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Ohio has missed a rare opportunity to lead in the great work now opening before the American people of practically developing sound principles of municipal government. She loses this opportunity because her legislature has succumbed to the dictation of Senator Hanna, of Cleveland, and Senator Foraker and "Boss" Cox, of Cincinnati, all of whom are obviously, and Senator Hanna confessedly, governed in their political conduct by solicitude for their own private interests.

The opportunity thus offered and rejected for setting a splendid example, came through a decision of the courts (p. 440) holding that the city charters of the State were unconstitutional for lack of uniformity. It became the duty of the legislature, therefore, to make a uniform municipal code. This work has now been done, under the dictation of the men named above, but they have turned the cause of good municipal government in Ohio backward and not forward. Local self-government is utterly rejected, while merit in the civil service is trifled with, and corporate interests in public property are carefully conserved.

How abjectly this Republican legislature has obeyed the Republican machine of Ohio and its corporation masters, is evident from the comments of independent Republican newspapers. The Chicago Evening Post, for instance, perhaps the best Western exponent of clean Republicanism, criticises these treacherous

representatives of its party in the following scathing terms:

There is no home rule in the new municipal code, and modern ideas of city organization and structure are deliberately discarded in favor of shifty considerations dictated by mere partisanship and "politics." The Ohio legislature has sinned against the light. It has disregarded enlightened precept and approved practice.

Perhaps the anti-home rule character of this code may escape casual notice. It was intended to. But the purpose is plain and the effect inevitable. The bureaus of the bureaucratic local governments which the code will set up in Ohio cities are well calculated to become the tool of a "boss." But their adaptability to that purpose is perfected by making the members appointive and giving the power of appointment, whenever the party "boss" desires it, to the governor of the State. Of course the code does not say so in terms. But he must be a babe in public affairs who does not know that it would be so in fact. For the boards are to be appointed by the mayor only in case his appointments are confirmed by two-thirds of the city council. If the city council fails to confirm the mayor's appointments by a two-thirds vote, as would usually be the case, the governor has absolute power to take the matter out of the hands of the municipality and appoint in his own discretion.

This is not Democratic criticism alone. The same Republican paper from which we have already quoted, characterizes the iniquitous provision in precisely the same way. After describing it, that Republican paper plainly says:

This is clearly an absurd and outrageous violation of home rule. This feature is strictly "political." It is aimed at Johnson and Jones, but it will affect many cities besides Cleveland and Toledo. In few Ohio municipalities

can either party command a two-thirds vote of the council. "Anyone with half an eye can see how the provision will work out," frankly says a Republican senator. Bossism and partisanship have triumphed over political principle and municipal interest and progress. The Ohio code will be condemned by every intelligent student of municipal government. It will react on and injure the Republican party of Ohio.

Whether the prediction of the Post is correct remains to be seen. But if the Republicans of Ohio vote Mr. Hanna's Republican ticket at the approaching election, after that shameless exhibition, they must be hopeless of civic regeneration. They, too, will have sinned against the light, and it would save them trouble to give a power of attorney for voting purposes to Hanna, Foraker and Cox, and be done with it.

In defense of the board feature of government, the Ohio "bosses" argue with unblushing effrontery that it is intended to prevent bossism! The spectacle of Hanna and Foraker as anti-boss men, to say nothing of Mr. Cox, their own boss, is as entertaining as a comic opera. Everyone knows that they are contriving to fasten bossism on their party and State. Without it, not one of the three could figure influentially in the politics of any party. And the board system which they have borrowed from Cincinnati, and imposed upon all the cities of the State, is essentially well fitted to perpetuate bossism. It would be so, even if the boards were appointive by local authority instead of by the governor, and even if they were elective. For boards divide responsibility so that the voter cannot hold anyone to account. At best they dabble in compromises; at the worst they are corrupt; and altogether they are inefficient. The true and only safe principle of local government is to place the ordinance-

making power in the hands of a local body, elected by districts, whose members can be held to responsibility by their respective constituents, and to place the executive power in the hands of an executive who must return frequently to the people for their approval. Such an executive cannot become a "boss" in the bad sense of the term. No one objects to a "boss," if you choose to call him that, who is frequently re-elected. Such a boss is an approved agent of the people. The bad "boss" is one who does not come before the people for approval, but from his private office pulls wires and dominates officials. President Diaz, of Mexico, is the kind of "boss" whom the people confide in because he serves them; "Boss" Tweed and "Boss" Croker were, as "Boss" Cox now is, the kind of "boss" who overrides the people and dictates to their servants.

Strenuous efforts are being made in the East to beguile the people of the country into petitioning for a permanent commission to regulate the tariff. Every man who signs that petition signs away part of his citizenship. "The tariff question should be divorced from politics entirely," is the cry of those who are pushing this movement for disfranchisement. Reflect a moment upon what that means. To divorce any public question from politics is to place it beyond the control of the voters. And this is the design of the plutocratic classes who are agitating for a permanent commission to adjust our taxes for us. Think of it. The most powerful lever of government, taxation, to be taken out of the hands of a people and given over to commissions packed in the interest of special privileges! Nor is the design confined to the subject of tariffs. The poorly concealed purpose of these enemies of democracy is to divest the voters of the country not only of power over the tariff, but of all power in public affairs. They aim to divorce every public question from politics.

Senator Spooner is one of the men

who are leading in this movement for the disfranchisement of the people, and he has declared its design with admirable candor. In a speech which he made at Lancaster, Wis., on the 21st, as reported by the Chicago Record-Herald of the 22d, a Republican paper, Senator Spooner advocated the plutocratic policy of disfranchisement in these frank terms:

If we could elect a good, strong Republican President like Theodore Roosevelt, and a strong Republican Senate and House for a term of twenty years, it would be better for the country. I believe this demagogic tear-up comes too often in this country.

There you have it in all its nakedness. Disfranchise the people! And let it be remembered incidentally that Senator Spooner is one of the powerful leaders of the Republican party as now organized.

When political leaders like Spooner think it politically safe to declare for the election of Presidents and Congresses for twenty years (which could easily be extended to life terms if 20-year periods of irresponsibility to the voters were once secured), it behooves everyone with a particle of democratic blood in his veins to refuse to sign any petitions whatever for limiting the voting power of the people. Government by commission is not popular government.

It is said that the Democratic party of Chicago has made poor nominations for local offices. This criticism is not true in its application to at least one of the nominees. Lyman E. Cooley, the Democratic candidate for member of the board of tax review, has published a letter of acceptance which testifies emphatically to his eminent fitness for that office. It is unfortunate that only one of the daily papers of Chicago should have regarded the question of local taxation as of sufficient interest to spare the space for Mr. Cooley's admirable letter; but it will be found in full on the sixth page of the American of October 14.

While Mr. Cooley recognizes, and properly so, that as a member of the

board of review he would have no right to do otherwise than enforce the tax laws as he finds them, he nevertheless declares his purpose of laboring for changes in the laws where experience shows that important changes are necessary. This is the correct attitude for the incumbent of such an office. That Mr. Cooley would find changes necessary, and that his mind runs in that respect in right directions, is one of the encouraging things about his letter. He recognizes, for example, the most important of all facts regarding taxation, the fact that the character of government is determined by the manner in which taxes are levied. "Whether the tax be laid equitably or arbitrarily," he says, "measures the difference between free government and despotism." Truer words were never written.

Mr. Cooley realizes also that radical changes have taken place in recent years with reference to taxables. The time when property consisted chiefly in agricultural lands has given way to a time when it consisted chiefly of such lands as mines, urban building sites, and rights of way for public service corporations. At this point he is not very clear—certainly not definite—but light is thrown upon the point by his unqualified and evidently intelligent declaration that "fundamental law contemplates unrestricted competition."

In holding that "every citizen should contribute something, though it may be small, to the support of the state," Mr. Cooley may seem to have drifted away from his previous postulate that taxation must be equitable. But it is only fair to assume that he intends the two propositions to be considered together. He doubtless means that the contribution of each should be in equitable proportion to the pecuniary advantages each receives from the state, and that all ought to get some of those advantages. However that may be, Mr. Cooley is the only candidate for a fiscal office in Chicago