

A vigorous fight is to be made in the Seventh senatorial district of Illinois, by both democratic-Democrats and democratic-Republicans, to smash the Republican machine, which is controlled by John Humphrey. Humphrey's name is most familiar in connection with the infamous bills for turning over the streets of Chicago to street car monopolies for 50 years. He represents that side of the issues between plutocracy and a genuine democracy which are crystallizing in American politics. The district is nominally Republican by a large majority; but Humphrey is opposed by Western Starr, whose democracy is of the Lincoln brand, and whose election against so pestiferous a ring as Humphrey's is prophesied with confidence by men of both parties. Mr. Starr was a Republican when the Republican party was democratic. He became a Democrat when the party of Lincoln was seized by the Hannas and Humphreys and Morgans and their like and dragged away from its democratic moorings into the whirlpool of imperialism and plutocracy. Though nominated by the Democratic convention, he was put forward by Republicans as well as Democrats. He stands for equitable taxation in the profoundest sense; for municipal ownership of municipal monopolies; and for government by the people instead of the politicians, through direct legislation. We bespeak for him the support of democrats of all parties. In his district and between him and Humphrey, the issue of democracy or plutocracy, of people or politicians, of rights or privileges, is distinctly drawn, and each side is admirably represented by its candidate.

A good word at a right time has been spoken by the Albany Argus, in connection with the case of Rebecca J. Taylor. Some anonymous correspondent had rebuked it for approving her criticism of the public department in which she worked, and it replied:

We must get rid of the un-American and dangerous notion that heads of

departments are "our rulers," and that an extravagant, sycophantic, personal loyalty is due to these so-called "rulers." The employes of our government, whether they be heads of departments, or clerks, serve the Hosts, that is the people of the state. Their duty is to the people. They are all alike servants; there is not a "ruler" among them. If one of them knows that a department is being run, by its temporary, transient head, in an extravagant, scandalous or hurtful manner, then it is his duty—his highest and most sacred duty—to let his real employer, the people, know the facts as to the mismanagement of the public business.

One of the most dangerous tendencies in American life is that which inculcates peculiar respect for officeholders. An officeholder should be respected for fidelity to his trust, and whether he is faithful or not his official acts should be obeyed in the interest of good order; but he should not be respected merely because he holds office, and above all he should never be exalted in the public mind above criticism. When "respect for the office" leads to toleration of bad service it is time to throw it off. The fact that officials, from lowest to highest, are not rulers, but servants, should never be lost sight of.

Home rule in taxation is forging ahead as one of the reforms by means of which the people of every locality can regulate taxes to suit themselves. Several local conventions of the Democratic party have adopted it, especially in the West, among others that of Traill county, North Dakota, which puts the demand in this excellent form:

A demand for early submission to the people of an amendment to the state constitution providing for the granting to counties and cities of the right to raise their own taxes in their own way by assessing or exempting personal property and improvements as they see fit.

This is the reform known as the Bucklin amendment, which is to be voted upon by the people of Colorado next November. It is being vigorously fought by the land grant railroads and Eastern land speculators, for whom the Republican papers are acting as organs in the fight, the large Democratic papers doing

their share by saying nothing. But the labor organizations are supporting the measure loyally, and the indications are that it will be adopted. Those who are promoting the movement in Colorado are handicapped for lack of funds to familiarize the people with its nature and anti-monopoly tendency.

THE RAILROAD TRUST.

The so-called "community of interest" or "railroad trust," which controls directly about 90 per cent. of the vital American steam railroad lines, and partially controls or influences the policy of the remainder, is made up of a coterie of capitalists who control this enormous amount of railway through the medium of what is known in Wall street as "the group principle."

That is to say, the bulk of the controlled mileage is divided into several great systems of railway lines, each system or group of lines being dominated by a particular financier or set of financiers. Up to a recent date there were but five such groups, but developments of the last few months have increased the number to seven.

The original five groups, which are known as "the Morgan," "the Vanderbilt," "the Pennsylvania," "the Gould-Rockefeller" and the "Harriman-Kuhn, Loeb" groups control in all about 122,400 miles of railway. If, however, we add the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system, which is partially identified with the Morgan interests, we make a total for the five groups of 130,260 miles. In addition to this there should now be embraced in this "community of interest" two more large groups of recent origin, one being the Rock Island or "Moore" group, embracing about 7,200 miles, and the other the "Pierce" or St. Louis & San Francisco group, consisting of 4,301 miles. Thus, included in the seven groups or systems, there is (counting the Atchison system as a part of the "Morgan" group) a total of 141,563 miles of railroad directly embraced in a "community of interest" or "trust."

The following table shows the dif-