

master general appears to have placed himself in a position which calls for some explanation. We allude to his denial of the validity of what, at page 609, two weeks ago, we described as and then supposed to be a construction by the Publishers' association of a post office ruling. The Publishers' association had announced that—

the post office officials at Washington, D. C., have just ruled that a subscription to any publication entered as second-class matter must be discontinued when the time for which it is paid in advance has expired.

In consequence of that announcement, the third assistant postmaster general, on December 30, instructed postmasters to notify all publishers in their respective cities that there had been no such change in the rules or practice with regard to subscriptions to legitimate second-class publications, adding:

The report grows out of a ruling in an individual case of a New York publication which was carrying an enormous list of expired subscriptions which were largely first induced by premiums and where due notice had been given to the subscriber, who had failed to renew or to order continuance with a promise to pay, expressed or implied. When general rulings are made they are published in this Bulletin for the information of the public and all postmasters.

This explanation is now badly discredited by the Publishers' association, which, in defense of its own good faith, gives out the following official letter, dated December 17, from the third assistant postmaster general:

In reply to your letter of the 14th inst., you are informed that the department holds it to be not within a publisher's privilege to mail at the pound rate of postage, as to subscribers, copies of his publication to persons whose subscriptions have expired; and the inclusion within the number presented for mailing as to legitimate subscribers of copies addressed to persons who are not legitimate subscribers, will deprive the publisher of his pound rate upon the whole, unless the illegitimate portion be separated therefrom.

It would appear, therefore, that the third assistant postmaster general has got himself into a tangle which in some of its aspects is significant of too much indifference to at least one of

the ten commandments. What did he mean when on the 30th of December he gave out a public notice to the effect that the department had not made the ruling described by the Publishers' association, if it was true, as he had written officially on the 17th of December, that the department had made precisely that ruling?

Mayor Johnson's efforts to redeem his promise to give to Cleveland a three-cent rate of street car fare (p. 612) is now far on its way toward redemption. After much difficulty he has secured from the city council an ordinance authorizing bids for street car service upon the basis of a straight three-cent fare, with no tax on receipts, and the rest is only a matter of business—open and legitimate business, not lobby "business."

Meanwhile the Cleveland mayor, whose "equitable taxation" clothes the republican governor has put on and found too large for a comfortable fit, is working with the Democratic delegation to the legislature from the Republican county of Cuyahoga upon plans for proposed legislation. This legislation ranges, to say nothing of tax bills, from a two-cent-a-mile fare on steam railroads to municipal ownership of municipal monopolies. The first bill on the latter subject is thus described by the mayor:

This bill concerns the question of street railroads alone. It is to give the city power to acquire, construct and operate street railroads. It provides that the city may issue bonds for this purpose, limitations being placed on these issues, of course. The city council shall first, by ordinance, outline the plan to be followed and the routes to be operated. After that is done and when everything is in readiness for the measure the question shall be submitted to the vote of the people.

Asked if this measure could be enacted in time to apply to the new street railway system provided for by the recent ordinance, the mayor said:

I am no prophet. I wish that might be the case. Of course I would prefer municipal to the private ownership of that road, but I would rath-

er have a three-cent fare now than to have to wait a long time for the other plan.

Pursuant to his expressed preference for municipal ownership of municipal monopolies, Mayor Johnson has induced the city council of Cleveland to petition the legislature for power to adopt such a system. The resolution came before the council at its regular meeting on the 13th. It called for the merit plan of employment as part of the system. Mayor Johnson, who has the right, ex-officio, of debate upon the floor of the council, made a strong argument for the resolution, in the course of which he laid stress upon the importance of the merit clause. Notwithstanding that the council has a Republican majority and that the president of the council and one other Republican member bitterly opposed it as part of a scheme to give the Johnson administration more political power, the resolution was adopted by the extremely significant vote of 18 to 4.

In a well-tempered article, an editorial contributor to that excellent democratic weekly of the Pacific coast, the San Francisco Star, criticises our position (p. 563) on the question of Chinese exclusion. Not only is this criticism well tempered, but, what is quite unusual in newspaper controversy, it fairly and intelligently meets the essential issue as we raise it. We had admitted the right in principle of a people to resist hostile invasions, whether invasions with arms or in peaceable form; insisting, however, that the defensive necessity must be apparent in order to justify defensive action. Accepting this principle, the Star urges that nothing remains but a question of fact, namely, whether Chinese immigration, if not restricted, would really be equivalent to a hostile invasion. But on this issue it demands the right of decision for the people of the Coast. There is no avoidance, however, of our contention that such questions should not be left to the decision of interested and probably prejudiced localities. The Star's