

to give The People one cent's worth of service for every dollar expended so long as anything remains of Private Monopoly. That is one of the big lessons of Hichborn's book.

From the adjournment of the 1911 session until the 1913 Legislature met, Special Privilege in California was collecting the stones to feed into the hopper; not a collection of "bad bills," but obstructions to the good bills that it saw coming. Special Privilege had more than two years to hire its agents and keep them at work collecting the stones; it had the money to pay for the work—was collecting the money from The People in the high rates it was charging for various services. Then it used the money taken from The People to fight The People in 1913.

Hichborn says that one of the most important problems before the 1913 Legislature, if not the most important, "was that of the legislature itself." That is true, and it's true of any legislature. Hichborn makes a splendid argument for legislatures of one chamber. One of the chief troubles of the American legislature is the two-chamber arrangement. That arrangement suits Special Privilege.

But who is Hichborn? He is the legislative correspondent of The Sacramento Bee. If you know The Bee, that's enough to know about Hichborn. When he signs his name to a statement about politics and politicians, the burden of disproof is on the other man.

V. G. EGGLESTON.



## TRUSTS.

**Trusts, Good and Bad.** Reprinted from "The Ethics of Democracy." By Louis F. Post. Published by The Public, Ellsworth Bldg., Chicago. 1914. Price, paper, 15 cents postpaid.

The trust problem has given rise to at least two great schools of thought. One advocates compulsory competition. We are to dissolve the combinations into their constituent concerns and force these concerns to struggle for the privilege of selling us what we need. The other philosophers scorn this view and say that combinations have come to stay, but that we can secure the benefit of their economies by regulating them and compelling them to deal with us on equal and reasonable terms. And here is Mr. Post, unmoved, apparently, by the arguments of both schools, reprinting these chapters from "The Ethics of Democracy" just as they were written ten years ago, changing not a word.

What, then, is Mr. Post's solution of the trust problem? It is simply free competition. "To make competition free, therefore, is to apply the natural remedy to the ills that flow from monopoly—free competition must be established." That is all.

Mr. Post would protect nobody against competition. He would abolish the tariff, as most of us

know, but that would be a mere incident in his program. He would root out the protective idea wherever he finds it.

To the small storekeeper who fears the great department store and would welcome legislation to restrict its activities, he says that "such legislation would be in effect legislation against buyers to prevent their economizing," and he will have none of it. To the workman who objects to labor-saving machinery, he says that we might as well think of interfering with the railroad for the benefit of the wheelbarrow industry. To the small farmer who may be driven out of business by the bonanza farm,—though Mr. Post doubts if he will be—he says that if bonanza farming "can produce more economically, then it is destined to be the farming of the future." If concerns combine and discharge laborers whom they do not need, Mr. Post will not interfere with them. To Big Business he has no objection based on its size.

Would he allow the combinations to take in as many concerns as they wish or can get, to sell goods as high as they can, to buy goods and material as low as they can? That appears to be his view. Only, he would remove the special privileges they have—monopolies of natural resources, coal and iron, and all the rest, monopolies of transportation, rights of way and terminals, railway discriminations, and everything else that forces consumers to do business with some concerns, and prevents free competition.

Mr. Post thinks that with special privileges removed, concerns could only grow to that point, whatever it might be in a given case, at which combination or large-scale production ceased to be economical. He believes that no concern, however large, could stay in business without special privileges, unless it served the public better than smaller concerns would. If its prices were too high, competition would reduce them—and it must be kept in mind that, in Mr. Post's scheme, competition would be entirely free.

With competition free, Mr. Post evidently believes, it would be as needless to make it compulsory as it would be to compel a healthy man to eat his meals. And if competition is free, Mr. Post thinks, monopoly is impossible.

"A combination of fishermen, for instance, could not, merely as fishermen, make a fishing trust. They have no monopoly. Their only advantage would be their fishing skill and equal skill could soon be acquired by others. Even with the advantages of such special privileges as dockage rights and transportation opportunities it has been found impossible to make an invincible fishing trust." But there are to be no such special privileges in Mr. Post's scheme, so that if a later effort to establish a fishing trust under present conditions should prove successful it would not decide the case against free competition.

Whether a combination without special privi-

lege can establish a monopoly, will probably remain one of the disputed questions until it is settled by experiment. Mr. Post thinks not. The Socialists think otherwise. But why not make the experiment?

Competition should be free; combination should

be free; large-scale production should be free. Let us make them free and see what will happen.

WILLIAM E. MCKENNA.



"It's curious," said Brown, "how coming events cast their shadows before them. I'll wager a fiver

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