

has been set to be quoted, which can not easily be brushed aside.

S. D.



No Time for Piecemeal Reform.

No change in the tax laws of Illinois is possible without a change in the Constitution. Since such a change is very difficult, no effort should be allowed to succeed which will only abolish one or two of the many unjust features of the system, leaving the other wrongs as hard to get rid of as before. This is the objection to the Civic federation's proposed amendment. It would do away with taxation of stocks and bonds. To accomplish this the federation would compel all other proposed constitutional changes to wait, since only one article of the Illinois Constitution may be amended at one time. It would put forth all the effort needed to get a two-thirds vote of both houses of the Legislature and the required majority at the election not merely of all votes cast on the proposition, but of all cast for the State officials. That accomplished, all further tax reform would be left to make the same hard fight over again with the added difficulty of being hindered by advocates of other reforms which the civic federation would compel to wait, and of being opposed by the interests back of the federation's amendment. The federation is endeavoring to make capital for its amendment out of the Chicago State's Attorney's silly attempt to enforce the personal property tax laws. True tax reformers will oppose its efforts. If owners of stocks and bonds, wishing relief from unfair taxation, insist on denying relief to others suffering far greater wrongs than they, then they deserve no relief themselves. They should be given to understand that their only hope of getting the relief they wish is in co-operation with a movement to so change the Constitution as to make more easy all needed reforms in the future.

S. D.



Enforcing the Law.

The Chicago Day Book says in its issue of January 9 in defense of State's Attorney Hoyne's tax crusade:

The viciousness of existing tax laws is not the issue. There is no objection to any individual making attempts to have the legislature change the tax laws so as to make them more equitable. The issue involved now is whether the law shall be enforced, or whether we shall leave it entirely to the discretion of tax officials to enforce the laws as they see fit, enforcing it on some and not enforcing it on others.

The Day Book is mistaken. There is no question

of enforcing the law. To do that would require assessment of every laundress's washtub, of every savings bank account, and of the last rag on a beggar's back, as well as of the millionaire's stocks and bonds. It is to the credit of State's Attorney Hoyne that he denies any intention of trying to enforce the laws against all violators. No doubt the Day Book, which is usually on the right side, would oppose strict enforcement of these vicious laws. To say that individuals may go to the legislature for relief is a mockery. The legislature can not grant relief without violating the tax provisions of the Constitution. A minority consisting of one-third of the membership of either branch can obstruct any constitutional change. When legislators are elected there are so many other issues besides the tax question, that it is impossible to secure a fair hearing for more than one proposed reform, and very often not even for that. Outside of Chicago, the wet and dry issue usually predominates, and voters will not vote against candidates representing their views on this issue to support opposing candidates who may be right on the taxation question. Chicago ought to have home rule in taxation, and in other things. Since legislative relief is a doubtful event of a somewhat remote future, disregard of unjust laws forced upon the city is the only practical method of securing immediate relief, and probably the best way to force legislative attention to the matter. So it is not disregard of tax laws that justifies complaint, but the fact that they are not disregarded in a way that will result in a more equitable method. Just as in Houston, the tax laws of Texas are violated in a way that gives the city a system far in advance of any prevailing in any other city of its size in this country, so might Chicago exempt all personal property and improvements by similar methods. Chicago has, without legal authority, assumed home rule in regard to regulation of business on Sundays. In the much more important matter of taxation it still submits to the will of the past generation, which 45 years ago adopted an almost unamendable State Constitution.

S. D.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

CALIFORNIA'S DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

San Diego, Calif., Dec. 31.

Forty-eight propositions were submitted Nov. 3, 1914, to the electors of the State of California for their decision. Twenty-seven of the propositions were approved by the voters (becoming effective Dec. 19, 1914), and twenty-one were rejected by

them. The total vote cast for candidates and propositions was 80% of the registration. The total vote cast for the five candidates for governor was 96% of the total vote cast, and that for the five candidates for U. S. Senator was 92% of the same, thus showing that 4% of the voters expressed no interest in the office of governor, and 8% no interest in the office of U. S. Senator, their thoughts being evidently directed to other candidates or some proposition on the ballot. This percentage of non-interest increases as one scans the figures of the other state officers.

The eight propositions in which the voters manifested the most interest were as follows: Prohibition, Eight-Hour law, Prohibition Election (8 year limit), Abolition of Poll Tax, Abatement of Nuisances, Prize Fights, One Day Rest in Seven, and Non-sale of Game, each receiving over 700,000 votes. Both the proposition for prohibition, which received 889,317 votes, and the one for an eight hour law, which received 843,573 votes, received more ballots than did any state office except those of governor and U. S. senator. There were six propositions which received over 700,000 votes; 14 propositions which received over 600,000; 24 propositions which received over 500,000; and two propositions which received over 400,000 votes.

The average total vote of the 48 propositions was 615,459, which was 74% as large as the average total vote of the ten highest state offices.

Of the 8 propositions mentioned above as receiving the most attention from the voters, 3 were carried (Abolition of the Poll Tax, Abatement of Nuisances, holding landlords responsible, and Abolition of Prize Fighting), and 5 of them were defeated: (Prohibition, Eight-Hour Day law, Prohibition Elections, One Day Rest in Seven, and Non-sale of Game). The eight-hour day law, the drugless practice bill, the day of rest bill, and the amendment to increase assembly pay roll expenses were defeated in every county of the State. The assembly amendment was rejected by the emphatic vote of 5 to 1.

Proposition No. 34, entitled "Taxation of Public Property," which presented some unique points of interest, was carried. It requires the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles to pay taxes on the land which those cities had brought in other counties for their water supplies. No tax, however, is to be paid on the improvements.

Proposition No. 7, entitled "Local Taxation Exemption," the amendment locally known as "Home Rule in Taxation," received 267,618 affirmative votes and 375,634 negative votes, an adverse majority of 108, 016. Two years ago the vote for this amendment was about 169,000, thus showing an affirmative gain of over 98,000 in two years. The amendment carried last fall in four counties, viz.: Kern, Madera, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Proposition No. 30, which allows irrigation districts to buy and own stock in foreign corporations when necessary for the success of their irrigation canals, was carried. It is for the special benefit of Imperial county which adjoins Mexico, and whose irrigation companies can now buy stock from a Mexican corporation along the 40 miles of the Colorado river, which there separates the two companies.

The following propositions are also among those which were carried: No. 43, exempting colleges from

taxation; No. 41, entitled "Miscarriage of Justice," which is designed to prevent verdicts in civil cases being set aside on a mere technicality; and No. 44, entitled "Minimum Wage," to be applied to women and minors.

The following propositions are also among those which were defeated: No. 14, entitled "Voting by Absent Electors"; No. 13, entitled "Qualification of Voters at Bond Elections"; and No. 23, entitled "Elections by Plurality, Preferential Vote and Primaries."

On account of the increase in the total vote for governor last fall, caused by the growth in population, and the recent advent of equal suffrage, the number of signatures required for 1915 for State initiative petitions will be 74,136, and for referendum petitions 46,335 (8% and 5% respectively), which is more than double the amounts previously required.

Praise is due R. E. Chadwick for the work that he did for proposition 7 in this county and in Los Angeles county in both of which it carried.

JAMES P. CADMAN.

STATEWIDE SINGLETAX MOVEMENT IN ILLINOIS.

Chicago, Jan. 12, 1915.

The prominence given to the singletax issue in the recent campaign made this seem a peculiarly fitting time for statewide organization. Unless immediate steps are taken, the vast amount of publicity secured in the fall will be lost. Considerable correspondence has been carried on with known singletaxers throughout the state, and many have agreed to serve upon a temporary committee which is to meet at some central point in the near future. No definite plan of procedure has been agreed upon, it being thought best to postpone the perfecting of the organization.

Considerable work, however, has been done toward ascertaining the most effective methods of propaganda. Many have expressed the opinion that the best results can be obtained by a capable organizer. John Z. White and others have spoken and lectured on the singletax and related subjects in practically every county in Illinois, and wherever they have gone they have paved the way for a more compact movement. It seemed to many of us that a good organizer could follow this up, and consolidate the singletax sentiment of the state.

It was therefore decided to try experimentally a number of county campaigns. Fortunately, Mr. Louis Wallis, who is known to readers of the Public through his book, "Sociological Study of the Bible," published by the University of Chicago, was available for this purpose. Mr. Wallis volunteered his services for a limited time without cost, and spent the last week in De Kalb county. This county was chosen because it offered average conditions, and was far enough from Chicago to have a distinct community life of its own. It is distinctly rural in character, and has average educational advantages. Mr. Wallis had no personal acquaintance in De Kalb county, and no set schedule was arranged in advance. The experiment was, therefore, tried under unfavorable conditions.

During the five days which he spent in the coun-