

the legislature, and in case of the disapproval of any of the cities affected increases the safeguards by requiring that the two-thirds majority shall include three-fourths of the members of the legislature from districts outside of the city or cities affected.

"In order further to reduce the necessity for special legislation the amendment provides for a liberal grant of municipal powers, thus diminishing the dependence of the city upon the state legislature. The committee has felt that this method of regulating special legislation will protect the paramount interests of the state, and, at the same time, assure to the cities all necessary freedom of action. As a further guaranty to such freedom of action, the amendment provides that all cities having a population of 25,000 or over may frame their own charters, subject to the constitution and to such power of the legislature to pass laws under the restrictions regarding special legislation above outlined."

The section treating of municipal organization proposes to abolish fixed terms of office except for officials elected by popular vote. The mayor and the members of the city council are the only officers so elected. Restrictions are further placed on the ability to contract debt, except indebtedness incurred for the purchase or construction of revenue-producing public works, which are held not to represent a real financial burden, since interest and sinking fund charges are usually paid out of the profits of these enterprises.

As to franchises, the committee says:

"Careful constitutional provisions have been formulated as to the method of granting franchises. That such franchises should only be granted for a limited period is a principle that has now received very general acceptance. The application of this principle is of importance in a country like the United States, where the legislative authority is restricted by the constitutional guaranties to vested rights. With us the grant of a valuable franchise for an indefinite period is in fact, if not in law, irrevocable. The enormous value of such a franchise makes it practically impossible for a city to repurchase it without seriously impairing its finances. The end which the committee has had in view has been to make the franchise grant in the nature of a lease for a short term, at the expiration of which the city, as lessor, enters into possession. The limits of the lease have been fixed at twenty-one (21) years; a term amply sufficient to offer all necessary inducements to private corporations."

Regarding the organization of the city council the committee says in part:

"The justification for the division of representative bodies into two chambers is to be found in the desire to protect the life, liberty and property of the citizen against hasty or ill-considered legislative action. The reasons supporting such a system are considerably weakened when the main dangers from hasty action are guarded against in the constitution. This has been done in prescribing the conditions in the granting of franchises, limiting indebtedness, etc. The history of American municipalities has proven that the effect of the bicameral system has been to dissipate, if not to destroy, real responsibility. The provision for a unicameral legislature is but the logical application of the idea of political responsibility which has come to be a guiding principle in the efforts for municipal reform."

The national municipal league was organized in New York in 1894. It is now an organization of about one hun-

dred societies, which are striving for the institution and maintenance of good city government. The league's object is to promote the proper management of cities as municipal corporations disentangled from issues of state and nation. Broadly, this might be said to involve principles essential to the well-being of the city, the discountenancing of national party lines in municipal elections, adherence to a merit system for city employes, and the application of honest business methods to the conduct of civic affairs.

ISLAND GRABBING.

The way things territorial are going and have gone of late seems to take some of the levity out of an expression made regarding Great Britain's disposition to annex some time ago—that it was dangerous for islands to be left out over night. Every one of the great powers of Europe has its eye fixed upon some "ocean of some dell, some island or some cave" which it is hoped may be reduced to possession without stirring up a general row. So strained has become the vigil which each maintains, not only looking out for a chance for itself but to observe what all the others are up to, that a purely innocent proceeding some distance away is looked upon with suspicion. So much so is this the case that our British friends were recently falsely accused of stealing a liputian archipelago southeast of Shanghai and directly on the commercial highway to that great port. Sometimes what was intended to be done is not done because of its being noticed in time, and this may prove to have been such a case, but be that as it may, it has been explained that what was supposed to be the British flag floating on one of the islands was in reality a surveyor's signal set there by a vessel engaged in charting the coast. This is perforce satisfactory for the present, but the question naturally arises, even if it does not find oral expression—for what purpose are the Englishmen charting the coast?

The newspapers take different views of the case. One that is nearer to the place in question than any other on this continent or in Europe—the San Francisco Chronicle—holds that the islands spoken of are undoubtedly a British objective, and thinks that unwillingness to take Chusan (the name of the group referred to) now may be due to the desire not to give France a pretext for seizing Hainan, the island farther south. It may be regarded as the clear intent of the British, if trouble comes with Russia and France, to take Hainan herself and use it as a base of operations against the French possession of Tonquin. With this object in view it is, of course, desirable that France should not get a chance now to occupy, fortify and garrison Hainan, which afterward would be hard to take, if not capable of holding out indefinitely. But the moment trouble comes a movement of the British fleet upon both Chusan and Hainan is supposable, unless diplomatic intrigue achieves both objects beforehand.

It is sometimes maliciously suggested that the United States has no right to object to island-grabbing by other nations, nor have those who excuse or defend its recently promoted purpose of acquisition such a right. Why not? By what rule or line of international policy are they stopped from so doing? Is it the case that some people are so narrow of vision and reasoning power that they judge of all cases indiscriminately? Such judges would make no distinction between the man who slays another to defend his own life and the one who murders in cold blood, and are as unsafe in their sphere as they would be on the

bench. There is no similarity in the cases presented by the United States in acquiring Porto Rico and the Philippines and that of the nation which lies in wait for an opportunity to gather in some unprotected island just for the sake of having it. One is a legitimate proceeding growing out of the exigencies of a war settlement, the other a matter of speculation, the gratification of an acquisitive appetite, or the desire to have and hold strategic points against possible complications and resultant contests. In one case, the enemy was defeated after a severe struggle, and had no money with which to pay the customary indemnity, and it was with us a case of territory or nothing. Besides this, it still remains an unanswered question—What else could the United States do than hold the Philippines and be equal to all demands of honesty, integrity and faithfulness? Turn them back to Spain? One of the objects of the war was to end Spain's dominion over her oppressed dependencies, and to do that would be to violate every one of the principles above set out. Place the late insurgents in possession and control? They are incapable of either, and without the strong arm and willing heart of a powerful ally, could not hold the islands for a single year. This would make them the prey of every European adventurer in the field, and eventually they would fall into other hands than ours. What other power has primal, incidental or acquired rights there superior to those of the United States? None of them. None has any rights at all but commercial ones, subject to certain regulations. The Philippines have fallen to us not altogether as speculative property but as a sacred trust, the difference between which and island-grabbing is as wide as the poles are apart.

THE LAW AS TO DEBTORS.

"Justice," writing from Parowan, presents a matter which he would like the incoming Legislature to look into. The correspondent has arrived at the conclusion that this State is a sort of paradise for dishonest debtors—rather an abrupt, not to say a severe arraignment for a starter—because it allows them a considerable amount of property that is not attachable for debt! Our Parowan friend holds it to be quite possible for the creditor to have absolutely nothing, while the debtor has all that the law allows him, by no means an unlikely circumstance, especially when it is clinched as in this case by the additional statement that several such cases have come under his observation. One of these, hypothetically stated as to the characters, is as follows:

"A, commenced business on a small scale with some means that he had saved.

"All went well for a time, but in the entanglement of trade he allowed B, C, and D, to get heavily into his debt. The result was that A's business was brought to a sudden stop. Those three fellows are notoriously dishonest in the payment of their debts, but they milk their cows and drive their fat horses hitched to new wagons that have been bought in the same way they bought goods from A. Suppose A, has no horses, and B, has two; it would of course not be lawful to take one from B, and give it to A, but would it not be equitable?"

It being suggested to A, that he appeal to the ecclesiastical authorities, the reply was returned that his only satisfaction would be that it is better to suffer wrong than inflict it. Our correspondent admits this and says it is a most noble sentiment, but asks, is there not some danger of carrying that exalted sentiment just a little too