

RHODE ISLAND.

GOVERNOR GARVIN WRITES HOPEFULLY OF THE SITUATION—A REMARKABLE TRADE DINNER IN PROVIDENCE—LETTER OF GENERAL AMES—PROMINENT MANUFACTURERS IN ADVOCACY OF THE LOCAL OPTION BILL.

The manufacturing centres of Rhode Island are deeply interested in an industrial "boom." Closely associated with these efforts to increase business prosperity is the question of taxation.

In Providence, on February 23rd, twenty-five hundred men, representing the industries of that city, sat down to a Trade Dinner, every article upon the tables being contributed by local business establishments. In the whole affair great enthusiasm was manifested.

General Wm. Ames, a leading banker and manufacturer, when appointed chairman of the largest committee for arranging the Trade Dinner, was obliged to decline because of pressure of business. His letter to the Secretary of the Board of Trade contained the following significant language:

"In passing, I desire to say that in my opinion the only way to improve business conditions in this State and city is to procure the amendment of Chapter 36 of the General Laws, giving the towns and cities of this State local option in taxation. A bill to bring this about is now before the Legislature."

Previously General Ames had been one of the sponsors of a circular which reads as follows:

"Providence, R. I., Feb. 8, 1909.

Dear Sir:—Our present system of taxation is an abomination. It is unjust, oppressive, restricts the production of wealth, encourages fraud and perjury. Everybody admits this.

There is now before the Legislature a bill for Home Rule or Local Option in taxation. If this bill becomes law, as we feel it should, it will allow each of the 38 municipalities of this State to adopt any better system, or make any change in present method which their judgment and experience may

suggest. In other words, it opens the way for advance in matters of taxation.

A very large number of our most thoughtful and respected citizens approve the principle of this bill, among whom are: Henry A. Stearns, William H. McVickar, W. H. P. Faunce, B. A. Ballou, Fred C. Lawton, Charles Sisson, J. C. Pegram, William McDonald, J. E. Sullivan, George E. Nicholas, Albert J. Thornley, Henry C. Dexter, James L. Jencks, Zachariah Chafee, William T. Chapin, Theodore W. Foster, William H. Thurber.

Will you not join with us in trying to do something of real benefit to the manufacturing and commercial interests of Rhode Island? If so, kindly sign and return the enclosed blank.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM A. COPELAND.
WILLIAM AMES,
ROWLAND G. HAZARD,
CHAS. H. MERRIMAN.

Mr. Copeland is a leading jewelry manufacturer, ex-president of the Jewelers Association; Mr. Hazard is the present head of the famous Hazard family, wollen manufacturers in Southern Rhode Island; and Mr. Merriman is of like prominence in cotton manufacturing.

This circular, accompanied by an individual petition, has been sent to each manufacturing establishment of the State. More than a hundred of the number of petitions thus sent out have been signed and returned and are being preserved from day to day in the legislature.

A still larger number of manufacturers, including many leading names, have signed a longer petition for local option in taxation, which has not yet been introduced into the legislature.

The public hearing upon the bill has been fixed for March 19th.

The newly elected governor of the State, Mr. Aram J. Pothier, used the following language in his message: "I believe Rhode Island can become the greatest industrial State in the Union, if it is made inviting to new enterprises, by a moderate taxation of industries."

Taken altogether the sentiment existing in this State in favor of lightening the bur-

den of taxation upon thrift and industry is very great. Whether it will be sufficiently aggressive to secure the enactment of the local option measure remains to be seen.

LUCIUS F. C. GARVIN.

LONSDALE, R. I.

NEWS—FOREIGN.

GREAT BRITAIN.

ENGLAND MOVING SLOWLY, BUT MOVING—
JOS. FELS WRITES OF THE MOVEMENT IN
GREAT BRITAIN—THE PROBLEM GROWING
EVER MORE ACUTE.

England, being closely bound up with traditions which make the solution of the land question a most difficult one, moves very slowly indeed towards the light. In fact, it is only during the last five years, and in the last year particularly (in the opinion of those who watch matters closely) that the taxation of land values has come much more plainly to the front than at any time within the previous ten years. It is especially noticeable that there has been a considerable number of people who evince a decided interest in pushing for land reform, particularly so in Scotland, whose people are called the Yankees of the north. I attended a conference on the taxation of land values at Dumfries last Saturday, and in the evening there was a well-attended public meeting held in a large hall there.

The Press Bureau of the United League for the Taxation of Land Values (whose headquarters are in London), presided over by Mr. John Orr, of Glasgow, is doing splendid work in getting information regarding the movement into the papers of Great Britain. About 150 papers here now accept taxation of land values matter from this Bureau, and the number is being added to weekly.

The Labor Party on this side is becoming interested in the land question, the solution of which is the necessary precedent to getting the reforms for which they are fighting in the industrial world. Every Labor and Socialist member in the House of Commons is in favor of the taxation of land values. I know of no exception; and

about 250 Liberal M.P's are also pledged to it over their signatures, though what this pledge will amount to can only be determined when the taxation of land values, as a public measure, is included in the Budget Bill of the present session of Parliament. Land reform is certainly making headway on this side; it is another matter however to get it through Parliament, and "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

The proportion of unemployed and hungry people, in comparison with those at work and self-supporting, grows year by year. The English are proverbially a patient people, and, in spite of hunger of the most acute kind, we hear nothing of riots and general violence; but how long they will remain patient under the abuses committed against them by the rascally land laws which are in force can only be determined by how long they will be content to endure the conditions which abuse them and bring about their starvation.

The Irish Land Purchase Bill passed by the Government must sooner or later make the trouble more acute. Whenever there is a disposition on the part of local authorities to buy land for the purpose of dividing it up among small cultivators, the landlord comes along and puts up prices to impossible heights. Again, the majority of the county councils, especially in the agricultural districts, are composed mainly of the landlords of the district—consequently land purchase acts are defeated and the wished-for results in re-peopling the country delayed.

England has natural advantages and rural beauty unsurpassed by any country in the world, but she is fast losing her agricultural population, numbers of whom are being drawn to the towns to help fill the vast workhouses, infirmaries and poor asylums.

JOSEPH FELS.

LONDON, Eng.

BEHIND politics there is economics: behind economics, philosophy; and when it comes to a philosophy of values, optimism with regard to our present plane of experience, can only be regarded as an attractive form of mental disease.