

questions that appeal to us at this time, none calls more urgently for examination and discussion than how to employ most equitably and to the greatest general benefit the mighty and far-reaching power of taxation.

E. P. ROUNSVELL.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

BUFFALO.

Buffalo, N. Y., July 31.—On the 25th the mayor signed the local public opinion ordinance which had been passed on the 11th and 12th by the two houses of the Buffalo common council. This ordinance is patterned after the Illinois public opinion act. It provides that when five per cent. of the voters petition for the submission to the people at a general election of any question of public policy, or when the common council by a majority resolution orders it, the question shall be submitted. Not more than three questions may be submitted by petition, however, in any one year.

The ordinance is a result of the activity of the Referendum League of Erie county, of which Lewis Stockton, upon whom has devolved most of the work, is president. Last fall, when Mr. Stockton was elected president of the League, he made an aggressive campaign by the distribution of literature and the questioning of candidates for office. All the local candidates for the assembly (the lower branch of the State legislature) save one, professed to favor the two bills the League had prepared—one a public opinion law for Buffalo, and the other a compulsory referendum law on Buffalo franchises. All the candidates for councilman (one of the two houses composing the common council of Buffalo), and nearly all the candidates for alderman (the other house of the common council) also gave favorable replies to the League's questions. The public opinion bill was indorsed unanimously by the then existing common council, and the referendum bill was indorsed by the chamber of commerce on a referendum vote. The president of the street railway company, who is an influential member of the chamber of commerce, worked very hard to defeat this latter indorsement, but failed. Both bills were indorsed by the labor organizations.

But neither bill passed the legislature. The explanation was that George A. Davis, one of the two senators from Erie county and a member of the committee on cities, to which the bills were referred, refused to allow them to be reported back to the senate.

As soon as the legislature adjourned Mr. Stockton presented to the common council the public opinion bill, in the form of an ordinance, and asked them to pass it, under their general authority, contained in the city charter, to pass ordinances for the good government of the city, and under a section of the general election law which requires the election officials to put upon the ballots any question submitted to the voters of the State or any subdivision of the State. A hearing was had by the committee on ordinances and a large number attended. About 15 men spoke in favor of the ordinance, some of the speakers being the most prominent business and professional men in the city. There was no opposition and the matter was referred to the corporation counsel for his opinion on the legality of the proposed ordinance. He advised that the common council had the power to enact the ordinance. He did not think, however, that the election officials, who are mostly county officers, could be required to place the questions on the ballot. Yet he recommended that the ordinance be passed so that the question might be tested in the courts. It was accordingly passed, and has been signed by the mayor as stated above.

The League therefore proposed a resolution for the common council to adopt, providing as a question for submission to the voters, that the schoolhouses be opened for citizens to hold meetings in to discuss public questions. The aldermen refused on the 25th to adopt this resolution without a reference to committee. That means that probably it will not be passed in time for the next election, for it must be passed by the common council two months before the election, and the common council has now adjourned until September. If the League wish to have the public opinion ordinance passed upon by the courts this year, they must procure a petition of about 3,500 names for the submission of a question under the ordinance, and file the petition before September 8. This would not be difficult under ordinary circumstances, but as August is the vacation season, when most of the League's workers are away, it may be neglected. But local interest in the referendum idea has wonderfully increased.

ALBERT H. JACKSON.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, August 4.

What is believed to be in all probability the decisive battle of the Russian-Japanese war (p. 265)

has been in progress in the region of Haicheng and Liaoyang since the 23d. It has been a double movement of the Japanese, with Haicheng for one objective and Liaoyang for the other, yet with a common purpose. The Haicheng or left wing of the movement is led by Gen. Oku, and the Liaoyang or right wing by Gen. Kuroki.

Advancing westward from Kiaotung (p. 265) by two roads, Gen. Kuroki has driven the Russians out of Yangtyuling on the southern road line and out of Yashulintzu on the northern road, points about 26 miles apart and 30 miles east of Liaoyang. These points were secured by the Japanese on the 2d, when the Russians withdrew westward to Anping.

Meanwhile Gen. Oku advanced upon Haicheng. Fighting began on the 23d at Tatchekiao, a point on the railroad to the south of Haicheng. Tatchekiao was soon evacuated by the Russians, and on the 29th Gen. Oku had swung his force eastward and attacked Simucheng, which he captured on the 31st. Haicheng itself fell on the 3d, and the Russians withdrew back of the defenses of Liaoyang, which they still hold.

These defenses are Anshan-shan, on the railroad and south of Liaoyang; Liandiansian, to the east of the railroad and southeast of Liaoyang; and Anping, to the east of Liaoyang. The Russian line stretches in front of Liaoyang in a semicircle, touching those three points; while the Japanese enveloping movement, now completely unified, with Liaoyang for the objective, is pressing on.

By some correspondents it is believed that the Russians are retiring farther north to Harbin, the junction where the Russian railroad diverges southward to Port Arthur and eastward to Vladivostok. Their losses in guns are reported to be heavy, from which it is inferred that their retreat is not pursuant to any prearranged plan of campaign.

While Gens. Oku and Kuroki have been driving the Russians under Kouropatkin northward, Field Marshal Oyama has continued his advance upon Port Arthur