

be mayor. He has severed his business connections and wants to devote his life, in the capacity of a private citizen having ideals of good government, to furthering reforms in the direction of freeing the people from the burdens of monopoly. But if the street car ring doesn't want him to be mayor, and evidently its feelings that way are very strong, the people of Cleveland could hardly do better than elect him whether he wishes to be elected or not. With a term in the mayor's chair and a council that would cooperate, Tom L. Johnson would come nearer than any other mayor to settling the street car question in Cleveland in favor of the people. He would also promote in other desirable ways that rational radicalism which is the only true and safe conservatism.

Gratifying news of a local political character comes from St. Louis. The Meriwether mayoralty campaign of 1897 is to be reorganized in the spring. No leading candidate has yet been thought about, but intelligent preliminary steps in organization are being taken. "Kitchen" conventions are organizing throughout the city. These are little gatherings in private houses. Only a dozen or two voters are expected at any one of them, but each person in attendance is urged to hold another in his own house. In this manner the endless chain principle is utilized. The open campaign will not begin before the middle of March. After that, the "kitchen" conventions having broken ground, large mass meetings will be held until the election. In 1897 Meriwether, pitted against both the republican and the democratic machines, polled 18,258 votes. His old supporters believe that the reorganization can add to that vote this year; and, in view of the effects of the street car strike of last spring, that it may win the election. This political movement aims at municipal ownership of public utilities. Its weakness is the lack of local newspaper

support, but hopes are entertained of overcoming that by inducing the Chicago American to issue a St. Louis edition.

We are advised by Senator Bucklin, of Colorado, that the report of the Colorado senate revenue commission, of which he is chairman, containing the commission's investigation into the Australasian land tax, has been exhausted. This is to be regretted, for the report is one of the most valuable official documents on taxation ever yet produced. More satisfactory is the news that the recommendations of the commission are commanding favorable consideration. Ex-Gov. Thomas approved them in his final message, and Gov. Orrin indorsed them in his inaugural address, while the recently elected senator, Patterson, supports them personally and in his newspaper—the Rocky Mountain News. The senate committee on the constitution has made a favorable report upon the recommendations, they having been referred to it; and it is believed that the proposed constitutional amendment embodying them will receive the requisite two-thirds vote in the senate. When the fact is noted that this amendment would allow the legislature to provide for levying the Australasian land tax—an ad valorem tax on land to the exclusion of improvements—for state purposes, and would empower counties to adopt it by popular vote for county purposes, as a matter of local option, the great importance and far reaching possibilities of the measure become immediately evident.

Missouri, as well as Colorado, has taken up the subject of local option in taxation, though in a more cumbersome and less direct manner. A resolution is now pending in the legislature of that state looking to a constitutional amendment under which the state would reserve to itself the power of taxing corporate property,

including franchises, and would get revenue from no other source except from license and inheritance taxes, and from fines, forfeitures and fees of public officers. The taxation of real estate and personal property would be left entirely to the localities respectively in which the real estate is situated and the owners of the personalty reside.

It is to be deeply regretted that President McKinley, by appointing a son of Justice Harlan to important office, and the son by not promptly rejecting the appointment, should have placed that distinguished member of the supreme court in a predicament in which, should he support the president's colonial policy in the pending decision of the court, his verdict can never be quite free from suspicion of sinister influences. The president's action is especially culpable, for it exposes not only Justice Harlan but all the other judges who may decide in favor of the president's policy to like suspicion. One judge having been thus openly approached with the disturbing influences of presidential favor, covert approaches to others will inevitably be suspected even by men who incline to look upon judges as beings of superior integrity.

The appointment of young Harlan is more significant perhaps, in that it exposes Mr. McKinley's conception—or is it Mr. Hanna's?—of the manner in which favorable judicial action may be secured, and tends to undermine popular confidence in the judiciary. To the ordinary mind, unaccustomed to worshiping presidents and not disposed to regard judges as demi-gods, the appointment of Justice Harlan's son means nothing less than that Mr. McKinley hoped thereby to influence the action of the supreme court upon a question of vital importance to the principal policy of his administration. It might mean more; but to the average mind it could not mean less. What public necessity was there for