

The Board of Control also passed it, but asked the Assessment Commissioner for a report as to how it would affect the assessment generally and what class of property would be benefited and what would have to bear an increased burden of taxation. His report is interesting reading, especially in view of the fact that he is strongly biased against the measure. Following are some of his main facts and figures:

The total assessment of the city is \$148,813,071, and the exemption would reduce it to \$122,613,971, necessitating an increase in the tax rate from 19 to 23.06 mills. The exemptions would affect three classes of dwellings; those assessed for \$700 and under, upon which taxation would be abolished; those assessed at over \$700 and under \$4,000, on which taxation would be reduced; those assessed at over \$4,000, upon which taxation would be increased. He then proceeded to show that there were 20,747 houses assessed at less than \$700, 19,318 assessed at over \$700 and less than \$4,000, and only 3,290 assessed at over \$4,000. The exemption on the first class would be \$10,353,500 and on the second class \$13,522,600. Of the first class 15,125 are occupied by tenants, and of the second class 12,026; while of the third or more expensive class only 1,327, or less than half, are occupied by tenants. He then gives a table showing the saving of taxes upon a house assessed at \$1,000 to be \$12.18; at \$4,000 the tax is increased by 10 cents; on a \$10,000 house the increase amounts to \$24.46; and on a \$50,000 house to \$186.86. He then shows that vacant lot holders will have to pay \$28,420 more than they pay now.

Opponents of the measure are raising the cry that the measure will benefit the owners of small properties and not the tenants, as the owners will not reduce the rents.

The report of the Assessment Commissioner also calls attention to the fact that nearly 30 per cent. of the property benefited belongs to non-residents.

In reply to these objections the single taxers are getting out 40,000 pamphlets and as many dodgers, and will have one in the hands of every citizen by election time if possible. They are also billing the city with posters: "Vote for the \$700 Exemption and Lower Rents," and "End the House Famine." They get very little assistance from the papers, except the Star. This paper has a single tax editor, who has given Mr. A. W. Roebuck a free hand to write up the matter.

The single taxers are hopeful of getting a safe majority. Their next trouble will be with the legislature. But they declare they are in the fight to win and will stay with it until they do.

ALAN C. THOMPSON.

#### BUFFALO.

Buffalo, Dec. 25.—Another referendum vote (p. 455) is to be had here if the Referendum League can bring it about. The petition is being actively pushed under the general direction of Mr. Stockton, president of the League. It calls for a vote on three questions:

1—Shall legislation be enacted amending the charter of the city of Buffalo, by requiring that all acts granting property or franchises to persons or corporations in said city, shall be submitted to the people of Buffalo at election before taking effect?

2—Shall legislation be enacted providing for a direct primary nominating elections law for Buffalo, in substance similar to the law enacted by the people of the State of Oregon, on June 6, 1904?

3—Shall the city of Buffalo own and operate an electric lighting and power plant for the benefit of itself and its inhabitants?

The circulation of the petition is of great educational effect, as the questions have to be explained.

The municipal electric lighting plant question is of special importance just now. On December 2, 1895, the city granted to several companies the right to lay conduits in the streets for the purpose of distributing throughout the city electricity from Niagara Falls, and the grant provided that the conduits should be built of such size that as much space as was used by the grantees should be reserved for the use of the city, and if the city began to utilize it for its own purposes within ten years it should have the right to use it free of charge. There are about 15 miles of such conduits laid within the city. As the city is about to sign a five-year contract with the gas company for lighting part of the streets, an effort is being made to prevent the signing of the contract and have the city lay electric cables in the conduits and use incandescent light in the lampposts, which, with the connecting gas pipes, the city owns. This course would save the city's rights in the conduits and at the same time strike a blow at the gas company, whose action has been particularly offensive in making the citizens pay a minimum charge of 50 cents a month in express violation of the statute which prohibits a meter charge, and who have refused to make a progressive decrease in the price of gas, which the statute also requires. At the same time the gas company has been asking the city for the privilege of supplying part water gas, which their grant forbids, but which, it is claimed in some quarters, they are supplying at the present time.

A momentary wave of indignation has swept the city in regard to the franchise tax valuations of the street railway companies by the State board of tax commissioners. These valuations for the year 1905 are \$4,300,000 for the International Railway Company and \$1,340,000 for the Crosstown Street Railway Company. Hearings were had before the board, in which Mr. J. U. Adams, the

only Democratic councilman elected on the city ticket last year, and the man whom the whole city is talking about as the Democratic candidate for Mayor next year, appeared and asked for an increase in the valuation. The Corporation Counsel also presented figures to show that the International franchise was worth from eighteen to twenty-two millions. But their efforts were without effect. The statute prescribes no method for valuing franchises and the tax commission has refused to disclose the methods by which it arrives at its results.

What hurts Buffalo is that the street railroads are paying less to the city now than they did before the franchise tax law was enacted. Under a contract made with the city in 1891 or 1892 the companies pay the city a percentage of their gross receipts varying according to the amount received; 2 per cent. when under \$1,500,000; 2½ per cent. when over \$1,500,000 and under \$2,000,000; and 3 per cent. when over \$2,000,000. Under the franchise tax law these percentages are deducted from the franchise tax. The city formerly based the percentages and taxes upon the physical property in the streets. Now the physical property in the streets is included in the franchise tax, with the net result that the city loses by reason of the law.

Another matter, one which is exasperating the people in the southern part of the city, is the action of the railroads in holding up the proceedings to abate the floods in their sections. The Buffalo river and Cazenovia creek annually overflow and flood a considerable area, causing great damage to the property and health of the people by reason of the backing up of sewers and filling of cellars with water, and some of the streets are submerged to a depth of five or six feet. The floods are increased by reason of the abutments and piers of railroad bridges where the tracks cross the streams. These are fixed bridges which have been legalized by the legislature. Plans to abate the floods by straightening, widening and deepening the channel have been prepared and eminent domain proceedings have been commenced by the city to take the necessary land. These proceedings were contested by the railroads, which have two things to fear: First, new railroad bridges will have to be built, which the charter provides must be swing or lift bridges, and there is also the possibility that the national government will take a hand and prescribe the kind of bridges to be built. Second, the deepening of the channel will make the river navigable for large boats and add a large amount of available water front. The city's immense harbor facilities are at present monopolized by the railroads. The foregoing objections of the railroads were referred to a referee to hear, try and determine, and were all sus-

tained. An appeal has been taken by the city.

There are enough reasons, truly, to make this a radical city; and the people are beginning to wake up and take notice of their city government. Meanwhile, the Referendum League is the center of all radical activity and is at present the citizens' only hope of salvation.

I should like to urge all public-spirited citizens in New York State to work for the establishment of the referendum by obtaining public opinion ordinances like ours, and by asking their assemblymen and senators to pass a general public opinion law. This would strengthen our hands in Buffalo. My opinion is that radical legislation will be secured finally, not through a political party, new or old, but through the referendum.

ALBERT H. JACKSON.

**NEWS**

Week ending Thursday, Dec. 29.

Official returns of the recent Presidential election (p. 582) show the completed totals to have been as follows:

Roosevelt (Rep.).....	7,627,632
Parker (Dem.).....	5,080,054
Rep. plurality.....	2,547,578
Debs (Soc.).....	391,587
Correagan (Soc. Lab.).....	33,453
Total Socialist.....	425,040
Swallow (Pro.).....	260,303
Watson (Peo.).....	114,637
Holcomb (Continental).....	830
Total vote.....	13,508,496
Republican majority.....	1,746,768
Percentages.	1892. 1896. 1900. 1904.
Republican.....	42.8 51.1 51.6 56.4
Democratic.....	15.1 46.8 45.5 37.6
Socialist.....	0.0 0.0 0.6 2.9
Socialist Labor.....	0.3 0.2 0.3 0.3
Total Socialist.....	0.3 0.2 0.9 3.2
Prohibition.....	2.3 0.9 1.5 1.8
People's.....	0.0 0.0 0.3 0.9
Continental.....	0.0 0.0 0.0 0.1
G. Democratic.....	0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0
National.....	0.0 0.1 0.0 0.0

An uprising in the island of Samar, Philippines, was reported last week, the character of which is not very well indicated. The most definite information came from Washington in a press dispatch under date of the 24th. It was as follows:

The War Department was officially advised to-day by Gen. Corbin, commanding the Department of the Philippines, of the uprising in Samar, in which one lieutenant and a number of enlisted men

of the Philippine scouts were killed. The cablegram is as follows: "The Pulajones are on the war path in Samar in considerable numbers, as may be judged from the following: On November 10 about 400 Pulajones and several hundred volunteers joined in an attack on a detachment of twenty Philippine scouts at Oras, Samar. Killed: One hospital corps man; wounded, twelve Philippine scouts; missing, five, said to have been bolowed while in the river. All bodies badly mutilated. And again on December 16 Second Lieutenant Stephen K. Hayt and thirty-seven enlisted men, Thirty-eighth company, Philippine Scouts, killed by Pulajones at Dolores, Samar. First Lieutenant George F. Abbott requests help from military authorities. Town threatened by 1,000 Pulajones. Situation critical in both instances. I offered the Philippine government all the assistance desired. As yet none has been accepted.

Formal organization of the commission of inquiry into the circumstances of the firing by a Russian fleet into a fleet of British fishing vessels in the North Sea (p. 553) was effected on the 22d, when the commission adjourned to the 9th of January.

The Czar of Russia has advanced somewhat in the direction of acknowledging the demands of the Zemstvos Congress (p. 552), he having issued on the 26th an imperial decree directing his ministers to formulate plans for effecting certain reforms which he enumerates. In substance the reforms so decreed in principle are cabled as follows:

1. A just and equitable enforcement of existing laws, with a view to securing the harmonious administration of all the courts.
2. Zemstvo organization, with a view to giving the widest latitude and autonomy to the various zemstvos, calling additional zemstvo representatives where required, and creating smaller zemstvo units, capable of dealing directly with the local needs of the peasants.
3. Equality of all citizens before the law, this touching the much mooted question of peasant equality before the courts.
4. A scheme of workmen's assurance for the benefit and participation of factory workers throughout the Empire.
5. Security of citizens against arbitrary arrest and immunity from harsh action of the police, except in the cases of persons known to be conspiring to commit overt acts against the stability of the State.
6. The religious freedom of all subjects of the Empire without respect to creed or manner of worship.

7. Abolition of all unnecessary repressive laws, leaving in force only those designed for the participation of peasants and for the benefit generally of subjects of the Empire.

8. The fullest possible measure of liberty to the press, and the removal, as far as possible, of the various restrictive laws.

With reference to these subjects the decree orders the council of ministers to examine the best way of giving them effect and to submit to the Czar at the earliest possible date its decisions as to the further shape of these measures in their prescribed order.

**NEWS NOTES.**

—A company for the publication of a magazine to be edited by Thomas E. Watson, People's party candidate for President, was incorporated in New York on the 27th, with a capital of \$125,000 at \$10 a share.

—The first annual meeting of the American Political Science Association opened at Chicago on the 28th, jointly with the American Historical and the American Economic Associations.

—Suit was brought by the United States in St. Paul on the 27th to restrain the paper trust from doing business in violation of the national anti-trust law. It is charged that a large number of paper companies, defendants in the case, have entered into an agreement to control the output, distribution and price of print paper through the General Paper company, another defendant, as their sales agent.

—Cotton growers of the South are reported to have agreed to destroy 2,000,000 bales of cotton, in order to diminish the output and thereby restore prices. Previous to this agreement 3,000 bales were burned at Fort Gaines, Ga., on the 28th. The possible output for this year, according to government reports, is 11,848,113. For 1903 it was 8,747,669. On that showing the New York price had dropped to a point which would yield but 6 cents a pound on the plantations, whereas the cost of production is 6½.

—A call for a world's single tax conference, to be held at Fairhope, Ala., beginning February 15, 1905, has been issued by the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation. Persons expecting to attend are requested to notify E. B. Gaston, of Fairhope. The call announces that "it is not the purpose of the Corporation to seek in any way to make this an official conference or to give its deliberations any further authority than the number and character of those attending would naturally give."

—A unique dramatic production is announced for next July by the cottagers at Twilight Park in the Catskills. Un-