

reasons for those suspicions two facts must be noted. One is the fact that the traction-extension ring were at a critical place last week in their desperate struggle with Mayor Dunne, who is fighting them with all the power at his command. They still controlled a majority of the Council, but it was a shaky and dwindling majority. The second is the fact, in verification of which we quote the Chicago Tribune, an organ of the traction extension ring, from its issue of Chicago 23, that—

despite the adverse street railway sentiment, J. P. Morgan and a few of his friends bought control of the City Railway company at \$200 a share, or approximately \$40 a share above the market, and at a time when the situation appeared the gloomiest. Mr. Morgan and other friends bought also the Union Traction company, the most hopelessly worthless street railroad proposition here, and bought also the North and West Chicago companies, even when the attitude of the city threatened their annihilation.

Upon his arrival in Chicago, Mr. Morgan indulged in the society of Mr. Marshall Field, and these two were in close communion. Naturally, for the two men are financially birds of a feather. But Morgan's visit to Field just at this time, when the Chicago aldermen were weakening on the ring's traction-extension policy, might be expected to suggest an explanation to the over-suspicious. And suspicion was not allayed when, in the issue of the Tribune of October 28, an interview with Mr. Morgan reported him as saying, with reference to Mr. Field:

We did not talk about the traction question. It is settled.

He was reported as adding: "We were not here on traction matters at all and our visit has no significance;" but it was hard to believe that Mr. Morgan had not come on traction matters when the stock for which he had paid "\$40 a share above the market," was in imminent danger of sinking to \$40 a share below the market. So the impression gained ground that, as the Tribune reported, Mr. Morgan had settled the traction question.

Thereupon Mayor Dunne very properly wrote a letter to Mr. Morgan in which he said:

If the traction question, which interests the citizens of Chicago to the extent of over \$100,000,000, has been settled, it has been settled without the knowledge of the Mayor of this city. If it has been settled, the settlement is a surprise to the 2,000,000 people of this community, who have been under the impression that the City Council and the Mayor are now seriously engaged in considering this great question. The news of the settlement is of great importance to the people of this great community, as well as to myself. Will you kindly inform me when and where the settlement was made; who represented the traction companies and who represented the city in this settlement; how was the settlement arrived at, and what methods were used to settle it without bringing the attention of the Executive of this city to the terms of the settlement? Will you also kindly inform me what are the terms and conditions of the settlement?

And now comes Mr. Morgan's response. Replying to Mayor Dunne, he wrote:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, and to say in reply that the statement to which you refer as attributed to me in a reported interview—i. e., that "the traction question is settled"—is absolutely without foundation. I need hardly add that I fully understand that there has been no settlement between the traction companies and the city.

Mr. Morgan's denial of the interview is explicit, and in view of the reckless methods of newspaper reporting in vogue in Chicago the presumption would be in his favor if he had stopped with his explicit denial. But what does he mean by adding that there has been no settlement "between the traction companies and the city"? Why this care to state what everyone knows, that no settlement has been made with the city? Was it a thoughtless addendum, unintentionally shifting the emphasis, or has there been a settlement—not between the traction companies and the city, but between the traction companies and the city's bosses? There may be no significance to the fact, but it is a

fact, that in less than a week after Mr. Morgan was reported as saying, "the traction question is settled," the traction-extension ring rallied enough aldermen to come within one vote of two-thirds of the Council on a test question.

Practicability of municipal ownership.

It will be remembered that Mr. Morgan's friend, Mr. Marshall Field, after a pleasure trip abroad, reported adversely (p. 449) on the practicability of municipal ownership in the United States. While Mr. Field's report was giving pleasure to his financial friends who are hanging on vigorously to their franchise flesh pots, its rhythm was seriously disturbed by Octavius C. Beale, president of the Associated Chamber of Manufacturers of Australia, who happened to be passing through Chicago. Mr. Beale appears to be blessed with a good deal more public spirit than Mr. Field manifests, and with reference to public affairs to have a higher degree of good sense. Note this observation:

If a thing in its nature must be or ought to be a monopoly, that monopoly ought to be with the people.

Discussing the subject generally, Mr. Beale said:

I did not come to America to champion the cause of municipal ownership; for, in the land from which I come and in some European states in which I have traveled, the successful results that have accrued to the people through the operation of that principle makes it appear to me as something extraordinary that, in a nation so progressive as the United States, there should be any question as to the expediency of the people controlling public service. . . . Any statement that municipal ownership abroad has not in practice met the expectations of its advocates proves that the maker of that statement has not carefully studied conditions or has his facts sadly mixed.

These statements were followed by Mr. Beale with citations of facts supporting them, drawn from the experience of Australia, Great Britain and Germany; and he touched the core of the munic-

ipal ownership problem when he added:

The whole direction of municipal ownership is toward equalization of opportunities, whereas private monopoly of any public service tends to the increase of inequality. If the cause of corruption so much complained of in America be removed, is it not probable that official corruption itself will disappear and the public will rejoice in the possession of cheap general utilities as in other lands?

Land values taxation in Great Britain.

From a "catechism of land values," which a landlords' union, The Property Protection Society, is circulating in England in opposition to the land values taxation idea to which the Liberal party is committed, we observe that the British landlords are defending their privileges with quotations from a speech made in 1887 by Dr. A. R. Wallace relative to land value taxation in the United States. Dr. Wallace must have been badly informed as to fiscal customs in this country. He is quoted as saying that although every particle of land under private ownership, whether built on or not, is taxed on its full selling value in America, land speculation is nevertheless everywhere excessive. The latter part of this statement is true; the first part never was true, and we question its authenticity as being a statement from Dr. Wallace.

If there is any place in the United States where land is appraised for taxation at its full selling value, the rate or percentage of tax there will be found to be extraordinarily low. In most places it is appraised for taxation at much less than its full selling value; and in all places the tax is so low, relatively to selling value, that a large margin for speculation is left. In Chicago, for instance, land is required by law to be appraised for taxation at one-fifth of the selling value, and the taxes are limited to 5 per cent., so that the tax is only 1 per cent. of selling value. The highest tax appraisals of land anywhere in the

United States seldom exceed 60 per cent. of selling value, and large holdings not built upon are often appraised at only 20 or 25 per cent. of selling value.

It is strange that so thoughtful a people as the English should be misled by such "statements of fact" regarding economic conditions in distant countries. The statements, in so far as they imply that a full tax on the full selling value would not abolish speculation in land, are transparently false. Any British child ought to be able to calculate that if the tax gatherer were to take all, nothing would be left for the speculator. If, however, taxes were levied on full selling value, but the taxes were so low as to leave a margin for speculators, then of course there would still be speculation. Its intensity would depend upon the margin, and the margin would depend upon the rate of tax. We do not understand that the Liberal party of Great Britain advocates taxes high enough to wipe out the speculative margin wholly. It proposes one that would narrow the margin. Consequently, what it now proposes would not abolish land speculation; but it would obstruct land speculation, and the rest would be only a matter of keeping on.

Woman suffrage in New York.

Under the auspices of the Harlem Equal Rights League of New York, a "straw" election is to be held on election day, at which the women of New York are invited to vote for their choice for city and county offices. All women living within the limits of greater New York are invited to attend the woman's polling place in the Harlem Casino, 124th street and Seventh avenue, from 1 to 6 p. m., on the 7th. At that time and place provision for balloting in the ordinary way will be made, including a supply of voting booths and forms of official ballots, and the vote is to be regularly announced and published. It is quite improbable that knowledge of this exper-

iment will become general in time to produce results of much magnitude at the present election; but it is easy to see that if the experiment were to grow into a general custom, it would figure as a formidable practical argument for welcoming women citizens to the official voting places. The experiment is in charge of Mrs. Martha Williams, Mrs. Belle de Rivera, Mrs. Florence Kelley and Miss Maud Malone as the board of election.

Bernard Shaw's play.

Whoever has read Bernard Shaw's "Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant," on sale this long time at general book stores of good repute, will be rather more surprised than the average newspaper reader at the decorous din over the alleged indecency of one of the unpleasant ones—"Mrs. Warren's Profession." The decorous din is easily explained. It is not because one of the characters is a courtesan, as the newspapers have it; courtesan characters are common in fashionable dramatic productions and there is no din. It is not because her vile business is exploited in the play; that also is common and permissible in fashionable plays, and exploitation is absent from this play. It is not because of any pruriency in Shaw's play, for, common as pruriency is on the stage, it is not present here. The outcry against the Shaw play springs from no sensitiveness at making prostitution a subject for the dramatic stage. It is in truth a pharisaical protest against the awful indictment Shaw launches at the industrial causes and wealthy promoters of prostitution. Prostitution is a fact, a terrible fact, and Shaw recognizes it as such in his play. Had he done this artfully and stopped there, we should have heard no outcry. But he does not stop there. He points at the respectable groups who profit by prostitution, and at those who maintain industrial conditions under which great masses of girls in every generation must choose between Mrs. Warren's profession, and some such industrial servitude as had