems in this country are better managed than municipal street car systems abroad. Even if the statement were true, the legitimate comparison is not between municipal street car systems abroad and private systems here; it is between municipal systems abroad and private systems there. This comparison is never urged in the interest of the private system. The reason is evident to all who have made the comparison.

Another of the Plain Dealer's arguments against municipal ownership in the United States was the familiar one that the general character of municipal government is better in Great Britain than it is here. Upon this assumption the inference is urged that the success of municipal ownership there, under their good municipal governments, does not prove that it would be successful here, under our corrupt municipal governments. Mr. Bemis's reply is unanswerable: "If the British municipal governments are able to operate their own public utilities better than our own, they are also able to make more honest and intelligent contracts with private ownership, and yet they prefer public management. To deal honestly and intelligently with private management is a harder

strain upon a city government than to manage directly a natural monopoly. Contrast the difficulties the City Council has with the waterworks on the one hand in Cleveland, and with the lighting and street railway question on the other hand; yet there is as much structural value in the waterworks as in either the street railways or the lighting companies." The same comparison between water supply and traction service holds good also in Chicago.

Mr. Bemis concludes his reply to the Plain Dealer with these pregnant remarks: "I learned in my visits to English cities that municipal ownership has done much to improve the character of English city governments." That is a result which should be expected everywhere. When a private business depends upon favors from public officials, its owners are under a constant temptation to influence those favors—by corruption if necessary. Honest municipal government is impossible anywhere so long as private interests can capitalize the profitable possibilities of performing public functions. We are too apt to think of an office holder who plunders the people by virtue of his office as different from a corporation that plunders the people by virtue of its franchise. Both are grafters, and the corporation is the worse grafter of the two.

The progressive tendency of public opinion toward greater wholesomeness with reference to public utilities was illustrated by the Nashville (Tenn.) Banner of the 16th of May, in an editorial reply to a question of the Nashville American. The American had asked: "Did the Banner advocate the million dollar subsidy?" and the Banner pungently replied: "It did not. The Banner believed that instead of lending its credit and issuing a million dollars of bonds to a syndicate to build a road to be owned and controlled by the syndicate, it should have taken the million dollars and built its own railroad, and forever

owned and controlled it; and it believes to-day that if this advice had been followed the city of Nashville, with its million dollars as a nucleus, would ere now have had a completed railroad all the way to the Mississippi river and commanded a position that would have enabled it to be forever independent of railway monopoly."

A similar tendency is every here and there evident in the declarations of our public men. Witness the following from the address on the 25th of S. S. Gregory as president of the Illinois State Bar Association: "An effort was made at the last session of the legislature to secure some provision for the municipal ownership of lighting plants. I think it was a mistake not to provide for this. Municipal ownership is an evolution in modern municipal government. It is the only practical solution of the difficulties which seem to attend upon securing for the public adequate service in such matters at reasonable cost. Another result thus attained would be to check the great temptation to official corruption which must always exist when valuable franchises can be obtained."

Mr. Gregory's Bar Association address was significant in still other respects. He spoke very pointedly against government by injunction, urging the true ground of objection to this dangerous judicial innovation, namely, that it deprives men accused of crime of the right to jury trial. On the subject of taxation, while the reforms Mr. Gregory urged were somewhat discursive and not all of them economically defensible, yet they were all inspired by a democratic spirit, and one of them, the land value tax, is sound and includes all that is good in the others. "I believe," he said, "that the time has come to recast our entire revenue system upon a scientific basis. Personally I regard all taxation of personal property as futile and unjust and tending to unjust discrimination

as between taxpayers. I believe that taxes on land values and franchises, graduated income taxes, and a materially increased legacy and succession tax, would furnish the revenue required for local and State purposes and distribute the burden much more equally and equitably than it is now distributed."

The general spirit of Mr. Gregory's address was indicated by his vivid picture of present conditions and the trend of public opinion away from plutocracy. In this connection he said: "The popular mind is now turning to the idea that, in some way, the control of government has passed largely into the hands of the favored few. The great popular movement to restore government to the hands of the people is well under way. It is illustrated in the popularity of the referendum, in the general demand that United States Senators shall be chosen by the popular vote, in the effort of municipalities to take over utilities operating within their territory, and the general protest against the attempt of a little oligarchy of men in the Senate of the United States whose aims are low, sordid and selfish, whose characters for integrity and patriotism are not above suspicion, whose conceptions of public duty are mean and small, and whose abilities as statesmen by no means warrant the authority to which they aspire on every occasion to thwart the popular will and to seek to protect great interests with which, in some manner not altogether mysterious, they seemed to be allied." To appreciate the full significance of Mr. Gregory's invigorating address it must be known that he was no accidental president of a State Bar association. He came to that position for the best of professional reasons—because he is in reality in the front rank at the Illinois bar.

An exceedingly significant report has been made by the United States consul general at Auck-