

is a fraud—a shameless fraud upon workingmen. If workingmen who vote for protection were not the ninnyes their protected employers take them to be, they would make it hot for protection members of Congress who refuse to investigate and regulate the working conditions and the wages paid in industries that are protected by the tariff.

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The Cleveland Referendum.

Before another issue of *The Public*, the referendum in Cleveland will have been decided. This referendum will probably determine whether the traction system of Cleveland is to be controlled by the city or by the old traction ring. It is the crucial contest of the whole traction controversy of nearly 15 years, to which Mayor Johnson gave vitality, and which during almost two-thirds of that period, he has fought in faithfully for the public interests against monopoly rings.

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If he wins this referendum, the fight may still go on, but the monopoly hunters will be at a vital disadvantage. If he loses, the fight will certainly go on, but the monopolists will have a strangle hold.

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The issue is a simple one. At present, the monopolists are in possession of the whole street car system, subject to a receivership which cannot last long. If next week's referendum goes against Johnson, the monopolists will soon come into possession of that system, and will then need only to get new franchises in order to put themselves completely in the saddle. The franchises they would try to get would be for 25 years, irrevocable, and probably be something like that which their lawyers fooled Judge Tayler into drawing as a compromise—full of bags for street car riders to hold, and full of plums for themselves. And they would have the whip hand in their efforts to get such franchises, for there would be no competition if the Schmidt ordinance is voted down next week. But if the Schmidt ordinance is voted up, then the traction monopolists will have to see the traction system pass over to a company which is limited in its fares to three cents and may have its franchises terminated at any time.

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It is easy to understand the concentration of interests against the Schmidt ordinance at this referendum. The Plain Dealer opposes it because it sees municipal ownership in it, and to that its

owners have always been opposed. The Leader is against it because it always has been a staunch supporter of the traction ring. The Chamber of Commerce is against it because its influential members have financial interests in the other direction. All the gangs, rich and poor, that have all along been opposed to Johnson or in favor of the traction crowd, are against it, because it serves their various purposes now as it has in the past to be in opposition to him. But it is difficult to see how a majority of the people of Cleveland can be willing to line up with the traction monopolists in this crucial conflict which so vitally affects their own interests. That they would be lining up with the traction monopolists if they vote against the Schmidt ordinance, is apparent to any one who has followed the ups and downs of the long traction fight. Every selfish interest in Cleveland that has heretofore stood by the traction ring, is opposing the Schmidt franchise at this referendum. The Schmidt franchise would be entitled to be considered a good franchise for the people, if only in the light of the enemies it has made.

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Grafting in Vice in Chicago.

Sensational proceedings against the police graft of Chicago (p. 674) have been instituted by the State's Attorney, John W. Wayman, since the impanelling of the July grand jury. Hundreds of witnesses have been examined, one police inspector has been indicted, and hints of prosecutions "higher up" are riding on the waves of underworld gossip. Doubts as to the good faith of these prosecutions are freely expressed, and vice and crime societies are coming to the defense of the indicted police inspector as a victim of the grafters' ring. But the State's Attorney is in the midst of what purports to be a genuine crusade, requiring exquisite skill and caution to make it anything more than a raid upon "small fry," and until his full hand is disclosed he should have the benefit of every doubt. It will be time enough to condemn him if his crusade proves in the end to have been a blind-alley affair. Should it prove, as we have reason to expect, to be an able and sincere effort, from motives of good public policy, to expose and destroy the wretched triangular partnership in iniquity which now exists in Chicago between nameless crimes, Big Business, and spoils politics, Mr. Wayman should receive without stint all the commendation which such a purpose courageously executed deserves.