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THE SCHOOL QUESTION AGAIN.

THE Chicago papers contain exhaustive particulars relating to the school question in Illinois and Wisconsin. It will be remembered that the Bennett law in the latter State entered largely into politics about three years ago. This was a sort of compulsory education measure embracing a provision for the teaching of English in all schools public, private or parochial. The German Catholics and Lutherans took umbrage at the new law and at once commenced to agitate. Mr. Peck, a Baptist, was then at the head of a funny paper in Milwaukee known as *Peck's Sun*. He took up the side of the Germans, and was immediately elected Mayor of Milwaukee. The Democratic party denounced the Bennett law, and this brought to it the German vote, which hitherto had been mainly Republican. Mayor Peck was elected Governor of Wisconsin on the Democratic ticket, and the State Legislature also became Democratic. The Bennett law was erased from the statute books, the Republicans helping to undo it as largely as the Democrats. It was supposed that the Germans would return to their old love, and in the last spring elections the results showed that to a certain extent they did so.

There is in Illinois the same kind of law as the Bennett measure of Wisconsin. For two years the Lutherans have been trying to get this bill repealed. The Democrats favored its repeal, but the Republicans tried to parry the issue. Recently the drift of sentiment in the Republican party favored the retention of the Illinois law. The German Lutherans held a conference last week in Chicago, and their Wisconsin brethren assured them of support in any action taken to do away with the obnoxious law. The Illinois Lutherans resolved to support the Democratic party. This means also Wisconsin Lutherans in Democratic ranks. With this change it is conceded even by Republicans that Illinois and Wisconsin are now Democratic unless Mr. Blaine be made the nominee. With him it is thought the German defection can be offset by recruits from other nationalities and from American Democrats.

Should this language, race and school issue enter into the pending national campaign it will tend to complicate matters in these two great States. The Germans are a controlling force in both places, and as they are very much attached to their own language, there seems a probability that Germans of all denominations will take one side in the struggle.

IN CREASING CALAMITIES.

THE continued rains and floods in the East and South are bringing disaster to many farmers and trouble to the whole nation. In one district alone it is said that 10,000,000 bushels of wheat are already lost, and over a hundred flour mills affected. The dispatches for two days past make a chapter of calamity perhaps unparalleled in the history of the country; homes destroyed, lives lost, valuable lands rendered worthless, and complete destruction of cereals and vegetables in large sections of country.

From every point of the compass come reports of disaster. Cyclones in Texas, storms in Indiana, snow blockades in New England, blighting frost in Iowa, all aggravated by fearful accidents on railroads, in mines, workshop and other places.

The year 1892 so far has been prolific of calamities and a feeling of dread in looking for troubles to come upon the earth seems to be gradually taking hold of the inhabitants thereof. A great crisis is at hand and the proofs are abundant that we are nearing the time of "the end."

THE BERING SEA COMMISSION.

THOUGH the newspapers have very little to say of late about the Bering sea business, yet the question has not been dropped from the list of vital issues. On the contrary it is now in its most important stage so far as the relations of the two nations are concerned. All the details for holding the arbitration commission are completed on the part of the United States. Our commissioners are Justice Harlan of the Supreme Court and Senator Morgan of Alabama. Associated with these gentlemen as counsel are E. J. Phelps of Vermont, J. C. Carter of New York, and Judge Blodgett of the United States District Court of Northern Illinois.

The latter appointment was made a few days ago, and completes the list on the side of the United States. He will resign his place immediately and repair to Washington where the work will be taken up at once. The arbitration treaty provides that each country be allowed two arbitrators and that three neutral powers appoint one each. The three countries agreed to are Italy, France and Sweden. The meeting place for the entire commission will be Paris. But it will take some time before it meets. The commissioners on both sides as well as the neutral ones are supposed to enter on a special study of the situation, ascertain all the law and the particulars from their respective standpoints, and then meet in a body and discuss the question.

Judge Blodgett is perhaps the least known nationally of the arbitrators on the American side, but in the region of the lakes and Mississippi valley his name is nearly as familiar as that of President Harrison. He is a native of Massachusetts and seventy-two years of age. His family settled in Illinois as early as 1830. He is a graduate of Amherst. He commenced life as a school-teacher, then

took up land surveying and finally adopted law as a profession, being admitted to the Illinois bar in 1845.

We have not observed whether the commissioners on the English side have been appointed. It is stated, however, that an Englishman and a Canadian will be selected as arbitrators.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONVENTIONS.

LIKE the Speaker of the House of Representatives at Washington the national convention is entirely unknown to the Constitution of the United States. But like Mr. Speaker, the convention has become a national institution, and is as firmly rooted as if it had constitutional sanction. It is of necessity the outgrowth of party, and whenever representative popular government prevails party does exist, and, it is contended must exist if the government is to be retained democratic and popular.

There was no convention to nominate George Washington, in fact there was no party in 1788. He was unanimously chosen President in February, 1789, and inaugurated on April 30, following. He was re-elected in the same manner in 1792, but in 1796 declined a third term. Meanwhile a division on party lines was going on based on interpretations of the new constitution. One party interpreted it to mean a strong central government with a tendency to aristocracy, the other the exact opposite. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were the respective leaders of these parties. In 1796 though a division of opinion existed there were still no attempts at party organizations, and under the system of electing then prevailing John Adams was chosen President and Thomas Jefferson Vice-President, a circumstance which in our day would look as if in 1888 Benjamin Harrison were elected President and Grover Cleveland, Vice-President.

In 1801 the first attempt at party nominations was made, by a congressional caucus held in Philadelphia which nominated Jefferson and Burr on the Republican or anti-Federal ticket. The complications attending this election caused an amendment pertaining to presidential electors to be adopted. In 1804 there is no record of how nominations were made, but Jefferson was re-elected. In 1808 the congressional caucus was again resorted to. Ninety-four of the 186 Republican members attended, and James Madison was nominated. In 1812 the caucus re-elected James Madison, but by this time a strong dislike for the caucus system began to prevail, and in September of that year a convention was held in New York City, composed of Federals and dissatisfied Republicans, representing eleven States. James Madison was however re-elected.

In 1816 Monroe was chosen under the caucus system and elected. In the same way he was re-elected in 1820. The caucus system was by this time thoroughly detested, and in 1824 caused a split in the Republican party. There were four candidates, Jackson, Adams, Clay