

THE "PUSH" RESPONSIBLE.

The order of Judge CALDWELL in the United States circuit court at St. Louis, yesterday, insures ultimate municipal ownership of the water works in Kansas City. It has made plain the fact that the company cannot force the city to renew its contract, and it lays equal stress upon the fact that it is not within the power of the city to confiscate the water works or obtain them for nothing. The order fully conserves the equities in the case and protects the rights of both parties to the controversy. This is what the city has been contending for, and the ruling will meet the general approval of the citizens here.

It is ordered by the court that the city be required to pay 75 per cent of the hydrant rental due prior to the expiration of the contract and 80 per cent from November 1st until the further action of the court. This is merely a ruling in equity. That is to say, it does not prejudice in any way the rights of the city as they may appear in the final hearing, and the court expressly states that the company will be compelled to reimburse the city if it shall be shown that the claim of the company is not valid. But, while the justice of this order is not questioned, inasmuch as it leaves the way fully open to the city to show why it has not paid the hydrant rentals, it places the municipality in a dilemma which is highly embarrassing. The order, if enforced by the court, would require the city to pay \$108,750 within the next forty days. To meet this obligation there remains of the fund set apart for the payment of hydrant rentals

only \$42,000. For the year closing April 18, 1893, there was appropriated for this purpose \$76,000. By diverting money from this fund for other purposes, more urgent in the judgment of the machine than the payment of an obligation incurred by the city, it has been reduced to the extent of \$34,000. It ought to have been apparent to the city government from the beginning of the present contention that the city would have to pay to the company a fair price for the water it consumed. The fact that certain points were in dispute regarding the bill rendered by the company has not absolved the city at any time from making proper provision for paying the company what it really had a right to claim. But, so far from observing this prudent policy, not only were the funds already appropriated for the payment of hydrant rentals diverted into other channels of outlay, but the Council failed, in addition, to make any appropriation for hydrant rentals for the current year. Had the appropriation for last year been left untouched and the proper amount been set apart for the present year the city would have had more than enough money to meet the order made by Judge CALDWELL.

But it is not the policy of the "gang" which is running Kansas City to save taxes or to husband the public treasure. It is its policy to increase taxes and to absorb and devour in the payment of salaries and perquisites the money which ought to be devoted to meeting the legitimate expenses of the city government. It is because such a combination is in power that the city finds itself in its present humiliating predicament, and such disgraceful emergencies are likely to arise until the people decide to place the administration of city affairs in the hands of men who recognize in the municipal government some higher purpose than to feed and foster a corrupt machine. Another powerful argument has been furnished for the ousting of Owsley and the overthrow of the "push" at next spring's election.