

The Public

Fifth Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 1903.

Number 261.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post Office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last page.

Before the lapse of another week three important municipal elections will have been held. They are important, not locally alone but generally, because they turn upon civic issues of universal concern. One is to come off in Toledo, one in Chicago, and the third in Cleveland.

In the Toledo election no problem in particular is at stake. It involves rather the endorsement of a local administration which for more than five years has identified itself effectively with the policy of honest and truly democratic municipal government. The defeat of Mayor Jones would be a public calamity. It would mean that the high ideals for which he stands are repudiated by his fellow citizens, and that political "bosses" and party spoilsmen are really preferred to a non-partisan administration.

Mayor Jones is a candidate upon petition. Either political party would have been glad to nominate him had he consented to join the party organization. His prestige is not to be despised even by party "bosses." They know that with him as its candidate the lucky party would sail into power with colors flying. But since his first election Mayor Jones has steadfastly refused to be a party candidate. He describes himself as "a man without a party," and simply offers his name to voters who want a non-partisan city government.

Here is an opportunity for those citizens of Toledo, and doubtless there are many, who profess to object

to partisanship in local elections. Not only does Mayor Jones meet the very extreme of their requirements in this particular, but he is also a candidate whose ability and fidelity have been proved by three successive terms at the head of the Toledo government. The people of Toledo are in the balances at this municipal election of theirs, and it remains to be seen whether or not they will be found wanting.

The Cleveland election is doubly important. Not alone does it involve local issues of general concern, but the leaders in the contest are political antagonists of national prominence—Marcus A. Hanna and Tom L. Johnson. To Mr. Hanna the struggle is of supreme importance. His political prestige is at stake, and with it his large investments in the watered stock of Cleveland street car corporations, his "savings bank," as he calls it.

The franchises of Mr. Hanna's corporations are about to expire. Unless renewed the water in their stock, amounting to millions of dollars, will soon be valueless. Mr. Hanna is urgent, therefore, to secure renewals of franchises at the old five cent rate of fare; though Johnson has pressed him so hard that he is now reluctantly willing to concede seven tickets for a quarter, provided cash fares are fixed at five cents. But Mayor Johnson has always been opposed to the ticket subterfuge; and, knowing from experience that 3-cent cash fares would be profitable, he insists upon establishing 3-cent fares throughout the city. Moreover, he demands that reservations be made in favor of municipal ownership, so that the city can adopt this traction policy as soon as the Ohio legislature grants it the power.

In furtherance of these views Mayor Johnson has for two years tried to introduce the 3-cent fare system. He secured the necessary ordinance, and found the capitalists, who actually began constructing a new road under a franchise pledging municipal ownership ultimately and 3-cent fares meanwhile. But Mr. Hanna was able to bring corporation judges and "boss"-ridden legislators to his aid, and with their assistance he has thus far balked Mayor Johnson's efforts, though to do so his judges were driven to the length of "ripping" every city in Ohio, and his legislators to making a new municipal charter system under which established street car corporations are given peculiar protection.

This "ripping" was sought partly to save Mr. Hanna's watered stock from the depressing effects of a competing 3-cent fare street car system, and partly to save it from taxation. For Mayor Johnson had undertaken to tax the local monopolies on the same basis that homes and general business are taxed. The ordinary rate of valuation in Cleveland is 60 per cent of true value, but the public monopolies were taxed at valuations varying from only 15 per cent down. Mayor Johnson caused the latter valuations to be raised, with the effect of vastly reducing the general tax rate. But judges and courts and legislature, bossed by Mr. Hanna, were brought to the rescue, and nearly all the increased taxes upon local monopolies which Mayor Johnson had secured, were remitted.

Mr. Hanna is now at the end of his tether. Unless he can defeat Johnson at the coming municipal election, he will have to submit to three cent fares, he will have to face the probability of early municipal ownership of street car lines, his monopoly in-

terests will have to pay the same proportion of taxation that small home owners pay, and he will at the same time be discredited in his own party as a leader. Hence the desperation with which he contests this election. He has forced upon his party for its mayoral candidate one of his own corporation lawyers, a man whose business firm finally secured the "ripping" of the Ohio cities to protect Mr. Hanna's street car interests; and to promote this man's election the street car combines of the whole country have been assessed for a campaign fund, which is being poured out in Cleveland to defeat Johnson. Some of it is spent among certain classes of labor leaders, to secure their "influence" with "the labor vote." Some of it is used to stimulate the hostility of former city employes who have been displaced by Johnson's adoption of the merit system of civil service. The rest of it might not be so easy to trace.

In this election it is the people of Cleveland who are on trial. They know that the Republican candidate is one of Mr. Hanna's business representatives. They know that the issue is Mr. Hanna's private interests versus the interests of the city. They know that low street car fares at once and municipal ownership at an early day will come with Johnson's reelection, but be indefinitely postponed with his defeat. They know that equality in taxation would be promoted by him if elected, but would be frustrated in the interest of monopoly corporations in the event of his not being elected. They know that Mayor Johnson has given the city of Cleveland its first taste of good administration. They know that he has kept the streets clean, that he has put the water works under the merit system of civil service, that he has prevented enormous land grabbing, and that in all other respects he has managed the affairs of the city as a sacred trust. Partisanship wholly aside, Cleveland has never had so satisfactory a mayor. The

people of Cleveland know, furthermore, that all the corporate interests in both parties and all the political rings in both parties, are working together like beavers to defeat him.

Chicago is passing through a political crisis which, while similar in some respects to that of Cleveland, is different in others. The people here are without a leader such as Cleveland has developed in Tom L. Johnson; but here, as there, the traction question is the burning one. As in Cleveland, so in Chicago, franchises are about to expire, and the popular demand for public ownership is insistent.

A labor party, with Daniel L. Cruice as its candidate for mayor, stands squarely for that policy; but there are no indications that it can bring forward even a small fraction of the vote that sympathizes with it. It is an honest movement, however, with an able and sincere man at the head of it. Attempts to charge Mr. Cruice with being in the field to help the Republican candidate are without justification. He is not a man of that character, for one thing; for another, the votes he gets will probably be at the expense more of the Republican than of the Democratic candidate.

The Republican candidate, Graeme Stewart, was supported at the primaries by "Boss" Lorimer, who secured his nomination over John M. Harlan, the anti-"boss" contestant. Mr. Stewart's nomination was distinctly a Lorimer triumph within the Republican party, and his election would doubtless place Lorimer in full control of the Republican organization of the State of Illinois. What this would mean with reference to the traction question in Chicago is obvious.

Mr. Stewart does declare for municipal ownership, and against the fraudulent 99-year franchise act which the traction companies are using as a club to drive the city into

assenting to a further extension of franchises. But he gives no real assurance that he will fight "vested interests" or defy the orders of his party "boss," either to get municipal ownership or to get rid of the 99-year act. On the contrary, his emphasis is placed upon the importance of settling the traction question at once so as to have better accommodations. This has all the significance of a proposal to surrender to the traction companies. They are in no hurry to lay the foundation for municipal ownership. They are in no hurry to abandon the 99-year franchise. And if the city gets in a hurry for better accommodations the traction question will be settled as it was 20 years ago (when the city was before in a hurry), by postponing its settlement for another 20 years and damming in the watered stock by new franchises meanwhile.

That is what Mr. Stewart's election would mean. Not only is he Lorimer's candidate, but he is supported by all the leading beneficiaries and manipulators of the traction interests, including, along with "Boss" Lorimer (the Republican leader), the nominal head of the Illinois Democracy, John P. Hopkins, and the principal Democratic investor in monopolies, John R. Walsh, whose paper, the Chronicle, supposed to be Democratic, is also supporting Stewart. These interests are not behind Mr. Stewart merely for exercise. They know what they want, and they may be presumed to know where to get it.

On the other hand, we have Mayor Harrison as the Democratic candidate for reelection. He is not an ideal candidate. But he is the only alternative to Stewart; and far short as he falls of being an ideal candidate in such a crisis as now confronts Chicago, he is clearly preferable, both with reference to the policy he is pledged to pursue, a policy from which he cannot escape, and to the kind of support he is receiving. The traction interests are doing all they