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EDITORIAL

The Chicago Traction Steal.

In all probability this steal cannot be consummated. For the gigantic referendum petition, the largest and cleanest ever yet obtained, which rolled up with amazing and unprecedented rapidity, is an earnest of the determination of the people of Chicago to vote down this latest des-

perate effort of the Wall Street gang and their local brethren to hold the transportation interests (p. 1034) of Chicago forever in leash. Nevertheless, though the steal cannot be consummated, it can be utilized, as were the 99-year claims, as a basis for protracted litigation; and under cover of that, the companies may continue their plundering by forcing future compromises.



This opportunity is furnished by the passage of the ordinances by the Council. They should have been adopted in committee of the whole, with an understanding that if sustained by the people they would be passed by the Council and if voted down by the people they would be voted down by the Council. That was the procedure recommended by the late Judge Tuley and adopted by the Council last year. But by passing the ordinances completely and finally in the Council, though subject to referendum, the opportunity for harassing litigation is created. After the people have voted the ordinances down at the referendum, the companies can set up the claim that the referendum condition is mere surplusage, and that the ordinances were completely enacted when the Council passed them. This they will certainly do. What of it if they lose in the end? They lost their 99-year claims in the end, but the end was long coming and the interval was a profitable period for the companies.



The legal opinion of the special traction counsel, Mr. Fisher, to the effect that the best judicial authorities support the view that legislation subject to referendums not authorized by law, stands or falls by the result of the referendum, or at the worst fails altogether instead of taking effect when the condition is held to be illegal, is probably sound. But even that opinion, delivered though it was under the stress of evident anxiety on Mr. Fisher's part to promote the immediate adoption of the ordinances by the Council, discloses the fact that the courts recognize two sides to the question and that one side, should it prevail, would validate these ordinances even though the people were to vote against them a hundred to one. Common prudence, therefore, should have dictated extreme caution on the part of the Council. But there was no prudence. An overwhelming majority forced the passage of the ordinances, incontinently rejecting every protective amendment, at a

session of the Council which was held down to its work, on the very evening of the committee's final report recommending thirty or forty amendments, throughout the night and far into the morning hours. There was no public necessity for this extraordinary haste, nor is there any possible legitimate explanation. In the light of the history of such performances in this city and State, and indeed throughout the country, the only possible explanation lies in the inference that corruption was rife.

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This inference is emphasized by the circumstances. On the majority side were lined up every notorious gray wolf who takes his provender raw, and every notorious greyhound who likes his cooked. "Reform aldermen" with a shrewd eye to business, and "bad aldermen" with a rheumy eye for boodle, trotted along most amicably at roll call side by side. City Hall rumor has it that two million dollars has been distributed to secure the passage of these ordinances—one million to aldermen and one million to newspapers. But Dame Rumor is not always good at figures. So the rumor may be wrong. It is even possible that there has been no corruption fund at all. The extraordinary unanimity of "reform" aldermen and "boodle" aldermen, of aldermen in precarious business condition and aldermen with political ambitions, of corrupt political machines and of Dugald Dalghetty newspapers, and withal of the traction companies themselves—this comprehensive unanimity of multifarious elements may possibly have been due solely to a pentecostal revival of public spirit in unexpected places. All those elements may have truly regarded these crooked ordinances as straight, and their imprudently hasty passage as a public duty imperative. But we don't believe it, nor is it likely to be generally believed.

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The most pitiable figure in the whole affair is Alderman Werno, chairman of the committee on local transportation. That committee was organized nearly two years ago with a majority to support Mayor Dunne's traction policy, and Alderman Werno was accordingly made its chairman. Until recently Mr. Werno has had the Mayor's confidence and given every sign of deserving it. His name has heretofore been associated with those of Dever, Zimmer, Finn, Kohout and the others who have valorously and as yet successfully in spite of their being in the minority, supported the municipal ownership programme. But Mr. Werno has recently manifested

a change of purpose, and on the day of the passage of the ordinance he appeared conspicuously as a thick and thin advocate both of the crooked ordinances and of the "jamming" process by which with inexplicable haste they were put upon their passage. It is not his change of purpose, however, that makes him so conspicuously pitiable, but his absurdly wretched efforts to cover his retreat into the enemy's camp.

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Mr. Fisher, the special counsel, had refused, at the meeting of the local transportation committee, to explain the haste in passing the ordinances, giving as his reason that as legal counsel for the committee it was not in his province to comment upon policies. Thereupon the same question was put by the same questioner to Chairman Werno. Mr. Werno answered: "I do not feel called on to reply"! And he has not replied. So far as anything to the contrary yet appears, Mr. Werno does not know of any reason for the haste. Nor is this remarkable, perhaps, for no one not completely in the confidence of the companies does know. Mr. Werno again appeared in a humiliating role when upon being confronted by Alderman Dever with a perfectly reasonable amendment calculated to keep open the way to municipal ownership, he explained that the companies would not accept this amendment and therefore it would be destructive of the ordinances! But the most remarkable of all Mr. Werno's interesting displays in his new role came as a reply to Alderman Dever's proposition to strike out the requirement of municipal operation as a condition to the purchase of the lines from the companies for municipal ownership. The evident purpose of the companies in insisting upon this condition is to prevent municipal ownership. For while the city can legally own, it cannot legally operate; and it never can acquire legal authority to operate so long as traction interests can control councils and prevent the submission to referendum of an operating ordinance. Alderman Dever's amendment was intended not to prevent operation but to deprive the companies of the "cinch" they were demanding, and thereby to clear the way for public operation—to make ownership possible and the way to operation easy. Now, behold Alderman Werno's reply: "I can't understand these advocates of municipal ownership, who, with all sincerity, no doubt, insist on municipal ownership without municipal operation"! A regularly retained lawyer for the corporations could not have turned the merits of the question inside out more gracefully, nor could any

alderman have turned himself into their spokesman more awkwardly.

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But if Alderman Werno has abjectly degraded himself Alderman Dever has made a splendid record for faithfulness and ability. His amendments were not palatable to the traction ring, but they were enlightening to the people. His questions cut the ground from under the combine. His speeches, while temperate in tone, were vigorous as well as ready in thought, and they mercilessly probed the pretenses of the ordinance jammers. As a net result, it clearly appeared, in spite of Alderman Werno's pettifogging defense of the "Africans" in the ordinances, that the ordinances are designed to settle the traction question in favor of Pierpont Morgan's traction ring.

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When the people come to consider these ordinances for the purpose of deciding how to cast their referendum vote, they will find them to be as disgraceful a piece of compromising with civic sin as any people have ever been pestered with. To call them "rotten" is to slander putridity. There are pretenses of universal transfer rights when no such rights are secured. There are reservations in favor of the companies in case of strikes, but no requirements to prevent provoking unnecessary strikes. The city cannot purchase except for municipal operation; but there is no way of getting legal rights of operation, no matter how strongly the people may be for it, so long as a bare majority of aldermen can be bribed or coerced by these powerful corporations. To cap all, the companies are permitted by the ordinances—aye, it is actually provided for in the ordinances—to expend such sums in rehabilitation as to increase the purchase price many millions beyond the \$75,000,000 at the disposal of the city for purchase, and this sum cannot be augmented so long as a bare majority of the Council can be bribed or coerced by the corporations. That the two latter points are vital is evident from the attitude of the corporations toward them. Although no genuine business question is involved, although no legitimate right of the companies would be prejudicially affected, the companies persistently refuse to assent to any amendment that would allow the city to purchase for ownership without operation, or that would keep the purchase price within the means of the city to buy, or that would provide now for augmenting its means to buy. The purpose is plain. It is nothing else than a determination to prevent purchase by the city. Municipal ownership is thereby obstructed, both as a

general policy and as a reservation for insuring good service.

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That Mayor Dunne will veto these ordinances goes without saying, for he has been consistently true to his pledges to the people of Chicago. That they will be passed over his veto is to be inferred, since the companies already have more than two-thirds of the aldermen in one or another of their corrals. That the people will vote the ordinances down at the municipal election is evident from the avidity with which the referendum petitions have been so numerous signed. That the companies will then nevertheless try to hold the ordinances valid in the courts on the ground that the referendum clause is nugatory, is certain. That in the end they will lose on this question in the courts is more than probable. Whether in the meantime the brigand crew is routed and their throttle hold upon the rights and conveniences of Chicago finally loosed by the taking over of the traction service by the city, will depend upon whether or not the people back up their condemnation of the ordinances with the reelection of Mayor Dunne and the selection of aldermen who will cooperate with him instead of cooperating with the brigands as so many of the present aldermen have done.

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The Referendum in Chicago.

It was a rude awaking that of the Chicago newspapers and aldermen and lynx-eyed "business" men when their loud assertions that the people wanted no referendum on the traction ordinances (p. 1040) was met with the biggest and strongest and cleanest set of petitions ever filed for a referendum vote. The time had been reduced to a minimum, in the expectation of making the effective circulation of the petitions impossible. The petitions had been clamorously denounced as saturated with fraud and forgery, and the conspirators, to make good, had "planted" upon the petition-collectors scores of thousands of false and forged signatures. One of their methods was to "plant" whole sheets of names with no genuine signatures upon them and so keyed as to enable men in the secret to pull them out of a pile of sheets apparently at random. Had this trick prevailed, some 300 sheets, "taken at random," would have been exploited by the subsidized newspapers as proof of fraudulent "saturation." They had even gone so far as to take steps in the Council to appropriate money for the "discovery" of this evidence of "saturation." But Mayor Dunne himself had the inspection done, and after all suspi-

cious sheets had been thrown out, 141,000 signatures remained. From this number a large deduction was made as allowance for joke names, individual frauds, and errors, which reduced the unimpeachable list to 112,000. As the number required was 87,000, this made the petition complete. Afterwards additional sheets with over 60,000 signatures came in and these were not inspected, for it was unnecessary. At once there was a painful silence. It was that kind of silence after noise which awakens the heaviest sleeper. The "business" interests, the clubs, the newspapers, realized that public opinion is not confined to the "Loop." And the newspapers—especially the Tribune and the Lawson publications—learned a much needed lesson. They learned that by their hypocritically false news reporting they have at last forfeited the confidence of their readers.

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Marshall Field's Personal Property.

From the inventory of personal property of the late Marshall Field which has been filed in the probate court, it would seem that his personal property amounted to something more than \$40,000,000. But an examination of the inventory discloses the fact that an overwhelming proportion of this personality consists in fact of certificates of interests in real estate—railway stock, mining stock, railway bonds, etc.—and these are not truly personal property. Though the law so regards them, they are nothing economically but evidences of title. The property they represent is solid earth, and the value of the certificates depends upon the value of that earth. Yet we often hear it objected to the exemption of personal property from taxation, that it would allow great fortunes to escape.

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Professor Starr's Significant Discovery.

The "proud Caucasian" may find food for reflection, if he has any tenderness in his nature, in the remarkable statement by Prof. Frederick Starr implying a moral inferiority in the white race. Mr. Starr's papers on his recent sojourn in interior Africa among the natives, are of an exceedingly high order, both in point of interest as a story of travel in strange places, and for their value as a report upon original anthropological investigation. In one of these papers, appearing in the Chicago Tribune of the 2d, Prof. Starr says:

Returned from the Congo country and a year and more of contact with the dark natives, I find a curious and most disagreeable sensation has possession

of me. I had often read and heard that other peoples regularly find the faces of white men terrifying and cruel. The Chinese, the Japanese, other peoples of Asia, all tell the same story. The white man's face is fierce and terrible. His great and prominent nose suggests the tearing beak of some bird of prey. His fierce face causes babes to cry, children to run in terror, grown folk to tremble. I had always been inclined to think that this feeling was individual and trifling; that it was solely due to strangeness and lack of contact. To-day I know better. Contrasted with the other faces of the world the face of the fair white is terrible, fierce, and cruel. No doubt our intensity of purpose, our firmness and dislike of interference, our manner in walk and action, and in speech, all add to the effect. However that may be, both in Europe and our own land, after my visit to the blacks, I see the cruelty and fierceness of the white man's face as I never would have believed was possible. For the first time I can appreciate fully the feeling of the natives. The white man's dreadful face is a prediction; where the fair white goes he devastates, destroys, depopulates.

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The Black Man's Devotion.

In uncomplimentary contrast with the observation of Prof. Starr on the cruel expression of the white man's face as it appears to men of other races, is this tribute of a Canadian woman to the generosity of the blacks of Kingston, Jamaica, at the time of the earthquake. We copy it from the Toronto Daily Star of the 30th:

The black servants, for whom I have come to have the profoundest reverence in this hour of trial, crowded round apparently less frightened than the whites, and with only one desire—to be of aid, to run, fetch, and carry, saying comforting words of religion, for they seem to have naturally a deep faith, and doing all that love and devotion could conceive. What we would have done without these eager feet and hands, those unconfused heads, in those first moments I could not say.

It would do white men no harm to reflect upon the possibility of there being in the "inferior" races a human quality in comparison with which the domineering qualities of the all-conquering white man may be as those of beasts of prey. Ability to conquer is not necessarily evidence of superiority—not of human superiority.

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A Reductio ad Absurdum.

Secretary Shaw has "gone the limit" on the question of protection. He proposes the establishment of a "free port," into which materials may be imported free from all parts of the world, to be there manufactured into finished goods, and be thence exported to the world's markets. The "free ports" would be separated by tariff restrictions from the rest of the country, so that only