

The Public

Fourth Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1901.

Number 174.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

Again the shipbuilding combine and subsidy beggars are striving to abrogate our treaty with Great Britain, which makes the great lakes neutral seas. No warships may sail these waters while that treaty lasts. If it were abrogated, every lake city would be at the mercy of a British fleet, were any misunderstanding to arise; and every Canadian city would in that case be at the mercy of an American fleet. This portentous change is sought for in the interest of lake ship builders. But lake ship builders need no abrogation of that treaty to enable them to build ships. Merchant vessels are allowed to sail the lakes. Let them build merchant vessels.

In moving the large gift of half a million dollars to Lord Roberts, Arthur Balfour confessed in parliament, on the 1st, that in December, 1899, the Boers had made the British cause well-nigh hopeless. He showed how Lord Roberts alone had saved it. It must have been an impressive picture that Balfour drew of Great Britain's indebtedness to Roberts, when, as the cable reports his speech, he "praised the strategy which defeated Gen. Cronje, saved Kimberley and Mafeking, and prevented 11,000 British troops from surrendering at Ladysmith, and the whole of South Africa from rising in revolt." So the whole of South Africa, as well as the two struggling republics, is a subjugated country. With a fighting chance it was ready to revolt. Evidently, if the Boers had pressed their early victories vigorously, instead of remaining on the defen-

sive, the history of South Africa would be a different story now.

Mayor Johnson, of Cleveland, has won the first legal battle in his war for equitable taxation—the exparte injunction issued at the instance of the "Big Consolidated" street car company (p. 243) having been dissolved. The case was argued before Judge Strimple, on the 29th, upon a demurrer interposed by the city, which pleaded that the street car company had not alleged sufficient facts to entitle it to an injunction. Judge Strimple so decided. He dissolved the injunction on the 30th, and immediately afterward the city board of equalization added nearly \$8,000,000 to the taxable valuation of the "Big Consolidated."

In its newly formulated demand (see News department) for the public ownership of certain property, the reduction of labor hours, and state insurance of workingmen, the Social Democratic party denies the principle of right. Utterly ignoring the fact that what it calls "the capitalist class" earns some part of its income, that some "capitalists" earn a larger proportion of their incomes than others do, and that some earn all they get and more, these demands propose an indiscriminate confiscation from that class for the benefit of the hired man class. Such a demand is a plain denial in principle of every man's right to the value of his own labor. It is an explicit political formulation of the philosophical doctrine that might (or, what is the same thing, expediency as the mighty interpret expediency) is the only kind of right. Labor can never win upon that basis. New forms of tyranny may, and they may wear labor labels; but labor itself, that is, working interests as working interests, can-

not. In dealing with the question of "capitalism," the only method that can truly serve working interests must rest upon a righteous distinction between earnings and privilege. The property that a man earns is one thing, whether he earns it as a hired man or as an employer. The property that consists merely in some form of delegated powers of taxation is a totally different thing. So long as socialists confuse these two they make their cause repugnant to all who believe in the principle of human rights. Perhaps these are not many. But we are confident that the people of this country, men and women of all classes, do as a rule believe in that principle. We think so notwithstanding the recent popular approval, though by a narrow vote, of the opposing doctrine of might, as exemplified in imperialism.

At last the Schley-Sampson wrangle is to be brought to the test of judicial investigation. This ought to silence the controversy. Schley having requested a searching inquiry and the secretary of the navy having granted the request and appointed a naval court to give it effect, the public should quietly and patiently await the verdict. It should also accept this verdict as a finality, unless the evidence produced may show it to be manifestly unjust, or the conduct of the court of inquiry may evidently indicate that it is tainted.

The fact cannot wholly be ignored, it is true, that in the inquiry Schley is at a disadvantage. To some extent this is disclosed by the official instructions of the department to the court. They have more the tone of vindictive accusations against Schley than of an impartial outline of inquiry drawn by an indifferent hand. But