

that—what papers of the class of the *World* really dread is the socialism of the poor; the socialism of the rich it is fighting to retain. But Johnson is against both kinds.

The *World* nevertheless contrives to speak of Johnson in high terms:

"Personally he is one of the most genial and affable men in public life. He is a big, well rounded man with "good fellow" stamped all over his personality. His smile is one of the most powerful campaign arguments, and his refusal to be perturbed is another. His chuckle is contagious, but behind it is the ability to emphasize the seriousness of any point he is anxious to drive home."

PHILADELPHIA.

LESSON IN ECONOMICS FROM MOVING PICTURE SHOWS LOST ON THE RETAIL MERCHANT—THE SINGLE TAX SOCIETY BENEFITS BY PHILADELPHIA BLUE LAWS—SUNDAY NIGHT MEETINGS ON MARKET STREET.

In the last two years "Old Philadelphia" has had in one respect the appearance of a real live city. Our main thoroughfare, since the advent of moving picture business, has been turned into a regular midway. At present there are located on Market Street, between Eighth Street and the City Hall, thirteen such places, each in turn pouring forth volumes of various noises. So keen has the competition become that the proprietors of some of these places have engaged the services of a female or male orchestra to take the place of the former screeching sounds of the phonograph.

There is no lack of industry or thrift on the part of the proprietors of these places; nothing is too good for them in the way of ornamental decoration. Buildings which a few years ago were nothing more than dingy shacks are to-day little palaces, with their ornamental fronts covered with electric lights which shine forth in the night air like diamonds.

To some it seems peculiar that this new business venture, which in its way is serving in educating and enlightening its patrons on subjects and occurrences in all parts of the world, should receive the condem-

nation of other business men in entirely different lines. Only a few months ago old established firms were up in arms against what they called a constant nuisance, and it looked for a while as though this new business would get its quietus. Quite an agitation was carried on through the newspapers, and the subject was on most everyone's tongue; but at no time did the writer see pointed out the real reason for this opposition.

With the advent of this new business there came an increased demand for locations formerly tenanted by old established firms. As the leases expired the owners were able to ask increased rentals for these particular locations. In many instances investors seeking locations for this new business paid double the amount paid by the old tenant, and did so on short term leases. In the long run this meant an increasing rental for all of the adjoining property. It seems pretty difficult for the average business man to recognize that the increasing value which attaches to land arises only because of the increasing presence and activities of large groups of people, and foolishly enough it is little wonder that the objection to the moving picture business was made on other grounds.

Handicapped as they are by having to pay enormous rentals for locations, this new enterprise is compelled by the old blue laws to close their places on Sundays. After spending large sums in remodeling these old buildings and fitting them up to suit their purpose, they created in the operation the finest little halls, with the best locations in Philadelphia, for Sunday public meetings. "The Single Tax Society" recognized this important advantage, and as early as October appointed a committee to ascertain whether one of these places could be rented for Sunday evening meetings. After interviewing several of the proprietors of these places, the committee was able to report that Mr. Mark M. Ditenfass, the proprietor of "Fairyland", at 1319 Market Street would rent his place for our purpose.

Since November "The Single Tax Society" has been conducting public meetings every Sunday evening at this address. Every meeting except one has been a packed house, and it is estimated that these are the best Single Tax meetings held in Phila-

delphia in the last five years. Being located on the first floor on a level with the pavement, and, aided by the use of electric lights on the front of the building, we are thereby able to get a new audience every week. We have in a very large degree solved the problem of getting strangers to attend Single Tax meetings.

The following is the list of those who have addressed "The Single Tax Society" in its new headquarters: Frank Stephens, Herman V. Hetzel, William L. Ross, James H. Dix, Charles D. Ryan, Thomas Kavanagh, Rev. J. H. Amies, James A. Robinson, Henry W. Hetzel, Haines D. Albright, Prof. Daniel Bachelor, John L. Gould, Richard Chambers, Dr. Edward D. Burrell and W. A. Douglass, of Toronto, Canada.

It is the purpose of the committee in charge to carry on these meetings until the middle of April or the first of May. By that time the weather will be warm enough to begin the open air meetings on the City Hall Plaza, which is less than one hundred feet from the present meeting place.

CHARLES D. RYAN.

RHODE ISLAND.

THE FIGHT BEGUN—TEXT OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATURE—FRANK STEPHENS, JOHN J. MURPHY AND JAMES MACGREGOR SPEAK IN PROVIDENCE.

Rhode Island is awakening from her long Rip Van Winkle sleep of a number of times 20 years and is beginning to sit up and take notice.

An association called the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association has been formed. Its platform is as follows: "Local self government is the right of a free people, and every community is entitled thereto in all matters affecting itself alone. The method of taxation by which local revenue shall be collected is such a matter, and each community should have power to decide for itself, without being held back by those indifferent to the injustice and dishonesty of present systems."

Its location is at 198 Westminster St., in the very heart of the shopping district,

which is, of course, to a Single Taxer, the same as saying that it is the most easily reached and therefore the most convenient spot in the city for the greatest number of people. The room is on the third floor of the Narragansett Block, fronting on Westminster St. It is 22 feet by 24 feet, is open at all times and Single Taxers and their friends passing through Providence are cordially invited to avail themselves of its privileges.

The immediate work to which the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association has addressed itself is the preparation for presentation to the General Assembly of a bill giving to the towns and cities of the State local option in taxation. The text of the bill is as follows:

AN ACT—Permitting any town or city to exempt from taxation personal estate, or improvements, or both.

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

Section 1. If at least one-tenth in number of the qualified electors of any town or city shall, twenty days previous to any election of town or city officers, file with the town or city clerk of such town or city a petition that the electors may at such election cast their ballots for or against the exemption from taxation of personal estate, or improvements, or both, such town or city clerk shall give notice of the same in his warrant calling the town, ward or district meetings, and shall at said election provide ballots upon which are printed the question. "Will this town (or city) exempt from taxation personal estate?" or "Will this town (or city) exempt from taxation improvements?" or "Will this town (or city) exempt from taxation personal estate and improvements?" as the case may be. If a majority of the ballots so cast shall be in favor of such exemption, then such property shall be exempt from taxation in such town or city; but if a majority of the ballots so cast shall be against such exemption, then such property shall not be exempt from taxation in such town or city.

Section 2. Whenever any town or city shall so exempt any property from taxation, such town or city may assess its ratable estate in excess of one and one-half per centum of its ratable value.

On January 24th, Mr. Stephens addressed