

The Public

LOUIS F. POST, Editor

ALICE THACHER POST, Managing Editor

Vol. IX.

Number 441.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1906.

CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL:

The Labor Vote in Maine	553
Works of Art Tariff Free	553
Bryan's Scourge of the Sullivanites	553
Getting Rich Out of Politics	553
Bryan and Government Ownership of Railroads.....	554
President Roosevelt's Idea of Great Wealth.....	555
The Problem of Ownership	555
Personal Property Taxation in Illinois	555
Conflicting Capitalizations	555
Agricultural Prosperity	556
"The Laboring Man's Prosperity"	557

NEWS NARRATIVE:

The Maine Election	558
New York Politics	558
Sullivan's Reply to Bryan	559
The Cuban Insurrection	559
Another Massacre in Russia	560
News Notes	560
Press Opinions	561

RELATED THINGS:

A Birthday Retrospect (Catlin)	562
Cheap Dwellings of Concrete	562
An Untaught Child	563
A Single Tax Argument	563
"A Private Monopoly Is Indefensible and Intolerable".....	563
Hymn to Diana	564
"The Moon Takes Up the Wondrous Tale".....	564
Woman Suffrage	564
Politics	565
San Francisco's Greatest Obstacle to Rehabilitation.....	565

SERIAL:

The Confessions of a Monopolist (Howe).....	567
---	-----

BOOKS:

Sonnets and Lyrics	572
An Economic Story	573
An Old Story of the Future	574
Books Received	575
Pamphlets	575

CARTOON:

Shearing Time	574
---------------------	-----

EDITORIAL

The Labor Vote in Maine.

It makes little difference that Congressman Littlefield of Maine has been re-elected in spite of the opposition of organized labor. The important thing is that in a rock-bound Republican district where he was elected two years ago by 5,419 plurality, he slips in this year with a plurality of only 1,100. Samuel Gompers has more reason than Congressman Littlefield to rejoice over that result. So have the people of the whole country, for it implies that the plutocratic fortresses are crumbling.

Works of Art Tariff Free.

A strong movement has begun in the East for the exemption from tariff duties of works of art imported from abroad. It is a good movement—one to which it is difficult to conceive of any opposition except from American artists who may wish to narrow their field of competition by protective legislation instead of their own artistic talent.

* *

Bryan's Scourge of the Sullivanites.

In flaying Roger Sullivan at the Jefferson Club dinner at Chicago Mr. Bryan took occasion to lay down a general principle regarding the relations of franchise grabbers to politics. He said: "I hold that no man who is officially connected with a corporation seeking privileges ought to act as an officer of a political organization." Those are plain words and ought easily to be understood. Yet they have been misinterpreted so as to make them seem to imply that persons engaged in large enterprises are not fit for public trust. Mr. Bryan neither said nor meant anything of the kind. His speech was exceedingly explicit and his meaning clear. He appealed simply to the old, old doctrine that no one can serve two masters. Any man "officially connected with a corporation seeking privileges," who is also an officer of a political organization, will either neglect his corporation or betray his political organization; and men of the Sullivan type, who make fortunes out of politics, do not neglect their corporations. Sullivan's insolent reply to Bryan needs no further comment than that a born Democrat, as he claims to be, is at best only an antique Democrat; and that the source of his fortune is significant enough when the fact is known that he has made it all out of public franchises controlled by politics.

* *

Getting Rich Out of Politics.

The most brazenly impudent part of Roger C. Sullivan's insolent reply to Bryan's condemnation of him and his ilk as political highwaymen, is that in which he puts himself on a moral level with Bryan because Bryan as well as himself, he says, has made money out of politics. This specimen of Sullivanic impudence is conclusively answered by the Peoria Star, one of the best independent Republican dailies of the West, which gives withal certain inside facts relating to Sullivan.

Accounting for the money that Bryan has made "out of politics," the Star states what no one needs to be more than reminded of to recognize as fair and true:

Mr. Bryan, it is true, had acquired no great amount of money either as a lawyer or as an editor, until he was suddenly thrust forward into the limelight in 1896 and became the candidate of the Democratic party, because he stood for principles which that party held dear. He was called upon to defend his position; and, as was said of Him of old, "The people heard him gladly." He gave them a full return for their money. Subsequently, on the platform, he was in demand for his eloquence, for his enunciation of the truth as it appeared to him. He plundered no man, he sought no franchise, he defrauded no municipality, he compelled no man to listen to him. The work of a platform lecturer is one of the most onerous that ever human being engaged in. It is exhausting, wearisome, and it requires a high order of ability and tremendous physical powers to continue to meet its exactions. Mr. Bryan has, in the ten years since his first nomination, amassed a modest competence. He runs a weekly paper which gives him a fair return for his efforts. He has been in the limelight for a decade, and in that time no suspicion of graft has clung to him.

*

Turning now from Bryan to Sullivan, the Star contrasts the former's honest and honorable acquisition of a competence through faithfully serving his party by propagating its principles, with Sullivan's acquisition of a gigantic fortune by using his party organization as a lever to pry money out of the people. Examining Sullivan's pluto-political career, the Star says:

About the time that Mr. Bryan was standing forth as the exponent of Democratic principles, Mayor Hopkins was presiding over the destinies of Chicago. Roger Sullivan was his right hand man. They used to hang around a restaurant on Monroe street. Through the efforts of Hopkins, Sullivan procured a franchise for the Cosmopolitan Electric Company. He came down to Peoria and bought two second-hand dynamos and established a fake system in an old, abandoned elevator on the Chicago & Alton tracks. He attempted to sell the franchise to the Chicago Edison Company, of which Samuel Insull was then and is now president. He wanted \$1,500,000 for the franchise, it is said, but as it was a fake proposition and had no basis to go on, the deal fell through. Then Sullivan procured through his friend Hopkins an additional franchise, known to fame as "the Ogdan gas franchise," and after some negotiations, they sold it to the Siemens-Halske Company, controlled by the Elkins-Widener Company of Philadelphia. The price which they got was between \$5,000,000 and \$7,000,000, and Sullivan was made president of the company as an additional reward for his efforts. W. H. Schott, who is now drawing plans for the insane asylum at Bartonville, was the electrical engineer that had in charge the old original fake company. This is the history of Roger Sullivan's exploits. It

was as a ward politician, pure and simple, that he laid his plans to secure a valuable franchise from the city of Chicago. It was because of his relations with Mayor Hopkins that he obtained these franchises. He claims that he was actuated only with a desire to give the people of Chicago cheap gas, but this claim is evidently false. He wanted a special privilege to sell, he obtained it and he sold it, and now he has the impudence to appear before the American people and claim that he stands upon the same footing with William Jennings Bryan, in the fact that both of them have made money out of politics. The claim is preposterous. William Jennings Bryan was called by the people to expound the principles of free government as handed down by our fathers. They gave him their half dollar per head and felt well repaid for the outlay. They were free to come or stay away as they wished. Roger Sullivan obtained a special privilege, because he was an intimate friend of the mayor and was a ward boss. He and his friend Hopkins are reputed to be worth \$2,000,000 each as the result of this deal. They represent all that is corrupt and corrupting in American politics to-day.

The Peoria Star, which makes itself responsible for the foregoing statement regarding Sullivan, is a paper that has made good its accusations before, and no one familiar with Sullivan's career will doubt its ability to do so in this case. But Sullivan is only a type.

* *

Bryan and Government Ownership of Railroads.

That Senator Bailey of Texas, Congressman Williams of Mississippi, and other Democratic leaders from the South should decry Bryan's declaration for government ownership of railroads, is to be expected. No Republican at the North is more completely the docile instrument of monopolistic interests than are most Southern statesmen. It is an incubus that the people of the South are beginning to shake off, as is evidenced by the victory of Hoke Smith at the Democratic primaries in Georgia; but if Tillman were left out it would be hard to cast a stone at any group of Southern statesmen in Washington without hitting a railroad employe. If Bryan's declaration does no more than to jar loose from the Democratic party the parasitical statesmen of the South, it will have done much.

*

Among the Southern editors who oppose Bryan's ownership proposition, and most Southern papers as well as most Southern statesmen are on railroad pay rolls, is Henry Watterson of the Louisville Courier-Journal. He makes an extended argument against Bryan's proposition. But after giving Watterson full credit for Democratic sincerity in denouncing the centralization possi-

bilities that may be involved in Bryan's idea, the fact remains that if the government doesn't acquire the railroads the railroads will soon own the government. This is the issue that Bryan has raised.

* *

President Roosevelt's Idea of Great Wealth.

In a church at Oyster Bay last week, President Roosevelt rebuked a clergyman for having advised the audience to disregard wealth. What a pity it is that Mr. Roosevelt was so far away from Palestine when the rich were admonished that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven. The New Testament might have read differently. According to Mr. Roosevelt, "the multi-millionaire is not a harm but a good to the community, if he appreciates that he is only a trustee for that wealth and he uses it for the cause of goodness." Apparently it makes no difference how the wealth comes, nor who is plundered and oppressed by its appropriation by the multi-millionaire, provided only that the appropriator hold it in trust and use it for good. Jonathan Wild, so it is said, had the same idea before Mr. Roosevelt adopted it. Wild, who robbed travelers of their money until he got hanged, appreciated his trusteeship and used his loot liberally for the relief of the poor.

* *

The Problem of Ownership.

"All human ownership," writes Dr. Parkhurst in *Munsey's* for September, "begins in a grab, in assuming that to be ours which is not ours; and continues as long as we can maintain the assumption successfully." There is so much of truth in this statement that Dr. Parkhurst's looseness of thought in regarding it as wholly true is to be deplored. It is obviously true of ownership of slaves, now that slavery is abolished; it would be as obviously true of ownership of land, if prevailing customs did not blur our moral perceptions in that respect as once they did regarding slavery; and it is evidently true of ownership of artificial things procured merely through the exertion of power or cunning whether legalized power or the power of the highwayman, whether legalized cunning or the cunning of the forger, the sneak thief or the confidence man. But it is not true of "all human ownership." The ownership of artificial things by the artificer or his honest assignee or donee does not begin in grab. There is a profound moral difference between ownership under voluntary title from the producer, and ownership under a coerced title.

Personal Property Taxation in Illinois.

A very material increase in assessments in Cook County, Illinois, has been made by the Board of Review, thanks to the prodding of that sleepy body by Mayor Dunne's law department. But the circumstances point to the inefficiency of the Illinois taxing system and its unfairness in operation. This system contemplates a uniform assessment upon a one-fifth valuation of all personalty; but in practice it is found impossible even to approximate fairness. The total personalty assessment for the whole of Cook County, even under Mayor Dunne's pressure, amounts to only \$500,000,000, while the bank deposits in Chicago alone are said to amount to \$600,000,000. This is in harmony with all fiscal experience, namely, that personal property cannot be fairly taxed. Nor ought it to be taxed at all—property that is essentially personal and not merely legally so. Tangible personal property, on the one hand, should be invited into the community, not taxed out of it; and intangible personal property, on the other hand, consists in fact for the most part only of certificates of ownership of some form of real estate, such as railroads, mines, etc., which can be reached and fairly taxed in the places of their location.

* *

Conflicting Capitalizations.

Regarding the subject of capitalization, so important to a really intelligent use of economic statistics, we find an excellent statement in the *Chicago Record-Herald*, under the signature of Henry L. Bliss, one of the most acute and logical analytical statisticians of this country. Referring to the common statistical error of treating all property values, all capitalization, as essentially the same, Mr. Bliss mentions \$90,000,000,000 as the estimated valuation of all property in the United States, and says:

But how much of this valuation represents actual wealth, and how much is but a capitalization of special privilege? The gas company of Chicago is capitalized at almost three times the value of its tangible property, and a year ago the value of the securities of the Chicago traction companies also amounted to nearly three times the value of their tangible property. But at the present time, owing to a recent decision of the Supreme Court denying the validity of the claim of a ninety-nine-year franchise and to the action of the voters of this city against the granting of further franchises, the actual value of these securities is but little more than the value of the tangible property. Here we have a great decrease in property values without any decrease in actual wealth. Likewise by the abolition of chattel slavery in this country there was a similar destruction of property values amounting to over two billions of dollars, without any decrease in actual wealth. The