

last. The fright into which its barest suggestion throws Vested Wrong, and the debates which the coming session promise to witness, will serve to enlighten public opinion on this subject as it has never been enlightened before.

D. K. L.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

OUT AMONG THE COPPER BUTTES.

Whitefish, Mont., March 10, 1911.

The election of a United States Senator, always interesting, has been a peculiarly interesting struggle at this time in Montana.

One of the chief issues in last fall's campaign was Republican stand-pat Senator Carter. The Democratic opposition was led by the brilliant lawyer, W. T. Walsh, chairman of the Democratic State committee. When the Democrats won a majority in the legislature, they looked about for their best man to take the seat at Washington which Carter would vacate. Walsh seemed to be the natural man for that place.

But the Interests—copper, railroad and timber—were to be reckoned with. They own Montana and usually own its legislature. Anyway they had owned Carter. They preferred the return of their faithful servant. If they could not have him at once, then they designed to deadlock the legislature, prevent any election, and two years hence (when it was hoped a reaction in politics would occur and the Republicans—in this State their party—should get a majority in the legislature), Carter would be elected to the vacant seat; the Democratic governor meanwhile being prevented by a United States Senate decision in a previous Montana Senatorial fight from filling the seat by appointment. The Senate in that case had reasoned that if the legislature had failed to elect when it had the power, the seat could not be regarded as vacant, and so could not be filled by the Governor.

The Interests' first step in this plan was to divide the Democratic vote against Walsh. This they accomplished. They raised up as his chief competitor one Conrad, a banker. He made his money in various ways—chiefly, it is commonly said, by standing in with the Interests. His ambition and vanity have led him to buy personal advertising space for himself in many of the weak and dependent papers of the State. As for brains and democratic-Democrat principles, he has little of either.

There was never any chance of Conrad's election. The Interests did not intend that there should be. But they did intend that he should stop Walsh; and he did.

He also stopped State Senator W. B. George, who is a very active democratic Democrat. Senator George might have been elected had the Democrats been any freer to vote for him than they were to vote for Walsh. But they were not.

Or if either Walsh or George could not quite have reached it, there was ex-Congressman Charles S. Hartman, another of the democratic-Democrat type; and it looked for a time as if he would sweep

it. But the Interests seldom get stampeded; and Hartman, like the others, was kept out by keeping Conrad in the field.

The Interests then made their master stroke.

The Montana Constitution limits the session of a legislature to sixty days, and the balloting had reached the last hours of the last day without an election. The Republicans suddenly made a motion to adjourn the joint session of the two chambers. Three or four Democrats had been induced to vote with them. If the Republicans had stood solid they would have prevented any election and carried out the Interests' plan for Carter. But one Republican—C. P. Higgins—suddenly revolted and voted with the body of Democrats against adjournment. With that defeat, the Interests lost control of their men, who feared the Interests could not protect them against deepening popular resentment at the prospect of no Senatorial election.

At that juncture somebody mentioned Judge Henry L. Myers, a former State Senator from the southwestern part of Montana.

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Judge Myers' name had not been mentioned up to that moment. He was known to have been a strong supporter of Walsh, to stand for the popular election of United States Senators, to oppose a big army and a big navy, to be for real tariff reduction, and to be a Thomas Jefferson democrat.

Moreover, he had been an important witness against "Copper King" Clark, when the latter was charged with buying his way to the United States Senate.

The man and the moment had come.

Myers was elected with a rush. He probably had not dreamed of such a result. In fact, when his election was announced to him over the long-distance telephone, he could with difficulty be made to believe it.

And when we consider the past power of the Interests in the politics of Montana, especially of copper, Judge Myers' election is even now scarcely believable.

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The copper Interest is, of course, centered in Butte, the largest city in the State. The city rests chiefly on a single isolated hill, which, in the language of this part of the country, is a "butte." This particular butte is spoken of as "the richest hill in the world," because of the copper ore in it. It is plastered over with copper claims, and on or near its top is the renowned Anaconda mine, which was one of the first to be worked, and which has now given its name to the most recent copper combination—the Amalgamated with the Clark and Heinze possessions.

While I was in Butte I went down one of the Amalgamated mines—the Leonard, a so-called "dry" mine, but where, with all the pumping, there was roof drip and under-foot slop enough to make me glad that I had exchanged my above-ground clothes for regular mining apparel. The assistant engineer of the mine, directed by the superintendent's office, conducted me.

We sank to the 1,200-foot level. That depth is nothing to boast of, yet it is sufficient for a first

experience. You are invited to get into a very small, iron-clad elevator. Suddenly down you glide with a speed that seems like a mile a minute. Your thoughts are necessarily rapid, too. My predominant one dealt with the bottom—how high we'd bounce when we hit.

But we didn't hit. We came to a gentle stop several hundred feet short of the bottom, and stepped out on the 1,200-foot level, not without speculations, however, as to what we might hit when we should shoot up. Suffice to say that within a couple of hours I was walking on the surface of the earth again without having hit anything, going up or down the mine shaft.

That trip down the copper mine taught me how mines must be assessed when the single tax on ground values, irrespective of improvements, shall be applied, and so get a great revenue into the public treasury while penalizing the holding of valuable natural opportunities out of use.

The usual way of taxing a mine is upon the basis of output. No output, no basis for any tax whatever, as witness the Minnie Healey Mine, notoriously one of the richest mines in Butte, but which, I was told, is, for reasons sufficient unto the combination owners, not at this time being worked. Also witness the piece of copper land for which ex-Senator Clark refused a million dollars, but which he was only nominally working.

Of course this mineral land should be taxed, not upon its output—which makes the tax depend upon the industry applied—but upon its market price.

Public assessors should be mining engineers and should determine the value of the ore land precisely as buyers and sellers determine it. They follow along the ore seams, get the breadth and thickness of such seams, and make frequent assays of the ore. These two things determine quantity and quality of ore. The experienced mining man knows that this is the only way to determine what he is buying. The way he arrives at the value of what he is buying is the way the public assessor must determine the value for assessment.

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The evening of the day I went down the mine I lectured in Butte, under the management of Mr. F. H. Monroe of the Henry George Lecture Association. Following the lecture many came out of the audience to shake hands. Among these were three gentlemen who invited me to go with them to the Butte club. I went, and found them anxious to ask about the application of the single tax. One of them proved to be an important man in the administration of the Butte mines. He questioned and listened with undisguised interest. He was not, however, too communicative about how he thought the single tax would operate, especially upon the copper land not in use. But another of the gentlemen thought such a tax would have a very wholesome effect on a lot covered by a wretched, abandoned and partly fallen stable on a corner opposite the club. The club was anxious to have the lot cleared or properly built upon and used, but the owner refused to allow either unless he got a big price.

The truth is that just as the tax would force the stable lot into a good use, so would it force the

idle copper lands into use. Incidentally it would extract an immense public revenue from all the copper lands, thus breaking the back of the copper combination.

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There can be no doubt of the rapid spread of the single tax ideas through Montana. Discussion of tariff taxation is very general. The Canadian reciprocity proposal has stimulated this discussion greatly. Arguments for free trade are no longer violently antagonized. Discussing free trade raises the question of alternative means of taxation. Hence consideration of the single tax.

One of the most interesting Montana audiences, before which I was invited to lecture on three subjects, was in the northwest at Whitefish, under the auspices of a Catholic young men's association—the Borromeo Club. Three young progressives—David Phelan, James Cavanaugh and Carl Walters—are at the head of it.

The priest of the parish, Rev. Dr. C. M. Van Aken, is the secretary of the club. He is the kind of priest to keep your eye on. He believes that Catholics should be abreast of the times—hear every live question discussed. He was born in Holland, as his name might suggest; had a finished education; and has three or four languages at his command. He developed such remarkable organizing abilities that he was "lent" by the Bishop of Helena, Montana, to the Bishop of Alberta, Canada, for three years, to bring over from Holland and colonize in the Province of Alberta farmers and their families. He brought over eighty such families and established them on 160 and 80-acre farms which the Canadian Pacific is selling—each with a house built, a well dug, the land plowed and the whole enclosed by a fence. I have forgotten about what the price of such farms is, but the impression left on my mind is that as such things go the price asked was reasonable.

Dr. Van Aken located his farmers six or eight miles from Calgary, the largest city in Alberta, and had the honor of having the neighborhood named after him—"Akenstad," meaning Aken City.

HENRY GEORGE, JR.

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PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRACY IN PENNSYLVANIA.*

Pittsburgh, March 17.

The Democratic reorganization committee met at Harrisburg March 14th, and deposed J. M. Guffey as national committeeman and A. G. Dewalt as State chairman, naming Congressman A. Mitchell Palmer and former Mayor George W. Guthrie of Pittsburgh to take their places. This was welcome news to every true Democrat in the State.

For years they had waged battle for a change in leadership, but, the party machinery being in the hands of Republicans masquerading as Democrats, the task was fruitless. Not until the shameful deal of last fall, when it became clear to every Democrat that their leaders had again served Penrose instead of their own party, did the Democrats throughout the State come to a full realization of

*See The Public, volume xlii, p. 1208; volume xlv, p. 102.