

that almost invariably sufficient judicial grounds for extradition are discovered by the commissioners. It is doubtful if any adverse decision has ever been rendered except in the case of the absconding Irishman at Indianapolis just before last Fall's elections; and Senators Hanna and Beveridge are reputed to have taken a political and personal interest in that case.

Another telegraph messenger strike is on in Chicago. These messengers get the munificent pay of half a cent each for delivering messages, and, like Oliver Twist, they have the impudence to ask for more. But it is not of the merits of their strike that we would speak. We wish rather to call attention to the moral degradation to which these children are subjected in order to earn dividends for pious investors in human flesh and blood and souls. The circumstances are sufficiently indicated by the following pathetic extract from an address put out by the messengers' union upon learning that girls were to take their places:

Mothers, your girls face grave dangers when they become carriers of telegrams. Messengers are compelled to go into all sorts of places. Even the most respectable may be dangerous to a girl. Men think they can say anything to a little girl that is carrying messages. The girls may not be injured by going out in the street and meeting all sorts of people and things, but they soon become slangy and acquire the ways of messenger boys. The little girls that work near Newsboys' alley are made almost as tough as the boys by their experience. I know that many girls are forced by conditions over which they have nothing to say to carry messages, to sell papers and to go into saloons and other bad places, but I hope that you mothers will make an extra effort to save your daughters from the many pitfalls that will be set for girls who carry messages. Besides placing your girls in a dangerous position by letting them take our jobs they are being used to defeat us. We are only fighting for just principles. Messenger boys must fight everybody and everything. Their life is a hard one; too hard for a girl. We are made fun of in the funny papers. They say we are slow and of no account, but many boys carry messages to support their mothers. We get half a cent for every message,

which we think is not enough, and we shall some day ask for higher pay. Then the company will want to hire your girls to take our places. We hope you won't allow it for your sake, for the welfare of your daughters and for our sake.

Children with musical or dramatic talent have been forced off the stage by "prevention of cruelty to children" societies; but message-carrying for telegraph companies, at all hours of day and night and into all kinds of places—well, "philanthropic societies are not organized to interfere with business."

A new departure economically has been taken by the Ross ministry of Ontario in connection with the construction and operation of the Temiskaming railway. This railway is wholly an affair of the Provincial government (corresponding to a State government on this side of the line), which is building and is to operate it as a government highway. It runs north from North Bay station, on the Canadian Pacific railway, to New Liskeard, on Lake Temiskaming, and thence still northward to a junction with the new transcontinental line, the Grand Trunk Pacific, at a point near Lake Obitibe. Probably it will then be extended to Moose Factory, on James Bay, at the Ontario tide-water. The action of the Provincial ministry to which we refer above, relates to town sites at stations along the line. The subject is presented in the leading editorial of February 23 in the Toronto Globe, the leading Liberal paper of Canada, which approvingly says:

Of all the new departures of an economic kind initiated by the Ross administration, none are more far-reaching in their effects, more equitable in their character, or more certainly profitable in their operation than the provision made in the Temiskaming railway bill of this session for the designation and control of town sites along the line. If the railway from North Bay extends no farther for the present than the point of junction with the trans-continental railway undertaken by the Dominion, there will be several important town sites and not a few sites of villages about the stations. Presumably the Provincial legislature will apply the same principle to the towns

and villages along the trans-continental railway, the total length of the two lines within the more favorable areas for settlement being not less than 700 or 800 miles. It will be found on a moderate estimate that, over and above the value the town sites would have if sold as farm property, there will be an entirely new source of public revenue, producing at least a million dollars a year and lasting a generation. . . . The method of procedure prescribed by the measure now before the Legislative Assembly is simplicity itself. The great bulk of the land along the line of the railway is still vested in the crown. In the case of a proposed town site on such land power is given to the government to transfer by order of Council to the Railway Commission, as trustees for the Province, such land as may be deemed suitable in the vicinity of "stations or proposed stations." But many of the surveyed lots along the line of railway are now owned by private persons, and in the case of a town site on such lands the commission is authorized to acquire the necessary area in the same way as it acquires land for right of way or station grounds, that is to say by negotiation, with expropriation as an alternative. It is interesting to note that these town sites are not to be included under the charge created in favor of the holders of the bonds issued by the commission, and that the revenue from the sale of town lots is to be regarded as a part of the income of the commission, to be spent on the "preservation, improvement and maintenance" of the railway. Ordinarily all such revenue has been heretofore diverted into the pockets of private speculators.

It is not improbable that when these sites are secured steps will be taken to amend the law so as to prohibit the sale of lots, thereby securing for the Provincial revenues an annual and increasing income from them for all time.

#### THE CHICAGO STREET CAR QUESTION.

In about four weeks the people of Chicago are to vote (p. 705) on the question of immediate municipal ownership and operation of the city street car system.

By "immediate" is not meant, as those who try to darken counsel profess to think it means, that public ownership and operation are to be expected the next day after an affirmative vote, nor the next week, nor month, nor year. It means that an affirmative vote will be a popular direction to the municipal authorities to proceed immediately, in good

faith, and without dilatory contracts with the traction companies, to establish the street car system upon the basis of municipal ownership and operation.

No doubt many obstructions will be encountered in making this change, and much resistance will have to be met. But that is no reason why the voters who prefer public ownership to the present wretched stock-jobbing system should not vote in the affirmative on the three questions to be submitted at the approaching April election.

Those questions are as follows:

First: On the adoption of the Mueller law. This vote is mandatory. If in the affirmative it will enable the city to acquire, own and operate street car systems under the provisions of the Mueller law.

Second: On the immediate establishment of municipal ownership and operation under the Mueller law. This vote is not mandatory. It is only advisory. Consequently an affirmative result will not bind the city authorities. They may disregard it. But they are not likely to do so if the majority is emphatic.

Third: For short-term licenses, and no more franchises, to the street-car owners, pending the accomplishment of public ownership and operation under the Mueller law. This vote also is advisory and not mandatory.

These three propositions draw the line between the stock-jobbing traction interests and the public. No voter can vote "No" on any of them without consenting to give aid, comfort and rich spoils to the stock-jobbing interests.

Irrespective of detail, the real issue presented by those questions is that of municipal ownership and operation.

So far as we have been able to ascertain the only remaining objectors to the immediate adoption of this system are of three classes.

The first class comprises voters who are directly or indirectly, honestly or corruptly, influenced by their own pecuniary interests. These will vote "No," and it would be a waste of honest breath to argue with them.

The second class is composed of

voters who honestly believe that the legal and financial obstacles in the way of the change are at present insuperable and that a compromise with the traction interests is therefore imperative. Attention will be given to this view of the matter later on. We are assured that it is a mistaken view, due to popular ignorance of the facts and misleading representations by the traction interests.

In the third class, which includes also some of the second, are voters who fear the demoralizing effect upon local politics of an army of street car employes whose appointment and removal would depend upon the favor of politicians. To this class we have a few suggestions to offer now.

They should bear in mind that the danger of spoils-hunting is no reason for farming out to private corporations any function that is governmental in character. The government should attend to its own business.

And the business of operating street cars is governmental in character, as a comparison with non-governmental business will show.

Take storekeeping, for instance. That is primarily a private business. No franchise is necessary. Anybody can engage in it who has capital. Consequently the policy of municipalizing grocery stores, dry goods stores, or other stores would have to be justified by some such socialistic reason as that the private advantages of capital should be abolished.

But that is not the ground upon which municipalization of street car systems rests. No one can go into the street car business, no matter how much capital he has, without first getting a franchise from the municipality.

Now, what does that fact imply? It implies that the street car business is primarily not a private business depending upon private capital, but that it is a public business into which no capitalist has the right or power to intrude until the municipality gives him permission—gives him a franchise. In other words, like the courts, like the taxing office, like the police, like every other public function, the street car business is in its nature and out of the very necessities of the case, a public busi-

ness. Historically, court functions have been farmed out to private interests; tax collecting also has been farmed out; so has police protection; and it is common in our time to farm out such public functions as street car service. But this does not thereby become a private function any more than the courts, the taxing power, and the police power did. Like them, it is a public function temporarily under private control.

The policy, therefore, of municipal ownership and operation of street cars does not involve the question of making a private business public. The only question it involves is the question of restoring a public business to public management. It is not innovation; it is restoration.

But apart from that fundamental consideration is the fact that street car employes are now dependent upon the favor of politicians. The objection, therefore, that municipal operation would immensely increase opportunities for political graft is unfounded. When not made in ignorance, it is made in bad faith. It assumes, innocently, or deceptively, that no political "spoils" are connected with the street car service now. But street car appointments are notoriously included in the category of political "spoils;" and these "spoils" could be no richer under public ownership and operation of our street car systems, than they are already under the present method of ownership by corporations and operation by stock jobbers. They would not be as rich.

Should you seek employment in the street car service, for yourself or a friend, you would have to be sagacious enough to procure the "recommendation" of your alderman or fail. Were you to neglect that little "pull", the applicant who did have an alderman's "recommendation" would get the job in preference to you or your friend. But what do you suppose your alderman would expect in return for his favor to you in giving you that "recommendation"? You are not innocent enough, of course, to imagine that he does the favor either for his own health or for yours? He would expect your vote at the ballot box when

he happened to need it, and you couldn't be ungrateful enough to disappoint him.

Go a step farther. What do you suppose the traction stock jobbers would expect of your alderman in return for their favor to him in giving you or your friend a job upon his "recommendation"? No more than aldermen, do stock jobbers do favors for anybody's health. They would expect your alderman's vote in the city council whenever they might need it. The alderman knows this, and his constituents ought to.

Political "spoils", indeed! "Graft", forsooth! What possible political "spoils" or "graft" under municipal ownership and operation of the street car system could be worse than the political "spoils" and "graft" under the corporation ownership and stock jobbing operation which now prevail?

None could be as bad. Under public ownership and operation, street car employes would come within the rules of the merit system of civil service. Their appointment and retention could not be used either to strengthen the political fences of corrupt aldermen nor to promote the schemes of yet more corrupt traction stock jobbers.

Nor is the use of appointments by street car corporations for the purpose of bribing aldermen and voters the worst "graft" of traction stock jobbers. Were the whole truth about political corruption in cities known, we should see that it is caused for the most part by the devious methods of public service companies and their stock jobbing managers. City officials cannot be corrupted unless some outsider has an interest in making their corruption profitable. Where there is no "graft" there are no "grafter". But the richest "graft" of the present time in cities, is that which flourishes in private ownership of public property and private operation of public functions—especially when nurtured by stock jobbers, as is the great street car "graft" under which Chicago has suffered for half a century.

The day in politics of the mere "tax eater" has passed; that of the franchise grabber and manipula-

tor is at high noon. Corruption in politics is no longer due in any great degree, to the corrupting influence of office "spoils" and party "spoils-men". It is now due chiefly to the corrupting methods of "business interests" in franchise privileges. As ex-Mayor Low, of New York, recently put it: "The day of open robbery is gone, but an era of intrigue has replaced it. Tweed's ring stood brazenly in the old days for open robbery; public service corporations and their stock jobbing managers stand for the secret corruption of the new era of franchise intrigues."

Abolish public-service franchises, and you abolish the most powerful and subtle of all the existing causes of political corruption. It is by getting rid of these franchises, not by perpetuating and fostering them, that good government is to be secured.

An opportunity to do this will be afforded the people of Chicago at the coming municipal election. If it is allowed to pass, no opportunity as good may occur in many years. If the questions then submitted are voted down, the city officials would be warranted in assuming that the public opinion of Chicago is favorable to the stock-jobbing schemes of the traction interests, and in therefore settling the whole matter in accordance with the demands of their representatives.

## NEWS

Week ending Thursday, March 3.

The strict censorship by both Russia and Japan makes it impossible to give any clear and full idea of the situation at the seat of war (p. 743), but reasonable confidence may be reposed in the reports that some kind of naval demonstrations were made at Port Arthur on the 24th, 25th and 29th. On the 24th the Japanese made an attack. According to the Russian official report this was done with numerous torpedo boats, and was repulsed, two Japanese vessels being wrecked and their crews saving themselves in small boats. The official Japanese report of the same event is to the effect that four old vessels, escorted by some

torpedo boats, were run into the entrance of Port Arthur by the Japanese for the purpose of blocking the mouth of the harbor, and that this object was accomplished. On the 25th there appears to have been a three hours' general engagement brought on by a Japanese naval attack; and on the 29th, according to Japanese reports, there was a similar engagement. The probabilities are that all this fighting is merely part of occasional skirmishes, demonstrative rather than destructive, between the Russian fleet in the harbor and the Japanese fleet which is watching it from without. The situation is not dissimilar to that at Santiago while the American fleet held Admiral Cervera in the harbor; and the event of the 24th is likened to Hobson's exploit in sinking the Merrimac.

A diplomatic reply was made by Japan on the 1st to the diplomatic complaint of Russia (p. 743) charging Japan with violation of the fundamental rules of international law in her manner of beginning the war. Japan's reply asserts that the answer to Russia's charges may be found in the action of Russia herself. It proceeds:

That her government never entertained any sincere desire for peace can be clearly seen from its own conduct. Throughout the whole course of the negotiations Russia persistently refused to meet the proposals made by Japan in a moderate and conciliatory spirit. By delays that could not be construed as otherwise than wanton and unnecessary, she put off the settlement of the questions at issue, while at the same time busily extending her naval and military preparations. Her warlike preparations in the far East since last April, when she failed to carry out her treaty engagement to evacuate Manchuria, are in full confirmation of these statements.

Then follows a lengthy statement in detail of the action of Russia in strengthening her military and naval forces at points menacing Japan, and thereupon the reply continues:

In view of these facts who can say that Russia had no warlike intentions or that she was unprepared for war? Seeing that the situation had become so critical that it admitted of no further delay the Japanese government was compelled to break off negotiations that had proved abortive and to take the necessary steps for self-protection.