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The extraordinary street car enterprises in which Tom L. Johnson is reported to have engaged since declaring himself out of business and entering upon his long cherished plan of smashing monopoly, have a strikingly suspicious appearance of having been manufactured by the Associated Press. The motive is not far to seek. Men who manipulate the Associated Press for business and political purposes have learned from experience that they can fool some of the people all of the time.

Indiana furnishes another negro lynching bee. The murderous mob in this case, however, showed evidence of being a degree in advance of the regular negro lynching mobs, along the lines of civilization, for it did not burn its victim's body until it had killed him by hanging. That is some evidence of improvement. But it was characteristic of this mob as of all the others that it was composed of citizens who believe so profoundly in "law and order" that they will have it if they have to defy all the laws and break up all the order there is to get it.

Representative Crafts, of Chicago, introduced in the legislature of Illinois on the 26th a resolution for amending the constitution with reference to the Illinois system of taxation. This resolution is substantially the same as the Elsberg bill of New York, heretofore commended in these columns and which the New York chamber of commerce has indorsed. It would abolish the state board of equalization, substituting the auto-

matic method of the Elsberg bill for apportioning state taxes among the counties, and would also establish local option in taxation in the counties for purposes of local revenue. This is a good measure, and Representative Crafts should be made to understand that in promoting its passage he will have the support of all intelligent students of taxation.

Some Chicago real estate agents are trying to play upon too confiding people the trick they played a year ago. Aided by real estate reporters they are serving the local papers with baseless yarns about rising rents. The principal sufferers by this trick last year were small owners, especially of apartment houses. Believing the boom reports, these landlords notified their tenants of an increase in their rents. But the tenants were not so easily gulled, and in consequence many small landlords faced the 1st of May with empty flats upon their hands. Rents did not go up last year, the predictions of real estate agents and real estate reporters notwithstanding. Neither will they go up this year. The tenant who cannot renew his lease upon last year's terms has a fool for a landlord. If he agrees to a higher rent his landlord has a fool for a tenant.

Having been advised by the attorney general, and advised soundly, that it cannot investigate the Dowie bank, the Illinois legislature is urged by some of its members to pass a law putting all private banks under state control. The itch for regulating private affairs by law is always breaking out somewhere and somehow.

Already the people of Cleveland have been treated to a surprise in connection with Tom L. Johnson's mayoralty campaign. At the begin-

ning it was asserted and believed that he would not have the support of a single daily newspaper besides the Recorder. But that has all changed. The Recorder has been with him from the start. The Waechter-Anzeiger, the leading German paper of northern Ohio and one of the most progressive in the country, is giving him its hearty support. The Press, which eschews editorial matter, gives him a frequent lift in the news columns. And on the 26th the Plain Dealer, which had never been friendly to Johnson, came out for him in a long and strong editorial, in which it described him as "a man of unquestioned business ability and unimpeached honesty," whose "capacity for managing large undertakings has been frequently demonstrated," and who, as "those who have known him best and watched him most closely have good reason for believing," will, if elected, "be the actual mayor of Cleveland and not the puppet of any party, faction or clique." There is no newspaper opposition to Johnson in Cleveland now except the two hard and fast republican organs, the Leader and the World.

The American senate has decided to invest the president with greater power than is possessed by the most despotic civilized sovereign on earth. It is a power, moreover, that may be withdrawn only by a two-thirds vote of each house of congress, unless the president himself voluntarily relinquishes it. The colossal magnitude of the proposed power may be appreciated by considering that it would confer on the president the right to make, repeal and extend at pleasure, all laws for the government of over 10,000,000 civilized people; and would enable him to appoint and remove at will all officers for the execution of

those laws. It would be the most remarkable modern instance of the creation of a despot so absolute that millions of human beings are dependent upon him even for their lives. He would be literally legislator, judge and executioner, with no one to check him or hold him to account. And as to the perpetuation of this despotic power, the whole story may be found in a single sentence of the proposed law—that which provides that the power shall continue “until otherwise provided by congress.” No provision otherwise can be made by congress, except through the enactment of a law. The president’s unlimited power would continue, therefore, until congress should repeal, or amend, or enact a substitute for the imperial clause proposed by the senate as a rider on the army appropriation bill. But congress could not do any of these things by less than a two-thirds vote of each house, without the president’s consent. If he refused that, by vetoing bills terminating his imperial power, the power would continue until two-thirds of the members of each house were sufficiently aroused to the growing dangers of imperialism to pass a bill over his veto.

We have no notion that any such usurping programme is now contemplated. Mr. McKinley doubtless expects to yield up his despotism as soon as “good government” is established in the Philippines. Doubtless, also, his supporters in congress expect him to do so. There is probably no other iniquity intended now than such as relates to the distribution of Philippine lands among presidential favorites. But never in all history has a novelty in despotism been made permanent at the start. Seldom has its permanency been intended. Despotism of the most vicious character usually develops from mischievous benevolence. Before the good Mr. McKinley succeeds in benevolently assimilating the Filipinos, his term may expire with this despotic power still attaching to his

office; and a president may come in with less inclination to part with such tempting authority. Should that contingency occur, the real despot would need the support of only one-third of each house to continue him in office as the absolute monarch of the Philippine islands. Beyond that point, all is conjecture. It may be worth considering; however, that imperialism seldom subsides until it has spent its force. And there would be much force, even at home, in absolute imperial power over 10,000,000 people, though they were 10,000 miles away.

Another move of the McKinley confederacy is dishonorable as well as imperialistic. We refer to the Cuban clause which the senate has also, under the white house lash, attached to the army appropriation bill. With unparalleled cheek this amendment makes the solemn declaration of our government, put forth at beginning the war with Spain—the declaration that we would leave Cuba to her people as soon as they had established a stable government there — makes that declaration, by a bold distortion of language, the basis for insisting upon suzerain conditions. It is enough to say of these conditions that if conceded by Cuba they would furnish all manner of pretexts for invading the island whenever the party in power in the United States might wish to do so. A repetition in Cuba of the British policy in South Africa would be a perennial danger. But more than that, they dishonor our country, by making of its solemn pledge an indecent mockery. For these conditions fly full in the face of our national declaration regarding Cuba, upon going to war with Spain, of the declaration already referred to and which reads:

That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accom-

plished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.

What Cuba ought to do is to ignore any suzerain conditions which the United States may seek to impose. She is represented by a constitutional convention which this country recognizes. That convention has adopted a constitution which her people would approve. Let them vote upon it. If they confirm it, as they doubtless would, let them proceed calmly and peaceably to organize their government under it. Then let them send a minister to the president of the United States for recognition. Mr. McKinley would be obliged either to recognize him, and thereby admit Cuba into the family of nations, or to refuse to recognize him, and thereby take the responsibility upon himself of stultifying the declared purpose of this government in going to war with Spain. To the doctrine that it is the function of the president, and not of congress to recognize new nations, President McKinley is already committed. For after both houses of congress had recognized the republic of Cuba in 1896, President McKinley as well as President Cleveland refused to acknowledge their authority. The Cuban republic was therefore denied recognition, notwithstanding the action of congress, upon the ground that the constitutional power of the president to receive foreign ministers carries with it exclusive authority to decide for the United States the question of recognizing new nations. We do not believe in the soundness of that doctrine. But Mr. McKinley acted upon it when he wished to overrule congress in recognizing the republic of Cuba. Let him, then, have an opportunity to overrule congress in directing that the republic of Cuba shall not be recognized unless it makes concessions that this nation has no right to exact and which if conceded would be destructive of its independence. This would be a wise policy for Cuba to adopt. But whether she adopts it or not, she is now at a point where only the most