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The difference between the Chicago City Railway company and private employers should be kept constantly in view in connection with the Chicago street car strike. Nor should it be ignored when the strike ends.

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Private employees have a right to resist strikes by any means they please except lawless means. Their business is their own. The public have given them no privileges, and they owe the public no duty. Not so with this street car company. The public have given it traction privileges in the streets. They have done so with the understanding that the company shall furnish the public with traction accommodations. Its business, therefore, is not a private business. It is not altogether the company's own business, but is charged with a public use. The company does owe a duty to the public. Its duty is to furnish traction accommodation uninterruptedly. Nothing excuses it from the performance of this duty but obstacles which cannot reasonably be overcome.

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No such obstacles have existed. The company could have ended the strike at any minute by agreeing to arbitrate its dispute with its employes. It could have prevented the strike before it began by consenting to submit that dispute to arbitration. There is therefore no reasonable excuse for its gross breach of duty to the public. No matter what any dispute between such a company and its employes may be about, arbitration is a reasonable method for settling it.

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The point that some things cannot reasonably be arbitrated is the barest pretense. That point itself is as reasonable an issue for arbitration as any other. If the arbitrators were shown that any issue was not a reasonable issue for arbitration, they could so decide, and the strikers would be bound as securely as by their decision on any other point. The sum and substance of the matter is this, that the street car company has set in to break up a labor union and has violated its duty to the public in order to accomplish that purpose.

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Have the public no redress in such cases. They would have if their representatives were representing the interests of the public, their newspapers were serving the interests of their readers, and their civic leaders were sensitive to public rights. But in Chicago that is not so. They represent and serve the interests of a few powerful capitalists of Chicago. This is what has given currency to so many frivolous excuses for allowing the street car company to ignore the rights of the public. Judges never tire of telling us that the law secretes a remedy for every grievance. But when your newspapers are under the dictation of large advertisers, as are the newspapers of Chicago; when your aldermen are ruled by large "business" interests, as are the stronger members of the Chicago council; when your public and professional men are "jollied" or intimidated by a local capitalism that ramifies business and social life and can make or mar careers, as are most of those of Chicago—in these circumstances the secretory glands of the law are much more likely to become inactive than when it is labor interests that conflict with public rights. Let the leaders in Chicago civic life courageously throw off the anaesthesia of mind and morals in which this deadening local capitalism has enveloped them, and the Chicago traction question would be settled speedily and settled right. There would then be no more street car strikes.

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Greeks bearing gifts always invite suspicion, and the Chicago Journal's awakened solicitude for municipal ownership is no exception. That journalistic handmaiden of Chicago plutocracy is notoriously hostile to municipal ownership of the Chicago street car system,—not only immediately, but yesterday, to-day and forever. "Public service is a private snap," expresses its highest civic ideal. Yet it had the insolence on the 24th to object most strenuously to the movement for municipal ownership immediately, because, in its opinion, that movement is inimical to municipal ownership! It is safe to say that if the Chicago Journal were really of the opinion that the movement for municipal ownership immediately is inimical to municipal ownership, it would support that movement with all the editorial power at its command. But the gratuitous advice of this extremely disinterested newspaper is more than suspicious. It consists of a loose collection of arguments for the Chicago City Railway company, transmuted into the form of advice to municipal ownership advocates.

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"The committee on local transportation is endeavoring to bring about opportunity for municipal ownership in the quickest and surest way," says the Journal. But in fact this committee of the

Chicago city council is known to consist for the most part of aldermen who represent the Chicago City Railway company and its coterie of Chicago capitalists, much more faithfully than they represent their constituents. They proclaim their opposition to municipal ownership. Shall they be trusted to promote municipal ownership?

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"The committee is pledged to no traction settlement which does not provide for modern service, liberal compensation, a waiver of the 99-year act, and a municipal ownership option," continues the Journal. To whom is the committee so pledged? And what of it? "Compensation" is only another name for secretly taxing street car passengers in the interest of the very capitalistic interests that control the Chicago Street Railway company. "Waiver of the 99-year act"! What would that waiver be worth if the company chose to fight it in the courts at the end of the contract, twenty years hence, and were met with an opposition as timid or complacent as the official opposition that confronts it now? Under threats of litigation the people of twenty years hence could be bilked as easily as the Journal would have them bilked to-day. Is it replied that the company would not be so dishonorable? Any man or company dishonorable enough to claim rights under so corrupt a law as the 99-year act would be dishonorable enough to do anything else that the courts would allow.

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"Municipal ownership option"! What kind of municipal ownership option? Look at the "tentative franchise" which the local transportation committee recommends. It does give such an option. But there is a proviso. In order to make the option effective the city council in office 19 years hence must serve notice of acceptance during a specified twelve months. Otherwise the option fails. And thereupon the company would acquire some indeterminate contract rights, stuffed full of litigious possibilities with which it might pry out another 20-year franchise. Though the people were insistent upon accepting the option, they would be balked if a majority of that particular council in that particular twelvemonth were either honestly or corruptly of opinion then, as the local transportation committee is of opinion now, that "we are not yet ready for municipal ownership."

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"An attempt to secure municipal ownership at once would drive the traction companies into falling back on the 99-year act," pursues the ingenuous Journal. But they have fallen back upon that already. Were the 99-year act out of the way, the traction problem in Chicago would cease to be a problem even to that timid official contingent who are fighting it with a feather.

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But the Journal goes on: "You would have to pay the traction companies for the value of their unexpired franchises; the Mueller bill so provides." Yes, the Mueller bill so provides. But the Mueller bill also provides for condemnation proceedings, under which these franchises would be valued by juries, whose verdicts would be final. When they were so valued, it would be found that their value is small indeed. The 99-year franchise would be dear at a dollar, and the unexpired odds-and-ends of shorter franchises wouldn't be worth much when the freed streets were taken over.

In connection with the question of labor unionism an analogy is often drawn between "organized labor" and "organized capital," and the labor union is consequently described as a trust. This is either thoughtless or unfair. Whatever else may be said against labor organization it does not monopolize labor, and cannot so long as its admissions to membership are as free as they are now. Herein there is a great difference between labor organizations and employers' organizations. Mr. Edward A. Moffett, editor of the "Bricklayer and Mason," brought out the point before the Civic Federation last Fall. Referring to the general refusal of trades unions to accept the overtures of employers' associations to work only for associated employers, he said: "Until membership in employers' associations can be attained with the same ease that membership can in the trades union, this amounts to asking the trade unions to help create a monopoly." He proceeded to explain further the difference between employers' associations and labor unions, in this forceful manner:

> An exclusive organization of employers aims at monopolizing the entire local business, and an employer from an outside locality finds it very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to be admitted to membership. Even in the case of the trade union that has no "open shops" whatever, a member of the national or international organization is admitted to the local union by merely depositing his traveling card, and a non-member, whose ability has been vouched for, may become a member and go to work upon the payment of a small initiation fee. I submit that there is no practical resemblance between the exclusive employers' association and the union shop.

Dun's Review is pleased to report that "labor organizations are accepting reductions in wages without controversy." They are like the deceased wife of the old German who, when asked if she was "reconciled to die," replied: "Mein Gott, she het to be!"

With the accumulating signs of business collapse is it any wonder that people are beginning to ask, with increasing emphasis, whether Bryan may not after all have been right about that money question?

JOHN Z. WHITE.

To most of our readers we are sure that the portrait of John Z. White, which accompanies this issue as a supplement, will be welcome. He is a man whose name is more familiar than his features to thousands of people whom The