

The Public

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The "City with the Civic Mind."

How Tom Johnson gave to the city he labored and died for, the "civic mind," as Edmund Vance Cooke has called it, was told with extraordinary but simple eloquence at the Conference of Charities and Correction at Cleveland on the 17th by Mayor Johnson's successor as Mayor of Cleveland, Newton D. Baker. The secret, according to Mayor Baker, lay with the development of the responsibility of citizenship. This worked even into at least a partial solution of that most difficult of all civic problems, the personal vice question. Mayor Baker asserted that Mayor Johnson had made Cleveland freer than any other large city of the United States, from city vices, not by closing up vicious places, but by making every man feel himself to be a responsible citizen. This policy has now been extended on new lines to the boys of the city, among whom 200 have been organized as a Junior Sanitary police force, authorized by the Mayor, wearing badges of office, officered by themselves, and having a superintendent from their own membership and of their own choice, who reports weekly to the Mayor. Self-control—that is democracy in morals.



Roosevelt and the "Steam Roller."

When Mr. Roosevelt was nominated for the Vice-Presidency in 1900, and for the Presidency in 1904, he knew that the "Steam Roller" was working for him. He knew it, and was glad. In

1908, he himself worked the Roller for Taft; and he was glad about that, too. But in 1912, at a nominating convention in which he has been persuaded that he has a chance, he discovers that the Roller is a bad thing—a very bad thing, you know; and he announces that he would be “de-lighted” to have it consigned to the junk-pile, the scrap-heap, or any other old place. This, however, is probably not to be. History has marked a great deal of progress, but “Steam Rollers” are never banished so suddenly as Mr. Roosevelt thinks the G. O. P. Roller ought to be. In fact, one of the troubles with Mr. Roosevelt is that he seems to be unable to draw the line of distinction as to the wisdom and justice of Steam Rollers, except by the test of Roosevelt on the Roller, or Roosevelt under the Roller. And now that the Roller begins to roll over him he emits wild cries for help in the name of Justice, which he spells with an initial R. If Roosevelt had been eaten in Africa by a Rollipotamus, how calm the Republican Convention might be!



China Shops and Bulls.

An untethered bull in your competitor's china shop may be well enough in a way, but what about untethering him in your own?



The Money Trust.

The facility with which the business of the country is harnessed in the stables of Wall Street, and the power of J. Pierpont Morgan when he mounts the box and cracks his financial whip, are coming into the limelight at the investigations of the Congressional committee into the money trust.



Good Scheme.

An enterprising advertising concern offers to privileged corporations an educational service—that is, a literary output of a kind calculated to convince the public that it is good for them to be stolen from by law,—the literary output aforesaid to be published as advertising matter, and candidly as such. Corporations ought to subscribe liberally. They may not suppose that pleasant literary matter about them would be a very valuable purchase if it is to appear candidly as a paid “ad.” But let them think again. Who can tell how much editorial matter “on the side,” might find its way into publications that got the candidly paid for “ads”?

Fiscal Progress in Houston.

With his introduction of the Somers system of valuations, Tax Commissioner J. J. Pastoriza* of Houston, Texas, has closed that city's tax books with extraordinarily satisfactory results. He has assessed land values at 70 cents on the dollar, and improvements at 25 cents on the dollar; and has secured exemptions of all personal property except automobiles and the capital stock and the surplus and undivided profits of banks. He has also procured the repeal of the license tax for erecting buildings, and has been relieved of the duty of levying taxes on any kind of useful occupation—the requirement that no one could do business in Houston without paying an annual vocation tax, having been repealed. The public service corporations of Houston, heretofore untaxed, are now assessed nearly \$2,000,000. Naturally the big land monopolists made all the trouble they could, in an effort to cut down the assessment on land, but after many difficulties, the results noted above have been obtained. How unfair the previous taxation must have been may be inferred from the fact that the 70 per cent assessment of land and the 25 per cent assessment of buildings, raises the total assessment from \$64,000,000 in 1910 to \$94,000,000 in 1912; and yet that more than 3,000 property owners pay less taxes at the \$1.50 tax rate of 1912, than they did at the \$1.70 tax rate of 1910. A few experiences of this kind may make small property owners “sit up and take notice.” They may possibly take notice enough to arouse a wholesome suspicion as to the motives that actuate Big Business in its opposition to the Somers system of land valuations and to the Singletax policy of lessening taxes on improvements and increasing taxes on land values.



Labor and Life, Here and Abroad.

A busy statistician announces that while the cost of living of a railway employe in the United States is not 50 per cent more than that of such a workman in Great Britain, his pay is more than double. It is possible, of course, to make comparative statistics of the money wages of different countries, but one should see the figures before concluding that a fair comparison has been made as to cost of living. The question at this point cannot be settled by paralleling market price lists. Whether a railway employe of Great Britain could live as well in the United States as in Great Britain, without more grinding work, may at least be

*See The Public of March 29, 1912, page 298.