

tifies the liberally paid president of the Lehigh Valley railway monopoly, one of the constituents of the great anthracite coal road trust, "would be one of the worst evils to which the country could be exposed." This has been the theory of the privileged classes since they began to subject their brethren to slavery. And in their view of what is evil for a country, it is a sound theory. It is the favorite philosophy of special privilege and the sacred creed of the monopolist.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Cleveland, May 5.—Yesterday was a red-letter day in Cleveland, at least to a majority of its citizens. Its local government under the new municipal code (vol. v. pp. 457, 536), which is applicable uniformly to all the cities of the State of Ohio, was organized after one of the most exciting city elections its inhabitants have ever known. Although a similar organization was effected in every other city in the State, Cleveland was the center of greatest interest, because of the peculiar circumstances of her political situation.

The antecedent facts are all well known, but the situation will be better understood if they are recapitulated.

For 50 years or more the cities of Ohio had what amounted to special charters. Though applicable in terms to all the cities of the State (to comply with a requirement of the State constitution), each charter was, nevertheless, so drawn as to affect only the city for which it was intended. For illustration, cities of not less than 25,000 inhabitants nor more than 25,250, might be put in a specified class, and provisions then be made for the government of all cities of that class. Only one city, of course, would come within the class. It was a transparent evasion of the constitutional prohibition of special legislation, but for more than 50 years the courts winked at or approved it.

Under this practice a charter for Cleveland was granted some dozen years ago, which did away with all the antiquated and corrupting systems of board rule, and established what was known as the "federal plan." The essential feature of the "federal plan" was its concentration of responsibility. Legislative functions were left to the city council, but the mayor was

invested with all executive functions, coupled with a legislative veto. This plan worked admirably. When an administration was bad, the people knew where to place the responsibility, and the mayor had to bear the brunt. He was responsible even for bad legislation, unless two-thirds of the council were willing to override his vetoes.

In course of time Mayor Johnson came into the mayor's office. This was two years ago. His first act was to veto a corrupt ordinance, which his predecessor would have signed but for a timely injunction. In control of the council he found a Republican majority, and among the Republicans there were enough expert corruptionists to dictate the organization, if the ordinary party caucus were to be allowed to run its course. But Mayor Johnson interposed. Getting together a majority of the council, both Democrats and Republicans, he said to them, in substance: "Gentlemen, the Republicans are in the majority in this council. Therefore the organization ought, in fairness, to be Republican. But the honest Republicans, and not the crooked ones, ought to control. I propose, therefore, that this joint caucus of honest councilmen of both parties, join hands to effect an honest Republican organization of your body." It was done. A year later Johnson had carried the city for the Democrats, and thereupon an honest Democratic organization of the council was secured. The effect of all this was decidedly renovating. When the last council came to go out of office, hardly a "crook" of either party had a seat in it.

Two principal subjects—each with many ramifications, however—commanded Mayor Johnson's attention during his first term. One of these related to the street car service, and the other to local taxation.

It was his unconcealed purpose to establish in Cleveland a complete system of street car lines to be owned and operated by the municipality. To promote this movement, and at the same time to undermine the spoils system, he placed Prof. Bemis in charge of the waterworks, already owned and operated by the city, and gave him instructions to organize that department strictly upon the merit system of civil service. This work Prof. Bemis has most effectively performed, while Mayor Johnson has faithfully protected him from all partisan interference. But without waiting until municipal ownership and operation of street car

service could be established, Mayor Johnson undertook at once to reduce fares to three cents.

He encountered obstructions at every turn. Though the council fell in with his plans, Senator Hanna did not. As leader of the Republican party, Hanna enlisted his party organization in the work of saving his highly-watered street car interests.

Similar opposition was encountered by Mayor Johnson in his efforts to equalize taxation. In this fight Senator Hanna was able to enlist the practical sympathies, not only of investors in street car stock, but also of all the tax-dodging interests. And at last, when every other device had failed him, he secured from an attorney general who owed the office to him, and from a Supreme Court composed principally of railroad lawyers, a decision declaring unconstitutional the whole system of municipal charters which had so long prevailed in Ohio.

Considered in itself, this decision was doubtless right. But when it is remarked that Mr. Hanna's attorney general refused to proceed against the Republican city of Cincinnati, even while he was proceeding against the Democratic city of Cleveland; when it is remembered that it was not until the city of Cleveland had been "Johnsonized" and corporate privileges there were consequently in jeopardy, that the Supreme Court discerned how fundamentally unconstitutional the Ohio municipal system was; and when it is considered, withal, that only such a decision could save corporate privileges from Johnson's relentless onslaught—when these things are noted, one may be pardoned for suspecting the entire good faith of that revolutionary decision.

The burden was now upon the legislature of creating a new and uniform system of municipal government for the whole State. For that purpose a special session was called. But the legislature had no opportunity to work out a code for the benefit of the people. Hanna, of Cleveland, with his personal interests, and "Boss" Cox, of Cincinnati, with his, compromised upon a code, which they then whipped unceremoniously through the legislature.

With reference to Cleveland, this code-making went upon the assumption that Johnson could be beaten at the municipal election. Although that was after Johnson's first election, and his subsequent victories in the legislature and the school elections, it was before he had carried Cleveland for Bigelow, the Democratic candidate for

Secretary of State; and Hanna believed that with party lines drawn closer than before, and the expenditure of large sums of money, Johnson's career could be brought to a close.

At the same time he threw an anchor or two to windward. Lest Johnson might possibly be elected himself, the code was fixed to render him incapable of making appointments without the assent of two-thirds of the council, the governor to appoint when the mayor and two-thirds of the council did not agree. It also abolished that excellent feature of the "federal plan" which allowed the mayor to participate in all debates in the council, and department heads to participate in all debates there on matters relating to their departments respectively.

The whole thing was as well calculated as the conflict of interests between Cox and Hanna would permit, to minimize Johnson's influence. But the recent election (pp. 1, 5, 39), a wonderful vindication of Johnson's leadership, has knocked it all "into a cocked hat," and a pretty badly battered cocked hat at that.

Not only was the mayor himself re-elected, along with all his executive associates on the Democratic ticket, but out of 32 councilmen 23 are Johnson Democrats. This gives to Mayor Johnson's civic policies a clear two-thirds majority, and disappoints all expectations of gubernatorial interference with appointments.

One of the first things the new councilmanic majority did was to agree in caucus to restore the old prerogative of the mayor and heads of departments to participate in the discussions of the council. By one of those oversights which so often interfere with the best-laid plans of mice, etc., the code makers had given to city councils the right to invite non-members to address them, and upon the basis of this authority the two-thirds majority of the Cleveland council has unanimously agreed to vote for a rule—it will doubtless be adopted next week—to extend a standing invitation to the mayor to address the council at any time during its sessions upon any pertinent subject; and to the heads of departments a standing invitation to address it upon subjects relating to their respective departments.

When the council met on the 4th for the first time, its principal duty was to elect the city clerk, who is also clerk of the council, an officer under the new code whose functions extend in many directions and whose

abilities and incorruptibility are considerations of more than ordinary importance. For this place, 24 of the 32 councilmen (one Republican bolting his own party) voted for Peter Witt. In view of the qualifications, mental and moral, which this office requires in a city government to be administered in new ways and with clean hands, the almost unanimous election of Mr. Witt is significant. Under Mayor Johnson's first administration he was the trusted chief of that tax bureau which Mr. Johnson established, and which, for extensively exposing the unfair taxation methods of Cleveland, was closed by hostile proceedings instigated by Senator Hanna and the tax-dodging interests with which he is bound up.

When the council had been organized and its officers elected and sworn in, Mayor Johnson read his inaugural address or message, printed in full elsewhere in these columns. It was listened to with interested attention, and hearty applause greeted its principal points. The subjects of absolute home rule, low fare and public ownership, and of carrying the local fight over the State for the purpose of securing local rights, were received with especial enthusiasm. Immediately after the mayor's address, the initial steps were taken under the law for realizing his two immediate plans—public lighting and power service and low street car fares.

The whole scene was exhilarating. Not merely because of the banks and beds of flowers, curiously shaped and beautifully contrasted, which decorated the council chamber, nor of the crowded spaces on the floor and in the gallery, nor yet of the natural enthusiasm of the successful candidates who were inducted into office and of their friends; but because the observer could not but feel that here was a city which, in spite of peculiar difficulties, had set out upon a sensible policy for demonstrating the splendid possibilities of democracy in municipal government. No one could fail to sympathize with that manifest and more than pardonable pride of nearly all concerned, to which Mayor Johnson gave expression, when, in inviting them to join him in making of Cleveland a model municipality, he said: "What greater honor could any of us desire? What object could there be more worthy of any man's ambition than to succeed in giving strength and tone and exalted character to the municipality of which he is a citizen? to succeed in

effectively cooperating in the task of establishing in his own city a municipal government upon the basis of equal justice, and thereby setting an example of practical democracy to the civilized world." L. F. P.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, May 7.

On the 4th the city of Cleveland came out from under the Supreme Court decree which for several months has rested upon this city alone of all the Ohio cities (vol. v, p. 536), and organized a new government under the new municipal code of the State. As soon as the city council, elected in April (pp. 5, 39), had completed its organization, the preliminary steps were taken to establish a lighting and power system under city ownership and operation, and also to revive the obstructed proceedings (vol. v. 187, 201) for the establishment of the 3-cent fare street car system.

The street car situation in Chicago (p. 59) is becoming clarified. On the 30th the special investigating committee of the lower House (p. 60) unanimously reported that the evidence produced before it did not establish any real attempt corruptly to influence Speaker Miller, and that there was no reasonable or substantial ground for a sensational editorial entitled "Boodle," published in the Chicago Inter Ocean on April 21, and regarding which the editor of the Inter Ocean had been examined by the committee. On the subject of gavel rule by the Speaker (p. 59) the committee expressed in its report the hope that this episode will mark the end in Illinois "of that unconstitutional practice known as gavel rule, whereby the constitutional right to a roll call has so frequently been refused in the legislative bodies." It expressed the further hope that it will also stop reckless and unfounded newspaper attacks calculated to influence legislative action unduly. When this report had been made the House took up the Mueller bill (pp. 50-51) for allowing cities to own and operate or lease their street car systems. By an almost unanimous vote it ordered the chairman of the committee on municipal corporations to report the bill at once, and he did so, but without recommendation. Several amendments proposed by