

The Revolution in Ontario

THE 20th of October, 1919, was a red letter day in the calendar of the Province of Ontario. On that date two important questions were decided in such a way that it came as a blow in the solar plexus. For many people it actually took their breath away.

The first vote settled the Temperance Question. During the war we had something approaching prohibition. The question as to its continuance or its repeal was answered with a vote so decisive for Prohibition that the Liquor Party, who called themselves the Liberty Party, was practically buried without any hope of resurrection.

On the same day the elections for our local parliament took place. Four parties were running, the Farmers, the Laborites, the Tories and the Liberals. When the returns came in the figures stood as follows: Tories, 26; Liberals, 28; Farmers, 40; Labor, 11; Independents, 2.

In the previous election, about five years ago, the Tories had a majority of 44 over all other parties. In the present election the Tories come out 55 less than the other parties. Fortunately the Farmers and the Labor Party had negotiated so that they worked in harmony. They avoided antagonistic votes, so that their combined vote gives them a majority. With this combination they have already formed a government with the offices all filled.

Before the election the Tories were talking as though they were confident of sweeping the country, as they had done previously, but the day of Judgment was against them. And they find now the realization of the Scriptural text, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

Three of the parties, the Liberals, the Farmers and the Labor men had planks in their platforms in favor of reducing taxes on improvements and increasing them on the value of the land.

With such a majority in parliament in favor of removing taxes from industry we feel confident that an act in favor of that method of taxation will soon find a place in the statute books of the province.

When that takes place, we will feel like the woman who lost her cherished piece of silver, and after she found it, called in her neighbors to rejoice with her. Would it not be glorious, after the triumph of the faithful and devoted work of a comparatively few men, that we should have the next National Conference of the Single Taxers of North America in this city of Toronto to celebrate our triumph.

The head of the new government is Ernest C. Drury, a noble son of a noble sire, whom I knew in the long ago. Formerly the father was Minister of Agriculture in the cabinet of the Honorable Sir Oliver Mowat. This son is a good public speaker, one of the leading men for many years of the farmers' organizations. For several years he had been a good friend of the Single Tax movement. With a sunny smile, a character for sterling integrity that would scorn to stoop to the slimy wiles of the average politician, we feel great hope from his accession.

Meanwhile we have won another victory. Some months

ago the chairman of the Assessment Committee of this city council brought in a recommendation that this city should take advantage of the act passed at the last provincial parliament, which permits any municipality to submit to the vote of the people a referendum asking whether they are in favor or otherwise of making the partial reduction of taxation on houses of a value less than \$4,000. The Board of Control, to which all these reports had to be referred before bringing them before the Council, kept putting off the matter from time to time with the determination apparently to kill it by delay. This morning, however, I had the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Board and reply to the sophistical puerilities of the Assessor who is strongly opposed to any plan for relieving industry. Finally the Board resolved to pass it on to the Council, so that we are hoping the public will have an opportunity to vote on this question.

The last time we had a referendum on the question of reducing taxes on improvements, the vote stood nearly four to one in favor of local option.

THE FORWARD RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

The churches here of various denominations have united in a movement to push on the work of all the churches to a great triumph. We have read their tracts, and how do they propose to bring about the consummation of a triumph of righteousness? Pray and pray, and give and give is their exhortation. Not the shadow of a hint that there is such a condition of social unrighteousness, that the success of religion is now an impossibility.

We are trying to bring before the leaders in this movement the futility, if not worse, of ignoring that justice that will bring the reconciliation of brotherhood, and that righteousness that will insure the well being of God's children, just as surely as the lilies of the field and the birds of the air are provided for.

We have one good outspoken friend in the Methodist Church in this city, the Rev. Salem C. Bland, D.D. He has made no concealment of his friendship for the Single Tax. Some time ago some of the leading people in his church objected to his giving an address to the labor men on a Sunday afternoon, and he straightway resigned. But by the discipline of the Church he could not leave simply on the mandatory of some officials. He is still holding the fort, and last Sunday evening he had the church crowded. We cannot say that of some other temples of worship.

The Rev. Mr. Ivens, of Winnipeg, has been dropped by the Methodist Church because he took so prominent a part in the strike in Winnipeg. He tells me that he has an independent church supported by labor men with the largest attendance in that city. And he is blessed with a love for the Single Tax.

W. A. DOUGLASS.

MAN did not enter into society to become worse off than he was before, nor to have less rights than he had before, but to have these rights better secured. His natural rights are the foundation of all his civil rights.—TOM PAINE.