

are swindlers and ought to be denied the use of the mails. But that is not the question. The question is whether the prerogative of deciding that they are swindlers, and of denying them the use of a public service which has come to be a necessity of social and industrial life, shall be summarily and irresponsibly exercised by an administrative officer at Washington. Is "due process of law" obsolete?

Mayor Johnson, of Cleveland, has entered fully into plans to redeem his promise to do all in his power to give Cleveland a three-cent rate of street car fare. But obstacles are being thrown in his way by advocates of a per capita tax on street car passengers, through the indirect method of taxing gross receipts; and to the arguments for this highly objectionable plan Mayor Johnson replies:

It is best to invite proposals in such a way as to insure three-cent fare, and the provision for municipal ownership when the people are ready for it, rather than attempt to incumber the proposition with a plan of producing revenue for the city treasury; for there is no revenue from taxation on gross receipts possible without increasing fares. Increasing fare for the purpose of revenue is bound to cost the patrons two dollars for every one dollar that goes into the treasury, and in the final analysis it is a plan for raising revenue for the support of the city government by levying a tax upon street car riders, confessedly that part of the community that is today bearing the heaviest weight of taxation in proportion to its ability. This is a poll tax, the most unfair of all plans of taxation.

In a more detailed discussion of the subject Mr. Johnson explains:

A five-cent fare with 40 per cent., or two cents of each five cents, paid into the city treasury, seems to be equivalent to a three-cent fare and nothing paid to the city. But it is not. No company could afford to accept a five-cent fare ordinance on such conditions, while a three-cent fare grant would be very profitable, as the low fare would encourage short rides and largely increase the volume of business. A five-cent cash fare, with 20 per cent., or one cent of each five cents, paid into the city treasury in the same way, appears to equal a four-cent fare. The fact, however, is that no percentage of

gross receipts can yield to the public treasury an amount equal to the advantage of low fares to the public. In my judgment a four-cent fare with five per cent. tax on the gross receipts would not be so good for the investor as the straight three-cent fare with no tax, and I doubt whether there would be as many bidders. Even if the proposition were equal for the investors, it would be a hardship on the street car riders to pay one cent additional on each ride in order that one-fifth of a cent might be paid into the city treasury. The people would be taxing themselves five dollars in car fares to relieve themselves of one dollar in tax burdens. Knowing this, it seems wise to concentrate our entire effort upon securing a low rate of fare; rather than any percentage of gross receipts, or to attempt partly one and partly the other.

This succinct explanation of the low-fare idea, by a man who not only opposes the revenue diversion on civic principle, but also understands the financial advantage to street car investors of low fares without taxation over high fares with taxation, is worthy of serious thought wherever the street car problem is under consideration.

Mr. Roosevelt's recent cabinet appointments are curious if not significant. For postmaster general, he names Mr. Payne, of Wisconsin, a notorious representative in politics of railroad and other monopoly interests. Gov. Shaw, of Iowa, appointed to succeed Mr. Gage in the treasury, is also a railroad politician. Both he and Payne were "turned down" in their respective states by their own party because they are too representative of railroad interests. But it is not to this characteristic of the two men that we particularly refer. There is no novelty about that in Republican politics. What is especially noticeable is the fact that both men belong to the minority faction of their party in their respective states. Payne is held in check by the La Follette faction in Wisconsin, and Shaw by the Cummins faction in Iowa. Is it possible that Mr. Roosevelt is building up a machine out of minority factions, with the idea that they can be turned into majority factions by judicious uses of federal pat-

ronage? Additional color is given to that plausible suspicion by the situation of the Republican party in Ohio. Mr. Hanna has heretofore been the Republican boss in that state. But the indications now are strong that the federal patronage, whereby he maintained that position, has been placed at the disposal of Mr. Foraker, of the minority faction.

President Roosevelt's summary dismissal of Maclay, the historian who so viciously assailed Schley's courage, raises a question of civil service reform. As Maclay was in the classified service, he supposed and the public generally supposed, that he could not be discharged without cause—that is, without cause affecting him as a classified servant—and then only upon notice and after a hearing. But the president has discharged him without such cause, without even assigning a cause, and without a hearing. And this action by the president is approved by the head of the civil service commission, whose idea appears to be that any classified employe may be so discharged provided there are notorious reasons which do not appear to be those of partisan politics, even though the reasons are unrelated to efficiency. If this be true, classified servants are not, after all, so secure against pernicious politics as the public has been assured. He would be a poor politician who could not find "notorious" reasons not political for discharging clerks that happen to be objectionable politically, if not required to name any cause at all.

The Italian minister of foreign affairs is reported to have caused a sensation on the 20th in the Italian senate. No wonder. The question of the lynching of Italians in Mississippi was before the senate, and the minister explained that neither the Italian government nor Italian diplomats were guilty of any negligence in their efforts to secure the triumph of justice, but owing to the reticence of witnesses it had been impossible to identify the culprits. He then