

# “MAYOR TOM’S” SUCCESSOR

MR. NEWTON D. BAKER, THE SMALL, BOOKISH MAN WHO WAS MAYOR TOM JOHNSON’S CLOSEST POLITICAL ASSOCIATE AND WHO NOW, AS MAYOR OF CLEVELAND, IS EXTENDING HIS WARFARE FOR “THREE-CENT PUBLIC UTILITIES” AND FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP — A SCHOLAR IN POLITICS WHO IS ALSO A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNER — HIS VISION OF “CIVITISM”

BY

BURTON J. HENDRICK

THE successor of Mayor “Tom” Johnson, in Cleveland, O., bears externally few resemblances to “Mayor Tom” himself. The famous champion of three-cent fares was big, bulky, of heroic size. In all his acts and in all his thinking he was elemental, resourceful, pioneer-like; Cleveland, in the nine riotous years he served as mayor, was little less than an armed camp. He always described his political activity as a “battle”; as long as his causes represented what he regarded as essential political virtues, it was not important that the gnarled leader lacked some of the attenuated graces of civilization.

The present mayor, Mr. Newton D. Baker, is a very different spectacle. He is a small, dark-haired, brown-eyed, boyish figure. After wheeling around in his chair to greet his visitor, Mr. Baker throws one leg under his body and sits upon it. This leaves the other swinging free and it barely reaches the ground. His appearance brings to mind a story that is told of his undergraduate days at Johns Hopkins University. On one of the appearances of Booth and Barrett in Shakesperian parts, Mr. Baker, with other students, appeared at the theatre in search of temporary employment as a “super.” The stage manager stood by while the line of candidates passed along for inspection. As soon as this autocrat detected Mr. Baker, he pushed him contemptuously out of the procession. “There are no Cupids in this show!” he shouted, as the disappointed gladiator vanished through the stage door.

Mr. Baker’s appearance is still quite

Puck-like. One might easily take him for a Latin tutor or a mincing theologian. His colorless face too clearly lacks acquaintance with out-of-doors; its indentations, however, disclose that Mr. Baker is not so young as he at first seems — they show that he, like his predecessor, has had his moments of agitation and trial. Indeed, if one ignores the slender body and focuses upon the face and head, a different and stronger impression is obtained. Here the man is full grown — there is nothing juvenile, nothing callow. Though the rest of the tenement may be undersized, the head itself is ample in its proportions. Mr. Baker wears a small shoe but a large hat. A six-footer’s top-piece is superimposed upon a boy’s body. Clearly we have a man whose activities are all mental. He works, plays, and dissipates all through the mind. Golf, mountain climbing, yachting, even automobiling probably offer him few attractions. The books that are scattered carelessly about the Mayor’s desk force home the same idea. Here is a copy of Bernard Shaw’s plays; here, the last number of the *Survey* magazine; the place is littered with large treatises on the initiative and referendum, proportional representation, workingmen’s compensation, city planning, and the like. Outside, his friends and associates tell the most amazing stories of the man whom they regard as a prodigy. Greek tragedies, they say, do not terrify him, even in the original. His coat pockets are always stuffed with books and periodicals. The average Clevelander knows his mayor as a small, huddled up figure in a trolley car with his nose plunged deeply into a book. When on the

way to a political convention, he commonly spends the time on the train with a copy of some magazine like the *Contemporary Review* or the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. A few years ago, at one of the most exciting Democratic state conventions, the leaders found their favorite champion, surrounded by a howling mob, absorbed in a volume of Browning. As a critical situation was developing, they demanded that he take the floor. Mr. Baker carefully placed his mark in the book and ascended the platform. In a few moments his sharp, clear voice had quieted the whole gathering; on this occasion, as on almost any other into which Mr. Baker injects his remarkable oratory, he carried his point. Amid heavy applause he returned to his seat, pulled out his book, and continued reading his Browning at the point where he had left off.

A MAYOR WHO IS FOND OF LATIN

At all times and with all people this preëminent mental trait discloses itself. Literary allusions and quotations filter everywhere into his conversation. If he wishes to illustrate the attitude of the farmer toward the city dweller, he does so by a reference to Wordsworth's "Michael." In describing the debasing effects of time-serving in the politician, he inevitably recalls the career of Jonathan Swift. He has the facility of an old-fashioned English statesman in Latin quotations. Nor does he hesitate to make these allusions to the people of Cleveland — an audience which has shown on notable occasions a hostility to manifestations of the kind. Thus, a few years ago Senator Theodore Burton, then candidate for mayor in Cleveland, in the course of one of his speeches struck an attitude and declared, *Jacta est alea!* — a phrase which Tom Johnson translated for the benefit of his Irish friends as "Let 'er go Gallagher!" Senator Burton has never recovered from the ridicule which this Cæsarian epigram brought down upon his head. Many people attribute to it his heavy defeat on that occasion.

Mr. Burton's indiscretion, however, was nothing compared with the classical perisflage Mr. Baker throws off every day.

In his first mayoralty campaign, he expressed the ruling conviction of his life in this convincing fashion: *Lex citius tolerare vult privatum damnum quam publicum malum!* When the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company made a sweet-sounding proposal for the settlement of its differences with the city, Mr. Baker expressed his opinion in this wise: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. His fellow citizens, however, who almost ran Senator Burton out of town for his classicisms, applaud only the louder when the present mayor uses them. And this in a community whose newspapers refer to the Street Railway Commissioner as the "Tractioner," the Health Officer as the "Healthier," the Commissioners of Public Safety and Public Service as the "Safer" and the "Server," and who describe that practice of municipal ownership upon which Cleveland so prides itself as its "Muny" policy!

And Cleveland has taken this young Horatian to its heart as the successor of Mayor "Tom." Cleveland has the highest warrant for doing so — it has the authority of Mr. Johnson himself. In his nine years as mayor, Mr. Johnson assembled a remarkable political family. Newton D. Baker was his Joseph — the youngest and the favorite son. And to-day, true to his training, Mr. Baker has a brief and simple political creed: "I am a follower of the light of Tom Johnson." This is wisdom enough for this student of Burke and Bryce and John Stuart Mill. That Mr. Baker has lived this doctrine, recent events have shown. But for his own rejection, he would to-day be a member of President Wilson's Cabinet. His reason for staying at Cleveland was simply loyalty to Johnson's memory, and a conscientious determination to remain and finish Johnson's work. All the pressure President Wilson could bring to bear upon the man "whose mind," in Mr. Wilson's own words, "works like chain lightning" could not shake this determination.

THE VILLAGE BOOKWORM

Like so many men now conspicuous in American political life, Mr. Baker is a Southerner. He was born in Martins-

burg, W. Va., about forty-two years ago. Though this town was located in twilight territory, Mr. Baker's family during the Civil War was intensely Southern. His father, a country doctor, served creditably in the Confederate Army. His mother, a woman of great cultivation and charm, used to run the blockade and smuggle quinine and other necessities into Fort McHenry. Mr. Baker's childhood was thus spent in a locality in which the one conspicuous fact was the recent Civil War. He can remember when his friends and neighbors used to go around in gray trousers, because they had nothing else to wear. It was just the atmosphere, one would suppose, for the development of a prejudiced and sectional spirit. The one thing upon which Mr. Baker now prides himself, however, is an open and tolerant mind; it is the thing upon which he has particularly insisted in his government of the mixed races, religions, and social ideals that make up the population of Cleveland. He acquired this democratic outlook amid the discouraging and distressing surroundings of his boyhood home. His teacher was his father. Mr. Baker's mother, the Mayor smilingly recalls, is still "an unreconstructed rebel." "She never sees a good-looking Negro girl now," he adds, "that she doesn't want to buy her." In his father's mind, however, Lee's surrender ended the sectional quarrel.

As a little chap, the present Mayor used to accompany his father on his long professional trips into the country. These journeys were really continuous lessons in non-sectional and non-racial patriotism. "One thing you must understand, my boy," the father would say, "is that this war was a great mistake. We Southerners were wrong; the North was right. We were fighting in a bad cause. I am glad it ended as it did, and so will you be when you grow up." This was valuable instruction, especially in that it gave Mr. Baker's mind a wholesome viewpoint, not only on the War but on life in general. It turned his ideas toward the future; gave him an intellectual apprenticeship for his service with Tom Johnson.

An event that particularly interested the elder Baker was the opening of Johns Hop-

kins University, in 1876. He even went to Baltimore and heard Huxley's address on that occasion. One of Mayor Baker's earliest mental pictures is of his father when he returned. He took the child on his knee — he was then four years old — told him what a wonderful school the new University was to be, and said that his highest ambition in life was that his son should be educated there.

This was Mayor Baker's baptism of learning; his formal dedication to the arts. From now on Martinsburg knew him as the village bookworm. He did not play baseball, seldom visited the swimming pool, and followed few of the other traditional instincts of the healthy-minded youngster. He was the delicate, pale-faced, spindle-legged boy with a book. In the next ten or fifteen years Mr. Baker devoured all the libraries in town. "Mere literature" became his favorite browsing field, and he read the English masterpieces after a method of his own. The way to understand English literature, he argued, was not to begin in the remote past and read up to the present, but to reverse the process. So he systematically started with Tennyson and finished with Beowulf and Caedmon. His favorite as a child was Wordsworth; the man who dominated his adolescent mind was Browning. All this time Mr. Baker nourished high ambition, in particular hungering after distinction as an orator. Though his natural gifts seemed deficient, the example of Demosthenes encouraged him. The boy actually duplicated the self-discipline of the Athenian; he would go out into the woods and declaim before the trees and birds.

#### MR. BAKER'S "SCHEMA"

In 1889 he realized his father's early ambition and entered Johns Hopkins. Here his favorite studies were economics, history, and political science. At Baltimore he came under another stimulating influence: Woodrow Wilson was then delivering lectures at the University on political administration. Mr. Baker naturally took this course; more important still, he lived in the same boarding house with Mr. Wilson, sat at the same table, and had the benefits of his table talk for

two years. Then followed a course in law at Washington and Lee University, and Mr. Baker returned to Martinsburg, to practise. He led a rather peculiar existence in the next year or two. Besides taking such law business as he could get, he helped his father, who was the local health officer; wrote his reports, prepared bulletins on sanitary topics, even, on pressing occasions, served as supernumerary at surgical operations. His evenings he solemnly dedicated to his intellectual advancement. One of Mr. H. G. Wells's stories tells how the hero — Mr. Lewisham — elaborated an ambitious "schema" for his studies, devoting certain times to certain subjects. Mr. Baker followed a similar plan. He fixed up his study in an attic room, the windows protected by mosquito netting in the summer time, and illumination furnished by the one electric light in town. One evening Mr. Baker set apart for Greek, another for Latin, others for French, for German, for Italian. His solitary light, shining until a late hour, was his one medium of contact with the social activities of the town.

"There's 'Doc' Baker," the grocery store philosopher would say: "He's sent his son to college and see what a damn fool he's made of him."

Mr. Lewisham's "schema," in the Wells story, was cut short by the appearance of a yellow-haired girl in a dimity gown. Mr. Baker kept at his for a year and a half; the disturbing element in his case was a letter from William L. Wilson, the West Virginian statesman, author of the Wilson Tariff Act, who had just been made Postmaster General. "Come at once to Washington, to see me," was the peremptory message. A family consultation, which was held immediately, finally decided that Mr. Wilson wished to give the young lawyer an assortment of his old law books and public documents. Mr. Baker and his father started for Washington, taking along an empty dress suit case in which to bring back the expected treasures. But Mr. Wilson wanted the young man to become his private secretary. He filled this position for a little more than a year — the last of Cleveland's term.

And then Mr. Baker again tried to

practice law at Martinsburg, and again destiny ruled otherwise. One day, in the fall of 1897, while on shipboard returning from a European trip, he became interested in two figures — a stiff-necked and much bored Englishman and a violent Irishman, evidently engaged in a not over-friendly debate. He drew near; they were discussing home rule. The Irishman was simply pursuing his antagonist, whose chief desire seemed to be to escape.

#### A BOY ORATOR IN CLEVELAND

Mr. Baker, desiring to help him, pitched into the argument, training his guns upon the Irishman. The Englishman slunk away and the new combatant had an energetic time of it. The Irishman was Judge Martin Foran, a big lawyer of Cleveland. He evidently gained a high respect for his nimble friend's mental qualities, for, not long after returning home, he sent Mr. Baker what was practically a command to come to Cleveland and enter law practice as his partner. It was a splendid opportunity and Mr. Baker took it. His introduction to an audience in Cleveland came soon afterward. Judge Foran was a good speaker, in great demand at political meetings. Once, when he had an engagement of this kind, he was taken ill and sent his new partner. No one in the audience had ever heard of the stripling. "Pat" McKinney, who presided, when he reached Judge Foran's number on the list of speakers, looked pityingly at Mr. Baker.

"Judge Foran is sick and cannot appear," he said. "He sent his boy to speak for him. Come on, boy, and tell 'em what you know."

Of course, the crowd laughed as Mr. Baker tripped forward. But he had not practised the Demosthenean experiment for nothing. He was entirely self-possessed; he had spoken only a few clear-cut, staccato words when the laughter changed to the raptest attention; and, long before he had finished, the crowd was just as well pleased that Judge Foran had not appeared. From that moment the "boy" has been one of the most vital elements in the life of Cleveland.

Mr. Baker soon had to face a problem

that tested his character. This was the choice between public service and a personal and financial advancement. Though only about thirty years old, the two conflicting interests in Cleveland immediately began competing for his abilities. The big law firms offered him attractive opportunities. Had Mr. Baker so willed he could easily have stepped into a large income; as a lawyer, he had virtually his pick of all that Cleveland had. But the other element was also making its demands.

#### A FOLLOWER OF "THE DEMAGOGUE"

Its leader was Tom L. Johnson. He had just been elected mayor, and had started that campaign which has led some observers to regard him as America's greatest democrat and others to look upon him as the prince of demagogues. Newton D. Baker formed Johnson's acquaintance and decided that he was a leader whom he could afford to follow. He turned his back upon an opening professional career, and became first lieutenant of "the demagogue." Instead of large railroad retainers, he remained content with the position of city solicitor at a few thousand dollars a year. This sounds merely like cant, but it isn't. One of the largest corporation lawyers in Cleveland, a man representing many of the most powerful railroad interests in the country, told the present writer how, in the early days, he had sought to make "Judge Foran's boy" his partner. And there were many others.

One of Mr. Baker's earliest assignments under Johnson's leadership was to act as "teacher" in the famous tax school which Johnson established in the city hall — the purpose being to show up the prevailing inequalities of taxation. This fine flower of Johns Hopkins University had, as his associate in this task, one Peter Witt, an iron moulder, for many years leader of the working people of Cleveland in their fight against corporation iniquities. From now on Mr. Baker was Johnson's closest adviser. Whenever Johnson went to Columbus in his fight to compel the adequate taxation of the railroads, Mr. Baker always went with him. But the greatest contest, of course, was the famous contest for three-cent fares. In the popular mind this was

Johnson's fight; and so, in a general sense, it was; from the legal point of view, however, it was Mr. Baker's. He had not gone far in its legal intricacies before it became quite evident that the corporations, in their attempts to add him to their forces, had sized him up accurately. He was, as Johnson says in his *Autobiography*, "though the youngest of us, really our head and principal adviser." In the six years that the struggle lasted, life signified practically one thing to Mr. Baker: injunctions. He became the man of fifty-five lawsuits, all started against the city by the street railways for a single purpose: to stop the reduction in street railway fares. As soon as he had won one suit, another would be served. He met and successfully disposed of fifteen injunctions in six months. Compared with his legal nimbleness, the corporation legal stars were clumsy performers. The mental habits of a lifetime were turned to a really practical use. "That boy Baker is telling us judges a lot of things we never knew before," remarked one of them as he solemnly left the court room. The next result was a popular victory. The time came when the street railways tired of injunctions and other proceedings and were glad to make a settlement with the city.

All this time Mr. Baker was advancing in other than legal ways. Election after election Cleveland returned him as its chief law officer, city solicitor. Sometimes his vote actually ran ahead of Johnson's own. Even when, in 1910, the people defeated Johnson for mayor, they still elected Mr. Baker, who ran on the same ticket.

#### DESTROYING MR. HARMON'S BOOM

There was thus little question, after Johnson's death, as to who should succeed him. The people of Cleveland, who had rejected Johnson in 1909, elected Mr. Baker mayor in 1911 by the largest majority in the city's history. In a sense this huge vote represented a penance. It was the way a conscience-stricken community expressed its contrition for having abandoned its weather beaten champion.

Mr. Baker had hardly settled down to his job of extending the policies of Johnson when an entirely new situation claimed

attention. Events made Ohio a storm centre in the Democratic Presidential campaign. The governor of the state, Mr. Judson Harmon, was one of Mr. Wilson’s strongest rivals. Under present conditions, the idea that Governor Harmon, high-minded a gentleman as he was, could have been seriously regarded as a rival to Woodrow Wilson, seems absurd. Yet this is just the kind of a candidacy that has often succeeded. One could think of many Presidents who have not exceeded Mr. Harmon’s mental and moral calibre.

Under ordinary circumstances, Mr. Harmon would have had a united support in Ohio. His large majorities at two elections as governor showed that he had a large following. One of Tom Johnson’s last acts was to appear on the same platform with Mr. Harmon and to praise his administration. In the early part of 1912 it was regarded as a matter of course, therefore, that Mr. Harmon would go into the Democratic convention as Ohio’s favorite son.

There was only one Democratic leader of importance who regarded the point as debatable. This was Newton D. Baker. There was no man in public life with whose ideas he more naturally sympathized than his old college instructor and table companion in Baltimore — Mr. Wilson. It was not until Governor Harmon appeared before the constitutional convention in Columbus, however, and made a “stand-pat” speech, that Mayor Baker turned against him. He boldly went into the field with the intention of destroying Governor Harmon’s Presidential boom by splitting the delegation from Ohio. One morning, newspaper readers were amazed to discover that, at the primaries, Governor Harmon did not have the undivided support of his own state. Of its forty-eight votes in the Democratic convention, he had received only twenty-seven; the other twenty-one had been captured by Woodrow Wilson. This was a sad beginning for a Presidential candidacy, and it was practically Newton D. Baker’s work.

The scene now shifted to the National Convention at Baltimore. There Mayor Baker captained Mr. Wilson’s forces from Ohio. He went there with the determin-

ation of having Mr. Wilson’s twenty-one votes counted. Precedents were against him. The state convention in Ohio had adopted the “unit rule,” under which all votes must be cast for the majority choice — in this case Mr. Harmon; and the unit rule had been sacred at National Democratic Conventions for years. If he could get a hearing Mr. Baker thought he could carry the day; but the convention rules excluded him as being himself a party to the contest. Things were looking rather desperate for the progressive element in the early stages. Mr. Bryan had lost in his attempt to defeat Mr. Parker as temporary chairman. The committee on rules was in the hands of the old fashioned element. This committee “steamrolled” Mr. Baker when he appeared before it in support of the Wilson votes.

#### HOW HE CAPTURED A CONVENTION

When the report was under discussion, however, his slight figure rose from the delegation from Ohio and made its way to the platform. The crowd showed little interest in him; it was tired, hot, and nearly dead from oratory. When Mr. Baker began to speak, few people heard him; the noise of the uninterested assemblage prevented. It was only another barrel orator talking for home consumption! Pretty soon, however, the people in front quieted down; then the silence gradually spread through the assembled delegates and the gallery. Before Mr. Baker had been talking five minutes only the slight movement of the palm leaf fans disturbed his discourse. After he had talked the allotted time Chairman Parker’s gavel came down with a “Time’s up.” And then followed an amazing demonstration in this sweltering, bored gathering; the place actually rang with cries of “Go on! Go on!”. And Mr. Baker went on. Any one who saw him on this occasion had a visible explanation of his career. The first noticeable thing about his voice was its clearness; there was nothing that suggested the husky, bawling campaigner — it was sharp, distinct, hitting out sharply every syllable.

Another striking trait was Mr. Baker’s rapidity of utterance. His voice went rattling on like a gatling gun while the

perspiring stenographers made distracted efforts to transcribe it. The speaker had not prepared a single word of his address — he seldom does; but there was not the suggestion of a pause between his words. The figure was not especially striking; with the exception of an occasional Dr. Munyon uplifted forefinger, there were few gestures. Except for the substance of the talk, the composure, and the steady, penetrating voice, Mr. Baker might have been a college graduate delivering a valedictory. He had another indispensable advantage — a good cause. Whatever virtue the unit rule may or may not have had in the old days of convention-selected delegates, it is ridiculous when these delegates are selected at primaries. And Mr. Baker won. For the first time the convention voted in favor of a progressive intention; from that moment its temper changed. And this vote ended Judson Harmon's hopes as a Presidential candidate. Mr. Baker had to pay the usual penalty for his oratorical success at a national convention. An attempt was made to enlist his interest in the Vice-presidency. He was even "mentioned" as a possible Presidential candidate.

#### THE APOSTLE OF "CIVITISM"

This performance, however, was only an episode; Mr. Baker had then, as he has now, only one excuse for being in politics. That excuse was the City of Cleveland. He is a city man; his mission, as he conceives it, is to improve conditions in that political entity which such increasing numbers of men and women are selecting as their homes — the city. He has invented and done his best to popularize a new word — civitism. "Civitism" signifies the same thing for the town that the word patriotism does for the nation. It is love and devotion to the particular city in which we live. His aim is to make this city of Cleveland the most efficient instrument possible for assuring the happiness, the comfort, the moral and spiritual improvement of its people. Externally the prospect does not seem especially attractive. Cleveland's black smoke is so ever-present that one seldom sees the sun; its city hall and its railroad sta-

tion are perhaps the most notorious architectural infamies in the United States. Its population contains the two elements which certain philosophers have declared to be the things that most menace free institutions: a dropsical plutocracy and a huge foreign population. Cleveland, with its 600,000 people, has more than one hundred millionaires; it is the headquarters of the greatest of American fortunes. Its foreigners, largely Slavic in origin, make up 75 per cent. of its population.

#### A CITY A MUNICIPAL REPUBLIC

Is this a discouraging field in which to preach the doctrines of "civitism?" Not at all. Cleveland has already gone far. It is perhaps the one large city in the United States of which one can make the definite statement that there is no graft. Its police department, for honesty at least, enjoys general confidence; and the other conventional types of corruption are likewise few. The remnants of a political machine there are; but it consists merely of a handful of chronic officeholders, not of professional plunderers. Whatever one may think of Tom Johnson, at least he left Mayor Baker the inheritance of a city free from graft.

So Mr. Baker has a good foundation to build on. What, then, is a city that represents the fruition of "civitism?" In the first place it would be a community that rules itself; a kind of municipal republic. Matters that affected the state or the Nation, Mayor Baker would leave to these agencies; matters that affected the cities, the cities should govern themselves. The outlying districts, for example, should have nothing to do with regulating Cleveland's morals or its street railway companies. Cleveland should have the right to tax itself for its own purposes, and to decide the way in which this should be done. Clevelanders are especially sensitive on this point, as they have suffered almost to distraction from the interference of the state. This point Mayor Baker has already won. His new "Home Rule" charter, in the making of which he was most influential, makes the city self-governing, with a minimum of state control.

Mayor Baker also believes that a city,

to be beautiful spiritually, should have a beautiful exterior as well. Here, also, he has made progress. Cleveland’s civic centre, when finished, will give the city an imposing entrance. Several of our greatest architects, including the late Daniel H. Burnham and Mr. Arnold W. Brunner, have had a hand in planning it. It includes a beautiful new city hall, already partly erected, and a new \$17,000,000 union railroad station on the lake front.

Mayor Baker also thinks that the future American City, to a great degree, will provide for and regulate popular amusements. Already he has created a municipal orchestra, which gives symphonies in the winter and open-airconcerts in the summer. His personal taste in this controls as in everything. He early stopped the ragtime which largely filled the programme at band concerts; now the composers who receive most attention are Wagner, Verdi, Donizetti, with a dash of Sullivan and Victor Herbert. He has warred upon the manifest vulgarities of the moving picture shows and is getting ready to assault the monstrosities of the billboards. Already he has started several municipal dance halls, where working girls and boys, at three cents a head, can enjoy a wholesome evening. The order maintained at these places has found expression in a popular joke: “There are only a few places in Cleveland where you can see modesty and decent dancing—and those are Mayor Baker’s three-cent dance halls.”

TRANSPORTATION BY TROLLEY AT COST

Above everything else, Mayor Baker’s “civitism” stands for municipal ownership of public utilities. Cleveland must ultimately control its street railways, its gas and electric lighting companies, its water supply, and its telephones. In Mayor Baker’s philosophy, this idea is fundamental; these conveniences furnish the basis of any well ordered and comfortable society; they are the things which have been most abused; they are not legitimately a source of private profit; the people are entitled to have these facilities at cost. Mayor Baker’s most practical success has been in demonstrating the soundness of this idea. The one “monument” to his

administration is the proof that it is possible to give the people trolley-car transportation at cost. That Mayor Baker has achieved success in this work will probably be news to most people. There is a prevalent misconception that Cleveland’s three-cent-fare system has proved a failure and that the roads are going back to a higher charge. This is not the case.

As a result of Johnson’s six-years’ war, the Cleveland street railways and the local government definitely settled their troubles in 1909. The basis of the agreement was that the people were to have their transportation at cost, whatever that cost might be. And, in arriving at this cost, all elements in the situation were to receive consideration. The agreement recognized the fact that capital was necessary in the building and equipment of a railroad; and that capital, in order to be obtained, must necessarily be reimbursed. Should Cleveland build its own street railways, it would do so by issuing municipal bonds upon which it would have to pay the market rate of interest. As a preliminary adjustment, however, an appraisement was made of the actual money invested in the street railway system. The city made a liberal estimate; it squeezed out a part of the water, but still left in some for good measure. Upon this capital, as ultimately determined, the city agreed that the stockholders should receive dividends of 6 per cent. Whatever happened to the lines, they should not receive more nor less; their income for all time was definitely fixed at this amount. If, after paying all charges, including those for maintenance and renewal, the roads earned more than 6 per cent., the fares were to go down; if they earned less, the fares were automatically to go up, until the maximum of four cents was reached. As a safety valve, the agreement established a so-called cash “interest fund” of \$500,000, representing surplus earnings. This “interest fund” showed whether there was to be any increase or reduction in the price of transportation. If it went above \$700,000, the fares automatically went down; if it sank to \$300,000, the fares went up. Meanwhile, as a protection to service, the city was given practical control over operation.



A new city officer, the "tractioner," was virtually made an autocrat over the railway lines; he could order new equipment, make changes in routes, put on new cars — in other words, practically control the service. The technical operation, however, still remained in the hands of the transportation companies.

#### CLEVELAND'S GOOD TROLLEY SERVICE

This was an ingenious arrangement, and fair both to the public and the owners of the railways. Mr. Baker made Peter Witt his "tractioner." Under him the service has wonderfully improved. Cleveland has one of the most up-to-date street railway systems in the country. The sliding scale of fares has likewise worked successfully. When the scheme went into operation fares were fixed at three cents with a charge of a penny for transfers. Under this arrangement the "interest fund" went above the \$700,000 mark and fares were reduced — the penny for transfers was taken off.

This charge has remained fixed at a flat three cents for three years. Now the situation has changed again. The roads have decided to "scrap" nearly \$800,000 worth of equipment. For that equipment there is outstanding capital stock. If this capital stock were permitted to stand with no physical value against it the stock would be "watered" to just that amount. The present policy is to eliminate "water" wherever possible.

The thing that Cleveland intends to do, therefore, is to go down into its pocket and produce \$800,000 in cash to purchase new equipment which will offset that which has been destroyed. A simple device accomplishes this; a charge of a penny for transfers, extended through a year, will just about bring in the \$800,000 that is required. About July 1st, therefore, this charge will go into effect. It will remain until the money is raised. Then it will be taken off, as it has been once before. That is about all there is to the newspaper accounts of Cleveland's increase in street railway fares.

This vexing question, which disturbs so many American cities, Cleveland has therefore definitely settled. For all practical purposes, it has municipal ownership of its trolley lines. Mayor Baker has now taken similar steps for the public control of lighting. Tom Johnson's cry was "three-cent" trolley fares; Mayor Baker's is "three-cent" electric light. And he is going about it in the approved Johnson way. "Mayor Tom" proved the feasibility of three-cent fares by instigating the actual construction of three-cent lines.

#### FOR "THREE-CENT" ELECTRIC LIGHT

When these had operated profitably for several years, the "trust" had no recourse except to adopt a similar rate. Mayor Baker is approaching the matter of public lighting in the same way. With a city bond issue of \$2,000,000 he is building an electric lighting plant. This will charge "three cents" a kilowatt hour for its current, instead of the ten cents charged by the dominant corporation.

Figuring from results in the street railway situation, it is believed that a wholesome competition will bring about a satisfactory settlement. The lighting corporation is fighting the city just as the street railway did. Mayor Baker is wading toward municipal lighting through a sea of injunctions, taxpayers' suits, and other ingenious legal processes, precisely as he did toward municipal railways. Nevertheless, Cleveland's city lighting plant is nearing completion, and will be in full operation soon.

When this lighting plant is finished, other public utilities will be handled in the same way. Already work on a municipal steam plant has been begun. Plans have been outlined for municipal telephones. Municipal docks are definitely on the programme. The fine thing about this policy is the fact that it is being applied so gradually. One thing is not undertaken until another is finished. In ten or fifteen years, however, Cleveland will have the "cost system" in all its utilities. Then "civism" may reign triumphant.