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The "city on a hill" : Tom Johnson and Cleveland 1901-1909

Keith Dean Dickson

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THE "CITY ON A HILL"
TOM JOHNSON AND CLEVELAND 1901-1909

BY

KEITH DEAN DICKSON

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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PREFACE

I would like to express my appreciation to the people who helped make this thesis possible. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Barry Westin, who has served as my advisor in this effort. He helped to develop and crystalize my subject, always guiding me in the right direction. He has been an excellent instructor, and throughout our association, I have greatly admired his professional skill as an historian.

The entire graduate faculty has also been very helpful in offering advice and honest criticism. I wish to especially thank Dr. John Gordon and Dr. W. Harrison Daniel for their assistance in preparing the final draft of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Karen, who has encouraged me throughout and helped me overcome some of the more difficult moments.

This thesis has brought me a great deal of personal satisfaction; in these pages, I believe I have accomplished something of value.

Keith Dean Dickson
"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena.
Whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood:
A man who knows the great enthusiasms and the great devotions,
Who spends himself in a worthy cause
Who in the end knows the triumph of high achievement,
And if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly,
So that his place shall never be with Those cold and timid souls
Who 'know neither victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt

"When the history of America is written, if ever it is properly written...Tom Johnson will tower high above all the other personalities it has flung up into the skyline. I should be really afraid to say how great I think he is."

Brand Whitlock to Lincoln Steffens

(From The Letters and Journal of Brand Whitlock, Vol. I, p. 120.)
CHAS. W. HORTON,
990 Old Arcade,
Cleveland, Ohio.
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INTRODUCTION

Tom Loftin Johnson, mayor of Cleveland, Ohio from 1901 to 1909, was once hailed by a contemporary as "The outstanding municipal executive so far produced in United States history." Indeed, this judgment probably holds true even to the present day. Johnson's drive, combined with his uncompromising dedication to justice, dominated Cleveland politics and enlivened a city which had lost all sense of civic pride and responsibility. Johnson also brought a new vitality to American reform in the cities. His battles for three cent fares on the municipal street railway system, municipal ownership of public utilities, home rule, equal taxation and public improvements in the form of new parks, police and social reform, set standards for other urban reformers and spurred the Progressive movement in the cities.

Johnson met incredible resistance in his fight to bring his programs into being. Many of these programs were considered by conservatives to be radical and dangerous. The Mayor was attempting to deal with the complex new social and economic problems in the city, brought about by a steadily increasing, mostly foreign population, and by the great technological advances of the

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1 Lincoln Steffens, Quoted in Charles A. Barker, Henry George. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 624. (Hereafter referred to as Barker, Henry George.)
twentieth century. Johnson also struggled to end the widespread political corruption in Cleveland.

Johnson fought an eight-year war to reverse the decay and neglect in Cleveland and establish a democratic civic-minded government. Tom Johnson unfortunately died in 1911, before many of his hopes were fully realized. Nevertheless, he left an indelible mark on his city, his friends, his enemies and his era.

Tom Johnson has been viewed by historians of the Progressive period, especially Richard Hofstader and Robert H. Wiebe, as simply a standard middle-class or structural reformer, one of many who characterized the era. More often than not, structural reform involved only superficial and conservative changes in government. Other historians, however, especially Melvin Holli, have interpreted Johnson's achievements in a different light. Holli supports the view of Johnson as a middle-class or structural reformer, but believes his overall program of socio-economic reform places him in a special category among Progressive leaders.2 Johnson worked for honest,

2Among them were Hazen, Pingree, Samuel M. Jones, Mark Fagan, Brand Whitlock and Newton Baker. Johnson was the most successful of these reformers. See Melvin Holli, Reform in Detroit (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 160-171. (Hereafter referred to as Holli, Reform in Detroit.)
efficient government as did the middle-class reformers, but was more concerned with the human aspects of reform. Johnson's programs were all designed to achieve fundamental changes in the economic and social institutions of Cleveland. He went to the root of the problems in the city - ignorance, poverty, crime, oppression - and worked to change these evils for the betterment of society so that clean government would also be able to achieve its goals. Without the desire to improve basic human conditions, government, good or bad, was useless. Johnson's principles held true, for his greatest strides in reform were made where the people's concerns and most urgent needs were met.

Tom Johnson did this because he was a great believer in people. Man, he believed, was basically good, but modern institutions made man evil. Therefore, he battled the public utility corporations and their corrupting influence on politics, in order to free the citizens from their grip.

To counter the power of the utility corporations, and be able to fight them on his own terms, Johnson built

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3 Richard C. Wayne, "Foreword", Holli, Reform in Detroit, pp. ix - x.
his own organizations. The Mayor, totally uncompromising and unrelenting in the cause of the people, welcomed the challenge of battle. Ultimately, his greatest strength was his fatal weakness.

When the time finally came for compromise and conciliation in 1909, Johnson hardened and stubbornly refused to give in. His idealistic nature and inability to grasp the practical considerations of the controversy led to his defeat. The citizens of Cleveland, who for eight years staunchly support Johnson, tired of his rejection of compromise.

Johnson enjoyed the power he wielded as mayor - but as public support declined during his final years, he fought hard and with questionable methods, to keep it.

During his eight years as mayor, Johnson came under strong criticism and personal abuse. The anti-Johnson forces fought his progressive programs and attempted to discredit his accomplishments. The material used by the interests arrayed against Johnson and his programs consisted mainly of accusations, attacks and rumors, which were found to be false when investigated. It was clear that the opposition, unable to stop Johnson any other way, were grabbing at straws, hoping to chip away public support for his programs.
Indeed, the great conservative leaders of Ohio, Marcus Hanna, Joseph Foraker and Theodore Burton all feared Johnson's desire to institute such radical programs as home rule, municipal ownership of public utilities and equal taxation. In spite of all their protests and solid opposition, these principles became the foundations of the new state constitution of 1912. It is for these reasons that few anti-Johnson sources are referred to.

This thesis views Tom Johnson in a favorable light; his accomplishments as mayor far outweigh the shortcomings of his administration. He deserves far more recognition for his work in Cleveland than is presently given.
CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND AND EARLY CAREER

Tom Loftin Johnson was born on July 18, 1854 in Blue Spring, Kentucky, one of three sons. His father, Albert W. Johnson, was a slave owner and a prosperous cotton planter. When the Civil War began, he served as a Colonel in the Confederate Army. The Johnson family moved often during the war, living in Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia before eventually coming to Virginia and settling in Staunton in 1865. The Confederacy's defeat had wiped out his father's fortune and young Tom was determined to help his family through the hard times. An opportunity soon presented itself - Johnson had become friendly with a conductor of a train which passed through Staunton daily. The conductor offered to bring in the Richmond and Petersburg newspapers for Tom alone to sell. Tom consequently was able to charge any price he desired. Johnson now had his first monopoly, and in five weeks made eighty-five silver dollars. His business venture unfortunately ended suddenly when the helpful conductor was transferred. The newspaper monopoly taught young Johnson a valuable lesson. In his career as a businessman, Tom would always be on the lookout for enterprises which offered little or no competition.

Johnson later referred to his earnings as "the first good money our family had seen since the beginning of the
The money helped the family move to Louisville, Kentucky, where Colonel Johnson tried unsuccessfully to recoup his fortune. The family again moved, attempting to re-establish a cotton plantation in Arkansas with free labor. The operation failed and the Johnson family made several more moves, including Evansville, Indiana where Tom first went to school and completed three grades before Colonel Johnson brought his family back to Louisville in 1869. Tom began work in a rolling mill located in the city. At this time, Biderman and Alfred DuPont were establishing a street railway system in Louisville. The DuPonts were friends of the Johnsons and found an office job for fifteen-year old Tom in the new business.

He enjoyed working for the DuPonts and soon became head bookkeeper and cashier; by the end of his first year he was named company secretary. Johnson became interested

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1 Tom L. Johnson, My Story, ed. Elizabeth J. Hauser (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), p. 6. Early biographical information on Tom Johnson is scanty; My Story is the most complete source. (Hereafter referred to as Johnson, My Story.)

2 Carl Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson Mayor of Cleveland (New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1911), pp. 1-8. (Hereafter referred to as Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson.)

3 Biderman and Alfred DuPont were the grandsons of E.I. DuPont, who established the famous powder factory of WILMINGTON, DELAWARE.
in the mechanics of operating the street railway and subsequently developed a coin fare box which greatly simplified the collection of fares. This successful invention eventually earned him about $30,000.

Tom quickly rose in the DuPont Company, serving as superintendent of the road until 1876 when he decided to leave the company and begin a business career of his own. With earnings from his invention and a loan from Biderman DuPont, he purchased the majority stock in a decrepit street railway in Indianapolis. Johnson reorganized the line, added some important improvements, watered the stock and sold the company in 1880, realizing a profit of about $800,000 for his efforts.4

In the meantime, Johnson had married and moved to Cleveland in 1879 to enter in the bidding for a street railway grant. This brought him in direct competition with the famous Mark Hanna, who was director of a local railway company. The bids placed were disregarded by the city council and Hanna obtained rights to build the line. Actually, Hanna's company by law had the right to the new line as it was considered to be an extension of

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the company's original franchise. This became an im-
portant lesson for Johnson as this same law would prove
very valuable to him in the future. Never one to be dis-
couraged, Johnson purchased a short section of street
railway line in a west end suburb of Cleveland and
planned to build onto it with additional grants which
would be considered as extensions of his original fran-
chise, exactly as Hanna had done. A bitter struggle
arose between Hanna and Johnson as each company attempted
to gain an advantage over the other. At one point,
Johnson sought to obtain a right of way over Hanna's
tracks in order to complete his company's route from the
west end suburbs to the center of the city, Public Square.
When he was unable to secure the right of way, Johnson pro-
vided bus service across Hanna's tracks to Public Square
free of charge.\(^5\) The young monopolist's next move was to
create a through line which would connect the east and west
side of the city for which a single fare would be charged
with a one cent charge for transfers at Public Square.
This was an innovation in street railway operation. Pre-
viously, the companies would charge one fare for a

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 18. Johnson finally obtained the right of way in May of 1881.
passenger to travel from the suburbs to the center of the city, make him pay a transfer charge, and pay yet another fare to reach the other side of the city. Johnson's proposal was fiercely resisted by his competitors.6 Hanna's forces had great influence over the city council which was to decide on granting the one fare east-to-west connection Johnson proposed. But city council barely passed Johnson's measure on March 12, 1883, and Mark Hanna was handed an unaccustomed defeat. Johnson soon thereafter was able to secure a twenty-five year extension on his franchise. He was successful at this business for two main reasons. First, he devoted his full time to operating and improving his company. Others, like Hanna were only part-time operators, and the street railway business was only a secondary interest to them. Secondly, and probably most importantly, Johnson was a quick learner. Eugene Murdock, a biographer of Johnson, found that "once he had become familiar with the techniques of obtaining franchises, extensions and renewals, he was a hard man to beat."7 This ability to adjust to new situations would be one of his most important assets

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6Johnson would later call this "The biggest street railroad fight in my life." See Johnson, My Story, p. 24.
7Murdock, Johnson, p. 16.
as mayor.

In 1888 and 1889 a technical revolution occurred in the street railway companies in Cleveland. Previously, the lines had used horse and mule-drawn cars on tracks. Now the city authorized the building of electric street car lines and by 1890 the entire railway system had been electrified. This caused a great change in the street railway companies themselves. The company's value increased immensely, operating costs were reduced, service was improved and profits rose. Through the introduction of electricity, the street railways suddenly became multi-million dollar enterprises. Consolidation of the city's small companies naturally followed; by 1893 two large corporations controlled all the transit business in Cleveland. Johnson's lines had merged with two other companies to form the Cleveland Electric Railway Company or the "Big Con" as it was popularly known. Hanna's company joined with the remaining businesses to form the Cleveland City Railway or "Little Con." Big Con controlled 60 percent of the city railway operations, while Little Con controlled the other 40 percent.

Johnson now began to branch out in other fields. In an effort to reduce the costs of his street railway enter-
prise, he developed an adaptation of regular railroad rails for streetcar use. Johnson obtained a beneficial contract from a rolling mill in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to produce these new rails. His idea was so successful and the demand for the rails was so great that he built his own rolling mill outside Johnstown. He also built a short section of steam railroad tracks to connect the mill to the city. After the disastrous flood of May, 1889, Johnson bought out the city's ruined street railway line and for sixty to ninety days after the flood, Johnson operated both railway lines without charge.8

Soon, the need arose to build a steel plant to produce the steel needed for the Johnstown rolling mill. In a typical move toward vertical integration, Johnson bought seven square miles of land on Lake Erie and established a plant in the town of Lorain, Ohio, located about forty miles west of Cleveland.

By 1895 Tom Johnson was the seventh largest steel producer in the United States.9 By this time, he had also acquired street railway lines in Detroit and Brooklyn, New York. Johnson had become a full-fledge monopolist,

8Johnson, My Story, pp. 38-39.

a millionaire, a practical and shrewd businessman. He had risen to riches and power like a character out of a Horatio Alger story. He enjoyed making money and was satisfied with his position in life. But a man had entered into Johnson's comfortable existence and brought about remarkable change in his life. This man was Henry George. The change occurred in 1883 when Johnson was traveling by train from Indianapolis to Cleveland. A boy on the train offered to sell him a book entitled Social Problems by Henry George. Johnson at first refused, believing it dealt with the rather distasteful subject of prostitution, and told the boy that he was not interested. A conductor overheard his refusal and promised the millionaire that he himself would refund the cost of the book if Johnson did not find it interesting. Johnson purchased the book and began to read it; he quickly became absorbed in its message. Suddenly he saw his life and career in a new light. Brand Whitlock, a close friend of Johnson, described the effect of George's ideas:

...he turned to confront his life in an entirely new attitude...he began to have that which so many...utterly lack...a

10Johnson, My Story, p. 33.
life concept. With this new concept there came a new ideal.\textsuperscript{11} Social Problems brought George's philosophy into sharp perspective. Even though mankind had made great technical advances, the human lot had not been improved - poverty, ignorance and intolerance still existed.\textsuperscript{12} Social adjustments were necessary to bridge the gap between wealth and poverty. George's arguments affected Johnson greatly and he later described his reactions:

I remembered how offended I was when I first read his fascinating words and realized the things I was doing were the things this man was attacking. Attracted to his teachings against my will, I tried to find a way of escape....\textsuperscript{13}

He sent the book to his lawyer, L. A. Russell, and asked him to refute George's powerful argument. Russell later confessed to Johnson that he was unable to deny the truth of the book. Johnson also read the other works of Henry George, including \textit{Progress and Poverty}. Convinced that George was right, he traveled to New York City in 1885 to meet the man who had stirred him so deeply. To Tom Johnson, Henry George was the most stimulating and

\textsuperscript{11}Brand Whitlock, \textit{Forty Years of It} (New York: Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 155. (Hereafter referred to as Whitlock, \textit{Forty Years}.)

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Johnson, \textit{My Story}, p. 8.
impressive man he had ever met. They soon became good friends.

After meeting with George, Johnson continued his business ventures with characteristic enthusiasm, but found that his "...point of view was no longer that of a man whose chief object in life was to get rich."\textsuperscript{14}

Johnson soon was donating large amounts of time and money to spread George's social reform programs. He helped finance George's 1886 and 1897 bids for mayor of New York City. In 1887, Johnson once again contributed heavily to George's campaign for Secretary of State of New York. He also financially supported the single tax newspaper in New York City. Johnson first gained some political awareness through his involvement in these campaigns. In George's 1886 campaign, Johnson gave his first speech in public. Hesitant and unsure at first, he soon mastered the art of public speaking and became an important asset in future George campaigns. Johnson was so successful that George advised his protege to enter politics himself. This was something new to Johnson; before meeting Henry George, he had no interest in politics - he had never even voted in an election.

\textsuperscript{14}Johnson, \textit{My Story}, p. 51.
In 1888, Johnson was shocked to learn that the Democrats of the twenty-first Ohio Congressional district had nominated him for Congress. He never knew exactly why he was nominated but believed the attention he attracted in the street railway battles in Cleveland with Mark Hanna and his wealth had something to do with it. Johnson accepted the nomination mostly as a result of George's urging. He based his campaign on free trade, the institution of the single tax and a promise "to bring about a discussion that will demonstrate to the people that in freedom and not in restriction rests the true solution of the great problems of justice to all in bearing common burdens and of special privilege to none at the expense of any others."

Tom Johnson, the unreformed monopolist, would never have dreamed of making such a statement. Henry George and his teachings literally made Johnson a new man. He now was infused with the new convictions, which were so strong that he was prepared to devote the rest of his life to their establishment in America.

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15 Ibid., p. 60.

16 Ibid., Johnson's approach to the single tax will be discussed in a later chapter.
Republican Theodore Burton defeated Johnson in the election of 1888 by a slim margin. The election gave Johnson some valuable experience and showed him that politics was "the most practical way to serve the cause." Johnson ran again in the 1890 Congressional election and defeated Burton. He was re-elected in 1892 but was defeated by Burton in 1894. Congressman Johnson was a strange figure to those who did not know of his new principles. He was a monopolist in favor of free trade, and a vigorous champion of the single tax. He actually accomplished little in Congress, finding that more could be done to further the cause in the cities than in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the experience was of great value to him. He considered it equivalent to a college education. After his defeat, Johnson made plans to continue speaking and supporting Henry George's cause. However, his enthusiasm for business now wavered as he involved himself more and more in working for George, and in 1894 and 1895 he sold his street railway property in Cleveland.

It was a great personal blow to Tom Johnson when he learned his friend and mentor, Henry George, died while

17Ibid., p. 61.
campaigning for mayor in October, 1897. Johnson thereafter resolved to give up all connection with business. The years 1898 and 1899 saw Johnson sell his steel plant in Lorain and the street railways in Johnstown, Detroit and Brooklyn. Although Johnson participated in the Democratic National Convention of 1896 and 1900, he had no political intention when he returned to Cleveland in 1900. But it was "chance" that determined he was the right man at the right time to enter the mayoral campaign of 1901.

Henry George had brought to Tom Johnson a new set of principles on which to base his life. The teachings of George vividly brought the differences between good and evil into sharp focus. The people were oppressed and controlled by unjust wealth, or "privilege" as Johnson often referred to it. Privilege to him was all business which profited from others' work and had obtained a monopoly or some type of protection from competition. Johnson described them as "trusts that existed because of law-made favors or restrictions."\(^\text{18}\) In order for the people to be able to regain control, economic reforms were

\(^{18}\text{Hoyt L. Warner, Progressivism in Ohio 1896-1917 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p. 71. (Hereafter referred to as Warner, Progressivism in Ohio.) Whenever the term "privilege" is used in this thesis, it refers to Johnson's definition.}
imperative. "It is privilege that causes evil in the world, not wickedness; and not men," Tom Johnson once stated. Privilege created poverty and took wealth away from people rather than creating it. It became Johnson's life-long goal to rid society of privilege which made men and women bad, and weakened government's ability to deal with it. It was important then that Cleveland have good government; but this was not enough. Johnson found in his experience that:

However desirable good government or government by good men may be, nothing worthwhile will be accomplished unless we have sufficient wisdom to search for the causes that really corrupt government.... This big business which profits by bad government [Johnson's Italics] must stand against all movements that seek to abolish its advantages.

This attitude was reflected in Johnson's first mayoral campaign platform which was based on municipal ownership and tax reform, and held to be the means by which the


21 Ibid., p. 64.

22 Johnson, My Story, p. 125.
citizens of Cleveland would gain control over privilege. He would follow the example of Henry George in instituting programs which would allow people to be able to help themselves.23

Johnson had a great trust in people, believing that a citizen must first be educated in government, be thoroughly informed and made aware of the affairs of the city government which affected him. In this aspect, Johnson closely followed the Jeffersonian concept of government.

Tom Johnson returned to Cleveland late in 1900, his ideals firmly in mind, and his principles well defined. He was now prepared to do the work of Henry George, and help free Cleveland from the grip of privilege and injustice.

23Barker, Henry George, p. 64.
CHAPTER II
CLEVELAND AND TOM JOHNSON

Cleveland, Ohio was a typical large American city at the beginning of the twentieth century. The city had grown immensely since the Civil War, becoming the seventh largest city in America and one of the nation's greatest commercial and industrial centers. Cleveland's population had grown from only 43,000 in 1860 to over 380,000 in 1900. Immigrants made up the bulk of this increase - population figures at the beginning of the new century showed there were 124,000 immigrants living in the city while another 163,000 persons were of foreign parentage. Less than 100,000 residents of Cleveland were old stock Americans.¹

Technological advances brought gas and electric lighting and the electric street railway to the city. There was a great demand for these services as the population increased and the city limits expanded. The suburbs were born as cheap transportation became available to the entire populace. The street car and other "industrial innovations...played a significant role in furthering the enlargement of the urban environs...[and] allowed workers to remove themselves from the proximity


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of the drab factories to more habitable surroundings." ²

Since Cleveland was by state law not allowed to own its own utilities, control of the city's gas, water, lighting and street railways was placed in the hands of large corporations by means of franchises. The city government would often grant generous long-term franchises to these corporations which in turn would grow in power and wealth. Huge profits were obtained through stock watering and exploitation of the ever-increasing value of land in the city. In order to retain their profitable franchises, corporations began to infiltrate both state and local politics. City Councilmen were often bribed to vote for measures which would benefit the corporations. "Bosses, machines and rings, supported by funds from the private utilities became the characteristic rulers in the cities of Ohio and the nation." ³

Fredrick Howe, a prominent reform leader, made this comment concerning the widespread activities of corporations in politics:

²Jack Tager, ed., The Urban Vision-Selected Interpretations of the Modern City (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1970), p. 3. (Hereafter referred to as Tager, Urban Vision.)

³Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 13.
There is scarcely a large city in the country in which the public service corporations do not control or constantly seek to control the government.\textsuperscript{4}

With the city government under control of the corporate utilities (especially the street railway corporations), the quality of service to customers was greatly reduced and high rates were charged. Government departments were occupied by spoilsmen and machine politicians who allowed the streets to go unpaved, the water and sewage systems to break down and slums to grow. The problems in Cleveland were characteristic of the "...inefficiency and corruption which extended from the city through the state government even into the national legislature."\textsuperscript{5}

City government in Cleveland underwent some reform in 1891. A new law gave the mayor executive authority in conjunction with the Board of Control, men appointed by the mayor to head the various government departments. Legislative power was given to the City Council, the

\textsuperscript{4}Fredrick C. Howe, The City - The Hope of Democracy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 86. (Hereafter referred to as Howe, City-Hope of Democracy.)

members popularly elected by wards. 6 This system of
government, known as the Federal Plan, was reduced in
its effectiveness by the many restrictions placed on
it by the Ohio state legislature. Without prior permis­
sion from Columbus, the city by law could not own or
operate a business, had no control over private property
and could not levy taxes, had little or no borrowing
power and had virtually no control over its employees. 7

Any hopes for better government in Cleveland
through the reform law of 1891 were dashed by the admini­
strations of Mayors Robert McKiss (1895-1898) and John
Farley (1898-1901). McKiss used the city government to
extend the spoils system. The political machine he built
as mayor later collapsed under a series of scandals which
eventually sent two city officials to prison. 8 Farley
was elected on a clean government platform, but soon aligned
himself with the powerful street railway interests which had
funded his campaign for mayor. According to Johnson, assist­
ance also "came largely from businessmen who...were quite
contented to let a few agents of special privilege attend

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6 Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 16.

7 Fredrick C. Howe, The Confessions of a Reformer,
referred to as Howe, Confessions.)

8 Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 18, 1901. See also
to the details of city government."\(^9\)

The prominent Republican leader, Mark Hanna, who owned a Cleveland street railway corporation, also supported Farley for mayor. The close cooperation between business and the Republican party, in the person of Mark Hanna, was prominent in both Cleveland and Ohio politics. Fredrick Howe, a member of the Cleveland Municipal Association, described the Republican party in Ohio as:

...Little more than a private organization under control of men whose political influence has been acquired through the franchise corporations in the city and the railways in the state...they...used the powers acquired to secure franchises of great value, to prevent competition, and to evade their proper burdens of taxation.\(^{10}\)

While politics and privilege maintained a comfortable status quo in Cleveland, the voters were largely unconcerned, holding the belief that all politicians were bad, one was simply like another. Government was seen as not belonging to the people, but to businessmen - to be run by them and serve their interests. The actions of the citizens of Cleveland showed they lacked a sense of responsibility in government affairs. They


\(^{10}\)Howe, *City-Hope of Democracy*, p. 94.
seemed to have resigned themselves to the prevalent system of mismanagement and corruption. Lincoln Steffens made this observation of Cleveland before the advent of Tom Johnson:

Businessmen support it [the government]. There was no boss, and such leading politicians as the city boasted were nothing but businessmen's political agents.

Public service corporations controlled Cleveland and its political life. "They nominated and elected the councilmen and, of course, the councilmen represented them instead of the community."

This then was the situation when Tom Johnson arrived in Cleveland from New York in 1900. The city was in an uncharacteristic uproar over a possible twenty-five year extension of Mark Hanna's street railway franchise, which still had several years to run. It was clear that Hanna was attempting to force an extension


13 Johnson, My Story, p. 114.
through Farley before the upcoming mayoral election. 14 Here was an issue with which every citizen in Cleveland was concerned, and the Democrats seized this opportunity to consolidate public dissatisfaction into a political force directed against Hanna and Farley. Tom Johnson attracted the attention of local Democrats as he was a well-known expert on street railways and had expressed an interest in campaigning against special privilege. Johnson expressed his sincere interest in a speech at the Democrats' Jackson Day Banquet on January 8, 1901.

Fredrick Howe described the scene:

He stood round and smiling, hands in his pockets, he looked like a boy out for a lark. Politicians shouted like mad around him....When the crowd grew quiet, Mr. Johnson began to speak.... 15

His words were simple and direct:

...I am today free from every business venture in the world...so help me God the balance of my life will be given to fighting for the principles of democracy.16

14 Plain Dealer, February 20, 1901. See also Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 54.

15 Howe, Confessions, p. 89.

16 Plain Dealer, January 9, 1901. See also Eugene C. Murdock, "Cleveland's Johnson: Elected Mayor," Ohio Archeological and Historical Quarterly, LXV (January, 1956), p. 34.
Johnson also stated that he did not desire to be nominated for mayor but his popularity rose greatly after his speech, and a movement for his nomination gained strength among the city's Democrats. On January 6, a delegation of the party presented Johnson with a petition signed by 15,672 voters asking him to be a candidate for mayor. Johnson had no serious opposition and easily won the Democratic primary held on February 19. He then announced his platform, which included a pledge for honest government, the implementation of the single tax, home rule for cities, municipal ownership of utilities and equalization of taxation. He asserted that "the street railway problem [will be] the chief issue of my campaign." These ideas were gleaned mostly from association with Henry George. Johnson later described in his autobiography the main points of his first campaign:

My platform declared against granting extension of franchises to the street railroads at any rate higher than three cents, for public improvements and for equal taxation...what I wanted to convey to the people in my platform was what I have been trying to make them understand

18Plain Dealer, February 25, 1901.
ever since, that the city with its privileges and its responsibilities is their city. [Johnson's Italics] \(^9\)

In a speech during the campaign, Johnson elaborated on his stand for home rule for Cleveland:

I think we know how many policemen and firemen we want and how much to pay them; we know how clean we want our streets, and how much lighting we need. \(^{20}\)

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, an independent newspaper, endorsed Tom Johnson for mayor in an editorial, citing his personal integrity and stand for honest government. The Plain Dealer probably reflected the majority of public opinion when it projected that Johnson, if elected, would not be able to make any headway in tax reform, municipal ownership or the reduction of the street railway fares from five cents to three cents. \(^{21}\)

Johnson was campaigning against William J. Akers, who also ran on a platform to reduce street railway fares to three cents. At the same time, however, Akers stated that a three cent fare was both impractical and impossible to institute in Cleveland.

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\(^{19}\) Johnson, My Story, p. 112.

\(^{20}\) Plain Dealer, March 13, 1901.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., February 26, 1901.
During the ensuing campaign, Johnson's political meetings set new records in attendance for the city. His simple, direct style, ability to field questions, handle hecklers and relate to his audience won him widespread support. A Plain Dealer article stated that all classes, regardless of party, were listening and warming to Johnson. 22

Akers was continually challenged by Johnson to debate the issues with him, but the Republican candidate declined, spending most of his time accusing Johnson of insincerity and political ambition. Johnson, Akers declared, was an unreformed monopolist who only wanted to use the mayor's office as a stepping stone to a higher political position. 23 Overall, it was Akers' connection with the McKisson machine which crippled his campaign. Many men who campaigned for Akers and supported him for mayor had been members of McKisson's deposed organization. McKisson earlier had backed Akers' nomination and helped maneuver him into the candidacy. This unsavory connection

22 Ibid., March 23, 1901.

drove a great deal of Republican support away from Akers. 24

By April 2, 1901, the day of the election, it was clear that the wide appeal of Johnson was overwhelming Akers' faltering campaign. Johnson won the election by a majority of 6,053 votes. 25 The newly elected Mayor termed his victory as a "revolt of people against continual corrupt machine politics backed by the owners of special privilege." 26 Johnson also stated that his election signified the voters' desire for a better understanding of public affairs and for a more candid administration.

Tom Johnson did not hesitate once elected to act in the public interest against the private corporations. A problem arose in Mayor Farley's office shortly before Johnson's election. It was found that a steam railroad was in possession of several miles of lakefront property, owned by the city and worth millions of dollars. City Council had authorized Mayor Farley to sign an ordinance which would give the railroad control of this valuable

24 Plain Dealer, March 28, 1901.


26 Plain Dealer, April 3, 1901.
property. Johnson, as a private citizen, brought an injunction to halt the transaction. Johnson then had his lawyers obtain a temporary restraining order. A common pleas judge granted the order, but only until 11:00 A.M. on April 4. After his election, Johnson had the Board of Elections verify the votes cast, obtained a certificate and proceeded to City Hall. On April 4, he entered the office of the City Clerk, took the oath of office and filed his bond. The time was 10:27 A.M. Johnson thus prevented Farley from signing the ordinance. Now that he was mayor, Johnson would simply refuse to take any action on the measure.

Johnson and his entourage met Farley in his office, announced that he was now mayor, and politely waited while Farley collected his personal possessions and left the office. It was in this energetic and unorthodox manner that Tom Johnson became mayor of Cleveland. His resolute action saved for the city an invaluable piece of land which would have been foolishly given away to the railroad. Accomplishments such as this would characterize

27Ibid., April 5, 1901. See also Howe, Confessions, p. 100.

28The ordinance itself was repealed by City Council two weeks later.
Johnson's term as mayor and make him one of the most effective municipal reformers in the nation.
The city government Johnson now headed as mayor had been in operation for fifty years under a charter issued by the state legislature. The government itself consisted of the mayor, his Board of Control and the City Council. The mayor was the single executive responsible for the city administration. He was advised by his Board of Control, often called the cabinet, made up of men appointed by the mayor. The City Council had the legislative power and its twenty-two members were popularly elected.\(^1\) Other members of the city's government elected by the voters were the president of the City Council, the city auditor, treasurer and solicitor, three Justices of the Peace, three constables, and five members of the board of education.\(^2\) Overall, the Federal Plan gave Cleveland "rapid, responsible and inexpensive public service. It also made possible "the tracing of misgovernment to one source - the office of the chief

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\(^1\) Cleveland was divided into eleven districts, each district electing two councilmen. Each member served a term of two years. The elections were arranged by law so that only eleven members at one time came up for election. Eugene C. Murdock, "Cleveland's Johnson: First Term," *Ohio Historical and Archeological Quarterly*, LXVII (January 1958), 38 n 8.

executive." Instead of appointing a group of spoils­
men and politicians to his Board of Control as his pre­
decessors had done, Mayor Johnson brought a group of
talented and efficient men together to assist him. The
Board of Control was headed by the mayor and divided
into six sections: Public Works, Police, Fire, Law,
Charities and Corrections, and Accounts. The men
Johnson chose reflected his abilities as an organizer
and administrator. The department heads were as follows:

Director of Public Works - Charles P. Salen
Director of Accounts - James P. Madigan
Director of Charities/Corrections - Reverend
Harris R. Cooley
Director of Police/Fire - Charles W. Lapp
Director of Law - W. J. Babcock, later Newton
D. Baker; Assistant Harry Payer

One characteristic of this group was their youth. Most
of them were recent college graduates, and they had been
attracted to Johnson by his personality as well as pro­
grams.5

One of the most interesting men in Johnson's first
cabinet was Reverend Harris R. Cooley Described as "a top

3Thomas F. Sidlo, "Centralization on Ohio Municipal
Government," American Political Science Review, I (Nov­
ember, 1909), p. 592

4Johnson, My Story, p. 119.

5Howe, Confessions, p. 471.
flight sociologist." Cooley was the Minister of Johnson's church in Cleveland (The Cedar Avenue Disciple Church); he became associated with the Mayor through their mutual interest in social reform. Cooley had traveled to England and had become involved in the social work program being developed there. His beliefs were based on a form of Christian socialism, which stressed the concept that the teachings of Jesus were the key to organizing and directing life as well as business and government.7 Cooley later became connected with the single tax movement of Henry George. Cooley's compassion and interest in social reform were the primary qualities Johnson sought in the man to fill the position as Director of Charities and Corrections.

Charles P. Salen was another prominent member of the Board of Control. He has served previously in

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7This was the "Golden Rule" concept which Cooley shared with Toledo Mayor Samuel M. "Golden Rule" Jones who governed that city from 1897 to 1904. Although information on Harris R. Cooley is limited, it appears that he also shared the views of the leaders of the Social Gospel movement, Walter Rauschenbusch and John Ryan. See Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 82-86.
Cleveland's government as city auditor. He helped expose corruption in city government during McKisson's regime. Salen also had managed Johnson's campaign for mayor. Johnson selected Salen "because of his knowledge of city affairs and the business part of that position." Salen indeed proved to be an effective administrator of this department. One of his first acts, authorized by Johnson, was to burn over 2,000 "Keep Off the Grass" signs placed in the public parks.

One duty of the Public Works Department was supervision of the city's water supply. A Superintendent of Waterworks was responsible for its operation. The Waterworks Department had a notorious reputation as a haven for spoilsmen. The previous Superintendent was removed by the mayor in September, 1901, when he proved to be incompetent in handling the department. The new Superintendent was Professor Edward W. Bemis, a well-known and experienced authority on municipal affairs.

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8 *Plain Dealer*, April 13, 1901.

9 Charles Salen Papers, Scrapbook, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland, Ohio. Article from *Suburban News*, June 27, 1924.

10 His neglect was responsible for the deaths of several workers in an accident. See *Plain Dealer*, August 20, 1901.

11 Bemis had been removed from two teaching positions
Bemis was soon firing those in the department who were not performing up to his standards. Bemis stated that:

...the only consideration has been the ability to perform the services to which I assigned or wished to assign to the employees. In my conduct of the office, political considerations have never entered nor will they enter....

Bemis also worked to reduce costs and improve services. The most important innovation he introduced was the water meter for all users of city water. Trial meters were set up, and proved to be successful; by 1902 water meters were compulsory. The city enjoyed a 6 per cent reduction in costs after the meters had been installed. Water waste had also been dramatically reduced, with a 11.3 per cent decrease in water used by the city. Bemis' knowledge and experience helped the Mayor in other affairs of city government including tax reform.

The law department also underwent a change in the fall of 1901. W. J. Babcock was elevated to a judgeship, leaving the position vacant. He was replaced by Newton

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at Chicago College and Kansas State Agricultural College for his liberal views. He was a proponent of municipal ownership and an expert on the valuation of street railway property. His services would later prove to be invaluable to Johnson.


13 Ibid., p. 104.
D. Baker, who would become one of the most important men in Johnson's administration. A vigorous worker, erudite, a man of great legal talent, he was an imposing figure in public. Baker and Johnson soon developed a close relationship. Newton Baker became Johnson's confidant and right arm. Baker often advised the Mayor, keeping him within legal bounds, as Johnson habitually attempted to stretch the limits of the law in his battles with the public utility corporations.14

Johnson's personal secretary was W. B. Gongwer, a former reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Gongwer had been covering the new mayor for the newspaper and was greatly impressed by Johnson's manner and ideas. Johnson later asked Gongwer to join his staff. The young man soon left the newspaper and loyally served Johnson throughout his years as mayor.15

Though strongly supported by competent men in his Board of Control, Johnson faced a different situation in the City Council where the Republicans had a ten to twelve majority. Eight of the Republicans had been members of the "notorious 13," the gas ring under McKisson's

14Carl Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson Mayor of Cleveland (New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1911), p. 72. (Hereafter referred to as Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson.)

15Plain Dealer, April 24, 1901.
regime. These men owed their positions to the gas companies in Cleveland and were hostile to Johnson and his reform policies. The Mayor, however, was fortunate to find Republican friends in the City Council. Fredrick C. Howe and William J. Springborn supported Johnson and gave the Mayor a working majority.\(^\text{16}\)

Fredrick Howe was typical of the young reformers who joined with Johnson. Howe first met Johnson in 1901 and was soon converted to the doctrines of Henry George. Howe's enthusiasm was unquenchable: while working for Johnson, Howe found that

> The possibility of a free, orderly, and beautiful city became to me an absorbing passion. Here were all of the elements necessary to a great experiment in democracy.\(^\text{17}\)

Lincoln Steffens, upon visiting Cleveland, found the men who worked for Johnson to be "sincere, able thinking men, all of them a well chosen staff, and they were all happy in their work."\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{16}\)In the 1902 Councilmanic election, Johnson supported Springborn's re-election as a Republican. The voters returned Springborn to City Council and gave Johnson a 14 to 8 majority. Fredrick Howe also ran in the election as an independent, refusing to be associated with the Republican Party and was defeated. Howe, Confessions, p. 111.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 113.

\(^{18}\)Steffens, Autobiography, p. 471.
Johnson himself also commented on the men who joined his administration:

As time went on our organization gathered to itself a group of young fellows of a type rarely found in politics - college men with no personal ambition [except] to serve [as] students of social problems known to the whole community as disinterested, high-minded, clean-lived individuals. 19

With his administration established, Johnson turned his attention to the affairs of the city. The Mayor took a drive around Cleveland, accompanied by the building inspector, and ordered thirty or more substandard buildings torn down. If the buildings had residents, they were evicted. The owners were notified to destroy the buildings, and if no action was taken, the city would tear them down and bill the owners. Afterwards, Johnson stated "If the people get the idea that we propose to enforce the laws...it will lead to the building of better structures." 20 He also ordered the removal of billboards which had become eyesores.

In another important act, Johnson had City Council transfer $160,000 from the new city hall building fund to Salen's Public Works Department for street cleaning

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19 Johnson, My Story, p. 169.
20 Plain Dealer, April 15, 1901.
and renovation. The condition of Cleveland's streets was disgraceful. The city had a total of 580 miles of streets and only 35% of these were paved.\(^{21}\) Johnson himself had had several problems with Cleveland streets when campaigning for mayor. In order to get to a political meeting in the rain one night, he was forced to drive through streets where mud was over a foot deep. There were reasons other than convenience for fixing and paving the streets; dirty streets bred disease, dust from dirt roads made breathing difficult and coated clothing and merchandise in street front stores. Unpaved or poorly paved roads were serious traffic hazards, which resulted in accidents and problems in transporting goods and passengers.\(^{22}\)

The practice of hiring a local company to pave a few selected streets proved to be a very expensive operation for the city. Johnson therefore, put a large number of streets up for paving and encouraged outside companies to bid for the contract. A non-Cleveland company won the contract and Johnson was able to save the city over $50,000.\(^{23}\)

\(^{22}\)Beard, American City Government, p. 243.  
Cleaning the streets was another problem met by Johnson. He had Superintendent of Streets, John Wilhelm organize a street-cleaning force patterned on the successful methods of New York City and Newark. The new force was called the "white wings," named for the white uniforms the men wore, and the system proved to be an important and beneficial investment in the city's welfare.

Johnson was a strong supporter of parks, believing they contributed to the overall joy and health of the city. As a result, Clevelanders were given free access to the public parks, playgrounds were opened for children and a badly needed public bath house was built in Garden Park for the city's residents.

Johnson also opened a campaign against vice. He had a policeman stationed at the entrances to all gambling houses and houses of prostitution. The policeman would simply take the names and addresses of all patrons.

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24Wilhelm served only a short time as Superintendent of Streets. He was fired by Johnson for assessing employees one per cent of their salaries for political campaign funds. Politicking in any form was not tolerated by the Mayor. Any offender immediately found himself without a job. See Plain Dealer, August 9, 1901.

25Ibid., April 19, 1901.

entering the establishments. This simple action was so successful Johnson was able to report that "...in a short time public gambling in Cleveland was practically abolished." 27

Another important problem met by Johnson's first administration dealt with the health of Cleveland. Smallpox was ravaging the city in the spring of 1901. The epidemic was so bad that Johnson received a letter from Dr. Ernest Wende of the Buffalo, New York Department of Health. Wende was considering placing Cleveland under a quarantine to prevent travellers from catching the disease as they passed through the city. The letter stated in part that:

My investigation shows that our apprehension is more than well founded; ...action in your city in the past, as at present, has been such as to result in nothing but a steady continuance of the pestilence at the rate of forty (40) cases per week. 28

The doctor in charge of the city's health department, Darrill Hemlich believed that wide scale vaccinations

27Johnson, My Story, p. 122.

28Ernest Wende to Tom L. Johnson, May 17, 1901, Tom L. Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland, Ohio. (Hereafter referred to as Tom L. Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.)
would stop the spread of the disease. He was removed by Johnson in July for altering bills incurred by the health department. The man who succeeded Hemlich was Dr. Martin Fredrich, who as soon as he was appointed on July 27, 1901, organized two medical teams of twenty men each to go to the infected areas and decontaminate the homes with formaldehyde. By August 23, not a single new case of smallpox was reported. Fredrich later explained the method he used in controlling the disease, which soon attracted national attention:

I...proposed to stop vaccination entirely and instead of it, disinfect thoroughly with formaldehyde every section of the city where smallpox had made its appearance; also to give the city a general cleaning up. Residents were told to clean up their yards, houses and barns. The Mayor...gave me all the aid I needed.

In assisting Fredrich, Johnson opened two emergency hospitals and extra doctors were sent to assist those already combating the disease. The doctors examined school children and checked water supplies in various

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29 Plain Dealer, July 21, 23, 1901.


31 Charles W. Lapp to W. B. Gongwer, May 18, 1901; Tom L. Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
areas for purity. The prompt action of the city earned the praise of Dr. Wende who again wrote Johnson:

I congratulate you heartily on the efficient system your officials have inaugurated and the aggressive-ness which is evident throughout....

The most exciting event of Johnson's first term began in May, 1901, when the Mayor asked Fredrick Howe to introduce a natural gas ordinance in City Council. The ordinance would grant a natural gas company a franchise to supply the city with cheaper gas than it was presently using. Johnson stated that he "was eager to get for the people of Cleveland cleaner and cheaper fuel and light than the coal companies or the artificial gas people could furnish them." The two artificial gas companies were the Cleveland Gaslight and the People's Gaslight and Coke, both of which charged the city .80¢ per 1000 cubic feet for gas.

Opposition to the ordinance quickly came from these companies as well as the coal dealers, who supplied the

32Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, p. 58.

33Carl Wende to Tom L. Johnson, May 18, 1901, Tom L. Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

34Johnson, My Story, pp. 213-214.
artificial gas companies with their fuel. The City Chamber of Commerce also opposed the measure. Those against the ordinance feared the streets would be torn up and that the gas would injure trees, ruin people's health and cause financial problems for those who had invested in artificial gas. 35 The City Council meetings concerning the issue received a great deal of publicity and attracted the attention of many Clevelanders. It was learned that the East Ohio Gas Company would obtain the franchise if the measure passed. The company would supply the city with gas for only .30¢ per 1000 cubic feet, quite a savings for Cleveland. There was some hesitation among the Johnson councilmen when it was discovered that Standard Oil owned East Ohio's gas fields, but Johnson supported the company as long as it brought cheap gas to its customers and refrained from any interference with city government.

It was Johnson's feeling that the Cleveland gas companies would attempt to influence certain councilmen to defeat the ordinance. He, therefore, had these men put under surveillance. During the debates over the issue, several councilmen reported that Johnson was having them

35 Howe, Confessions, p. 101.
shadowed by city policemen. The Mayor denied they were policemen, but admitted that councilmen were being watched by private detectives. This caused something of an uproar, but Johnson justified his actions by stating that:

...since I've been mayor I have had a good many detectives watching councilmen and have paid for it out of my own pocket. I will say further that the results have generally been sufficient to warrant the outlay.\(^{36}\)

The Mayor's suspicions proved to be correct. On June 23, 1902, the ordinance came to a vote in City Council. The gallery was packed with citizens. The ordinance was defeated by one vote. Suddenly Johnson announced that a councilman had come to him earlier in the day and reported that he had received a bribe of $5,000 from the gas companies to vote against the measure. The councilman then rose and presented the bribe money to the Mayor, announcing that no amount of money would buy his vote. Johnson asserted there were probably others in Council who had taken bribes, but were saying nothing. Fredrick Howe then addressed the group with an impassioned speech, asking whether this was the normal way city business was conducted. He bitterly condemned bribery as the swiftest

\(^{36}\)Plain Dealer, June 10, 1902.
way to destroy government. The man who bribed the councilman was present at the meeting and was arrested while attempting to leave Council chambers.

After the excitement died down, Council re-voted and passed the ordinance by a vote of fifteen to six. The ordinance stipulated that the East Ohio Gas Company was to lay 30 miles of gaslines within the first six months and would charge .30¢ per 1000 cubic feet of gas for the first five years of the franchise, there was included a 10 per cent discount for gas used for city buildings and schools.

Lowering costs, obtaining better service, making public improvements and bringing honest efficient men into government were the initial aims of Johnson's first term as mayor. In this he was largely successful.

37 Howe, Confessions, p. 103. See also Plain Dealer, June 24, 1902, for a full account of the City Council meeting and subsequent trial of Dr. Daykin, the man who bribed the councilman. Dr. Daykin was acquitted.

38 Plain Dealer, May 6, 1902.

39 At the end of 1901, the total per capita expenses for the citizens of Cleveland was $12.14. This is a significant figure when compared to other total per capita costs in other cities at the same time. They are as follows: Philadelphia - $15.64, St. Louis - $15.63, Cincinnati - $18.62, Pittsburgh - $19.86, Boston - $34.39. Figures from Department of Labor Bulletin September 1902. See also Howe, City-Hope of Democracy, p. 59.
These changes were fairly easy to make, and the rather mild corporate resistance was not difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, privilege in Cleveland realized the danger Tom Johnson and his programs presented. Conservatives began to rally together, through organizations such as "Banks, the Chamber of Commerce, clubs and churches," afraid of what they termed Johnson's "gas and water socialism."

Fredrick Howe made this incisive observation of the situation in Cleveland:

Before the expiration of the first two years of Mr. Johnson's term of mayoralty the city was divided into two camps along clearly defined economic lines.... On one side were men of property and influence; on the other the politicians, immigrants, workers, and persons of small means.

The battle lines were being drawn as Johnson began his first major attack on privilege - the reform of taxation in Cleveland.

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40 Howe, Confessions, p. 115.
41 Ibid.
As early as April 1901, Tom Johnson was preparing a plan of tax reform for Cleveland. As a follower of Henry George, the subject of taxation was an all important concern. Henry George expressed his aim in *Progress and Poverty* to "abolish all taxation save that upon land values."\(^1\) This was the basic principle of what George termed the single tax. According to George, private ownership of land caused a sharp division of society, creating two classes - the rich who owned the land, and the poor who rented the land. The single tax was designed to free the poor from high rents. Those who owned the land, would pay taxes on only the value of the land itself, not on any improvements which might have been added. This would reduce taxes, ending social barriers which in turn would also ease social and economic decay. Through the single tax all "socially created wealth" - the wealth produced by capital and labor (buildings and improvements, personal property income and industrial goods) would be exempt from taxation and the tax on land itself would provide enough revenue for government.

To Tom Johnson, however, the single tax was a measure for social rather than fiscal reform. He expressed this opinion as follows:

...taxation in all its forms, however designated, is merely the rule by which burdens are distributed among individuals and corporations...so long and so universally has taxation been regarded as a fiscal system only that comparatively few people recognize it for what it is, viz.: a human question.

The single tax to Johnson was the vehicle by which social justice could be achieved, it could help remake society, redistribute wealth and cure social ills; it would humanize municipal reform. It was also a practical doctrine which could be easily understood by all men. The attitude held by George, Johnson, Howe and others was that the city was the best place to begin the single tax experiment. In the city, land values

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4 Ibid., p. 375.

5 Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 87.
were increasing by ten to twenty per cent each year. A tax on land would force owners to utilize the land they had as it would be more profitable for them to do so and would help end land speculation. The single tax would also reduce rents, reasoning that "...a tax upon the house is borne by the tenant, while a tax upon the land falls upon the shoulders of the landlord."\(^6\) This would in turn end slums and overcrowding and jobs would be created as landowners made building improvements.

By instituting the single tax, and abolishing all other forms of taxation, the city would have a perpetual source of income which would become greater as the city grew and land values increased. Any extra money obtained from the single tax would be used for parks and city beautification. With no taxes, industry would be enticed to locate in the city.\(^7\) A new era in urban development would come about through the single tax with Cleveland "becoming the most attractive city in America."\(^8\)

Interestingly, Tom Johnson, although a single taxer,


\(^8\) Howe, *Confessions*, p. 98.
never made this an issue in his campaigns. He sought rather to educate the people in this philosophy and lay the groundwork for its ultimate adoption by stressing such reforms as home rule and tax equalization.

The state of Ohio had not changed its system of taxation since 1851. The state constitution of that year made little mention of taxation, stating only that taxes would be levied "on money credits, investments in bonds, stocks, joint stock companies,...all real and personal property according to its value in true money."9

In the city, general property (land and buildings) were appraised every ten years by a board whose members were elected in the city wards. This Decennial Board of Equalization as it was known, had ninety days to assess all property in the city. There was also a City Annual Board of Equalization, appointed by the mayor, which met yearly to correct any inequalities in assessments made by the decennial appraisers. Railroad property was appraised each year by a group of popularly elected county auditors in the counties through which the railroads ran.10

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great problem with this system of taxation was that it placed the burden on the middle-class property owners. The various tax boards, often bribed by the corporations, greatly underassessed property so that they paid almost no taxes. Johnson, made this comment on the tax system as he found it:

...small taxpayers generally were paying full rates, while the public service corporations, steam railroads, and large land-owning interests were paying between ten and twenty per cent only the amount required by law. More than half the personal property and nearly all the valuable privileges were escaping taxation....

When Johnson became mayor, the Decennial Board had just finished its appraisal of property in Cleveland. Finding the assessment to be terribly inadequate in determining the true value of commercial property and land, Johnson began what he called the Tax School in April, 1901. The Tax School, paid for by the Mayor out of his own personal funds, was to serve two purposes: first to show the inequalities of taxation which existed, and second, to educate the citizens on the tax problem. The man Johnson chose to head the Tax School was Peter Witt.

11 Ibid., p. 127.
12 Ibid.
Witt was the son of German immigrant parents; he had pursued several trades before joining the Populist movement in the 1890's. He soon became an advocate of the single tax. Witt first met Johnson during the latter's Congressional campaign of 1894. At one meeting, Johnson was continually harrassed by a particularly vociferous man. Johnson invited the man to join him on the platform so they could discuss the issues better. The crowd apparently knew the man and they cheered him loudly as Witt joined the candidate on the platform. In this fashion, did Johnson come to know Peter Witt. They soon resolved any differences which existed between them and the two men became close friends. Witt was an excellent speaker, and an effective campaigner who actively challenged the administration's enemies. Johnson described him as the "bravest and most resourceful [of the] fighters against special privilege."¹³ A local newspaper made this characterization of Peter Witt:

"He[is a] Bulldog for the administration...a howling terror in action; ...vitriolic, genial, brutal, courteous, coarse, refined - a paradox and a puzzle."¹⁴

¹³Peter Witt Papers, Scrapbook, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland, Ohio. (Hereafter referred to as Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.)

¹⁴Ibid.
The tax School then began with the defiant Witt in charge and Newton Baker serving as legal advisor. Its main objective was to make a "thorough and scientific appraisal of property values based on [the] market price." Maps were drawn of each ward of the city showing all the streets, property frontage and assessed tax value. Only the land itself was assessed in Witt's study, no improvements were included. This, of course, was one of the basic principles of the single tax valuation of land. Property assessment was made on the Somers plan of valuation of city property. Named after W. A. Somers who developed this scientific method, it was based on a uniform valuation of property measured on a one-foot frontage by one hundred feet in depth. In this manner, each lot in the city was equally and fairly valuated. This was then compared to the records of the Decennial Board. Witt recounted the results:

We found in our search one hundred and one thousand sub-divisions of land varying in size from a small building lot to one thousand acre tracts. This property was appraised all the way

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16 Plain Dealer, May 19, 1901.

17 The method itself is rather complicated. Somers outlined his system in "Valuation of City Real Estate for Taxation," Municipal Affairs, V(June 1901), pp. 401-418.
from two percent of its cash value to more than sixty-eight percent above its market price.  

Taxpayers were invited to see these discrepancies, and a series of large maps showing streets, individual lots and buildings by ward were placed in City Hall. These maps were intended to "show the board where the discrepancies exist and...tell the board what the true values are...."  

The Tax School used another method to reach the individual landowners. Taxpayers in each ward were sent a circular describing in detail the inequalities of assessments on their own property in clear terms. The Plain Dealer related the purpose of the circulars:

Each circular will quote figures intended to prove that the property owner to whom it is addressed is paying too much taxes because of an over-evaluation of his property compared with other property of the same class both in his own ward and in other

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18 Peter Witt, "Mayor Johnson's Administration in Cleveland," speech printed in City Club Bulletin, (February 12, 1908), p. 373. See also Dearborn Independent, June 24, 1922. Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

19 Johnson, My Story, pp. 127-128.

20 Plain Dealer, May 19, 1901.

21 See appendix for a copy of one of these circulars.
parts of the city.\textsuperscript{22} The circulars were the first important step in Johnson's tax reform program.\textsuperscript{23} Peter Witt also played an important role by going throughout the city giving public lectures on the subject of taxation. Using visual displays with a stereopticon (a device much like a modern overhead projector) and employing a battery of facts and figures he helped make the public aware of existing tax inequalities.

The Mayor had paid the Tax School's expenses throughout April; the City Council, wary of the Tax School at first, now appropriated funds in May for it and continued to support its work until October 8, 1902 when a large property owner filed suit against the city and had an injunction issued.\textsuperscript{24} The Tax School was abolished in December, the court ruling that the funds had been used by the City Council without statutory authority.\textsuperscript{25}

The Tax School had caused a stir in Cleveland, but Johnson's simultaneous attack on corporate and railroad taxation caused repercussions which carried all the way

\textsuperscript{22}Plain Dealer, July 28, 1902.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24}Johnson, My Story, p. 129. Plain Dealer, May 7, 1901.
\textsuperscript{25}Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 88.
to the state capital. The public service corporations had long enjoyed low taxes, as their assessments were based on grossly undervalued property values. Johnson wanted the corporations taxed not only on the worth of their property, but also on the worth of their franchises. This principle of utility taxation had been successfully applied by Theodore Roosevelt when he served as Governor of New York. Commonly known as the Ford Franchise Tax, it had been incorporated into Ohio law in 1894 as the Nichols law. The utilities were able to sidestep the law in 1896 through an agreement by which the corporations would pay an excise tax of one half of one percent of their total yearly earnings if the legislature did not invoke the Nichols law.

Johnson was determined to have these corporations assessed and taxed properly. The Annual City Board of Equalization had the power to raise or lower the corporations' assessments. This seven man, Republican dominated committee was notorious for its low valuations. When


27 Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 9, n. 18, See also Fredrick C. Howe, "Cleveland: A City Finding Itself," Ibid., p. 3989.
Johnson became mayor there were two openings. By some political maneuvering, Johnson was able to obtain two more openings which he filled with his supporters who favored high assessments, giving him a four to three majority. Soon after, in the months of May and June, the City Board met and raised the assessments of the five largest public service corporations in the city. The Cleveland Electric Railway Company's (Big Con) original assessment of $1,265,150 was raised to $15,000,000. Similarly, the Cleveland City Railway Company (Little Con) was reappraised at $5,000,000 the corporation's tax return valued itself at $600,000. Cleveland Gaslight and Coke Company's assessment was increased from $360,245 to $1,074,000. The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's valuation was raised from $470,000 to $1,347,000 while the People's Gaslight and Coke Company's valuation was increased from $1,500,000 to $4,286,400. The Board was assisted in these valuations by Professor Edward Bemis. Bemis was a well-known authority on the valuation of public service corporations.

28*Plain Dealer*, May 17, 18, 1901. The two men replaced were given equivalent positions elsewhere in the city and county government.

and according to Johnson, "the only such expert on the people's side." Overall, the Board raised the utilities' valuation by $20,000,000. This revenue, if received by the city, would reduce the overall taxation rate in Cleveland from $3.00 to $2.55 per $100,000. Several lawsuits and an appeal by the corporations failed to have the assessments lowered. Subsequently, the five corporations took their case to Columbus, where they appealed to the State Board of Tax Revision. The State Board consisted of the Governor, the Attorney General and the State Auditor. Newton Baker represented the city. Tom Johnson was present at the hearings, but was not allowed to participate. Baker alone faced what was termed as a team of corporation lawyers. On February 1, 1902, the State Board renounced the $20,000,000 increase, declaring that the City Board had "exceeded its powers and acted without authority of law." The decision was

30 Johnson, My Story, p. 132.
31 Plain Dealer, September 5, 1901. Ibid., p. 145.
32 Big Con had an injunction issued against the Board. The corporation also accused Johnson of fixing the City Board to raise valuations. Plain Dealer, July 20, 24, 1901.
33 Ibid., January 18, 1902.
34 Ibid., February 2, 1902.
based, according to the Attorney General, "on the fact that the Cleveland Board applied the principles of the Nichols law to determining the value of the property of these corporations." 35 Johnson immediately accused the Republican board of playing politics. He later made this wry comment: "Of course, a decision against the public service corporations would have meant a shutting off of campaign contributions - and that was the real reason why the tax was found illegal." 36 Soon after, on May 21, 1902, the state legislature replaced the troublesome City Board with a State Board of Review, its members appointed by the state government. 37 This was a deliberate act by the Republican state government to reduce Johnson's effectiveness. Soon the legislature would have to take more drastic measures to stop Johnson.

At the same time utilities were being assessed, Johnson also fought to increase the taxes on the steam railroads in Cuyahoga County. The county auditors met in Cleveland to assess the value of property owned by the railroads. Johnson attended the meeting with Dr. Bemis.

35 Johnson, My Story, p. 146.
36 Ibid., pp. 146-147.
37 The members were the State Auditor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State and Attorney General.
"Our desire," Johnson reported, "was to get them to place at least a 60 percent valuation upon these properties." The railroad's own auditors and land tax agents were present and gave the county auditors figures which came to about a six to fifteen percent valuation. Johnson and Bemis brought out facts and figures which proved the railroad lines in the county were considerably under-assessed. In one example, the Valley Railroad was valued at $5,500 per mile. Johnson's experts had previously examined the railroad's rolling stock, track, trestles and other equipment and found that the line should have been assessed at $65,000 per mile. The Valley Railroad also had been found to be issuing passes, granting favors in order to obtain a low valuation from the county auditors. During the course of the meeting, Johnson made this statement:

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38 Johnson, My Story, p. 132.
40 Johnson, My Story, pp. 134-135.
41 Plain Dealer, May 10, 1901.
I want to show you that the selling price, the market value of this road is not less than $106,000 per mile and I want to know why this road is only assessed at $5,500 per mile when other property pays on 60 percent of its true value... it ought to pay at least $65,000 a mile.\(^{42}\)

The following day, the County Board increased the railroad's valuation one half of one percent, or about $565 per mile. Johnson accused the members of the Board of receiving bribes and told them he would do all in his power to have them defeated in the next election.\(^{43}\)

The Mayor carried the fight to the State Board of Equalization. Bemis and Baker presented their carefully compiled evidence which clearly showed the difference between the proper valuation and the amount assessed by the County Board. The State Board refused to act, determining that by law it was not empowered to rule on the matter.\(^{44}\) Johnson took the case to the State Supreme Court, which in February, 1902, ruled against raising the assessment, referring the Mayor and his party to the state legislature for a change in laws.\(^{45}\)

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\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., May 11, 1902.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., September 8, 1908. Murdock, "Johnson", p. 197.

\(^{45}\) Johnson, My Story, p. 142.
Johnson's fight for tax reform in 1901 and 1902 was met with stiff opposition by both the state and the corporations. The Mayor realized that in order to obtain any substantial reform, the state government had to be cleaned up and the influence of privilege removed. The battle for tax reform was not without its rewards, however, through Johnson's efforts, the public was made aware of the abuses of taxation by the corporations and railroads. Cautious of public opinion, the utilities voluntarily raised their valuations after 1902 from a total of $4,500,000 to $7,800,000 giving the city an extra $60,000 a year in revenue. They also paid a total of $100,000 in back taxes owed.

It would not be until 1910 that Johnson's method of assessment for corporations would be incorporated into state law. The Tax School brought about a lowering of assessments on middle-class homeowners and increased

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46 Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 91. Because of the loss of revenue through improper valuations of the public service corporations, the tax rate in Cleveland rose from $2.87 per $100.00 in 1902, to $3.05 per $100.00 in 1903. If the corporations would have paid their taxes, the city would have had a surplus of $182,000 in the treasury, and the tax rate would not have increased. From the Report of the City Auditor, James P. Madigan. See Plain Dealer, December 3, 1902.
valuations on commercial and financial property of the city; land and buildings were appraised separately. The Somers system of land values was adopted as the standard for city assessments. The assessments themselves were to be made every four years instead of every ten, with the members of the board reduced to five and elected by the voters.

Tax reform was thus halted early in Johnson's career as mayor, but he achieved the final victory many difficult years later. Johnson turned his attention to a new objective - the three cent fare for street railways. This was the goal which would dominate the Mayor's attention for the next eight years.

47Peter Witt Papers, Scrapbook, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
Fredrick Howe termed the fight for the reduction of street railway fares to three cents as the "immediate struggle."¹ In considering the street railway war, Johnson found that "It was this that engaged most of our time, used up our energy and taxed our ingenuity."² This issue would bring Tom Johnson his greatest triumphs and his most bitter defeats. It would consume Cleveland like few other issues ever had, and escalate into an epic battle between the people and privilege. This was an issue Johnson knew intimately; he had helped to build the street railway corporations in Cleveland, and now in 1901 as Mayor, while fighting for equal taxation, he was also preparing to bring about the municipal ownership of these lines through the three cent fare and universal transfers.³

Tom Johnson was a strong believer in municipal ownership for public utilities. He saw the street railway

¹Howe, Confessions, p. 115
²Johnson, My Story, p. 220.
corporations as the most important public utility. Municipal ownership of the street railways would clear the way for the single tax. Property along the route of the railway increased in value; the increase would be taxed, according to the single tax, thereby covering the operating expenses of the railway; allowing the city to operate the line free of charge. Johnson envisioned the day when land taxes alone would support the entire street railway operation, much like renters of a building pay for the free operation of their elevator. Since it was impossible to institute this change now (cities were not allowed to own or operate their own utilities), Johnson supported the three-cent fare. "I favor low street-car fares because I believe that this is the best way to municipal ownership which I believe is the only true system." The three-cent fare, according to the Mayor, was a reasonable charge for a company whose stock was not watered. The company would also not lose

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5*Plain Dealer*, May 14, 1910. Other benefits Johnson stressed were freedom from excessive fares, dividends on watered stock and corruption in public office. From *The Star*, Schenectady, New York, May 11, 1908. Tom Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
money by lowering its rates. Johnson explained that "at three cents people will ride more often and will take cars for shorter distances than they would with a larger fare." He seemed to support the fare mostly because three cents was closest to no fare at all, which was his ultimate aim anyway.

With this outlook, Johnson began his campaign for low fares. On December 9, 1901, Fredrick Howe proposed that the City Clerk request bids for the construction of a street railway. The bid would include an agreement that the railway would charge a three cent fare and universal transfers. A twenty-one year franchise was to be granted and the city would have the right to purchase the line when it became legally possible to do so.

Johnson later added to Howe's ordinance, specifying certain conditions under which the low fare line would operate. Six miles of track were to be laid in the first six months, after that time, the line would be required to be operating. The city would control the location of the

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6Ibid., May 19, 1901.


8It was obvious that Johnson was behind Howe's low fare ordinance. See Plain Dealer, December 10, 1901.
railway's transfer points, and would be allowed to build straddle tracks and could lay track next to already existing track. These conditions were a move by Johnson to overcome the expected reaction of the other railway corporations. The low fare ordinance was passed on January 6, 1901, and bids were opened on February 10, 1902. There were several problems in obtaining a franchise after bidding. Strict regulations governed the establishment of any new street car operation. First, the proposed route had to be approved by City Council. The route would then be opened for bids and the franchise awarded to the lowest bidder on the condition that a majority of the property owners along the proposed route gave written consent to the construction. After obtaining the franchise and establishing itself, the company could easily renew its grant. No consents were needed for a renewal of a franchise.

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9Ibid., December 17, 1901.
10Ibid., December 20, 1901.
11Ibid., December 10, 1901.
The City Council received only one bid of $50,000 from John B. Hoefgen. Hoefgen was a former colleague of Tom Johnson during his business days, and now owner of a street railway in Brooklyn, New York. On February 21, 1902, Hoefgen's three cent company was incorporated as the People's Railway Company. In March, the franchise was officially granted by the City Council. From February to March, Hoefgen faced strong and determined opposition while attempting to obtain the franchise, especially in obtaining the majority of consents necessary. Fearing the threat of the low fare company to their monopoly, the railway corporations had gone to the streets where the new line was to pass and paid many residents to refuse to sign the consent.

At one point, it seemed as if Hoefgen would be unable to obtain a majority of consents, but City Council intervened, combining four streets into one with a single name. Hoefgen had enough consents on two of the four streets and the combination was enough to give him an

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14 *Plain Dealer*, February 11, 1902.
overall majority of consents to obtain the franchise.\textsuperscript{17}

Work on the line was then planned to begin in early April. On April 5, an injunction was issued halting all work on Hoefgen's line. The Little Con, in the injunction, held that the franchise was invalid, charging that changes in the route had been made after the franchise had been granted. The traction company also obtained several signatures of property owners who protested against the methods Hoefgen's company used to obtain consents.\textsuperscript{18} In May, 1902, the circuit court ruled in favor of Hoefgen, finding that the city was legally able to change the route after bids were received.\textsuperscript{19} The case was appealed, and on June 21, 1902, the circuit court declared Hoefgen's franchise invalid as it "covered only a portion of the route advertised for bids."\textsuperscript{20} According to the court, the franchise contained certain unfair restrictions pertaining to the settlement of disputes between the company and employees. The Hoefgen franchise


\textsuperscript{18}Plain Dealer, April 6, 1902.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

also had restricted open and fair bidding as it excluded companies which possibly might have desired to bid for the line and operate it at less than a three-cent fare. 21

Within five minutes after being notified of the decision against the ordinance, the Plain Dealer reported that Tom Johnson was preparing a new ordinance which would comply with each point the court found exception to. 22 The Mayor, however, was enjoined from taking any further action by the Ohio Supreme Court which upheld the circuit court's ruling and went on to declare the Federal Plan charter for the city of Cleveland unconstitutional. As a result of this act, the city government came to a standstill for eleven months. The court ordered that no public service grants were to be made until the legislature could form a new municipal code. 23 According to Johnson, other Ohio cities were still able to operate under the unconstitutional Federal Plan without restrictions. The Cleveland reformers believed this was a move by the Republican legislature and street railway

21 Ibid.

22 Plain Dealer, June 22, 1902.

23 This had been ordered by the State Attorney General, see Johnson, My Story, p. 163.
corporations to stop their activities once and for all.

In 1902, a special session of the state legislature voted to form a new municipal code. On September 8-9, 1902, the Nash Code passed into law. Drafted by conservatives, the code was supported by men like Mark Hanna, Charles Dick, Joseph B. Foraker and George B. Cox, who were all opposed to any reform actions in Ohio.24 These men were the epitome of entrenched privilege which Johnson was fighting against so fiercely. The Nash Code was based on the unpopular government of Cincinnati, presently under control of "Boss" Cox.25 Peter Witt bitterly termed the new plan of city government as "The scheme of government under which he [Boss Cox] grew to be a millionaire and Cincinnati, or its people, went

24 Charles Dick was an associate of Hanna and succeeded Hanna as U. S. Senator after the latter's death in 1904. Joseph B. Foraker, twice Governor of Ohio and U. S. Senator, often mixed business interests with politics and supported the position of the corporations. All these men were hard line conservatives who feared Johnson's radicalism. Governor Nash, who sponsored the Code, refused to incorporate such reforms as home rule and municipal ownership because the state constitution made no mention of granting these privileges to the cities. See Plain Dealer, July 8, 11, 1902, August 29, 1902.

25 The notorious operation of Cincinnati government under Cox is well covered in Steffens, Struggle for Self-Government.
down so low in the moral scale...."26 The Plain Dealer went further in an editorial:

All the cities in the state, from the biggest to the smallest, are to be saddled with a system of municipal government unwieldy, costly, open to the raids of political spoilsmen, unscrupulous contractors and corrupt officials...Cleveland has been robbed of the best system of government it ever had and is to be given the worst, at the dictation of the Cincinnati boss.27

The Nash Code replaced the Federal Plan with a board system of government. It was to be instituted in all cities over 5,000 in population.28 The mayor, vice-mayor, City Council, city solicitor, auditor and treasurer were all to be popularly elected. Cleveland was redistricted into twenty-six wards, with one councilman elected from each ward and six others elected at large, making a total membership of thirty-two, an increase of ten men over the old Federal Plan.29 The vice-mayor would

26 Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
27 Plain Dealer, Editorial, October 19, 1902.
29 Plain Dealer, November 19, 1902. Murdock, "Johnson," p. 188.
serve as president of City Council.

Two boards would replace Johnson's Board of Control. A Board of Public Service, consisting of three to five men elected by voters for a two year term. A second board, the Board of Public Safety was made up of two to four members appointed by the mayor with the approval of the City Council. The number of men on each board was to be determined by the City Council. The terms of elected officials were as follows: The auditor was elected for a three year term, while the vice-mayor, mayor, treasurer, solicitor all were elected for two years. Elections for these offices were to be held in May. The power of the mayor was seriously impaired by the Nash Code. He was unable to join in City Council debates and the department heads of the boards were not allowed to sit in on the City Council's debates concerning their respective departments. The mayor's influence in city government was squashed by the new code. Johnson knew that "there is not a shadow of a doubt that the whole thing had been carefully planned to minimize my power." 

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30 E. W. Bemis to Clinton Rogers, May 9, 1905. Tom Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

31 Johnson, My Story, p. 185.

32 Ibid.
The Plain Dealer made this comment on the power shift in the new government:

Under the new code...the Mayor will practically be little better than nothing. The nominal head of the government he is given, but small share in it....The power of this Board of Public Service is almost without limit over everything in the city government....They have absolute jurisdiction over every department of municipal affairs outside of the departments of law, accounts, fire and police.33

The Nash Code also was intended to disrupt the upcoming elections, giving the Republicans a chance to regain control of Cleveland's government, or at least gain enough elected seats to impair any actions of the reformers.

Johnson was coming up for re-election, and the Republicans made a concerted effort to discredit him. Their candidate for mayor was president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, Harvey D. Goulder. In March of 1903, the Democrats chose their slate of candidates for the new city government. They were as follows:34

Mayor: Tom Johnson

33Plain Dealer, Editorial, March 10, 1903.
34Ibid., March 16, 1903. The candidates were all selected by Johnson and approved by the Democratic party without opposition.
Vice Mayor: Charles Lapp
Solicitor: Newton Baker
Treasurer: Henry D. Coffinberry
Auditor: Charles P. Madigan
Board of
Public Service: William J. Springborn
Harris P. Cooley
Daniel Leslie

The Democratic platform was based on the continuation of the three cent fare line which had been halted months before. The Republicans made various accusations against the mayor - insincerity, corruption and mismanagement. On the street railway question, Goulder desired a settlement negotiated with the street railway corporations, setting up a new franchise for twenty-five years and a fare based on seven tickets for a quarter. Fredrick Howe had this reaction to the Republican proposal:

The existing franchises have a value in excess of the city debt. I am not sure but that we could better afford to give away our waterworks and throw away our parks than to grant a franchise such as proposed for twenty-five years at seven tickets for a quarter.

The Nash Code appears to have been the deciding factor which gave Tom Johnson his second victory in Cleveland. In evaluating the election, the Plain Dealer found that

35 Plain Dealer, April 4, 1903.
36 Ibid., March 29, 1903.
the voters believed Johnson had been cheated by the state government and deserved to have a chance to make good his programs. There was no real issue in the campaign, and interest in the election was not great. This attitude was reflected in the rather poor voter turnout the day of the election, April 7, 1903; Johnson, however, was given a large majority. The voters elected the entire Democratic slate by large majorities, giving Johnson a significant victory. Charles Lapp defeated his Republican opponent by 10,633 votes. Baker was elected city solicitor by 5,828 votes, Henry Coffinberry had a 7,217 plurality, Madigan won by 6,620 votes and the entire Board of Public Service, Cooley, Springborn and Leslie all were elected by large majorities. The voters also gave the Mayor a 23-9 majority in the City Council elections. Peter Witt became City Clerk, and Republican Fred Kohler was named Chief of Police on May 2, 1903. On May 19, Johnson named his Board of Public Safety. The Board had two members, a Democrat

37Ibid., April 8, 1903.

38The results of the election were as follows: Johnson: 36,060 - Goulder: 30,275; Johnson's plurality: 5,785. Plain Dealer, April 16, 1903. See also Briggs, "Progressive Era in Cleveland," p. 141.

Matthew B. Excell and a Republican Hugh Buckley. Another Republican served on Tom Johnson's Board of Public Service. William J. Springborn became the Director of Public Works. Springborn was an enthusiastic believer in municipal ownership, and served well as manager of Cleveland's municipal light works and garbage plant. He also maintained well lighted, clean, paved streets. Daniel Leslie headed the Parks and Recreation Department and began several programs which gained wide public support.

Johnson felt he had foiled the plans of the state legislature and privilege. The voters elected Johnson and his candidates by a wide majority, giving him the men with whom he had worked so well during his first term. Peter Witt had this explanation for Johnson's success:

...people nominated for the various municipal offices, on the Democratic ticket, were candidates of the Mayor's own choosing. He and they went before the people with the declaration that in

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40 Buckley served four years, Excell two years. Buckley had been sheriff and a former member of the Board of Elections. Excell, a lawyer by profession, was assistant law director under Mayor Farley. Plain Dealer, May 19, 1903.

41 Plain Dealer, April 8, 1903. See also Johnson, My Story, pp. 179-182. Leslie opened several baseball diamonds in the city and built ice skating rinks in the winter.
the event of his and their election; the executive branch of the government would be carried on in the future as it had in the past.\textsuperscript{42}

It was apparent that the board plan of government had backfired on Johnson's opponents:

By virtue of the ripper legislation affecting the form of city government instigated by his enemies for the purpose of crushing him completely, he [Tom Johnson] finds himself in absolute possession of the entire executive and legislative departments of the city....\textsuperscript{43}

The new government now faced a renewal of the street railway war. Johnson decided that he would take a new direction in obtaining a three-cent fare railway. He outlined his plan in a campaign speech late in March:

When in a very short time, the franchises of the old companies run out, we will say to them that they must stipulate three-cent fares and universal transfers, and if they do not agree, we will refuse to grant their extensions. Instead, we will grant their renewals as new franchises to three-cent fare companies which will be entirely willing to accept the privilege upon the terms of the city.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{42}Peter Witt to H. D. Lindsley, March 28, 1907. Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

\textsuperscript{43}Murdock, "Johnson," p. 247.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Plain Dealer}, March 26, 1901.
Johnson believed his re-election was a vote of confidence for the establishment of the three cent fare. He made this comment:

The result of the election is the fruit of the work that we have been doing for the past two years along the lines of three cent fare and the equalization of taxes. The opposition could not distract the minds of the people from these issues.\(^45\)

The Hoefgen injunctions had shown Johnson that bringing in a large scale railway company was not the answer. Instead of allowing a long prescribed route to be submitted to bidders as before, the three cent route would be divided into small sections. The lowest bidder would be given one of these sections, and then the remaining sections would be granted to the line as an extension of its original franchise.\(^46\) As franchises expired from the old companies the low fare railway would also receive these grants as part of their franchise.\(^47\)

\(^{45}\) Ibid., April 7, 1903.

\(^{46}\) Johnson had this same tactic as a street railway owner in Cleveland in the 1890's.

On May 4, 1903, when the new city government went into effect and the injunction imposed by the Supreme Court expired, eleven low-fare ordinances were introduced into City Council.\(^48\) On July 18 bids were opened and Albert R. Green won the grant on September 9, for a short section located on Denison Avenue. Green was the successor to Hoefgen's company and was able to obtain the consents needed to secure the franchise.\(^49\)

Green's company was capitalized as the Forest City Railway Company. Work on Denison Avenue began on September 23, and a mile of track actually had been completed before the legal battle began anew. An injunction was issued halting work, and the legality of the line was questioned.\(^50\) The injunction came from a new and stronger enemy. In June of 1903, the Big Con and Little Con merged to form what was popularly known as the Concon.\(^51\) The

\(^{48}\)These ordinances were largely the work of Harry Payer. See Murdock, "Johnson," p. 335. City Council Proceedings, May 4, 1903.

\(^{49}\)Hoefgen gave up the People's Railway Company after the Supreme Court injunction. Johnson, My Story, pp. 187-188.


\(^{51}\)The official name was the Cleveland Electric Railway Company.
Concon was created as a means of mutual protection and as a need to present a coordinated, united front to the city government. By joining the resources of the two companies, the Concon sought to afford the immense legal costs involved in the street railway war.

The injunction issued against Green were finally resolved in favor of the low-fare line. The Concon had waited too long before having the injunction issued - the Forest City Railway Company had already spent too much money to halt the operation. The remainder of the Denison Avenue lines was completed and Johnson had the base for future extensions. Another injunction, however, stopped all further work on the line until 1906, when it expired. The Concon then announced the establishment of universal transfers and six tickets for a quarter fare to replace the regular change of eleven tickets for fifty cents. 52

52 It was dropped in March 1904 and declared impractical. This was a common ploy by the Concon throughout the street railway war. By using low fare experiments, and showing them impractical to the citizens, they were proving their case without resorting to fanfare. It is interesting to note that the rates changed by the corporation were reduced when the low fare lines were in operation, in order to compete effectively. The rates were returned to the normal eleven tickets for fifty cents when the injunctions blocked the operation of their rivals. See Plain Dealer, March 22, 1904.
The city kept up its attack on the Concon; on December 28, 1903, ordinances were introduced into City Council granting an old Cleveland Electric Railway franchise on Woodland Avenue to the Forest City Railway Company. The franchise was to expire in September of 1904. When the low-fare company attempted to take control of this line, an injunction was again issued and the court upheld the Concon's right to the franchise.

The spring of 1905 was marked by Johnson's attempt to break the legal stalemate. The Mayor offered a holding company plan to the Concon - a holding company would be put in control of all street railways with the city serving as lessee. The property would be operated in the "interests of the public and not for profit." The holding company would receive a twenty-year franchise. The city would evaluate the Concon stock at $85.00 per share, in order for the holding company to purchase the line. This plan was flatly rejected by the corporation. Another compromise was proposed by the City Chamber of Commerce, but it was rejected by both sides. In order to downplay the three cent fare line, the Concon made various half-hearted experiments with low fares, declaring them all failures.
By 1905, the Forest City Railway was bogged down in injunctions and court battles. The city was prepared to wait and allow the injunctions against the low fare line to expire. The Concon had failed to end the Forest City's possession of Denison Avenue. The stalemate would end in 1906, and Johnson would be on the threshold of his greatest victory against privilege.
In the years following Tom Johnson's re-election in 1903, great strides were made in several areas which established Cleveland as a leader in urban reform. Municipal ownership, public improvements, home rule, social and police reform were all issues in which Johnson's administration achieved significant successes.

There was another dimension to the struggle for municipal ownership other than the street railway conflict. Johnson had begun his first campaign for mayor calling for municipal ownership of utilities; he found that private utility corporations often charged what they wished for their services, and customers had no where to turn for redress. In his opinion, it was necessary for the city to own and operate these utilities in order to provide for its citizens, not for profit, but for the general benefit of the city.¹ The corruption and inefficiency of private ownership would also presumably end under city management. It was Johnson's belief that "Only through municipal ownership can the gulf which divides the community into a small dominant class on one side

and the unorganized people on the other be bridged."\textsuperscript{2}

He expressed his position more adamantly in his autobiography:

\begin{quote}
I believe in the municipal ownership of these monopolies because if you do not own them they will in time own you. They will rule your politics, corrupt your institutions and finally destroy your liberties.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

Protecting government from corruption was to Johnson the most important reason for municipal ownership. Fredrick Howe, too, was "firmly convinced" that "municipal ownership would greatly diminish, if not wholly correct, most of the abuses of municipal administration."\textsuperscript{4}

Howe found many other benefits in municipal ownership; he felt it would help stimulate citizenship and generate civic pride. People would know that they owned and controlled their gas, water and transportation through their votes. It would help them to keep in touch with their government. "A sense of responsibility is awakened by ownership. The greater number of things done by the city, the better they will be done."\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Johnson} Johnson, \textit{My Story}, p. 194.
\bibitem{Howe} Howe, \textit{City-Hope of Democracy}, p. 119.
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid., pp. 155-156.
\end{thebibliography}
Tom Johnson had brought cheap gas to the city in 1901; now in 1903, he attempted to give Cleveland cheap electricity. The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company supplied all of the city's electric power. The Mayor hoped to build a city-owned light plant which could effectively compete with C. E. I. On May 4, 1903, in the first City Council meeting under the new city government, an ordinance was introduced for a bond issue of $200,000 to build an "electric light and power plant."

Council approved the bond issue over the protest of private light company stockholders. The ordinance however, was resubmitted to remove the words "and power" so that prospective buyers of bonds would have no questions. The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company was able to muster enough strength to have this new ordinance defeated.

A referendum was scheduled on the bond issue in September, 1903, but C. E. I. was able to obtain an injunction preventing the referendum from being held.

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6 Johnson, My Story, p. 192.
7 Ibid.
8 Frank Durham, Government in Greater Cleveland, (Cleveland: Howard Allen, Inc., 1963), p. 606. The court ruled that the Board of Elections, which would supervise the referendum, was an unconstitutional body, and that special elections for bond issues were
Only temporarily halted, Johnson regained the initiative when the city decided to annex the small town of South Brooklyn in November of 1904. This was an important decision as it would give the city control of South Brooklyn's municipal light plant and allow the city to compete with C. E. I.

The City Council also appointed three annexation commissioners, Newton Baker, Fredrick Howe and James P. Madigan to help direct the annexation procedures. The C. E. I. attempted to influence City Council to replace the commissioners with men who were sympathetic to the company's cause. When this plot came to his attention, Johnson accused two Democrats and fifteen Republican Councilmen of bribery and misfeasance. In the investigation which followed, the C. E. I. was ordered by City Solicitor Newton Baker to open their records for investigation. The company refused and an injunction was issued to stop any further actions by the city. A circuit court upheld the ruling and proceeded to permanently enjoin the city from examining the company's records. After a

also unconstitutional. See Plain Dealer, September 6, 1903.

9Ibid., November 10, 1904.

10Johnson, My Story, p. 216.
great deal of commotion and controversy, the annexation ordinance became law after a year's delay on December 11, 1905. Peter Witt expressed his hopes for the city's new lighting plant when he wrote to a friend stating "In less than two years, the entire city will be lighted from the municipal plant." Competition from the city lowered Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's rates by twenty per cent in three years time. In 1910, Cleveland annexed another town, Collinwood, which also had its own municipal light plant. By the end of Johnson's administration in 1910, the cost per capita of light supplied by the city was $.67, one of the lowest rates in the nation.

Cleveland also acquired a municipal garbage plant in 1905, under the guidance of Director of Public Works,  

11 Plain Dealer, February 14, 15, 1903; November 8, 1905  
12 Letter dated December 5, 1905, (recipient unspecified). Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.  
William Springborn. The plant was designed to extract commercially valuable products from collected garbage. The cost of the plant was minimal, as it almost paid for itself through the sale of oil and other products of the reduction process.15

Through the municipal light and garbage plants, Cleveland proved the feasibility of city-owned utilities. Edward Bemis spoke of the advantages of municipal ownership:

...in both water, gas and electricity the municipal plants have done far better for the taxpayer and consumer that the private plants in anything like a similar situation. Prices have been lowered and the plants have been largely or wholly paid for out of earnings...16

Public improvements also flourished under Johnson's supervision. Daniel Leslie's park system received the most attention. Peter Witt found that "The parks became the playgrounds for all. Fifty thousand people is a small number to attend the parks on any Sunday during the summer."17 In addition to parks, children's play-

15Beard, American City Government, p. 253.
16Ibid., p. 225.
17Letter dated December 5, 1905, (recipient unspecified). Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
grounds with instructors were established. A gymnasium and fifty baseball diamonds were also constructed. Vacant lots were loaned to the city during the year for carnivals and festivals for the various nationalities in the city. The city also built and operated several public bath houses. Peter Witt described this program:

...On Orange Street...we opened a municipal bath house. As many as 1,500 people have taken baths there in one day. The second bath house in Newburg will be opened in less than one month and before we get through [sic] we will have a dozen such bath houses in various parts of the city. During the summer, the city operates two mammoth bath houses in the park that front the lake.\(^{18}\)

The emphasis placed on parks and bath houses was intentional. Parks, to the Cleveland reformers, were the people's commons, helping to check vice and crime. Establishing public parks and bath houses was "...done as a matter of justice and of right to those of our city who contribute their lives to its upbuilding."\(^{19}\) These improvements brought enjoyment and health to the public.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Fredrick C. Howe, "A City in the Lifesaving Business," *Outlook*, January 18, 1908, pp. 119-137.
An outgrowth of this system, and as a move to help generate civic pride, the Cleveland Group Plan was devised. Developed by Fredrick Howe, the plan involved the construction of a mall from Lake Erie to Public Square. It was based on malls Howe had studied in European cities and would be the first planned mall in the United States. 20

Surrounding the mall would be the Federal building, the county courthouse, the City Hall, the Public Library, and other important structures, all of the same architectural design. 21 Peter Witt described the plans for the mall:

The mall leading from the Post Office and Library at Superior Street and the Court House and City Hall at Summit Street will be six hundred feet wide. The scheme of grouping our public buildings will be the grandest thing of its kind in the United States. 22

As part of his public improvement program, Johnson instituted anti-pollution ordinances in Cleveland. These smoke ordinances, as they were called, prescribed certain standards for all steam boilers and furnaces under

20 Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 75.
21 Howe, City-Hope of Democracy, p. 243.
22 Letter dated December 5, 1905, (recipient unspecified). Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
construction in the city. No building permit would be
issued, nor would the plant use city water until these
standards were met. Inspectors also visited the plants
to insure specifications were maintained. 23

The work of Reverend Harris R. Cooley as Director
of Charities and Corrections attracted world-wide atten-
tion and established both Johnson and Cooley as innova-
tive social reformers. Cooley and Johnson shared the be-
lief that society was responsible for poverty, and po-
verty was the source of crime. Johnson succinctly
described his approach to crime and society in the
following statement:

...delinquent men, women and child-
ren were to be cared for by the society
which had wronged them - not as objects
of charity, but as fellow beings who
had been deprived of the opportunities
to get on in the world. 24

Fredrick Howe, describing Cooley and Johnson's attitudes
in an article for Everybody's Magazine, found that:

They trace poverty and the vice and
crime which spring from it, to its ori-
gin in land monopoly, and the law-made

23 John Krause, Supervising Engineer of the City,
to Johnson and E. W. Bemis to W. B. Gongwer, January 26,
1906. Tom Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical
Society Library, Cleveland.

24 Johnson, My Story, p. 174.
privileges like the tariff, and the private ownership of the railways, and the franchise corporations of our cities. 25

Both Johnson and Cooley felt a personal responsibility to cure the abuses of the corrections system in Cleveland. Soon after the Mayor's election in 1901, Johnson and Cooley visited the city workhouse. Many people were confined to the workhouse for non-payment of fines or debts. Men, women and children were placed with the city's hardened criminals, and more often than not, treated no differently from the worst felon. Peter Witt later reported the incident as follows:

When Tom Johnson and Dr. Cooley came to the workhouse, they found five hundred men and women, who had been there not only once, but two, three, ten or twenty times, and one man was serving his ninety-fourth term. 26

Johnson and Cooley subsequently pardoned or paroled 1,409 inmates, with the Mayor often paying the fines of some offenders out of his own pocket. It was obvious the brutal conditions of the workhouse did nothing to deter


crime of reform those who had been confined there. Several policy changes were made in the workhouse and by 1905, Peter Witt was able to report that "kind acts have taken place of the club at the workhouse. More men are out on parole that were ever in the workhouse before." 27

Improvements in the workhouse alone were not sufficient, however, and on September 19, 1904, City Council authorized Cooley to purchase a tract of 2,000 acres of land outside the city of Warrensville. On this land, Cooley built a correction facility, the city almshouse, a tuberculosis hospital and a boys' farm. The city cemetery was also located there. The programs established at Warrensville were to "set a standard that was copied throughout the world." 28

The correction facility was a farm reformatory. Drunkards, vagabonds and petty offenders were sent here to be rehabilitated. This facility was to reflect Cooley's concept of justice:

...not to measure out punishment to men in proportion to the crime they have committed but to punish them only to such an extent as will

27 Letter dated December 21, 1905. Ibid.

Cooley's intention, as he expressed it, was to "make men instead of profit." The farm had no guards, no walls or barriers, the prisoners wore no uniforms and no chains restricted them. The men were not even referred to as prisoners, but "trustees." Cooley found this to be an excellent policy. "We trust these men and because we trust them, they respect the trust." The men worked on roads, in the fields or in the stone quarry located on the facility. "They live out of doors...and the prisoner goes back to life again, able to meet the temptations which the city offers." Cooley believed that wholesome work, fresh air and sunshine would reform the men. He found that "confinement weakened their will power and destroyed their health...they were hardened by...brutal treatment...."

29Plain Dealer, July 19, 1901.
30Letter dated December 5, 1905, (recipient unspecified). Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
32Ibid.
33Ibid. See also Beard, American City Government, p. 187.
Schooling was also available to illiterate prisoners, and when their term was over the men were referred to an association called the Brotherhood of Prisoners which helped the men find jobs and decent places to live, assisting them in adjusting to their new lives.

The city almshouse, Colony Farm, was built to house and care for the city's aged poor. Cooley felt this was the least society could do for its older citizens. "Most of them have done their fair share of work," and he often compared them to crippled veterans of wars, where the need for kind treatment and assistance was necessary. 34

Another section of Warrensville, was called Boyville. Begun in 1902, it occupied 285 acres. One hundred boys, usually juvenile delinquents, lived in seven cottages, each cottage operated by a matron. At Boyville as at the correction facility, there were no physical restrictions and the boys were on their honor always. The boys attended school there, and the grounds had ample space with ballfields and ponds for fishing and ice skating. It was hoped that Boyville would return the boys to

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Cleveland "with better and cleaner buildings" to take some sense of responsibility and an awakening interest in the city which has done so much for men. 46

Although the city was working to improve the connection facilities, Johnson was also concerned with controlling crime and vice in the city. He believed that "you can't legislate men and women into being good...you can remove artificial stimulants which make them bad." 47 As already mentioned, one of Johnson's first acts as recorder was to ban the sale of gin and prostitution in Cleveland. 47 Johnson found the selection of police court officials and review of cases that they had collected from periodic reports to be an important function. He hoped to encourage better regulation of prostitution and to stamp out its encourage ment. 47

He said that the cost of the justice system in Cleveland would be spread over the entire city, part of the...
Johnson also proceeded to rework the police hierarchy, asking for the resignations of four captains, removing what he termed "dead timber" from the department. As in the rest of Johnson's administration, changes in the police force would not be influenced by any political considerations."...I will not tolerate any politics in connection with this matter for one second," was the stern dictum of the Mayor. Police Chief Corner was replaced by Fred Kohler in May of 1903. This tough, efficient policeman was hailed by President Theodore Roosevelt when he visited Cleveland in 1910 as the "best police chief in the United States." Kohler did his own reworking of the department, combining the police and detective branches; retiring or dismissing officers, and promoting and reassigning others.

Kohler also instituted the Golden Rule policy for arrests in 1907 and 1908, a system which soon attracted

39 Plain Dealer, November 17, 1902.


41 Eugene C. Murdock, "Cleveland's Johnson; The Cabinet," Ohio Archeological and Historical Quarterly, LXVI (October, 1957), p. 383. The Tom Johnson Papers are filled with letters Kohler notifying the Mayor of the weekly changes going on in the police department.
national attention. Previously, large numbers of arrests were made for minor offenses, usually public drunkenness, which were usually discharged anyway.\(^{42}\) The offenders were held over night and crowded into cells with common criminals. These arrests proved to be of no use and probably only helped to create crime. Arrests, according to Kohler, served a purpose only if the offender was properly corrected.\(^{43}\) The useless arrests only brought "disgrace, humiliation and suffering to countless persons."\(^{44}\)

Under Kohler's Golden Rule policy, a minor offender (usually a drunkard) was sent home by a policeman with a lecture, or if unable to return home on his own safely, he was taken into protective custody until sober enough to go home. In general, any misdemeanor charge was waived at police court, or sunrise court as it was called.\(^{45}\) After taking the offender's name and address,

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\(^{42}\) In 1907 alone, out of 30,418 arrests made, over 16,987 were for intoxicification. William J. Norton, "Chief Kohler and His Golden Rule Policy," *Outlook*, November 6, 1909, pp. 537-542.

\(^{43}\) Beard, *American City Government*, p. 189.


\(^{45}\) Sunrise Court was an innovation of Newton Baker.
he was released. The record was kept confidential in the files of the Chief of Police and no stigma was attached. Children were not to be arrested, but returned to their parents. In 1908, 2,500 persons were released through the Golden Rule Policy. The Golden Rule helped to reduce arrests made where they would do more harm than good. The policeman would be spending his time preventing criminal acts rather than arresting individuals for minor offenses. The Golden Rule also reduced the number of arrests - in 1908 there were 10,085 arrests, and by 1909, this number had been further reduced to 6,018. There was an eight percent decrease in arrests made between 1907 and 1909.

Through the Golden Rule, Cleveland's police stations became in Fredrick Howe's words:

...not places where punishment hardens the heart of apparent violators, making it easy to become second offenders - but we have made them what might be termed moral hospitals where advice, good will, protection, correction and if


possible, reformation is the watchword.  

Early in his career, Tom Johnson gained notoriety throughout Ohio as the champion of home rule for cities. It was Johnson's belief that "every city should make its own laws, design its own organization, govern itself by the ballots of its own people, absolutely untrammeled by outside dictation or interference." Brand Whitlock, later mayor of Toledo, supported Johnson's fight for home rule, describing it as "the large hope of our democracy in the cities of America."  

Johnson's experience with the state government and the courts proved that something had to be done in order for his reform policies in Cleveland to have any effect. In general, "...reformers often found themselves powerless as long as the system they fought extended into the state legislature."  

Consequently, Johnson entered state politics in order to overturn Republican power which dominated Columbus. He worked closely with a good friend and single

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49 Johnson, My Story, p. 148.
50 Whitlock, Forty Years, p. 137.
51 Faulkner, Quest for Social Justice, p. 103.
tax," Reverend Herbert S. Bigelow, who ran for Secretary of State of Ohio in September, 1902. The main issue throughout the campaign was home rule and just taxation. Although Bigelow was defeated by a large majority (27,500 votes), Johnson felt they had made a step in the right direction by popularizing the issues.

The following year, Johnson himself became a candidate for Governor. In a hectic campaign, Johnson spoke in fifty-six counties and every major city in Ohio. He brought the arguments for home rule, equal taxation and an end to corrupt influences in government to the voters. The chances for victory were slim from the beginning, but Johnson did not relent.

Tom Johnson may be defeated, but he will stir this state to its very depths...through the principles of home rule and equal taxation....It might not come now, but come it will.52

This newspaper article reflected Johnson's hopes for his

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52 Dayton Daily News, August 27, 1903. See Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, p. 133. Mark Hanna was instrumental in Johnson's defeat. Hanna followed Johnson throughout the campaign, warning the voters not to be duped by the candidate's fine phrases and colorful actions. Hanna stressed that the reform programs Johnson based his campaigns on were merely side issues, and not important to the majority of the voters. Hanna's speeches often followed conservative opposition to Johnson. See Plain Dealer, October 21, 1901. The Republicans often specified their complaints against Johnson; October 29, 1902.
gubernatorial campaign. Republican Myron T. Herrick won the election by 113,812 votes. Ohio was simply not ready for the new principles Johnson espoused, time would tell, for soon what was held as radicalism in 1903 would be law in 1912.

Overall, Johnson and his associates could look with pride on their accomplishments. Peter Witt assessed the achievements of Cleveland in December of 1905:

We are doing great things here. So far as the law permits us we are going, and the fight now it to change the laws; to divorce the city from the state.... We have here a city without graft. We work like one family and with the betterment for Cleveland always uppermost in our minds. Municipal ownership is making more progress here than any other place in the county....

Tom Johnson had brought to Cleveland an excellent administration which helped him establish the beginnings of municipal ownership, city beautification and social reform. Cleveland was quickly moving toward becoming a leader in municipal reform, what Johnson described as the "city on a hill."

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53 Ibid., Information on Johnson's state campaign can be found in Warner, Progressivism in Ohio, pp. 134-136.

54 Letter dated December 21, 1905 (recipient unspecified). Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
Cleveland in 1906 was the scene of a deadlock between Johnson's low-fare street railway company and the Concon. Peter Witt sized up the situation: "We are strong in City Council; they are strong in the courts. As fast as we pass ordinances, the courts knock them out, but every once in a while we get one that will stick."\(^1\) It was a frustrating experience for the reformers. Fredrick Howe complained that "...over fifty injunction suits were allowed against the city. This meant costly struggles, years of delay, it meant that the street railways could continue to collect fares....It meant millions of profit to the corporations."\(^2\) However, as time went on, in late 1906 and early 1907, it became obvious that the city was growing stronger in the fight while the Concon steadily weakened.

\(^1\)Peter Witt to Clinton R. Woodruff, July 1, 1907. Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

\(^2\)Howe, Confessions, pp. 203-204. Johnson explained that the Concon often divided their causes of action for the injunctions into the smallest possible parts and argued over each legal technicality. Court decisions were held up by the corporation's lawyers who obtained restraining orders from the lower courts. By these delay tactics, the Concon was able to continue its service on disputed lines and wear down public enthusiasm for low fares. See Robert H. Bremner, "How Privilege Fights," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, XI(January, 1952), p. 214.
While waiting for several injunctions to expire, a holding company was created in order to strengthen the Forest City Railway Company. The officers of the low fare line decided to lease their property to the newly created Municipal Traction Company. This holding company would construct and operate the line and pay a six per cent dividend on Forest City stock. The Municipal Traction Company would operate at no profit whatsoever and only for the benefit of the citizens of Cleveland. Any profits remaining after payment of dividends would be used for extensions and improvements on the line. All transactions would be conducted openly and records would be available for public inspection. It was announced to the public that "stockholders get more than six per cent income on stock and pay no more than $110.00 a share." The holding company itself would be run by five directors. A strong supporter of Johnson, A. B. DuPont (son of Biederman DuPont) became President. Fredrick Howe served as Vice-President and Treasurer,

3Johnson, My Story, p. 224.

while W. B. Colver, a newspaperman, acted as Secretary.5

The company had experienced trouble in attracting investors. Cleveland capitalists, many of them Concon stockholders, were opposed to the low-fare railway; banks were also adverse to lending the company money. Johnson did not trust these sources anyway, as he feared they would scheme to purchase the majority of stock and then sell it to the Concon.6 Public financing was relied upon, and about $400,000 worth of Forest City Railway stock was put up for sale. Johnson and E. W. Scripps, founder of the Cleveland Press, made it known that they would guarantee payment of the six percent dividend on the stock, with the agreement that neither individual would profit from the arrangement. When questioned on his action, Johnson simply answered: "Some men like to leave monuments behind them; some build hospitals, some build libraries. Others build universities. I want to see that there is a street railroad built that will be


6Johnson knew from personal experience that this could very easily happen. Tom Johnson, the monopolist foiled the efforts of Hazen S. Pingree, Detroit's reform mayor, to establish a low-fare railway by purchasing the controlling stock in the company and adding it to his own railway holding in Detroit. See Johnson, My Story, pp. 91-94.
run in the interests of the people." The Scripps-Johnson guarantee proved to be successful, and the citizens of Cleveland eventually financed more than $720,000 worth of Municipal Traction Company property. In addition, a bank was created to assist the investors. The Depositors Savings and Trust Company offered Forest City Railway stock to the public and guaranteed investors a six percent dividend. Johnson reluctantly agreed to become the bank's president, which he later regretted.

By autumn of 1906, the low-fare line controlled without question twelve to fourteen miles of track in southwest Cleveland, from Denison Avenue to "injunction point." Injunction point was an area 633 feet wide which separated the Forest City line from a line to Public Square, guaranteed by the city as free, and could be used by any company. The Concon declared the 633 feet of track as its property, while the Forest City Railway

7Ibid., p. 236.

8Peter Witt, "Mayor Johnson's Administration in Cleveland," speech printed in the City Club Bulletin, February 12, 1908, p. 373. Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

9Johnson, the bank's largest stockholder, lost a considerable sum when the bank closed. All other depositors received their money and dividends promptly. Johnson remarked "From first to last this enterprise gave me only care and anxiety." Johnson, My Story, p. 265.
argued it was part of the free track. While legal battles went on throughout the month of October, the Forest City Railway was making preparations to operate their cars on Denison Avenue.

November 1, 1906 was a momentous day for Tom Johnson and the city of Cleveland. On that day, with the Mayor serving as motorman, the first three-cent fare car ran in the city. The first passengers were friends of Johnson and supporters of his low-fare fight. All paid their fares before beginning their triumphant journey. Crowds lined the streets; flags and decorations abounded along the route, children threw bouquets of flowers and a joyous mood prevailed.

Shortly thereafter, in order to provide service to Public Square, Forest City proceeded to manually move a low-fare railway car over injunction point to the free tracks on the other side leading to Public Square. An old Johnson tactic was then used to complete the company's service - bus transportation was provided for

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11 Ibid., November 2, 1906. The Forest City Railway and later the Low Fare Railway were known to Clevelanders as the "Threefer." Some preferred to call the line the "TomCon."
passengers using the Denison Avenue line across the 633 feet of disputed territory. Surprisingly, there was no resistance, and this system worked well throughout November and December. Johnson and his associates received a great shock at Christmas, however, when an injunction was brought against the low fare line, enjoining the company from operating on the free track. The Concon charged that the bus line was interfering with its service. The Concon also charged the Mayor with having a "financial interest" in the low-fare company. Johnson immediately made plans to thwart the injunction.\(^\text{13}\)

At 12:30 A.M. on December 26, workers began laying temporary tracks on top of the pavement of Superior Street, adjacent to the previously free track line to Public Square. Poles to support the electric lines were placed in barrels of cement alongside the tracks. The Concon reacted quickly, and by 3:00 A.M. another injunction was issued, halting all further work. Later in the

\(^{12}\)Ibid., March 12, 1939.

\(^{13}\)The charge of financial interest came about as Johnson's enemies saw the Mayor gather friends and old business associates around him to operate the city's low-fare railway. They felt Johnson was paying them to work for him. The Mayor brought these men together in order to better supervise the company. He also wanted trusted associates about him, who would not betray his intentions to the Concon,
morning, the tracks were taken up - the Mayor's "midnight coup" had failed. The Forest City company had hoped to bypass the wording of the injunction, and obtained permission from the Board of Public Service to simply build a new track line on Superior Street which had not been enjoined from operating by the court.  

But the charge of financial interest against Mayor Johnson was serious enough to endanger the future of the Forest City Railway Company. Consequently, on December 17, a new three-cent railway company was created with funds from "a man who believed in our movement and who was not a resident of Cleveland." W. B. Colver became the president of the new firm, called simply the Low Fare Railway Company. The Municipal Traction Company then assigned a short section of its eastside Cleveland franchise to the new company. The Low Fare Railway Company then applied for an east to west through route ordinance covering the enjoined track lines. City Council passed this ordinance and work began shortly thereafter on January 1, 1907. Predictably, an injunction was issued in which the Concon challenged the

\[14\text{Plain Dealer, December 27, 28, 1906.}\]

\[15\text{Johnson, My Story, p. 246. Johnson does not mention the man's name.}\]
legality of the company's ordinance and prevented further construction. It now appeared as if the low-fare interests had reached another impasse. It was then that a United States Supreme Court ruling drastically changed the situation in the city and opened a new phase in the street railway war. On January 7, 1907, the Supreme Court ruled that the Concon's franchise on the hotly contested Central-Quincy line had expired in 1905. Immediately following this news came a ruling on January 9, from a lower court which upheld the legality of the Low Fare Railway ordinance issued by City Council.

With Johnson now clearly holding the upper hand, a truce was declared. An agreement was reached between A. B. DuPont, President of the Municipal Traction

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Company, and Horace Andrews, President of the Cleveland Electric Power Company. The Concon would still be permitted to operate the Central-Quincy line, but only at a three cent fare. The Forest City would operate on all lines previously enjoined, giving the low fare railway free passage to Public Square. The accord was submitted to City Council which approved it, allowing the agreement to go into effect on January 12. On that day, the first three cent car ran unimpeded to Public Square — it was an immensely satisfying moment for Tom Johnson. "It had taken two and a half years to get the grant for that car to run to the Square, and nearly four and a half years from the time the grant was made for it to wade its way through injunctions to that point."

Negotiations in order to arrange a permanent settlement between the two companies soon began. Johnson and his associates hoped for a settlement based on a holding company plan, as proposed by the Mayor in 1905. Under the proposed plan, the Cleveland Electric Railway would lease its lines to the Municipal Traction Company. The holding company would then operate the entire city railway system at a three cent fare and pay a guaranteed

19Ibid., January 12, 1907.
20Johnson, My Story, p. 250.
dividend on the company stock. In order to determine the value of stock issued and dividends to be paid, each company's value had to be determined. This caused negotiations to break down several times as both sides disagreed over the physical and franchise value of the Concon. President Andrews valued his line at $24,547,888.88 making the average share of Concon stock worth $105.00. DuPont's own valuation of the Cleveland Electric varied greatly with Andrews. According to DuPont, the Concon was worth only $19,898,126.33 or $49.61 per share. City Council stepped in and formed a street railway committee to make their own valuation and found the Concon stock to be worth $60.00 per share. The Cleveland Electric Railway Company announced it would consider the holding company proposal and give their answer at the City Council meeting on April 5.

When the day arrived, the chamber was packed with spectators. Horace Andrews and most of the company's directors were present. The Concon's printed reply was passed to the City Clerk to read before City Council.

22Johnson, My Story, p. 252.
23Plain Dealer, April 3, 4, 1907.
In its reply, the Concon totally rejected the $60.00 per share valuation proposal and announced that it would return to the previous fare of eleven tickets for fifty cents. The reply was a clear declaration of war against Tom Johnson, ending all hopes for a quick settlement.

After reading the Concon's statement, City Clerk Peter Witt took control of the meeting. In a scathing impromptu speech, Witt turned on the directors, accusing them of bribing councilmen and legislators, and employing dishonest judges to grant injunctions. He spared no one, accusing each director by name of various illegal acts. Surprisingly, there was no response from the accused men and the spectators roared with approval.24 Soon after the conclusion of this colorful meeting, the war resumed with the Concon moving on the attack. "We propose to use every honorable means at our command to press our case not only with the voters, but with every man, woman and child in the city," was the

24 Johnson, My Story, p. 258. Apparently, the Concon rejected the compromise when it learned of the defeat of Chicago Mayor Edward Dunne, a close friend of Johnson. Dunne, before his defeat, was attempting to establish a low-fare municipal railway system based on Cleveland's Municipal Traction Company. The Concon hoped to stall until Cleveland's mayoral election in November and put their efforts into defeating Johnson.
solemn declaration of Horace Andrews. The Concon worked from April to October to slow the advance of the three-cent railways. In June, 1907, the company halted the Low Fare Railway from building on Central Avenue, but failed to prove Johnson had any type of financial interest in the Forest City Railway Company. The intensity of the struggle subsided as attention was drawn to a more immediate issue - the upcoming mayoral election in November. The Republicans began preparing for a final massive effort to topple the Johnson machine in Cleveland.

Johnson and the Democrats were firmly in control of Cleveland politics; through his skills as an organizer the Mayor had built an efficient and loyal organization of men who supported his efforts. His successful approach to politics was a combination of realistic thinking and strong ambition. In addition, Johnson was able to unite noble political ideals with the practical administrative qualities of a business man.


26 Ibid., June 1, 1907.

27 Nye, Midwest Progressive Politics, p. 179.

28 "Election in Ohio," Outlook, November 16, 1907,
Since 1901, Johnson's domineering spirit had controlled the Democratic organizations in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. By 1903, the time of the gubernatorial campaign, Johnson had also gained control of the state party, where he wrote the platforms, picked candidates, subdued opposition and gave patronage to supporters. Johnson came to resemble the political bosses he was fighting against.\textsuperscript{29} Johnson's bossism, however, differs greatly from his opposition; in building a loyal party following, the Mayor insisted on total honesty, and there never was a scandal in party affairs. He appointed men of proven ability who would discharge their duties faithfully and efficiently. Republicans, as well as Democrats were of importance in Johnson's administration.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29}Warner, \textit{Progressivism in Ohio}, p. 69, n. 45. Johnson often fulfilled his Democratic ideas through un-Democratic means. See also \textit{Plain Dealer}, March 23, 1902, April 11, 1909. Johnson's tactics are outlined in "Tom Johnson to the Front," \textit{The Nation}, September 11, 1902, p. 201.

\textsuperscript{30}To Johnson, it was a case of "non-partisan goals... best reached by proven partisan paths." Briggs, \textit{Progressive Era in Cleveland}, p. 74.
In Cleveland, Johnson's strength lay in his remarkable abilities as a campaigner. He always conducted a short, vigorous and aggressive campaign, its purpose to bring the issues directly to the voters. In his campaigns, Johnson effectively used modern developments such as the automobile and the newsreel to make his presence known. He also projected an open, honest sincerity in his speeches. Brand Whitlock described his manner as having "a peculiar, subtle charm."\(^{31}\) Carl Lorenz in his biography of the Mayor said: "Johnson's influence over an audience was remarkable. There was a strong personal magnetism ever going out from him toward the people."\(^{32}\) Johnson's special abilities as a speaker allowed him to establish a rapport with his supporters and help convince the undecided.

One of the most effective campaign tools Johnson used was a circus tent. During his first campaign for Congress, Johnson had difficulty in obtaining a public hall in which to hold meetings and decided to use a tent. It soon became his trademark. During his mayoral campaign, Johnson purchased two tents, each holding about 4,000 people, which could be easily transported through-

\(^{31}\)Whitlock, \textit{Forty Years of It}, p. 52.

\(^{32}\)Lorenz, \textit{Tom L. Johnson}, p. 103.
out the city.

Johnson found that the tents opened the atmosphere and relaxed the audience, stimulating them to react and ask questions. Heckling the candidate also became a part of the Johnson tent meeting. The Mayor did not discourage this, believing that it tested the candidate and became a form of political education for the crowd. Johnson always handled these raucous meetings well and never lost control of his audience. Charles Salen once described Johnson's style at one of these tent meetings:

...he can debate with a crowd better than any public man in America and at his meetings, he always invites questions and interruptions, and the saucier they come, the better he likes them.34

The Johnson tent meeting was a study in American democracy. People would crowd into the tent long before the meeting would begin. Then Johnson and his entourage would arrive, usually late, in the Mayor's "red devil," his bright red motorcar. They would make their way to the


34Murdock, "Johnson," p. 239.
platform as the throng cheered loudly. Johnson's speech would usually begin the program. Using his special kind of "engaging and disarming candor," he served as an interpreter of the philosophical reasoning behind the issues such as taxation and municipal ownership. He also exhorted the crowd to fulfill their duties as responsible citizens. Afterwards, he often bantered with hecklers, using these exchanges of wit to his advantage and to the amusement of the gathering. Newton Baker would usually follow Johnson, explaining the technical and legal aspects of the city's fight against privilege. His clarifications were especially important in relating the complex street railway dispute to the voters. The meeting was climaxed by the most popular of the speakers - Peter Witt. Where Johnson and Baker were normally restrained, Witt's harangue struck out at the opposition; his words were received with greatest of enthusiasm. Witt often used a stereoptican in conjunction with his speeches. This device, which had proved so successful in his tax lectures, was also used in

35 Howes, Confessions, p. 122.
37 Ibid., p. 102.
political meetings. Referred to as "picture talks," Witt would illustrate to the audience the achievements of the Johnson administration. There were pictures of Reverend Cooley's farm colonies, and pictures of the workhouse, showing prisoners learning to read and write in classrooms; "...next came the pictures of the garbage plant and public improvements...the street cleaning department...the pictures showing the conditions of the streets six and seven years ago...." These were contrasted with pictures of city streets as they appeared presently, clean and beautiful.38

Johnson always invited his opponents to debate the issues before the public. Only one mayoral candidate took Johnson up on his challenge. In 1905, Republican candidate William H. Boyd and Tom Johnson held six debates, mostly dealing with the issues of municipal ownership and alleged corruption in Cleveland city government. A greatly publicized investigation of the city administration was held which turned up nothing at all, and served only to prove how clean and efficient Johnson's government actually was. In the debates themselves,

38 Article dated November 2, 1905. Scrapbook, Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
Johnson swamped Boyd with an impressive array of facts and figures. Johnson ably met every charge levelled against him and pressed Boyd for answers concerning his proposed programs for Cleveland. The contest was never in doubt. Johnson received 41,652 votes to Boyd's 29,483, a majority of about 15,000 votes, the widest margin yet.39

The election of 1905 clearly proved Johnson's skill as a politician. Throughout Johnson's career, the Cleveland reformers were able to keep voters interested in politics by popularizing issues which affected their lives directly, such as lower utility rates and taxes.40 They stimulated interest by using catch phrases such as "city on a hill" and "three cent fare." The tent meetings presented the issues of "privilege" to the voters in a clear, simple language and made the concept real to them. Through these political methods, Tom Johnson became a symbolic figure. He was the symbol of Cleveland's fight against privilege - Johnson became the people's champion in their battle for justice. Through this image, the Mayor gained public support for his programs.


This then, was the style and method of Tom Johnson the master politician. The Republicans, as the 1907 election approached, would have to outdo Johnson's political aplomb and convince the voters of Cleveland beyond a doubt that their idol did indeed have clay feet.

The Republicans began a search for a candidate who could meet Johnson on his own ground. Possible candidates would rise in popularity and soon quickly fall. It appeared as if the party would not be able to bring a strong man to the forefront. Attention soon focused on Congressman Theodore Burton, a prominent Republican who had served seven consecutive terms in the House, two of them uncontested. Burton had defeated Johnson years earlier in a Congressional election. He actually had nothing to gain if elected mayor, but party pressure forced his decision. The pressure included letters from President Theodore Roosevelt, Secretary of War William H. Taft, and a personal visit from Secretary of the Interior, and prominent Ohioan, James R. Garfield. With this kind of backing, Burton announced his intention to challenge Johnson on September 3, 1907. The Republican convention confirmed his candidacy on September 7. On September 21, Johnson and his slate of candidates were endorsed by the Democratic convention.
The issues in this campaign were clear cut. The United States Supreme Court decision against the Cleveland Electric Railway Company had brought the street railway issue to a head. The election would be a referendum for the three-cent fare. A more important principle hinged upon the election - the right of the city to own and control its utilities. If the street railways came under public control, it would be only a matter of time before the city would demand to own all other utilities.41

The Republicans brought national issues into the campaign and attacked Johnson for building a "dynasty" in the city government.42 In dealing with the street railway issue, Burton proposed to appoint a commission to study the problem. He felt a fare of seven tickets for twenty-five cents was the best rate for customers to pay. Johnson called for action: the controversy had raged unresolved since 1901, it was time for a decision based on the holding company plan proposed a year earlier.43

42 Plain Dealer, September 17, 1907. Lincoln Steffens came to Cleveland to help Johnson during the campaign.
43 From Philadelphia North American, December 7,
Personalities had a great deal to do with the 1907 campaign. Burton, a serious scholarly man, had an imperious, haughty manner, which alienated him from the voters. His political speeches were filled with classical illusions (Jacta est alea [the die is cast] was his campaign slogan) and inflated vocabulary. Few Clevelanders knew what he was talking about. In Burton's meetings with the public, it was obvious that he had little knowledge of city affairs. He avoided questions, often leaving the platform immediately after his speech. Johnson later made this comment on Burton's conduct during the campaign:

...Mr. Burton was trying to discuss matters which were strange and unfamiliar to him with men and women who knew all about them, and when they asked him questions, he didn't tell them he couldn't answer, but tried to make them believe that he could answer if he would, but for some reason... he preferred not to do so.\footnote{Johnson, My Story, pp. 273-274.}

The Concon announced a new fare of seven tickets for twenty-five cents in conjunction with Burton's stand on the street railway issue. Johnson played this announcement up, describing Burton as a tool of the Concon, which

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1907. Tom Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland. See also \textit{Plain Dealer}, October 11, 1907.
was using his candidacy for their own selfish ends. This charge was reinforced when Burton refused to disclose the source of his campaign funds, while Johnson's were open to examination. 45

As the campaign progressed, it became obvious that Johnson's record was unassailable; the Republicans floundered as their candidate was unable to rally any popular support. On November 5, 1907, the citizens of Cleveland gave Tom Johnson a clear mandate to continue his work. The Mayor received 48,342 votes, while Burton trailed with 39,016 votes. Johnson received a 9,313 vote majority, his second largest. Vice Mayor Tapp City Solicitor Baker and the members of the Board of Public Service - Cooley, Springhorn and Leslie - were re-elected by large majorities. The City Council was given a commanding 27-5 Democratic majority. 46 Johnson's total victory in Cleveland was not without its national significance: The Arena made this statement on the election:

From now on Mr. Johnson will be regarded as one of the strongest

45 Briggs, "Progressive Era in Cleveland," p. 136. After Burton's defeat, the Concon returned to their former fare of eleven tickets for fifty cents.

46 Plain Dealer, November 6, 1907.
popular representatives of honest reform, business government and fundamental democracy....He has proven himself to be a statesman of extraordinary executive ability, a man of high moral ideals, who has ever been faithful to those ideals....47

With Johnson's decisive victory over Theodore Burton, the Cleveland Electric realized the struggle was hopeless. The company was in financial trouble paying huge legal fees and had suspended payment of dividends; it was also steadily losing money to the low-fare lines.48

There was no other choice but to meet again with the city. Negotiations were soon begun through the efforts of Elbert H. Baker, the general manager of the Plain Dealer, who earnestly desired a settlement on the conflict. The meetings began on December 4, 1907 with Fredrick H. Goff representing the Concon. Goff was a lawyer and director of a major bank in Cleveland. Tom Johnson represented the Municipal Traction Company. There would be over one hundred meetings before an agreement was reached on April 27, 1908. As before, the main obstacle


48Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, p. 155.
to a settlement was the valuation of the Concon. The valuation had to be carefully determined as this would be the figure on which the holding company would pay a six per cent stock dividend. It would also be the price the city would pay if the state ever allowed Cleveland to purchase the holding company. 49

Johnson valued the Concon property at $50.00 a share, making the company worth about $21,000,000.00. This included the physical value, the value of the unexpired franchises and good will. Goff valued the franchise at $65.00 a share. After a great deal of discussion and compromise, a valuation of $22,000,000.00 or $55.00 a share, was finally agreed upon. The Forest City Railway Company and the Low Fare Railway Company were valued together at $1,800,000.00. This brought the total worth of all three companies to approximately $24,000,000.00.

It was agreed that the Concon would become the lessor of the two low fare lines; the name of the company would then be changed to the Cleveland Railway Company. All stock would be turned over to the new company to be reissued under the new name. It was agreed that $55.00 of

Cleveland Railway stock was worth $100.00 of former Concon stock. The low fare company's stock would be exchanged for the new stock at par value. City Council then passed an ordinance giving the new company the entire city railway franchise for a period of twenty-five years. The Municipal Traction Company became the holding company for the Cleveland Railway Company, operating and directing the line at a standard three cent fare, guaranteeing a six per cent dividend to all stockholders, with any excess to be used by the city as it wished. The holding company would be headed by five trustees, appointed by the mayor, who operated the line in the interest of the citizens of Cleveland. A. B. DuPont remained as President of the holding company. If the line could not be practically operated at a three cent fare, then the company was empowered to raise fares to a maximum of six tickets for twenty-five cents. Johnson allowed the inclusion of this stipulation into the agreement, but felt it was unnecessary. He was also wary of a condition in the agreement providing that if the three cent operation failed, the control of the lines would revert to

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50 Ibid., p. 196. See also Plain Dealer, April 26, 1908.

51 Howe, Confessions, p. 123.
the original owners, if a majority of the voters consented in a referendum election. 52

With the agreement concluded, the Municipal Traction Company began to operate Cleveland's street railway system on a three cent fare and universal transfers. April 28, 1908, was declared Municipal Day, with free street car rides for everyone, to celebrate the victory over privilege. The feeling of triumph waned, however, as the holding company began to have problems. Generally speaking, the service was not as efficient as the individual companies had provided. Furthermore, the Panic of 1907 caused a reduction in passengers and the low-fare line began to lose money. Income obtained from the three-cent fare was not enough to meet operating costs, and the guaranteed dividend on Cleveland Railway stock would be difficult to pay in the bad times following the Panic. In order to cut costs, schedules were revised, service was reduced in some areas and halted altogether in others. The maximum fare of six tickets for twenty-five cents was instituted in April; universal transfers were ended and one cent was charged for a passenger to change cars. Higher fares were later

52 Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, p. 167. Plain Dealer, April 28, 1908.
charged for passengers in the suburbs. The company's economic troubles were exacerbated by a strike begun on May 16, 1908. About three quarters of the employees walked off their jobs, most of them former Concon employees. The Concon had promised them a two cent per hour raise if the company obtained a renewal of their franchise in 1906. Now that the Municipal Traction Company controlled the line, all employees were given a raise of twenty-five cents per hour. The former Concon workers still insisted on being paid an extra two cents as promised. When the holding company refused, there was a general walkout. The company subsequently hired new men to replace the strikers. Throughout the week, scattered outbreaks of violence occurred as cars were stoned, tracks dynamited and power lines cut. Mobs roamed the streets at night and the police dispersed them only with some difficulty. No one was seriously injured, and the strike ended ten days later as the men were forced to return to their jobs or be permanently

53 Plain Dealer, April 30, 1908.

54 Briggs, "Progressive Era in Cleveland," p. 32. E. W. Bemis reported that between June 19 and June 25, 1908, passengers had saved over $41,172.14, paying the three cent fare and one penny transfers, over the old Concon fare. The Public, June 17, 1908.

55 Plain Dealer, May 18, 20, 21, 23, 1908.
replaced by the new men hired by the company. 56

There were about 1200 men who were not rehired as a result of their actions and were replaced. This would prove to be a serious mistake in the months to come.

Tom Johnson was conspicuously missing in this controversy. A. B. DuPont, who was allowed to handle the problem, bungled it badly, causing bitterness between labor and management. Johnson was ill at the time of the strike and resting from the problems of the city. The Mayor should have paid more attention to the strike, for the 1200 men not rehired sought redress in legal action. Their actions eventually brought about a collapse of Johnson's municipal railway system.

In March of 1908, the Schmidt bill passed the Ohio state legislature and became law. This new law dealt primarily with the granting of consents. 57 Another section dealt with referendums on new franchises granted by the city. The franchise was no longer valid if a majority

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56C. W. Gongwer to the editor of the Kansas City Star, May 25, 1908. Tom Johnson Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

57Property owner's consents were no longer necessary to obtain new franchises on lines already existing on their frontage. New franchises could be granted within one year after the old franchises ended or two years before it expires. Johnson, My Story, p. 278.
of citizens voted against it. The disgruntled employees used the Schmidt law to hold a referendum election on the Johnson-Goff franchise agreement. They proceeded to collect the lists of voter signatures necessary to hold the election. The strikers hoped that if the franchise was voted down, the Cleveland Railway Company would be free from the control of the Municipal Traction Company and would rehire them.

Johnson was now faced with a serious crises. Since 1901, he had fought for the Schmidt bill, now that it had finally become law, it was being used against him. Because of his illness, he could not draw on the reserves of energy which had carried him through so many battles. In a very uncharacteristic move, Johnson delayed and contested the voter petition submitted to City Council for several months. It was not until October 22 that the referendum was finally held. The stalling tactics of the city were met with great public displeasure. The referendum attracted the attention of people outside Cleveland.

58^Plain Dealer, June 30, 1908.
59^See "Cleveland Street Railways," Outlook, November 7, 1908.
In early October Johnson rallied and was able to lead a fierce campaign against the supporters of the referendum. When the returns were complete, the day after the election, the street railway franchise was defeated 38,249 to 37,644. A visitor recalled how Johnson appeared after he learned of the election results: "Mr. Johnson was sitting motionless in his chair; his face was ashen. In three hours, he was an old man."  

The low-fare ordinance had not lost by a large number of votes, approximately 605 out of 76,000 votes. Less than one percent of the votes cast determined the fate of Johnson's franchise. Considering the problems the holding company experienced throughout the first few months of its operation, the referendum showed there was strong support for the Municipal Traction Company. The explanation for the failure of the referendum lies with Johnson and his associates. For the first time the Mayor was unable to marshal his forces to defeat the new threat. Overconfidence played a large part - the reformers thought it impossible that the voters

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60 Plain Dealer, October 13, 15, 16, 1908.
would reject the system they had fought for since 1901. Johnson's health at this time also became a crucial factor in subsequent events. He was overworked, restless, impatient and spent too much of his time handling numerous small details dealing with the operation of the low-fare line.62

Now that the referendum had ended, the Municipal Traction Company, the situation became confused and troubled as the companies began making claims. On November 11, the Federal Circuit Court took over and appointed a receivership which operated the line until March 1, 1910 when Judge Robert W. Tayler put into operation a grant which finally brought an end to the street railway war in Cleveland.

In early January, Tayler submitted a plan to City Council guaranteeing a six per cent dividend to stockholders, city control of bookkeeping, and the lowest fare possible with an assurance of good services.63 Johnson opposed this plan, known as the Tayler Ordinance, and


63 Archer H. Shaw, The Plain Dealer: One Hundred Years in Cleveland (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942) p. 291. (Hereafter referred to as Shaw, The Plain Dealer.)
attempted to create a new company based on a three-cent fare and universal transfers which would take over franchises of older lines about to expire. Johnson's proposition, known as the Schmidt grant, was defeated by the voters on August 3, 1909. It was clear that the voters were tired of further controversy and were looking for a satisfactory settlement from Judge Tayler. The Plain Dealer had a great deal to do with forming public opinion to accept a settlement. Surprisingly, Johnson seemed blind to public opinion and refused to accept any compromise. In analyzing Johnson's second referendum defeat, a magazine article stated that: "The principle for which he professed to fight was lost sight of and neglected in the bitter personal struggle that was waged between him and his chief opponents...." Mayor Johnson had neglected the public interest for the first time and would continue to do so until his defeat in November of 1909.


65 Shaw, The Plain Dealer, p. 294.

66 "Failure of Johnson," World's Work, January, 1909, pp. 11085-86. Johnson believed the Tayler Grant was a defeat for the three-cent fare, and his personal efforts to establish it in Cleveland. Cleveland Press, February 12, 1909.
The Tayler grant was submitted and approved by City Council on December 18, 1909. The grant gave the Cleveland Railway Company a twenty-five year franchise and developed a sliding scale of fares to accommodate the needs of the company. The fare was originally set for three cents with a one cent charge for transfers. The city would supervise the line's operation and could purchase the line at $110.00 per share when the state law allowed the city to own its own utilities. The Tayler grant was overwhelmingly endorsed by Cleveland's citizens on February 17, 1910. The Cleveland Railway Company began operation officially on March 1, 1910.

Johnson had hoped the traction issue would be resolved before the mayoral election of 1909. The Republicans, sensing victory, nominated Herman Baehr, who had strong support from the German community in Cleveland. The Democrats, led by Johnson, attempted to turn attention away from the street railway question and make taxation the major issue of the campaign. In April, the Ohio legislature had abolished the Decennial Board of tax appraisers and replaced them with a properly elected five member board of quadrennial appraisers. Candidates

for this board were to be elected in the 1909 municipal election. Both Johnson and Witt did their best to emphasize tax problems, but Baehr's attack on the failure of Johnson to bring about a settlement in the street railway controversy still remained the main issue of the campaign. Johnson fought valiantly, his strength failing, beset by personal problems, his fortune lost, although he still displayed the old spirit that had made him the great leader of reform in Ohio, the people were no longer with him.

On November 2, 1909, Johnson experienced his last defeat. Baehr beat Johnson by 3,733 votes, a Republican dominated City Council was elected, and Republicans controlled every elected position in the city government, with the exception of Newton Baker, who was re-elected as City Solicitor. Four Democrats selected by Johnson for the Quadrennial Board were also elected.68

In speaking of his defeat later, Johnson stated:

I had been Mayor for so many years that many people had lost sight of conditions as they existed before that time. Thousands of young voters could

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68The votes cast were: Johnson - 37,709; Baehr - 41,422. Plain Dealer, November 3, 1909. For evaluations of the election see Briggs, "Progressive Era in Cleveland," pp. 198-200. Also Johnson, My Story, p. 289.
not remember any other Mayor, and there was a great deal of that feeling which is always manifesting itself in politics, that - 'Oh, he's had it long enough, let's have a change' feeling, and so the wave of democracy receded and the enemies of the things we stood for were swept into power.69

It was apparent that the voters of Cleveland had not discharged Tom Johnson, mayor, but Tom Johnson the street railway magnate. He had become so involved in fighting his enemies that he had forgotten to listen to the will of the people. Public opinion was overwhelmingly against a continuation of the controversy, and they tired of Johnson's seemingly endless machinations.70

Newton Baker, in speaking of Johnson's defeat observed:

The people have lost their standard of compassion and are not able to compare his work with that of his inefficient successors. We will probably have two years of reactionary and inefficient government, and then there will be a popular demand for Mr. Johnson....71

69Johnson, My Story, pp. 289-290.

70Lorenz, Tom L. Johnson, p. 118.

Tom Johnson left the office he occupied so well on January 1, 1910. Before departing, he made this emotion-filled statement:

I have served the people for nearly nine years. I have had more of misfortune in those nine years than in any period of my life. As that is true, it is also true that I have had more of joy. In those nine years, I have given the biggest and best part of me. I served the people of Cleveland the best I knew how....

From February, 1910, until his death, Tom Johnson fought the illness which had troubled him since 1908. During that period he visited England, spoke at several single tax meetings and wrote his memoirs for Hampton's Magazine. He steadily weakened and on April 10, 1911, Tom L. Johnson died in Cleveland. His death was mourned nationwide. A silent crowd of citizens numbering in the hundreds of thousands lined the streets to pay homage to their fallen champion.

Johnson's body was taken to Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn and buried in a family plot adjacent to the grave of his friend and mentor, Henry George.

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73 Johnson's illness is unspecified, although "acute nephritis" appears to be the immediate cause of death.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

Today in Cleveland, in a small shady corner of Public Square, is a statue. It is of a large man, gazing reflectively, seated in a chair. A book he holds in his right hand rests easily on his leg. The book is entitled *Progress and Poverty*. On the back of the monument is the following dedication:

Erected at popular subscription in memory of the man who gave his fortune and his life to make Cleveland as he often expressed it, 'a happier place to live in, a better place to die in.' And located on the spot he dedicated to the freedom of speech.

This monument is the city's tribute to Tom Loftin Johnson.

Hazen S. Pingree once stated that "eternal fighting seems to be the price of any reform in municipal government."¹ This was especially true of Johnson's administration. For nine years, he served Cleveland as mayor, fighting for honest government and social justice. In those years, he advocated home rule for cities, equal taxation and municipal ownership. His social reform programs, public improvements and support of Warrensville, opened new horizons in dealing with the complex problems of the growing city.

¹Holli, *Reform in Detroit*, p. 75.
These were years of struggle; of great victories and frustrating defeats. Tom Johnson never tired or wavered in the fight - he thrived in the heat of battle, refusing to relent, even in the face of overwhelming odds. Fredrick Howe, a great admirer of Johnson, considered the Mayor to be one of the greatest statesmen America had produced. He made this evaluation of his leader:

He was an astute politician, but he never compromised on important measures, even when they were far in advance of his time. He attacked institutions, not men. ²

Johnson shared the hopes of other urban reformers in working to create a free and more modern city. But he firmly believed that programs for social readjustment were needed as much as political and economic reforms. By applying the principles of Henry George and maintaining the Jeffersonian trust in the common citizen, Johnson became the spearhead of urban reform in the United States. He viewed government as both responsible and representative; corruption would be eliminated in order to allow the citizen to actively participate in city government. The government, in turn would meet the

²Howe, Confessions, p. 145.
needs of the citizens through various social and economic programs.³

The men Johnson chose to assist him in carrying out these programs were all experts in their respective fields. The talents of such men as E. W. Bemis in municipal ownership, Fredrick Howe in city government and Harris R. Cooley in social reform made Cleveland the center of reform information throughout the nation. It thus became an administration to copy through their efforts and Cleveland became a model city to other reformers. A prominent western newspaper made this comment:

Not another city entered a franchise fight or planned an extension of activity for the general well being, or sought a square deal in any form, that it did not receive help and inspiration from Cleveland's public servant[s].⁴

⁴Editorial, Kansas City Star, April 11, 1911. Warner Progressivism in Ohio, p. 78. The Tom Johnson Papers contain a great deal of letters from other cities throughout the nation asking advice and information; the following are some examples: Milwaulkee, Wisconsin, December 3, 1906. W. D. Kerr to Johnson, requesting information on the establishment of the three cent fare. Saint Louis Post Dispatch, January 19, 1907 writing to Johnson, concerning the three cent fare. Toronto, Canada, January 27, 1907, asking Johnson's advice on conducting a campaign for low fares in that city. Shreveport, Louisiana, October 2, 1907 asking the help and advice of the Mayor in working out a plan for municipal ownership. Schenectady, New York, May 11, 1908, request-
Although relatively few programs Johnson advocated were adopted in his lifetime, his efforts were rewarded at the Ohio Constitutional Convention of 1912. In speaking of the reforms embodied in the new Constitution, a reporter had this observation:

> In Ohio it was a square-cut issue between the Common Good and Special Privilege, and the Common Good won. I might almost say Tom Johnson won, for Johnson was the first great leader in Ohio to trace the political wrongs of the people back to the Constitution itself.5

It was in 1902, in his first campaign, that Tom Johnson said "some day [Herbert S.] Bigelow and I are going to rewrite the Constitution of the State of Ohio."6

In a very real sense, Johnson's prediction came true. His associate, Herbert S. Bigelow, was the President of the 1912 Constitutional Convention, and was instrumental in incorporating in the document the major principles Johnson had dedicated his life to. When completed, the new Constitution read like a Johnson campaign platform. Municipalities were granted self-gov-

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6 Ibid.
ernment, with each city forming its own charter. The Constitution also allowed any municipality to "own, lease and operate...any public utility." Voters were given the initiative and referendum, individual machinery was simplified, direct primaries were instituted and penal reform based on Cooley's work, also was included.

An earlier law, The Tax Commission Act of May 10, 1910, passed by the state legislature created a tax commission of three men appointed by the Governor for a term of three years. Their sole purpose was to assess public utilities and corporations. This new board replaced the local boards of assessment, and employed the methods Johnson had advocated years before in his battle for tax reform. The new approaches to government, which had been considered so dangerous, radical and anarchistic to Mark Hanna, Joseph Foraker and others in 1903 was now law. Their predictions of the destruction and collapse of the state under Johnson's influence were unfounded.

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Johnson's leadership had given Cleveland many things. Disease, crime and vice has been reduced. Paved roads, city beautification programs, public parks, cheap gas, water and electricity, criminal and police reform were all instituted under the Johnson administration. Municipal ownership also became a practical reality in Cleveland under Tom Johnson's leadership. In the street railway question, the Tayler Grant, although opposed by Johnson, was based on the Municipal Traction holding company plan Johnson and Goff had worked out, and it served Cleveland for a generation with low fares and good service. The East Ohio Gas Company and the Cleveland Electric Company operated (and still do) Cleveland's gas and electric utilities under the supervision of the city government.

In considering his achievements, Johnson's greatest legacy lies in the concept of democracy he left with the citizens of Cleveland. He stimulated a "civic sense" in them and proved that concern for their city benefited all. Johnson's tent meetings served to educate the public, encouraging them to discuss the issues, to become informed and to vote intelligently. Johnson proved to them what Samuel M. Jones, Mayor of Toledo spoke of: "...They [the people] are the power - indeed.... They can
have any kind of government they want."9

This was truly Johnson's greatest ambition and he emphasized it powerfully in his autobiography:

What object could there be more worthy of a man's ambition than to succeed in giving strength and tone and exalted character to the municipality of which he is a citizen? To succeed in effectively cooperating in the work of establishing in his own city municipal self-govern ment upon the basis of equal justice and thereby setting an example of practical democracy to the civilized world?10

Tom Johnson was not without his shortcomings. His zeal to achieve his objectives sometimes blinded him to the consideration of others. Those who did not support him in the Democratic party were removed. Nothing would stand in the way of the cause. In a sense, he was a boss, but a boss for the people. By 1908, illness weakened his efficiency - Tom Johnson in effect, worked himself to death. While he was mayor, there was no rest from the business at hand. This often made him uncompromising, especially in the later years of his administration, when it was obvious that he was the only party

9Samuel M. Jones to Witt, April 16, 1903, Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.

10Johnson, My Story, pp. 186-187.
resisting a settlement on the street railway question. But, these are small matters when compared to the principles he stood for and the work that was accomplished in Cleveland and in Ohio as a result of his efforts. Johnson laid the path, prepared the groundwork for the everwidening wave of Progressive legislation which swept the nation during his later years and after his death. He played a key role in proving that the people, under strong leadership, could overcome any obstacle.

Lincoln Steffens, in a personal letter to the Mayor, best expressed the overall importance of Tom Johnson:

...try to see what I see: the prophecy of your work; the accomplishment of it everywhere and the certain recognition then that Tom Johnson first projected in deeds what all other men only dreamed or wished or wrote or thought.11

This is the legacy Tom Johnson left to his era. He inspired an important new consciousness in the nation, which has not yet ended. He stands as a giant in the history of the modern city and of American reform.

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11Lincoln Steffens to Tom Johnson, October 23, 1908. Peter Witt Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland.
APPENDIX
FACTS ABOUT YOUR TAXES.

Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Wilk

Dear Sir,

You are paying $16.50 too much taxes on your land.

The Tax Department has for a year and a half had under examination the question of unequal distribution of tax burdens in the city of Cleveland. The investigation of inequalities in the valuation of land for taxation has been so far completed that we can give you the aggregate result in your ward and the actual result in money in your particular case. We will give you similar information as to the inequalities in the valuation of buildings as soon as it is completed. Here we consider only the lot exclusive of improvements.

In the 15th ward the total cash value of all taxable land is $1,899,330; its valuation for taxation upon the duplicate in the office of the county auditor is $1,185,610, or 62 per cent. of its cash value. The average of this ward is higher than the average of the entire city. The best estimate we can make as to what the final figures will be for the entire city is 39 per cent. Therefore, the following figures are made on this basis. In the ward there are 10 pieces of land which are valued at less than 39 per cent., some as low as 34 per cent. of their value; as in the case of the land of James Parker 100 x 154 Outhwaite St., cor. Wilson Ave., the land having a cash value of $16,390, is assessed at only $5,660; there are 1016 pieces that are valued at more than 39 per cent., some as high as 108 per cent. of their cash value, as in the case of the land of John Green, 40 x 134 Hazen St., the cash value of which is $830, while it is assessed at $900.

The cash value of your land which appears on your tax bill as Original Lot No. Sublot No. on Street is $2,090. It is valued for taxation at $1,370. The tax valuation at 39 per cent. would be $820. You are therefore assessed at 62.5 per cent. of the cash value of your land. You are now charged $4,11.00 in taxes on your land. You should pay only $2,44.50

BRANDON 68-69

[Signature]

August 1902.
The Annual City Board of Equalization proposed to correct these inequalities but the recent legislature abolished that Board to prevent it from making these corrections and also because that Board had the courage to raise the assessed valuation of the property of the street railways and other public service corporations nearly twenty million dollars, which would have made those corporations pay on the same basis as small home owners. The legislature put in the place of the Annual City Board of Equalization a Board of Review which is now in daily session in the old Court House.

This Board of Review is the board to which you must appeal for relief from this over valuation.

The tax department will call to the attention of the Board of Review all cases of under valuation.

Three state officials took off the twenty millions added by the Annual City Board of Equalization and by doing so raised your taxes 10 per cent. This is an additional injustice to the one caused by the inequality above pointed out. Divide the total of the taxes you are required to pay by 10 and it will show you, in dollars, a part of the injustice done you by the legislature in abolishing the Annual City Board of Equalization, and by the three state officials in setting aside the increased valuation made by that Board. This will also show you how much you have to pay of the taxes, which ought to be paid by the public service corporations, but which they unjustly make you pay through the favoritism of public officials.

Apply to the Tax Department, 109 City Hall, for any further information to aid you in having your taxes reduced by the Board of Review in the old Court House.

FACTS ABOUT THE TAX RATE.

The tax rate of 30 Dollars and 35 Cents on each thousand dollars is unjust: particularly so to all over-assessed property, and is due to the fact that powerful corporations are able to have their property so much under-assessed that they avoid the payment of nine-tenths of the taxes they should pay.

If the street railways and other public service corporations paid their fair share of the tax burden, it would reduce the 30 Dollars and 35 Cents, 10 per cent., and the rate would be 27 Dollars and 32 Cents on each thousand dollars.

If the steam railroads paid taxes in proportion to the value of their property, it would exceed the amount due from the public service corporations and would cause a still further reduction of at least 10 per cent., bringing the rate down to 24 Dollars and 59 Cents on each thousand dollars.

This rate would raise the same sum that is now levied for all purposes and would amount in the case of each taxpayer to a reduction of 20 per cent., or a tax of only four-fifths of the present charge.

In short, after making the reduction first pointed out of 15 in the amount of your taxes due to unequal valuation, there would be, if the steam railroads, street railways, and other public service corporations paid their fair share, a still further reduction of one-fifth, which would reduce your taxes from $ 24.60 to $ 19.60, the amount you should pay instead of $ 24.60 as you are now charged.

Thus a fair and equal distribution of the tax burdens would mean a saving of $ 5.00 to you on your land alone.
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Note: The Plain Dealer was the most objective and informative newspaper covering this period. The Cleveland Leader was anti-Johnson and Republican supported. The Cleveland Press was very anti-Johnson until 1905, when it changed to totally support Johnson's policies.

III. Public Document
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VII. The following magazines' editorials and untitled articles were consulted.

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Arena
VITA

Keith D. Dickson was born May 15, 1954, in Lakewood, Ohio, and grew up in a town on the outskirts of Cleveland. In 1969, his family moved to Farmville, Virginia, where he attended Prince Edward Academy, graduating in 1972. He attended Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, graduating in May, 1976 with honors in history.

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