

making power in the hands of a local body, elected by districts, whose members can be held to responsibility by their respective constituents, and to place the executive power in the hands of an executive who must return frequently to the people for their approval. Such an executive cannot become a "boss" in the bad sense of the term. No one objects to a "boss," if you choose to call him that, who is frequently re-elected. Such a boss is an approved agent of the people. The bad "boss" is one who does not come before the people for approval, but from his private office pulls wires and dominates officials. President Diaz, of Mexico, is the kind of "boss" whom the people confide in because he serves them; "Boss" Tweed and "Boss" Croker were, as "Boss" Cox now is, the kind of "boss" who overrides the people and dictates to their servants.

Strenuous efforts are being made in the East to beguile the people of the country into petitioning for a permanent commission to regulate the tariff. Every man who signs that petition signs away part of his citizenship. "The tariff question should be divorced from politics entirely," is the cry of those who are pushing this movement for disfranchisement. Reflect a moment upon what that means. To divorce any public question from politics is to place it beyond the control of the voters. And this is the design of the plutocratic classes who are agitating for a permanent commission to adjust our taxes for us. Think of it. The most powerful lever of government, taxation, to be taken out of the hands of a people and given over to commissions packed in the interest of special privileges! Nor is the design confined to the subject of tariffs. The poorly concealed purpose of these enemies of democracy is to divest the voters of the country not only of power over the tariff, but of all power in public affairs. They aim to divorce every public question from politics.

Senator Spooner is one of the men

who are leading in this movement for the disfranchisement of the people, and he has declared its design with admirable candor. In a speech which he made at Lancaster, Wis., on the 21st, as reported by the Chicago Record-Herald of the 22d, a Republican paper, Senator Spooner advocated the plutocratic policy of disfranchisement in these frank terms:

If we could elect a good, strong Republican President like Theodore Roosevelt, and a strong Republican Senate and House for a term of twenty years, it would be better for the country. I believe this demagogic tear-up comes too often in this country.

There you have it in all its nakedness. Disfranchise the people! And let it be remembered incidentally that Senator Spooner is one of the powerful leaders of the Republican party as now organized.

When political leaders like Spooner think it politically safe to declare for the election of Presidents and Congresses for twenty years (which could easily be extended to life terms if 20-year periods of irresponsibility to the voters were once secured), it behooves everyone with a particle of democratic blood in his veins to refuse to sign any petitions whatever for limiting the voting power of the people. Government by commission is not popular government.

It is said that the Democratic party of Chicago has made poor nominations for local offices. This criticism is not true in its application to at least one of the nominees. Lyman E. Cooley, the Democratic candidate for member of the board of tax review, has published a letter of acceptance which testifies emphatically to his eminent fitness for that office. It is unfortunate that only one of the daily papers of Chicago should have regarded the question of local taxation as of sufficient interest to spare the space for Mr. Cooley's admirable letter; but it will be found in full on the sixth page of the American of October 14.

While Mr. Cooley recognizes, and properly so, that as a member of the

board of review he would have no right to do otherwise than enforce the tax laws as he finds them, he nevertheless declares his purpose of laboring for changes in the laws where experience shows that important changes are necessary. This is the correct attitude for the incumbent of such an office. That Mr. Cooley would find changes necessary, and that his mind runs in that respect in right directions, is one of the encouraging things about his letter. He recognizes, for example, the most important of all facts regarding taxation, the fact that the character of government is determined by the manner in which taxes are levied. "Whether the tax be laid equitably or arbitrarily," he says, "measures the difference between free government and despotism." Truer words were never written.

Mr. Cooley realizes also that radical changes have taken place in recent years with reference to taxables. The time when property consisted chiefly in agricultural lands has given way to a time when it consisted chiefly of such lands as mines, urban building sites, and rights of way for public service corporations. At this point he is not very clear—certainly not definite—but light is thrown upon the point by his unqualified and evidently intelligent declaration that "fundamental law contemplates unrestricted competition."

In holding that "every citizen should contribute something, though it may be small, to the support of the state," Mr. Cooley may seem to have drifted away from his previous postulate that taxation must be equitable. But it is only fair to assume that he intends the two propositions to be considered together. He doubtless means that the contribution of each should be in equitable proportion to the pecuniary advantages each receives from the state, and that all ought to get some of those advantages. However that may be, Mr. Cooley is the only candidate for a fiscal office in Chicago

who has given any reasonable indication of an intelligent grasp of fundamental principles of taxation, together with a determination to execute the law as it is; and if fitness is to be a determining factor at the election, he ought to be placed upon the board of review by an overwhelming majority of votes.

In naming several single tax men last week (p. 435) who are Democratic candidates for important office, we by no means named all. Among the others are Henry Smith, a candidate for Congress in Milwaukee, and Robert E. Cresswell and Charles R. Eckert, candidates for Congress in Johnstown and Beaver, Pa., respectively. Mr. Eckert is editor of an excellent single tax paper, the Commoner, of Rochester, Pa., and his election is regarded as reasonably certain. Another of these men who are impressing the Democratic party with the growing strength of their cause is J. H. Quick, ex-Mayor of Sioux City, Ia., who is a candidate for a vacancy upon the supreme court bench of his State.

In Chicago, as we have already stated (p. 307), several candidates for the legislature have been put forward, regardless of party, by the Public Ownership league. Chief among these is Clarence S. Darrow, the law partner of the late John P. Altgeld, and who stands for what Altgeld did. Mr. Darrow is a candidate in the Seventeenth district. He is indorsed by the Legislative Voters' league, a body which scrutinizes candidates of all parties and recommends upon grounds of personal character alone. Besides Mr. Darrow, the Public Ownership league names Arthur L. Gettys, of the Third district, who is also recommended by the Voters' league; Julius A. Wesel, of the Eleventh, for whose good personal reputation the Voters' League vouches; George A. Mawman, of the Eighth, the "news-boy" candidate; Paul O. Hazard, of the Fifth; and Albert C. Berndt, of the Second. Under the

"plumping" method of voting for legislators in Illinois, the vote for these men can be multiplied by three, which is believed to make their election probable. Of the desirability of having in the next legislature a group of men committed to the public ownership of public property it is hardly necessary to speak; and all these candidates faithfully represent that principle. Mr. Darrow is, moreover, distinctively a leader in radical politics at this end of the State, and a man whose influence would be felt in any legislative body.

The State Federation of Labor of Illinois, which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, took important action at its recent session in adopting the following resolutions on the subject of taxation:

Whereas, labor organizations in New York, Colorado and other states are agitating for changes in the present system of taxation; and, whereas, taxation has a vital effect upon the demand for labor and the rate of wages; Resolved, that a committee of nine be appointed to investigate the relation of wages to taxation and report to the next convention of the Illinois Federation of Labor.

These are the same resolutions that were offered at the international convention of the Typographical union at Cincinnati last Summer (p. 308), and for some unaccountable reason defeated. They are the same that were adopted by the Stereotypers and Electrotypers' union at that time (p. 309), and the same that have been adopted by the most important labor body of New York State. It was Mr. L. P. Straube, of Chicago, who proposed them unsuccessfully at the typographical convention, and who now has the satisfaction of having seen them adopted by the Illinois Federation of Labor. Even here he had to fight for them on the floor of the convention to overcome the adverse report of the committee to which they had been referred. Mr. Straube was made chairman of the committee appointed to carry out the resolutions. This opens the way for him to accomplish a work that at no dis-

tant day will be freely recognized as the best that can be done in labor interests.

The London conference of British municipalities which met this week and adopted the principles of land value taxation for local purposes, was an epoch-making body. Although the rate of tax on land values which it proposed is low—probably not more than half of one per cent.—the reasons given make it of special importance and peculiarly significant. When taxes on land values are urged on the ground that land values are public property, the reform takes on a very different color from what it would have if it were urged on the ground that all property ought to be taxed. And this is the character of the British agitation for the taxation of land values. It is made because those values belong to the public. Since, therefore, scores of British municipalities are demanding this fiscal reform, it is evident enough that a movement has begun in Great Britain which will lead on to the full taxation of these public values and the consequent exemption of all private values.

The recent street car strike in New Orleans has revealed a condition regarding the capitalization of the company which it was worth all the strike has cost to learn. It is stated upon excellent local authority and as the opinion of an expert that "the plant operated by the New Orleans Railways company in its entirety can easily be reproduced new and in better condition than it now is, for about \$30,000,000." Yet this New Jersey trust which owns the plant is capitalized at \$80,000,000, and is striving to earn an income on that extravagant valuation. This is one of the effects of allowing private corporations to own public property. The private property of the trust in this case is only \$30,000,000. Its public property—right of way—is capitalized at \$50,000,000.

Ex-Senator Pugh, of Alabama, is