

continue the pollution of the lake, even if afterwards the water could be rendered absolutely sterile. But as I talked to Dr Kraft, I felt that he, and probably his colleagues with him, had somewhat failed to realise the magnitude of the storm of feeling that was being raised against them and that Dr Kraft, at least, had failed to understand that some part of that feeling was not animated by mere party antagonism, but by the desire to safeguard the public health. I wished that the Socialist administration would immediately come forward with a big scheme for dealing with the sewage on the land in the most scientific manner possible, and that they would also adopt some immediate means of purifying the water supply. I was impatient at their delay. Yet I knew that they were faced with tremendous difficulties on every hand. Their critics, who were urging on the water outcry, confined themselves to vaguely charging the Health Department with inertia and to complaining that it was not giving sufficiently grave warning of the water's condition. Warnings, from any quarter, inclined to be superfluous at the time, for every newspaper was publishing long columns of warning and startling alarmist headlines. It was certain that whatever the Socialists might do to strike at the root of the water evil, critics would bitterly oppose on the score of its cost. The same sections that had clamoured for the isolation hospital were already making capital out of the money which the Socialist administration had been obliged to spend in building it. A reporter on one of the Republican newspapers said to me: 'The Socialists are not a bit better than other people, they were expected to reduce the rates and they have not done so and they only built the isolation hospital because they were forced to do it.' How can they reduce the rates when they are undertaking such schemes as the Isolation Hospital? I asked.

The answer was: 'Well, they have not done so much as they might for housing. We are publishing the result of an investigation which shows how bad housing still is.'

I said: 'I suppose when they take up the housing question on an extensive scale you will attack them for raising the rates?'

'I suppose so,' was the cynical reply.

To abuse reformers for their expenditure is, naturally, a very powerful means of attack upon them. The very poor, whom their reforms were designed to help and by whom they are most needed, are prone to resent the raising of the rates to pay for reforms, because they can so ill afford to pay any rates at all. When a City Council raises the wages of its sweated

employees, the even more sweated employees of private persons must help to pay for the increase.

There was little wonder, that with but two months left of their term of office, the Milwaukee Socialist administration should wish to see the Isolation Hospital, the prison farm and other half finished schemes fairly started before undertaking another big enterprise. Yet I wish they had plunged into a bold plan for dealing with the sewage and the purification of the water and had done as much as they could to get all the contracts settled, so that they could not be withdrawn from, however the coming election might result. To have done this - to have tried to do it - would probably have lost them the election -? The event proved it had been lost without.*

Sympathetic doubters of Socialism and Socialists frequently believe, as politicians of the old schools tell them, that Socialist legislators and administrators must be feared for their quixotic recklessness and hot headed zeal. And yet how circumstances combine to wear down the active fighting faculties of the legislative and administrative pioneer! All the atmosphere and tradition of politics, all the influence of politicians, make for inaction, compromise, delay. The earnest sense of responsibility, the very strength of the desire to act worthily in the pioneer's own breast often lead to hesitation. Caution whispers 'to act boldly is to lose your seat and with it all your opportunity for good.' Meanwhile political opponents magnify mild little acts and sayings into things of revolutionary import and so cause friends and foes, who are not conversant with practical details and do not realize that this is merely politicians' make-believe, to think that doughty and even reckless fights are taking place.

Already the rival Political Parties - the Democrats, the 'Standpat' Republicans and the Progressive Republicans, the LaFollette followers, were joining their forces to oust the Milwaukee Socialists.[†] The previous administration had been notoriously corrupt and the Socialists had been sent in on a wave of popular indignation to drive corruption out. They had succeeded. The Progressive Republicans who professed to specialise in purity of administration, were obliged to admit, 'Oh yes, they have

* Seidel's opponents united on the 'nonpartisan' candidature of former commissioner of health, Dr Gerhard Bading, to unseat the socialist mayor in the elections of 1912.

† See note above on p. 132.