

lic utilities to private corporations was elected.

Referendum Movement in Cincinnati.

The referendum movement, which has really brought the municipal ownership agitation to the point it has reached in Chicago, is reported to have taken promising shape in Cincinnati. At a largely attended public meeting at the Vine street Congregational church on the 13th, the Cincinnati Referendum League was formed, and the following voters' agreement adopted for general distribution:

I, the undersigned, hereby agree not to vote for any candidate for city council or State legislature, who fails to pledge himself to support, in office, the People's Veto and Direct Initiative as explained on the back of this card.

Name
 Residence
 Ward Precinct.....

The explanation referred to is to the effect that—

if 5 per cent. of the citizens petition for the right to vote on any measure passed by council or legislature. It shall be submitted to them not later than the next general election, and if a majority of those voting oppose the measure it shall be repealed. If five per cent. of the citizens by petition present to council or legislature any measure. It shall be submitted to a vote and if a majority favor it it shall be a law.

Corporate Ownership in Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia it is reported that the tendency is away from municipal ownership instead of toward it, one of the evidences of this trend being the proposed introduction in the Council on the 20th of an ordinance authorizing the extension of the lease of the city's gas works for fifty years from December 31, 1907, to the Equitable Illuminating Gas Light Company, which is owned by the United Gas Improvement Company, a Standard Oil connection. This concern now has a thirty-year lease on the city's gas plants which expires in 1927.

Municipal Ownership in Great Britain.

In Great Britain, however, the municipal ownership tendency appears to be setting in stronger than ever. According to a special dispatch of the 12th from London, published in the Chicago Daily News—

further heavy investments in tramways

have been decided on by the London County Council. The municipal lines north of the Thames are leased to private operators. The council purposes to pay \$600,000 for the four years' unexpired period of the lease. It will take over the horses and rolling stock at a valuation of \$16,500,000. The transaction involves the sacrifice of annual income of \$110,000. J. Allen Baker, chairman of the tramways committee, said: "The majority of the Council favors this step because we have amply proved the ability of the municipality to run trams profitably from every standpoint. The outcry of the private capitalists is natural. They see untold millions vanishing from their grasp. . . . Our lines, the assertions of private exploiters to the contrary notwithstanding, have been self-sustaining from the first moment of acquisition. The northern and southern lines together during the past eight years have reduced their rates after provision for interest and sinking fund charges to the amount of \$1,465,000. For four years forty-eight miles of tramways north of the river worked for the Council by private persons earned a profit of \$765,000. During the same period twenty-four miles south of the river worked by the Council itself earned a profit of \$360,000. Set against this comparison these facts: The Council's own lines carried 200,000,000 passengers at the rate of one cent. whereas the leased lines charged a minimum of two cents. This represents a big money value to the traveling public south of the river. Besides, the Council, unlike the lessees, provides workmen's cars running up to 8 in the morning, for 2 cents any distance for a single journey and 4 cents for return. This is a vast boon to workers. All-night cars are also provided. The municipal employes also have a ten-hour day for six day a week and the municipality has otherwise improved the conditions of labor, representing, all told, an expenditure in excess of the cost under this head, when the tramways have been acquired from the private owners, of \$150,000 a year. Our financial position is daily becoming sounder; it is the reverse with the companies. We are steadily paying off our capital expenditure, thanks to our constantly increasing surplus receipts. In other words, our leasehold property is being rapidly converted into freehold, whereas the companies are undertaking a perpetual leasehold. All the foregoing must be viewed in the light of the fact that during much of the time covered by the foregoing figures we have been engaged in substituting electricity for horse propulsion, necessitating occasional complete closing of parts of the system. London's experience has been paralleled in Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds and scores of smaller cities throughout the United Kingdom."

The British Tariff Question.

Dispatches of the 14th from

London announce a compromise on the tariff question (vol. vii, p. 823) between Mr. Chamberlain and the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour. According to these dispatches, Mr. Chamberlain agrees to support the Balfour ministry on Balfour's fiscal programme, which is reported to be in substance as follows:

First, such fiscal freedom as will permit of retaliation under the condition that no taxation be imposed except for revenue; second, closer commercial union with the colonies; third, convening a colonial conference unhampered by limiting instructions; and fourth, that home prices must not be raised for the purpose of aiding home production.

Swedish-Norwegian Union.

Some progress has been made in the adjustment of affairs between Norway and Sweden (p. 26), the special committee appointed to shape the course of action having been addressed by the Crown Prince Gustaf, who outlined the following plan:

1. A common Swedish or Norwegian foreign minister.
2. A special consular service for each country, the consuls to be under the direction of the foreign minister in all matters affecting relations with foreign countries.

Political Affairs in Russia.

Internal commotions in Russia, though less spectacular than the conflicts between mobs and soldiers (vol. vii, p. 805), are really of greater importance because they signify a set and strengthening purpose on the part of the people to abolish autocratic government. One of these significant events of the larger sort was reported early in the month. It was the wide circulation of the programme of the Social Revolutionary party, demanding democratic home rule for the provinces, municipalities and communes, and universal suffrage without distinction of sex, nationality or religion. The economic demands are numerous and specific, including socialization of the land.

A more moderate yet revolutionary organization has been formed by the lawyers of the Empire. A pan-Russian representative congress of lawyers which met at St. Petersburg on the 10th was dispersed by the police, but not until it had adopted resolutions providing for the formation

of an association to foster social and professional intercourse and to strive for the political freedom of Russia on the basis of a democratic constitution, and also to combine with other associations having the same aims. After being dispersed by the police this congress of lawyers, numbering 173 delegates representing every judicial district of Russia except Siberia, met secretly in private houses in St. Petersburg. It finished its work on the 12th, which consisted chiefly in the organization of a national professional reform league for uniting the activities of lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers and other professional classes of Russia to bring about the democratization of the government and the institution of a representative parliament and a responsible ministry. The plan contemplates the formation of a national association of each professional class, all such bodies to elect delegates to a central bureau which is to direct and coordinate the efforts of the "intellectuals" in the direction of reforms. The leaders of the movement declare that they do not contemplate any assault on the monarchical form of government or disloyalty to the Empire, but the elimination of absolutism and the establishment of participation by the governed in the direction of affairs, especially in the budget and taxation.

The great success of this congress despite the difficulties it encountered, and the welcome given to its work among the professional classes, to whom it appeals, is believed to have been strengthened by a rescript issued by the Czar (without the knowledge of Mr. Witte, the president of the committee of his ministers) abolishing a peasant commission relating to peasant land tenure, of which Witte was chairman, and creating a special bureaucratic commission, with no popular representation upon it, and with Minister Bouligan at its head. This action has intensified the feeling that the Czar's promised reforms (vol. vii, p. 777) are all to be in the hands of the bureaucracy. When Mr. Witte learned of the dissolution of the peasant committee, on the 15th, he is reported to have asked the Czar for leave to retire from the ministry,

but of this there is no confirmation nor any news of his actual retirement.

Dispatches on the 13th reported the calling of another Zemstvo Congress (vol. vii, pp. 552, 732) to meet in Moscow May 8, in which representatives of the nobility also will participate. From three to five delegates from each provincial zemstvo have been invited. It is reported that an endeavor will be made to align the moderates with the nobility in favor of reforms without going to the length of the constitutionalism of western Europe.

Labor Strikes in Italy and France.

A railroad strike in Italy is reported from Rome, but not very clearly described. Apparently all the employes of the railroad objected to some feature of a municipal railway bill pending in parliament and upon the refusal of the Minister of Public Works to concede their demands with ferrency to the bill, they decided to strike. The strike began on the 17th and is reported to have caused an alarming condition of scarcity in some of the principal cities. At Foggia on the 18th three strikers were killed and several wounded by a volley from the troops.

A strike of porcelain workers at Limoges, France, was reported as violent on the 16th, and on the 17th there were collisions between the strikers and troops. In a debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the 18th, the Socialist leader, Jaures, denounced the government for using troops at Limoges, claiming that by doing so it had caused the riot. He argued that the Ministry ought to have advised the owner of the works to negotiate with his striking employes. Another Socialist deputy accused the owner, an American of the name of Haviland, of hoisting the American flag over his works in the hope that the strikers would insult it and thereby raise international complications necessitating vigorous repression of the strike. The cause of the strike is not reported.

Strike in Porto Rico.

A great strike of 14,000 men is

in progress in Porto Rico against a large French company—the Compagnie des Sucreries de Porto Rico.—in connection with which there has been rioting in Ponce. On the 19th the United States judge, McKenna, granted an injunction at San Juan, against Santiago Iglesias and other members of the American Federation of Labor, prohibiting intimidation and violence. Iglesias has appealed to President Gompers of the Federation for support, claiming that peaceable meetings of the strikers are being broken up by the police.

The Chicago Strike.

The teamsters' strike which broke out suddenly in Chicago last week (p. 23), still continues and Mayor Dunne has abandoned his efforts to bring it to a close by arbitration agreement. As Mayor Dunne describes the situation—

the employes offer to arbitrate the whole difficulty, while the employers do not. The employers informed me that they would be willing to arbitrate their individual differences with the teamsters. They wish to arbitrate independently of Montgomery Ward & Co. On the other hand, the employes offer to arbitrate not only their differences with the various firms, but also the situation as it pertains to Montgomery Ward & Co., in which is concerned, I am informed, the garment workers' strike.

Unconstitutionality of a Labor Law.

An important decision in a labor case was made on the 17th by the Supreme Court of the United States. As four judges dissented—Harlan, White, Day and Holmes—the decision is supported by a majority of one out of nine judges. The point in question was the constitutionality of the New York statute limiting labor time in bakeries to 10 hours a day, and 60 hours a week. An employing baker in Utica had been convicted of violating this law by permitting an employe to work in his bakery more than 60 hours in a week. By the New York Court of Appeals the conviction was sustained, Chief Justice Parker writing the prevailing opinion. That court held the statute to be constitutional, as a proper exercise by the legislature of the police power for the security of the public health and safety of the State. This decision is now reversed by