

The Home Rule Idea.

The democrats of Johnstown declare for local option in taxation. They thus put themselves in line with the most enlightened thought of the day on this important question. They believe in home rule. They hold that the people of Johnstown are fully competent to regulate their own affairs and they believe this city should be left as free to adopt new and advanced ideas in taxation as it is to adopt new ideas in paving or sewerage or lighting.

Johnstown would instantly resent flattery from Harrisburg on the subject of adopting a new idea in paving. Our people believe themselves capable of deciding for themselves in such matters. And if they are capable of deciding questions relating to paving and the like, why are they not equally capable of dealing with the question of raising revenue? If they prefer to tax themselves in a certain way rather than in some other way which happens to suit Altoona or Reading or Scranton, whose business is it but their own?

There are plenty of arguments in favor of home rule in taxation. It accords with the general principles of self-government. It opens the way for experiments along fiscal lines which are impossible under the existing Procustean system. There is no better reason why the state at large should interfere in matters of local taxation than that it should interfere in saying whether we should use gas or electricity or gasoline or tallow dips in lighting our streets. The state is concerned only in getting the revenue belonging to it from the city. It should make no difference to the state how the city raises the revenue—whether by taxing all forms of property, as now, or by taxing only certain forms, as many believe desirable.

The people of Johnstown would be glad to promote a diversification of industry. We now have all our eggs in one basket. If we could exempt manufacturing from taxation, as is done in certain states, this would become a most inviting field for industrial enterprise. But we are denied home rule in such matters. We can make no exemptions, except such as the assessors illegally grant in pure favoritism to the vacant lot industry.

At the state commerce convention held at Syracuse, N. Y., where there gathered a distinguished body of representative men from the various commercial organizations of the state, it was

"Resolved, That the best way to reform the system of local taxation is to grant local option to the cities and counties of the state."

This resolution has been formally indorsed by the New York chamber of commerce, the most powerful body of its kind in the United States. It is composed of the leading men of the American metropolis and it has issued a formal appeal to the people of the Empire state for legislation conferring home rule in taxation upon the local taxing authorities. It urges this reform with strenuous arguments and the legislature of New York is practically certain at no distant day to give a favorable response.

That the home rule idea is not visionary and that it has the approval of accredited authority is shown by the following from the late Prof. David A. Wells, the noted specialist in taxation. He says:

"I am greatly in favor of the local option principle. It is, in fact, a novel method, practically educating the people in respect to the good and bad methods of taxation, and not merely

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the local taxpayers of New York, but of the whole country. As it is, the taxpayer is bound down to a system to which no elasticity can be given except by knavery and perjury, which is contrary to the world's experience and the best judgment of those who have carefully studied the subject, and he has no incentive to reason for himself with a view to obtaining anything better, because he feels he can't get the legislature to pay any attention to his conclusions. With permission to experiment in a small sphere, as granted by the proposed bill, the taxpayer will take an interest in the subject, and results will certainly be achieved to which a legislature will give attention because the argument of mere theory can no longer be urged in opposition."

It is worth noting that this home rule idea prevails in New Zealand and in several of the Australian states and that in those countries great and most happy progress toward economic freedom is being made.—Johnstown (Pa.) Democrat.

Magnificent Revenge.

While Robert Stewart was governor of Missouri a steamboat man was brought in from the penitentiary as an applicant for a pardon. He was a large, powerful fellow, and when the governor looked at him he seemed strangely affected. He scrutinized him long and closely. Finally he signed the document that restored the prisoner to liberty. Before he handed it to him he said: "You will commit some other crime and be in the penitentiary again, I fear."

The man solemnly promised that he would not. The governor looked doubtful, mused a few minutes and said:

"You will go back on the river and be a mate again, I suppose?"

The man replied that he would. "Well, I want you to promise me one thing," resumed the governor. "I want you to pledge your word that when you are mate again you will never take a billet of wood in your hand and drive a sick boy out of a bunk to help you load your boat on a stormy night."

The steamboat man said he would not and inquired what the governor meant by asking him such a question.

The governor replied: "Because some day that boy may become a governor, and you may want him to pardon you for a crime. One dark, stormy night, many years ago, you stopped your boat on the Mississippi river to take on a load of wood. There was a boy on board who was working his passage from New Orleans to St. Louis, but he was very sick with fever and was lying in a bunk. You had plenty of men to do the work, but you went to that boy with a stick of wood in your hand and drove him with blows and curses out into the wretched night and kept him toiling like a slave until the load was completed. I was that boy. Here is your pardon. Never again be guilty of such brutality."

The man, cowering and hiding his face, went out without a word. What a noble revenge that was and what a lesson to a bully!—Success.

Out of Harmony.

It is more than likely that these American representatives at a coronation are not altogether welcome. They are out of harmony with such a function. It is to them a show, not a solemnity. They are amused at the thought of rulers "by the grace of God." Fitz-Greene Halleck's Connecticut farmer "would shake hands with a king upon his throne and think it kindness to his majesty." The European looks upon his monarch as a divinely ordained ruler, to kiss whose hand is a distinction.

A representative of the American government at a coronation is out of

place. He is an incongruity. He is about as much out of place as a representative of a Presbyterian general assembly would be at the installation of an archbishop of Canterbury or a pope of Rome.

The excellent gentlemen who have been selected to see King Edward crowned will have to go. It would be discourteous to revoke their commissions now. But this should be the last affair of the kind. The attitude of the United States concerning future coronations should be one of dignified aloofness. It should not descend from the heights of its republican simplicity to take part in the childish entertainments of Europe in which crowns, scepters, and holy oil are of so much importance.—Chicago Tribune (rep.).

Power of the Trusts.

Chicago, Feb. 14.—(To the Editor of the Chicago Chronicle.)—In the little town where I live there are thirty-eight of us who had always voted the republican ticket prior to the nomination of W. J. Bryan. We changed our politics because we saw our tariff system could be used and was being used for illegitimate purposes. Through it a few had gained enough wealth that, with its influence, they had surrounded themselves with a gang who have shown their willingness to rob the government by the I'll-help-you-you-help-me plan, until now the business and the only business of the gang is to find new fields for robbery and rob them.

I will not attempt to mention more than one thousand of ways this gang have and are now robbing the people. This gang I will designate as the money trust. They are the greatest of all trusts, in fact the foundation of all trusts.

The former leaders of this trust

learned most of their tricks during and following closely after our civil war, and with their increase of power—money—they are now the backbone of the government. They are "it" in the fullest sense of the word. What may we not expect now, when this greatest of all trusts, with their billions, have the national treasury also in their hands? If they could buy a president, a supreme court, a senate and a congress before what cannot they buy now?

When the people in convention at Chicago and Kansas City tried manfully to rid themselves of that monster breeder of all trusts who was it who slunk away and did all they could to keep the monster in power? If I understand you, you would call them democrats. All others you would call populists. Well, I am not sure I know what a populist is, but I do know that the other fellows are in favor of a money trust. If they did not vote for the gang they did all else they could for them. A CHRONICLE READER.

A Logical Conclusion.

As the people contemplate the Schley verdict and note that it was a captains' fight off Santiago they may be reminded that the Long administration of the navy department has been a clerks' administration, with Crowninshield chief clerk.—Sioux City Tribune.

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