

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### TIME OF CITY ELECTIONS.

"A Reader" asks this question:

Does the News believe that either February or May would be better months than November as the time for holding municipal elections, and why?

The News does not think that either February or May would be better months for the holding of municipal elections than November. Either might be just as good, but we incline to the later month as preferable, because it is by common rule an election month. The only point we raise in regard to the elections named is that they should not be at the same time as general elections. For instance, in this State, the general elections come in even years, and it was stated in the report of legislative proceedings that there was favored a proposition to have municipal elections at the same time. We now understand, however, that in the bill which looks to a change from February, it is provided to make municipal elections in the odd years, commencing with November, 1897, and thus avoid State or general elections. The latter proposition we favor strongly, for the reasons we objected to the other; and we believe the legislators will take the same view when the matter comes to be considered and acted upon.

### EXHIBITION AT STOCKHOLM.

While the great powers of Europe anxiously are watching the gathering stormclouds in the east and preparing for a possible combat in which force will be the deciding element, the Scandinavian countries are exerting their energy to hold a contest of peace, where superiority in industrial skill will win the prize. An exhibition that promises to eclipse previous ones in the Scandinavian countries will be held at Stockholm this year from the 15th of May till the end of September, and as Russia and Finland officially have signified their intention to be represented in the art as well as the industrial departments, the exhibition is sure to be one of general interest.

The place selected is Djurgården, Stockholm's Bois de Boulogne, and this is said to be the most beautiful spot ever offered for an exhibition of this kind. The art exhibition will be international. Prince Eugene, King Oscar's youngest son, who is a talented painter, has this department in charge, and he has personally visited many leading artists and obtained their promise to be represented. It is believed that this part of the exhibition will be one of the most remarkable ever held. The United States will be represented by the works of John Alexander, Alexander Harrison, Julius Carl Melchers, John Singer Sargent, Robert William Vonnob, James McNeill Whistler and others.

In connection with the exhibition the fourth international press congress will be held at Stockholm in the

month of June. King Oscar, always interested in the representatives of the press, has signified his intention of entertaining the delegates at his beautiful castle Drottningholm.

Another feature coincident with the exhibition will be the celebration in the month of September of the 25th anniversary of the ascension to the throne of King Oscar. Great festivities will mark this occasion, ending the exhibition, as it were, in a blaze of glory.

It is now 81 years since the first exhibition was held in Stockholm. Since that time the country has made material advances in everything. Its agricultural products, dairy products, mining industries, trade and railroad building have made large strides forward and as a consequence the general prosperity of the people has been advanced. As an instance of this it is mentioned that in 1866 deposits in the savings banks amounted 38,000,000 kronor, whereas the latest returns show a balance of 350,000,000. The increase of the consumption of sugar is taken as another indication of prosperity. In 1866 four kilos per head a year was the average; now it is 14 kilos.

The Scandinavian peninsula is generally supposed to be poor in natural resources, and the history of its people has many a page recording suffering on account of long winters and famine. But the fact is that these would never have occurred had it not been for the almost insane policy of the rulers for centuries past—a policy of internal strife and contests with neighbors. On the altars of civil and foreign wars the tillers of the ground and other working men were sacrificed, and the industries were neglected. The so-called heroes of the nations became their curse.

The house of Bernadotte has followed a policy of peace. For nearly a century the two united kingdoms have rested on their arms, and when it is remembered what Sweden and Norway were in 1814 and what they are today, a material illustration is seen of what the whole world might have been saved from the curse of militarism and allowed to follow the pursuits of peace in righteousness.

### THAT PROPOSED AMENDMENT.}}

In another part of this issue is a communication from County School Superintendent Van Cott, on the proposed amendment to the State Constitution allowing the taxing of city property for maintenance of county schools. Mr. Van Cott falls into the line of argument commonly followed by many who mistake sentiment for logic, whether the former be right or wrong. His letters make him appear to think that in the relations of city and county districts the former is the vampire that grasps all the benefits, and therefore should be compelled by law to relinquish some ill-gotten gains. For instance, he says of the county people:

We are taxed to maintain (and that too

in the city) our entire county government. All our roads lead to the city. All our produce finds market there, but, whether we sell or buy, the profits remain where the city is enriched.

One might think from that kind of reasoning that none of the money or its equivalent paid by city people for country produce ever found its way to the pockets or homes of the country people; that the county offices are maintained in the city for the latter's convenience instead of equally for city and county; or that the county commissioners devoted funds to city government in preference to the interests of the county outside of the city—all of which is wrong. It is time to cease using that kind of argument—the only effect of which is to create an injurious prejudice between city and county districts—and get down to the merits of the case.

The proposition is to tax the city for maintenance of schools which the taxpayers have no voice in controlling. That is not the case with the State tax, for inhabitants of cities have their voice in the State school administration; but not so in the county. Besides, the county districts of counties in which cities of the first and second class are situated are richer in proportion to the taxes they have to pay than are the majority of the city taxpayers. It must be remembered that there is a great disparity in the taxes paid in the city and in the county, heavy as they may be in the latter. For instance, in Salt Lake county, the owner of a small piece of land on the outskirts of this city, in the richest country district, paid last year \$1.25 taxes; for the same sized tract in the city limits, distant from business, and which was of no more actual value to him for use, he paid \$20.67. What would Salt Lake county property owners say if, for instance, they were required to pay taxes for the county administration of schools in Tooele, because the latter is not such a rich county so far as assessed valuation is concerned? They are willing to pay to a general State school fund, but to do so to a specific county school fund which they have no voice in disbursing, is another thing.

We do not take this matter up for the purpose of discussing it, but to show that there are legitimate arguments on both sides, and that it is unwise to resort to specious pleadings to invoke sectional prejudice that never did and never will be of benefit to either city or county districts, in or out of school matters.

We would call attention to one other feature in connection with the school tax question. The State provides that "the common school shall be free," and directs the Legislature to provide a uniform system of public schools. That is a State guarantee of free common schools which, if open ten months in Salt Lake county or city, under State law, shall be open a like period, under like conditions, in Piute or Washington counties. If the State carries out its guarantee in this respect, which it does not do now under existing laws, the local question raised on this county tax business will be settled; but to arrange it as proposed under the amendment advocated, would not re-