

have had no better chance in the field than other concerns.

It will thus be seen that monopolies stifle competition, not by reason of their enormous wealth, but through their ability to get from legislation grants of special privileges.

Had the people of Texas and Port Arthur had the matter in their own hands this could easily have been prevented and an immense benefit secured, not only for the state of Texas, but for the whole nation. But as it is under our present form of government the people have no voice in the matter. Our constitution grants to a handful of legislators the exclusive privilege of legislating, and this handful of legislators grants to corporations exclusive privileges in controlling the resources of wealth.

So it will be seen that monopoly rests on legislative grants of privileges, and legislative grants of privilege to corporations rest on the constitutional grants of privilege to legislators.

To get rid of the monopoly strike at the root, the constitutional grant of privilege to legislators.—The National New Era, of Springfield, O.

FROM THE ARID WEST.

For The Public.

The arid west is beginning to wonder about how soon it can reasonably expect to receive the farmers' bonus which the republican platform favored in 1900. Of course while the war in the Philippines was hanging fire, and the supreme court was known to have the constitution up a stump, the west sat "like patience on a monument." But everything has cooled off nicely. McKinley can once more sleep the sleep of the righteous, and the west is getting as restive as a bronco that has not bucked for quite a spell. It cannot be that the grand old party contemplates a bunco game with the people of the Rocky mountains. They have recovered their equanimity, and in the language of Shakespeare do not give a yellow dog if the white metal was turned upside down. Farming cannot be benefited by anything in this part of the world which does not increase the acreage under cultivation, the number of cultivators to the acre, the number of bushels to the acre, and also supplies a market. The present tariff will not do all these things, and there are some wool growers who have even lost faith in its efficacy, since the bottom has dropped out of the wool market. Idle men are rapidly increasing, building operations are at a standstill and some peo-

ple are blaming the labor unions for demanding an eight-hour day. Are these the premonitory symptoms of a cloudburst of colonial expansion prosperity? or only indicative of a spell of bad weather?

Some men handle any question which concerns laboring men very gingerly. It would be a shock to their reputations to be called socialists. Others are so much interested in the welfare of the kind of people Abraham Lincoln said were so numerous that the charge has no more effect than a Spanish broadside on an American battleship. A lie is its own worst enemy. If it is driven to cover it commits compulsory suicide.

Government ownership of irrigation is wanted, because no other method of supplying water to the thirsty soil can handle it at cost.

Every home builder who adds an improved ranch to the property valuation of a western state has increased the demand for the products of domestic factories. Such homemade expansion works both ways. There is a good time coming in the near future when an imaginary line cannot separate Yankees who live on either side of it. Neighbors with common interests are bound to get together.

The agricultural future of the arid west depends, after irrigation, on the South American market. An isthmian canal will be favored by the west, for a reason of its own. We want free trade with South America. Then the fortified canal is wanted by the Atlantic coast as its highway to the orient. A better subsidy to American shipping could not spring full orb'd from the brain of the republican elephant than free transportation to American bottoms across the isthmus. But unless the waterway is cut at once by popular subscription there is a chance for serious trouble with Europe. Make no mistake, Europe is after that canal hot-footed. She has blood in her eye, and threatens to take the implied powers out of the Monroe doctrine in a square stand up fight to a finish. War is not pleasant to contemplate. Sherman—an expert on the subject—declared it was hell. Europe cannot be prevented from going to hell if she chooses, but it would be well to remember the inscription which Dante saw over that open door.

JAMES C. FREE.

Billings, Mont., July 5, 1901.

It is a pity that our ancestors left us so many problems which they should have solved; also, that we are willing to pass the problems along.—Puck.

MAYOR JOHNSON'S WAY.

NO MUNICIPAL POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS.

There won't be any assessments at the city hall while Tom L. Johnson is mayor. That fact was demonstrated yesterday when the mayor called a halt on an assessment that had been started. It seems that the work had been going on several days before the mayor learned of it. When the facts came to his knowledge he at once sent for a city hall employe who was said to be directing the work.

"Yes, it's true," was the answer given to a question put by the mayor.

"What do you mean by doing anything of that sort without consulting me?" demanded Mayor Johnson. "I won't have it at all. I want it stopped right here. How many men are out collecting money?"

"One, I think."

"Can you get your hands on him in a few minutes?"

"I guess so."

"Do it right away then. Tell him not to collect another cent and see to it that nothing of the kind goes on again. Send the subscription books to me."

In a short time four books were placed in the mayor's hands.

"Are these all?" he asked.

"No."

"How many more are out?"

"Two or three."

"Get them in right away. Now I want every cent collected returned to the men from whom it was received."

"All right," and the assessment collector walked out, dazed.

In the city hall there are a number of employes who are republicans. They hold their jobs because they are competent men. The mayor, apparently, does not think it would be right to make republicans contribute money to defray the expenses of a democratic campaign. He is also opposed to making a lot of low salaried democratic employes give up a per cent. of their earnings for political purposes.

The mayor's ultimatum carried joy to the hearts of some city hall people and dismay to others. Director of Public Works Salen was one of the most astonished ones when he heard what the mayor had done.

"How are we to defray the expenses of the democratic committee?" he demanded. "It isn't right to ask one or two men to put up all the money and unless we have money

we'll simply have to close the headquarters on the square. I don't see anything wrong in asking officeholders under a democratic administration to contribute to the expenses of a democratic campaign. They all expect it and the people expect it, too. Officeholders are the ones who are supposed to pay for the music."

Just where the money is to come from to keep the democratic machinery in the county oiled during the fall campaign is not quite clear. Candidates' assessments will likely be pretty stiff, and Mayor Johnson will have to go down into his own pocket for a large wad.—News Article in Cleveland Plain Dealer of July 19.

Mayor Johnson's order against the collection of political assessments from employes of the city has caused surprise among politicians and sneering insinuations of insincerity from party organs opposed to him politically. They cannot understand how one who holds a municipal position can take the stand assumed by Mayor Johnson, because the assessment of officeholders "for the benefit of the party" has been the regular custom for many years.

It is true that the custom has long existed, but it is none the less pernicious, demoralizing to the service, a wrong to taxpayers, and sometimes cruel to the employe, who is compelled to give up part of his pay that is badly needed for the support of his family. Under previous administrations assessments have been various percentages of the employe's salary or wages, generally at least two per cent. Under a late republican municipal administration the assessment went as high as seven per cent. This was nothing short of downright robbery, and either the employes or the public, or both, were the victims of that robbery.

The pretext for these political assessments is that the employe owes his position to the party, and therefore should contribute of his earnings to the party's support. The plea is of itself one of the strongest arguments for the complete divorce of municipal government from partisan politics. Make employment in the city's service dependent wholly on fitness for the position and retention in that employment dependent on faithful and efficient service, eliminating altogether considerations of political "work" or "pull," and there would be no occasion or excuse for

political assessments of municipal employes.

Take the situation as it now is, for example. Mayor Johnson owed his election to his declaration that he would run the affairs of the municipality on a business basis, and not use his position for the building up of a political machine. The people believed in the sincerity of that declaration. Mayor Johnson is responsible for the entire force of municipal employes and it is his duty to see that they perform efficient service and earn the pay they receive from the money of the taxpayers. They did not get their places from any political party. They are the employes of the people of Cleveland, without regard to political views. They are paid by money collected from the people in taxes. They are responsible to Mayor Johnson as the chief servant of the municipality. No political party appointed them or retains them in their positions, or pays their salaries or wages. They are under no obligations, legal or moral, to contribute against their will to the fund of any political party.

If an employe of the city holds a \$1,200 position, and performs its duties satisfactorily, he is entitled to all the money he has earned. If it is a \$600 position the same is true. What right has a political collector to demand of the one \$24 or of the other \$12 "for the benefit of the party?" If the employe is worth to the public what the public pays him, he is entitled to all his earnings. If he is not, he should be dismissed, or the pay of the position reduced to the value of the services rendered. That is what is done in the business world and the municipal establishment should be run strictly on business principles.

The injustice of the political assessment system is more sharply defined when it is known that a number of republicans are holding positions under Mayor Johnson's administration. The political assessor makes no distinction of individual politics. Such a position is assessed so much. No matter what the political views of the holder of that position, he is expected to pay promptly, and he pays. The wrong of compelling a republican to contribute to a democratic campaign fund, or a democrat to a republican political fund when the conditions are reversed, should be apparent to every fair-minded person.

If any man, democrat or republican, officeholder or in no way connected with the municipal government, chooses to contribute to the fund of his

political party, that is his privilege as a private citizen. If he declines to contribute, that, too, is within his rights. But political "assessments" are indefensible, both from the individual and public point of view, and Mayor Johnson is entitled to credit for taking a firm stand against the practice under his administration.

The radical remedy for the manifold evils attendant upon the municipal political assessment system is to absolutely divorce municipal affairs from partisan politics. When that is done the people will have a right to expect the full value of their money in faithful and efficient service. There will then be no excuse for political assessments, either of two per cent. or seven per cent., with the dishonesty the higher assessment suggests or induces.—Editorial in Plain Dealer of July 21.

STREET CLEANING IN CLEVELAND.

Electricity now cleans Cleveland streets with a new sweeper, the first of its kind, that was given its first working test last week. It will sweep all the streets on which there are car tracks with the exception of Superior, which is 200 feet wide and is cleaned by the "white wings" men. The electric sweeper is the invention of General Manager Ira McCormick, of the Big Consolidated Electric railway, and grew out of a suggestion of Mayor Tom L. Johnson.

One of the first things the mayor did after getting into office was to start a clean streets campaign. He found that the contractors, working with the ordinary horse-drawn sweepers, charged one dollar a square. He sent for McCormick and called his attention to a forgotten clause in the street car company's franchise that required it to keep its tracks clean. The result is the electric trolley street sweeper that will revolutionize the cleaning of streets on which there are electric car lines all over the world.

The necessity of sweeping the company's tracks for nothing started the street railway manager thinking, and he went back to the mayor with an offer to sweep the streets through which the lines of his company run for 20 cents a square, a fifth of the present price the city pays. The mayor told him he could have the business, and McCormick went to work on his trolley sweeper. He built in the company's shops a ponderous car, having, in addition to the motors for driving it, another 35 horsepower motor for driving revolving