ing full value of site and improvements separately, together with other details as to real estate values of much more than local interest, can be had of the "Supervisor of the City Record," City Hall, New York City. It may be described as "Section 1, Blocks 1 to 315, Borough of Manhattan," of the assessment roll supplement of the City Record. Reports of other sections are ready for delivery at the same price—25 cents each, plus 10 cents for postage.

Whoever takes an active part in public affairs is subject to suspicion. A poor man who champions something in which there is manifestly no "boodle," is usually suspected of harboring envy of the "successful." A rich man who champions something in which there is no "boodle," is usually suspected of being a demagogue seeking popularity with the lower mob. Anybody who champions something in which "boodle" is probable or possible, is likely to be suspected of being a "boodler." Oftentimes these suspicions are malicious. Yet any of them may in particular cases be well-founded. Experience goes far to prove that the last of the three is the least frequently indulged, the most reasonable in its nature, and oftenest the best founded in fact.

We are living in an age of graft. From the railroad passes with which most legislators and not a few judges are brought into pleasant relations with corporation influences, to the large sums that business interests contribute for the purpose of electing "safe and sane" men to office, we are engulfed in a flood of grafting. All of it is not vulgar—not even splendidly vulgar. Social aspirations, political ambitions, professional careers, are largely dependent on the good will of men who profit by governmental favor. They find this field for grafting cheap. Men who are too honest to be bought with "dirty dollars," will often serve respectable grafters faithfully for the social favors, political prestige or professional advancement which those grafters command. But much of current grafting is brazen bold. Although it assumes garbs of gentility which in Tweed's day would have seemed superfluous, it makes few pretenses of virtue. Readers of Lincoln Steffens's articles in McClure's ought to be pretty well convinced that this is so.

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Mr. Steffens's latest article, that in McClure's for October, is on the politics of Wisconsin. Its revelations make meaty food for thought. Senator Spooner denies what it reveals about him; but his denial is like the South Carolina darky's lame back, which was "powerful weak." Mr. Steffens confirms by this article his previous intimations that the business classes and their "safe and sane" tools in office are the worst enemies of the Republic. One of his incidental observations is particularly striking. We do not remember having seen the fact noticed in print before; yet it is a very significant fact, which can hardly have escaped any observer. "I have noticed," writes Mr. Steffens, "that a public official who steals, or, like Lieutenant Governor Lee, of Missouri, betrays his constituents, may propose to be governor without being accused of ambition. 'They' seem to think a boodler's aspirations are natural. He may have a hundred notorious vices; they do not matter. But a 'reformer,' a man who wants to serve his people, he must be a white-robed, spotless angel, or 'they' will whisper that he is—what? A thief? Oh, no; that is nothing; but that he is ambitious." This is said apropos of La Follette, whom the grafters accuse of ambition, having nothing else to accuse him of yet feeling the force of the onslaught he is making upon their graft structures. But its application is universal. It is so common that one may infer, with the almost absolute certainty of being right, that the public man who is reputed in high business or social circles to be "ambitious" or a "demagogue" is raising havoc with some kind of graft. Conversely the reputation in those circles of being "safe and sane" is almost as sure an indication of fidelity to high grade grafters and devotion to their profitable privileges.

In the controversy over the Chicago traction question which has for several days been lively in the local papers, there have been only two important contributions favoring the proposed compromise ordinance. One is from Alderman Foreman, who, as chairman of the transportation committee, is the nominal sponsor for the ordinance. The other is from Edwin Burritt Smith, who, as leading special counsel to the committee, is responsible for its legal perfection. Mr. Smith's contribution is only a republication of his letter in reply to Judge Tuley (p. 352) first published several weeks ago. Neither Mr. Foreman nor Mr. Smith have met the issues which they themselves have raised. The most strenuous reasons for urging the adoption of the ordinance are, first, that it would give the city, at the end of 13 years, a free hand in dealing with the traction question by ridding it of the obstacle of obstructive litigation; and, second, that it would meantime secure good traction service. That the ordinance would produce those results is denied by Judge Tuley and Judge Dunne, and their opinions in that particular are buttressed by the published opinions of a considerable number of practicing lawyers of unquestioned ability and respectable standing. Yet Mr. Smith and Mr. Foreman both ignore these objections. They assume that the results named would be accomplished, and defend the ordinance upon that assumption. They neglect to show that the city could not be tied up with litigation at the end of 13 years under the ordinance, as well as now without it; and they make no attempt to explain how it would be practicable under the ordinance, any better than without it, to compel the traction companies to furnish good service.

Another singular thing about the Chicago traction controversy is this public admission on the 25th, by the corporation counsel, Edgar B. Tolman, through the Chicago Tribune of that date:

> If the street car companies do not come to terms with the city a municipal street railway system founded on the Chicago Passenger railway lines and the expired City railway and Union Traction franchises undoubtedly will be the next step on the part of the city.

Why the next step if the companies "do not come to terms"? Why not the next step without waiting for them to come to terms? One of the favorite reasons given for the compromise is its alleged necessity, owing to the professed inability of the city to establish a system of its own. But Mr. Tolman now admits, what the "hair-brained cranks" of the municipal ownership movement have repeatedly assured the "safe and sane" representatives of the city, that the city is free to found a system of its own, on the basis of expired and expiring franchises which the 99-year claims do not touch. If the city is free to do that, why surrender its freedom in a compromise of such dubious value to the city and such manifest value to the traction companies as the city's representatives are trying to "club" the companies into accepting? Municipal ownership and operation of public utilities have proved everywhere to be superior to private ownership and operation. Not only is this true abroad; it is true in this country. Even the worst waterworks in the United States, for instance, that are municipally owned and operated, are better than the best that are privately owned and operated. For the superiority of private systems of public service none but fools and partisans of privilege any longer contend. That element of practicability is out of the question. The question is one of legal power and financial ability. But Mr. Tolman admits that Chicago has legal power and financial ability to establish a street car system. Then why not drop this higgling with "widows and orphans" and establish it?

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What is probably entitled to rank as the least intelligent and most blindly partisan effort at obstructing municipal ownership in Chicago is the objection of the Daily News to the emergent petition now in circulation with the object of preventing the railroading through of the compromise ordinance. Supplementing the principal question on that petition, the one relating to the ordinance now pending, are two others. They are intended to elicit an expression of public sentiment on the issue of compromise, and to anticipate such pettifogging on the part of the traction interests as might resort to verbal changes in the ordinance for the purpose of insisting that a popular vote against it is thereby nullified. The supplementary questions are as follows: "(2) Shall the city council pass any ordinance granting a franchise to the Chicago City Railway Company? (3) Shall the city council pass any ordinance granting a franchise to any street railway company?" To these questions the Daily News objects that they are so framed as to preclude the possibility of an affirmative vote upon them. The reason given is that an affirmative vote would "approve in advance of any loose action the council might choose to take." This borders close on the silly. Questions of general legislative policy, popularly declared, are not to be interpreted by schoolmaster English when their meaning would be thereby confused and is clear without it. It is perfectly clear in this case that a negative vote on those two questions would mean that the voter is opposed to the policy of granting any franchises. It follows, with equal clearness, that an affirmative vote would be the reverse of that, and mean that the voter is in favor of the policy of granting franchises. By no reasonable interpretation could the affirmative voter be supposed to favor any and every kind of franchise ordinance. When the vote is reported everybody will understand that the "No" vote means that that many oppose the policy of granting franchises, while the aggregate "Yes" vote means that that many favor the policy of granting franchises. To construe the affirmative vote as intended to license improvident franchises would be to pettifog. To insist upon such construction in advance is to pettifog in advance.

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That the petition against the proposed traction ordinance is not only making tremendous headway but expresses the popular sentiment of the city, is evident from the hysterical manner in which corporation organs have begun to fight it. When the Mayor calmly proposed to railroad this ordinance through (p. 342), in spite of last Spring's vote against its principle and in spite of his own election pledges, unless a referendum petition under the "public policy" law were immediately presented against it, these papers echoed the Mayor's jeering advice to the opponents of the ordinance to stop talking and "get busy" with a petition. It was supposed at that time that the work of getting up such an enormous petition could not be accomplished. But since it is more than half complete, they sing another song. They find now that these repeated petitions are a "nuisance." Next they will demand the repeal of the "public policy" law. Reduced to the last analysis, all this outcry against referendums means no more than that the men who inspire it are grafters, of one species and another, who fear popular government. Their ideal of government is government by corporations in which they own stock. That kind of government is "business" government.

It is well that periodicals are giving publicity to the fact of the increase of child labor, which is said to amount to 33 per cent. within the past ten years. This, in spite of the agitation of certain good people against the employment of children of school age, is