

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 240.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

DOWN COMES HUMPTY DUMPTY.

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THE flail of discussion is bringing to light the essence of the direct primary scheme.

Gov. Hughes started the "ball rolling." Forward he came with a goal, and means to attain it. The goal was the "placing of political power in the hands of the people." As things are, so ran the Governor's argument, the people have nothing to say. Nominations are dictated to conventions by political bosses. This breeds corruption. The people themselves are to run things. The means was the direct primaries. The voter is himself, not a convention, to nominate the candidate.

The folly of the scheme was quickly punctured by the bosses. They correctly pointed out the Anarchistic naiveness of imagining that hundreds of thousands of voters scattered over a large area could turn out the fittest candidate any more than they could turn out intelligent legislation.

The Governor then took a somersault back. Primaries are not to be direct. The voter was to vote for committeemen; and these were to appoint a smaller number out of their own midst; and these latter are to nominate the candidate.

Arrived at this point, the discussion puts the intellectual resources of the political boss to their mettle. The political boss has the best of the argument. And he has won out, so far. Now, however, he has been driven to a point where he cannot play his trump card without suicide. He can knock down Hughes, but not without knocking down himself also.

That card is the blunt admission that existing and widespread poverty renders futile all schemes for purity of election. If the Governor really aims at the wiping out of corruption, then he is a visionary engaged at the Malapropian job of damming the Atlantic Ocean with a mop. The results of popular poverty are not to be avoided by legislative schemes. A proof of it is the cumbersome and impractical

and the-devil-around-the-stump-beating scheme that the Governor now falls back upon. Through the loins of corruption only corrupt children can be strained. Committees, however elected, are such offspring.

The New York direct primary altercation has more than local significance. It brings to the fore one more proof that capitalism is to-day engaged mainly in seeking cures for the diseases which itself engenders, and which it engenders faster than it can cure. Each scheme is a Humpty-Dumpty, that dances its jig, and then breaks down.

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Uploaded July 2010

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