

The Independent.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO . . . HOME LIFE, AGRICULTURE AND POLITICS

Twentieth Year.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, MARCH 28, 1907.

Subscription \$1.00

THE UNITED CHURCHES

Further progress for the denominational union movement was made in the Chicago meeting of delegates from the Congregational, United Brethren and Methodist Protestant denominations. The formal movement for the union of these three denominations dates from July, 1903. At that time a committee of the denominations met at Pittsburg and issued a call for a general council of the three denominations to meet at Dayton, O., to discuss plans of union. This conference met a year ago and made tentative proposals to be further considered by the conference which took action this week. This plan proposed no material change in the faith or local autonomy of the congregations of the three denominations, but provided for a common inter-congregational organization. That meeting did not suggest a name for the combined denominations, leaving that to this week's meeting, which suggests the name of the United Churches. This action remains yet to be approved by the congregations in the three denominations before the union is complete.

The union of these three denominations will be the second completed merger of the several that have been under discussion or actually under way in the three years past. The union of the Presbyterian church north and the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination has been consummated. All that it lacks of physical completeness is the adherence of a few dissenting congregations of the smaller denomination.

In both cases the union is an annexing consolidation of territories rather than a union within competing areas. The Cumberland Presbyterian church had its strength mainly in the zone between north and south, where there were few congregations of northern Presbyterians. To the newest union, the Congregationalists contribute mainly New England and middle Atlantic states, the United Brethren come largely from the middle west, while the Methodist Protestants are largely confined to the border states of Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The Congregationalists bring to the united society some 690,000 members, the United Brethren about 255,000, and the Methodist Protestants 183,000.

PUTER'S TESTIMONY.

For detailed information of the modus operandi of land graft see the testimony of S. A. D. Puter of Oregon in the trial of ex-Congressman Hermann. The evidence now in is only a part of the stupendous whole, enough to serve as an appetizer, perhaps. Fifty dollars was spent trying to "fix" a couple of the grand jurors who afterwards indicted him. When the general land office held up some of his applications for land titles two one-thousand dollar bills handed to Senator Mitchell had a miraculous effect. Two payments of \$500 each to a government special agent played a part in getting title to worthless land in the Cascade forest reserve which was later to be exchanged under the land law for lands located elsewhere and worth five to six dollars an acre. Land Commissioner Hermann, afterward congressman, was a party to these deals, according to this evidence, and appeared as a witness for the defense when Mr. Puter was tried and convicted two years ago.

Puter also implicates a Portland at-

torney in these deeds, as if to remind us of the current assertion that Mr. Heney found only one attorney in Oregon free to assist him in prosecuting the land thieves. That one was the district attorney, who is trying this case as a recess appointee, the senate having refused at the instance of Senator Fulton of Oregon to confirm his appointment.

MONEY THAT CAME EASY.

The announcement that Joy and Paul Morton had lost a million dollars by the burning of their salt plant at Hutchinson, Kansas, suggests how easily money is made by those who are equipped with the facilities for gain which corporation control provides.

About the time that President Roose-

RAVISHED BY BOSS RUEF

Practically every city in the United States has been at some time in the unholy embrace of a crew of municipal ravishers such as that now held up to the light in San Francisco. It is no exaggeration to estimate that more than half of the cities of the country are in some degree at the mercy of such clusters of parasites today. The complete exposures in San Francisco enable a more realistic examination of the shame of cities than even the late sensational disclosures in Philadelphia, Minneapolis and St. Louis, because of the official character of the San Francisco reports.

In its essential details the graft system is simple. Given a wealthy city

Sometimes one, sometimes another, oftentimes a combination of the three, aspires to control of the machinery of public administration in the hope of securing this opportunity. This once achieved, the city government becomes a brokerage office for the sale to the highest bidder of the right to rob. Some buy the right to rob at the point of a revolver, others at the gaming table, a San Francisco gas company bought the right to rob the people of ten cents with every thousand feet of gas they used.

The method by which the Ruef machine gained control in San Francisco is typical, though not identical with others. Whether or not he is but the visible head of an organization whose real builders are the public service corporations and vice dispensers, has not yet been made certain. Possibly Ruef himself built up the machine and forced these interests to support him. To get hold of the city machinery he had to have some numerical support. In San Francisco two elements were sufficient for this. First and greatest, there were as always everywhere those honest people who pride themselves on voting their party ticket whether composed of saints or horse thieves. A majority of this sort in San Francisco were democrats, and so Ruef went to work as a democrat to name the candidates. But there were not enough of the sort of democrats who can be delivered baled at the polls to insure control at the elections. To supply the difference Ruef bought the union labor vote by filling up his ticket with creatures who pass as union labor men, and by permitting union labor free hand in all public matters directly concerning it. A complete union labor monopoly extorting from the city millions in its rebuilding is the price on the one hand. Ten union labor men among the sixteen indicted supervisors witness the price paid on the other hand.

The complete usurpation of public power consummated, the remainder was simple. Franchises were sold to the United railroads, the Home Telephone company, the San Francisco gas and electric light company at prices profitable to all parties except the general public. Prize fight promoters were able to buy desirable privileges, as were various forms of vice which have made San Francisco infamous. City laws were bought and sold like city lots. The city people who were not sharing in the graft looked on helplessly; they had parted with their birthright, not getting so much as a mess of pottage therefor.

The wretched plight of civic San Francisco is no proper occasion for leveling the finger of scorn. It is rather a reminder to every citizen of every municipality to question whether he, by inertia, selfishness, stupidity, or worse, is not contributing to a like disgrace in his own community.

PRESSURE ON THE PRESIDENT.

Railroad interests are applying a personal and political pressure to the president such as no other power in this country except united public opinion is capable of summoning. J. Pierpont Morgan is able to speak for four railroad presidents as if they were actually his "chief clerks," as President Stickney calls them. He, with Mr. Harriman and Mr. Hill make a



PRACTICAL FORESTRY IN NEBRASKA.

The hardy catalpa plantation of C. D. Robinson near Pawnee City. This grove, planted in 1889 and 1890, was harvested early in 1906, yielding a net return of \$6.24 per acre per year, after paying for labor, all expenses and compound interest on the investment.

velt was first threatening to bring suit against rebating railroads, having shortly before that made Paul Morton a member of his cabinet, the story gained currency of how Joy Morton became head of the salt trust.

According to this story it was while Paul Morton was vice-president and general manager of the Santa Fe system that his brother Joy became identified with the salt interests at Hutchinson, and that within an incredibly short time, by reason of rebate advantages granted the Hutchinson salt concern by the Santa Fe railroad, Joy Morton found himself in absolute command of the salt producing industry of the United States and head of the salt trust.

There are important contracts to let, such as contracts for street transportation, lighting and gas supply, and numerous other services which must be performed as public functions. There are also illegitimate interests to be controlled by the city interests based on vice and crime of various sorts. It is worth much to be allowed to ply these crimes undisturbed. What would it not be worth to have the disposal of all these legitimate and illegitimate privileges in one's own interest instead of in the public interest? Such a question comes to the mind of capitalists seeking franchise favors, to leaders of the underworld seeking the privilege to prey, to politicians seeking power and the wealth that opens the way thereto.