

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### ANOTHER "INFLUENCE" BUGABOO.

It was hoped, from the way things were moving in the present political campaign, that the so often misused cry of Mormon Church influence in politics would not be called into play at this time; but it seems that the hope was vain. Now, within a week of the election, the shout comes from Idaho, and with as little justification as it is possible to have therefor.

It is a fact that men of different political parties have sought to secure Church influence in the past, and failing to get it, often have joined in the shout that it has been given to the other side. In other cases, politicians have taken up the expressions of individual opinion by men and newspapers, and have sought to give them the effect of Church influence. This is notably the case in a recent instance in Idaho. There a paper took articles from the DESERET NEWS and from other publications which have a close relation to the Mormon people, and sought to use the same in the interest of Senator Dubois. The effort was not to use those articles for their intrinsic worth as the opinions of newspapers and individuals, but to give them the effect of Church views, when in fact the Church has no views to express on the subject. On the other hand, opponents of Senator Dubois brought up speeches of the latter and newspaper remarks about him of years ago, when there was an anti-Mormon contest on, and thus sought to exercise against the senator a Church influence to which they had not the shadow of right. The efforts on either side of the question are base and contemptible, as are others of a similar character, because they are wholly unjustifiable. The Mormon Church is not exercising any influence one way or other. Its members are absolutely free to vote for whom they please, on their own judgment, and without danger of Church pressure either way. The Church teaching to its members as citizens is to do their duty as citizens, and do it independently.

Sometimes men who hold positions in the Church are asked by others for their political views; and while the leading officials are careful in any expressions they use, there may be times when they state their individual preferences. But such statements are not Church views or policy. Because men are members of or officers in the Church they do not lose their rights as citizens. They have a right to their political views, and to express them. And any one to whom those views are expressed who goes forth and attempts to show that they are the ideas and wishes of the Church betrays the confidence reposed in him by a fellow citizen, who has spoken as a citizen, and not in the exercise of his ecclesiastical duties. Further, the Church member who takes the expression of political views by any other Church member or officer, and distorts them to indicate a Church policy when they do not do so, stands in the position of one guilty of a betrayal of

trust to the Church, because he represents it in a false attitude.

It is high time that it be fully understood that when the Church wants to use its influence on any point it will do so in the regularly constituted channels, so no one need have a misunderstanding; and further, that politicians who either seek to use or cry out "Church influence in politics" are doing so from ulterior motives that render them unworthy the confidence of the people. We believe the hour is pretty close when the people will fully recognize this point, and when they note a politician seeking covertly to use such influence in his own behalf, either by representing that the Church is favorable to him or is working for his opponent, they will shelve him as not fit to be trusted in a public position.

Nothing should be plainer or more thoroughly understood than that there is no Mormon Church influence in those political campaigns; also that Mormons, no matter what their position is in the Church, have as much right to their political views, and the expression of the same, as have any other citizens, and purpose to maintain and exercise that right. Such procedure is not Church influence, either in fact or intention, and no reputable person will seek to make it appear so.

As to the present campaign, which is under special consideration now, the Mormons are free to vote as they please; they may support McKinley or Bryan for President, just as they wish, and no Mormon Church influence wants them to go either way. And as to all other candidates they also are as free to make their choice as individuals possibly can be. This trumpety about Mormon Church influence in politics ought not to receive credence from any person of respectability and ordinary common sense.

### THE IDAHO CANARD AGAIN.

The "Church interference" bugaboo in Idaho is still being worked on there, and a dispatch to the Salt Lake morning papers asserts that Hon. Wm. Budge and others in Church positions in Bear Lake had stated in public meetings that "the Mormons were instructed not to vote for Bryan." The News does not have the exact language the speakers referred to may have used, if they spoke on the subject at all; but from a long and intimate acquaintance with the gentleman named as one of the accused parties, and from a knowledge of his character, the News feels free to say that he has made no such statement. Possibly he or somebody else may have said that "the Mormons were not instructed to vote for Bryan;" and if he did, that is true. So far as the Church is concerned, the Mormons have not been instructed from that source for whom to vote, and will not be.

It will be observed that the transposition of one word in the sentence quoted makes all the difference in the

world, and scheming politicians and rank partisans are not above making such a transposition. They have done things equally as bad in the Idaho campaign this year, as noted in Thursday's News. And whatever persons may say or claim, the News reiterates the fact that "the Mormons have not been instructed to vote for Bryan;" "the Mormons have not been instructed to vote for McKinley," or any other candidate, so far as any Church instructions or influence is concerned. Certain politicians have been "instructing" the people on either side, as the News stated yesterday, and possibly these politicians are a little agitated because the people recognize those "instructions" to be bogus. The Mormons will do as other citizens: vote according to their convictions on national party issues, leaving out all questions of religion or Church membership.

In the Montpelier dispatch referred to, the milk in the coconut is revealed in the closing sentence that "no contradiction has been secured from the Church authorities at Salt Lake." The allegation that any Church influence had been used or Church instruction given was emphatically contradicted; but there was no response to an impudent demand for a telegraphed official denial. A reason was that the design of obtaining such a telegram was recognized. It was that Church influence might be used in a negative form in the interest of the parties making the demand, just as has been sought to do with other expressions pro and con by both parties to the contest in Idaho. But the trick did not work. The Mormon Church influence is not available to one or the other side in the political controversy.

### A FUSSY ANTI-MORMON.

An Associated Press dispatch received today is as follows:

Ashland, Ky., Oct. 30.—Reports from Elliott county state that the opposition to the advance of the Mormon religion is becoming very violent through the entire county and that all the Elders have been frightened out of the county. Several serious affrays have resulted between the opposition and the sympathizers, and the recently reported shooting near Sandy Hook has only aggravated the already threatening conditions.

Elder W. H. Burrows of the Mormon Church went to Crum in Lewis county to preach. He had been invited to go there by the Baptist congregation of Rev. Mr. Reiffeto, but the pastor refused to permit the Elder to preach in his church. Mr. Reiffeto locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Several men pried the lock off the door and the Elder, with the triumphant song "Hold the fort for I am coming," marched boldly in and preached a long sermon.

The half brother of Rev. Mr. Reiffeto, Deacon George Shoup, cast off his Baptist garments and donned the Mormon vestments. Rev. Mr. Reiffeto, who is quite wealthy, and who had intended to make his brother his heir, has revoked his will.

Mr. Reiffeto owns the church building in which he had preached many years. He has nailed up the doors and nailed down the windows. He says now that it has been polluted by the faith of Mormonism, it shall be opened no more for religious purposes. He says it is hardly