

sense. But how much of that sort of equipment Mr. Harrison's political trainers credit Bryan with may be inferred from their far and wide advertisement of him this week, as having committed himself to Harrison's summer-solstice candidacy. If Mr. Bryan were guilty of so foolish a thing, his bitterest enemy could do him no worse turn than to advertise it. If he is not guilty of it, only an enemy or a dolt could couple his name with a faked-up story that he is. For our part, until very much better evidence is forthcoming than the Chicago ring can furnish, we prefer to believe that Mr. Bryan is still the honest and level-headed leader of American democracy that his whole career thus far has shown him to be. To believe this, is to know that he has not agreed to lend his name and influence to the ambitious, intriguing and politically treacherous mayor of Chicago, whom he must know to be without political principle, and whom he cannot but suspect of having traded the presidential vote of Chicago in the autumn of 1900 for the mayoralty vote of Chicago in the spring of 1901.

On mere grounds of ordinary political expediency, Mr. Bryan could not support Mayor Harrison's absurd pretensions. Harrison would be unable to carry his own state in the national convention. He could not carry his own party in his own state at the election. And the members of his own party who would vote against him if he were the candidate are the class of men who constitute the backbone of Bryan's political strength. But that is not the only consideration. Mr. Bryan has thus far confirmed the faith of democratic Democrats in his devotion to democratic principles. They are confident that he means it when he says he stands for these principles regardless of men. They believe, therefore, that although he is not himself a candidate, yet that he will not so entangle himself in the petty intrigues of ambitious small fry that he cannot

be the candidate if circumstances demand it. And circumstances might demand this. If a heavy cloud of hard times should darken the land before the convention of 1904, and public opinion should attribute the stagnation and suffering to an iniquitous money system, which is not improbable and certainly not impossible, then there would be only one conceivable Democratic candidate; and he would be Bryan, whether he desired the candidacy or not. Should this contingency not arise, it is improbable, since Mr. Bryan has declared himself out of the field, that there would be a demand for his nomination. But, in any event, he would be regarded as one, if not the principal one, of the party leaders, with a relation to the party of too delicate a nature to warrant him in consenting to entanglements with any candidate three years before the convention, much less with one whose political character, policies and methods place him in the category of the impossible.

Congressman Hull has returned from the Philippines. He throws further light upon the motives which led this great American republic to make war upon its ally, the Philippine republic, when in an interview he says that he is "convinced that we only fairly guess the richness of our Philippine possessions." "Mindanao," he tells us, "is full of gold." While there he saw a nugget as big as his fist. And he complains of the Spooner law as "most unwise legislation" by which "we are badly handicapped," because it temporarily holds back enterprising Yankees from grabbing Philippine land. Mr. Hull is the man who serves his country in congress by supporting laws creating privileges in the Philippines, and makes his living by working the privileges. One remark in his interview is significant with reference to the pacification of the islands. It is this: "If troops were withdrawn the civil governments would fall at once, as they are only maintained by the presence of the soldiers." Apro-

pos of this remark, isn't that the way the tsar maintains in Russia what he also calls civil government?

This curious controversy has been submitted to us for an opinion: "In a discussion A argues that there never was manhood suffrage in the United States until 1865-67; whereas B argues that there was in theory, but that Negroes were barred as being not men?" Such a controversy cannot be settled, because it turns upon individual motives. The fact is, and to this both disputants agree, that Negroes were not generally allowed to vote prior to the close of the civil war. Consequently, until that time the principle of manhood suffrage was not operative. But whether the dominant race was governed in this violation of fundamental principle by indifference to the principle, or by a conviction that Negroes were not men, or by other reasons, no one can tell. The probability is that the governing motive was either indifference or hostility to the principle. We do not believe that any intelligent person does now or ever did believe that Negroes are not men. All professions of such belief were most probably made to evade an embarrassing issue. In our opinion manhood suffrage, which includes womanhood suffrage, has always existed in theory as a fundamental principle of the American government. The declaration of independence admits of no other interpretation, and the constitution rests in terms upon the consent not of the white people alone, nor of the male people alone, but of all the people of the United States. If the principle is as yet inoperative, that is not because it does not exist. It is because its operation is obstructed.

A well-known Canadian, the journalist, author and caricaturist, J. W. Bengough, criticises the admirable article by Charles E. Russell reprinted in these columns in the issue of August 24, at page 316, in which Mr. Russell castigates the British government for its prosecution of a

devastating war of conquest against the Boers. We agree entirely with Mr. Bengough's criticism, and we are not sure that Mr. Russell himself would object to it upon the whole. In this criticism Mr. Bengough declares himself at a loss to determine whether the Russell article "should be dealt with as a specimen of monumental 'gall,' a phenomenal piece of impudence, or as a keen satire on the American policy in the Philippines." He concludes, however—and in this we are not so sure of Mr. Russell's acquiescence—that "both descriptions will fit, though the irony is quite unconscious, and Mr. Russell's article is worth noting as another interesting case of cross-eyed journalism." Mr. Bengough then proceeds:

Readers of the Public at all events will see that every expression he uses in denouncing Britain will apply with equal force and truth to the United States. But, alas, there are only a few journals which, like the Public, are great enough to grasp the cause of humanity and to deal with it truthfully, above the level of a bastard "patriotism."

There are more American journals of that kind than Mr. Bengough supposes. Indeed, there are so many that it is almost invidious to name any. Yet some are conspicuous. Perhaps the greatest is the Springfield Republican. The Nation is another. Then there are the City and State of Philadelphia, the Star of San Francisco and the Harlequin of New Orleans, all able and influential weekly papers. To these must be added the Johnstown Democrat, which, next to the Springfield Republican, is easily the best provincial daily in the United States. We repeat that there are a host of others, little and big; but these are notable for having consistently and persistently drawn the parallel to which Mr. Bengough calls attention.

An official copy of the Booth apportionment law of Oregon, upon which we commented early in the summer (p. 180), is now before us. This law completely abolishes boards

of apportionment, and doing away with all discretion with reference to the subject, makes the equalization of taxes a mere matter of simple calculation. Any competent clerk can perform the work. Following are the clauses of the law which prescribe its operation in the equalization of state taxes:

In order to ascertain the proportion of such taxes to be paid by the several counties, said state officers shall ascertain from the reports of expenditures of the several counties on file in the office of the secretary of state, the average amount of expenditure in each county during a period of five years; and each county shall pay such proportion of said state taxes as the average amount of expenditure for said period bears to the total amount of expenditures in all of the counties of the state, such computations to be made by said state officers in January, 1905, and in January in each fifth year thereafter. Until the January, 1905, computation, the proportion of the state taxes to be paid by the several counties shall be set out in the following table, which is based on the assessments of the several counties for the past five years.

At this point in the law the table of assessments is inserted. This device for securing fair and incorruptible equalization is so simple that it would seem to require only to be explained to be forthwith accepted. But old evils die hard, even when their bad character is known and oppressively felt.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer has given Mayor Johnson so much intelligent and effective support in his fight for equitable taxation that a veering editorial in its issue of the 3d is to be regretted. The editorial in question, entitled "Taxing Rights and Rights to Tax," is an unmistakable rebuke to the Johnson administration for its efforts to make railroads pay the same taxes, value for value, as other Cleveland taxpayers. It is directed specifically at the attempts of the administration to tax the values of riparian or lake front rights, largely owned by railroad companies and hitherto wholly neglected by the taxing officials. The spirit of the Plain Dealer's rebuke cannot be encouraging to advocates

of fair and equitable taxation. It is altogether too suggestive of railroad influence. Not so, however, with the Plain Dealer's argument in support of its rebuke. Thoughtfully considered, the argument supports a conclusion the very opposite of what seems to have been intended. Though the article gives the case to the railroads it gives the reasoning to Mayor Johnson.

"The Plain Dealer," says this article, "advises a broad and liberal policy, one founded on justice, one that will encourage the owners of lake frontage to build it into docks and cover it with warehouses." That is an excellent policy. But which is the more likely to encourage improvement of the lake front, the policy of allowing valuable riparian rights to go untaxed, so that this frontage can be held out of use indefinitely at no expense to the dog-in-the-manger owners, or the policy of taxing those values so that the owners cannot afford to allow them to remain unused? There can be but one answer. The way to foster improvement is to discourage mere appropriation without use; and that can be done by taxing the salable value of the right, whether used or not. It could be done still more effectively if all improvements were exempt. But the law does not permit this, though Mayor Johnson is doing his best to get his fellow citizens of Ohio to see that it ought to.

As an illustration of the eccentricity of the Plain Dealer's new position, consider this quotation from its ambiguous editorial:

Under the common law and under statute law there are certain rights pertaining to property on the borders of navigable rivers, lakes and the ocean. These are called riparian rights, and that means the right to fill in the land to the line of navigation or deep water. This land, of course, may be covered by buildings placed on piles. It may be private grounds, and when so brought above the surface and utilized it becomes subject to taxation, like any other property.

Could any policy be less broad or less