

this plan, and the report was unanimously approved by the Chamber. In their report the committee pointed out that the tendency of the legislature to derive revenue from special taxes for State purposes, and to rely on this revenue exclusively, would take away from taxpayers that interest in State expenditure and State taxation, which is present when taxation is direct; that it would tend to promote extravagance; that it would throw the burden of State expenditures upon the urban political divisions; that it would deprive the political divisions of the State of subjects of taxation. It was also shown at that time that the various business interests of the State would always be in danger of being singled out as subjects for special taxation for the increasing needs of the State.

The plan of apportionment indorsed by the Chamber of Commerce was not adopted, and all these prophecies have been fulfilled.

Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman of Columbia University, who is regarded as the leading authority on taxation in the United States, and who for many years has advocated the divorce of State from local taxation and the raising of a large part of the revenue for State purposes by special taxes, wrote a review of recent tax legislation in New York for the Review of Reviews of July, 1905. After pointing out that a system of state revenue which depended exclusively on special taxes is inelastic and objectionable from other points of view, he said:

This is an unfortunate state of affairs, and will, if persisted in, lead to ultimate disaster. Every modern system of taxation must possess the element of elasticity. There is one scheme that has been suggested by the New York Tax Reform Association in New York and Ohio, and which has been put in partial operation in the State of Oregon, which would bring about this result. This is a method of apportioning the State tax and granting local option in determining the subjects of local taxation. It rests upon the idea that the necessary revenues may be derived by making each locality contribute to the State revenues in proportion to its own expenditures. The scheme possesses four advantages: First, it would provide elasticity, as did the old system; second, it would tend to keep down State expenditures, because each locality would be interested in the control of State finance—an interest which is now fast being lost; third, it would tend to keep down local expenditures; and fourth, it would enable each locality to raise its revenues in any way that seemed best to it, and would put a stop to the conflicts between country and city. If the rural districts desired to maintain the personal property tax, they could do so; if the large cities desired to substitute something else, they would be equally free to follow their bent.

The Local Option or Home Rule bill proposed by the New York Tax Reform Association was carefully drafted to avoid conflicting laws. It provided simply that the appropriate authorities of any county might exempt from taxation any class of property. It did not permit the separate counties to make any new law for the taxation of any property; all they could do was to remove a class of property from the taxing power.

Any one familiar with the actual practice of assessors in any State, could readily foresee what would happen if such power of exemption were granted to local homogeneous communities, for in every State to-day such local option is to a large extent exercised in fact, without the sanction of

law. Instances of this will probably occur to everyone. I knew of a case in the State of New York where the assessors by a formal vote resolved not to assess any personal property at all. In some rural counties live stock is never assessed. I was told the other day that in Chicago there is practically no attempt to assess the shares of stock of foreign corporations in the hands of individual holders. The outrage of such an assessment is recognized and the law deliberately nullified. Doubtless such practice is common in the State of Missouri. With legal local option there would soon be legal exemption of classes of property which to-day are seldom assessed, and gradually all intangible property would be exempted, and such other exemptions of movable property would be made as experience should demonstrate would be for the welfare of the community.

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A NEGRO WHO IS THINKING.

For The Public.

The following conversation took place on Friday of last week between myself and a Negro bootblack who has a little stand on the South Side. He is a middle aged man with a fine head and an intelligent face and the pronounced dialect of the Southern-raised Negro. The incident is interesting as indicating that our colored brethren are responding to the influences of the moral awakening to economic wrongs now so manifest in our land!

I had just looked over the morning paper and was folding it to put into my pocket when Rastus broke in with:

"Ah see dey is gettin' aftah dat Stan'ard Oil bunch mighty hahd."

"That's true, how do you like it?"

"Suits me all right, sah. Ah doan like no trust nohow."

"Why?"

"Cause dey done put de price of everythin' so high a man kaht ha'dly live on what he makes."

"Guess you've got a kick coming, my friend, for your race has always voted for the party that is owned and controlled by the trusts."

"Ah know we has, but Ah ain't wid 'em no moah."

"Well, they're trying to even up by putting a colored man on the bench."

"Doan you b'lieve it; dat man nebber will get on de bench. Dey put him on de ticket to get our votes; now dey'se gwine to count him out."

"Anyway, Uncle, you ought to be glad you're free."

"Yes; but Ah ain't free. Co'se Ah's free to stay heah so long as Ah pays mah rent. So is a Chinaman, or so would Ah be in China if Ah paid de rent dere. Ah's free to buy what Ah needs if Ah pays de trust prices. Ah done told a white labor man this mornin' dat he was no mo' free den mah grandfather, who was sold on de block."

"Uncle, I see you're doing some thinking. What do you think of President Roosevelt's action in discharging the colored troops for failing to inform on the wrongdoers in their companies?"

"Ah doan think no colored man has any business hirin' out to de gov'ment to shoot down de po' working men who may be strikin' fo' better pay, an dat's what dey'se in the ahmy fo'; but at de same time

Ah doubts if de President would discha'ge white sojers fo' de same reason."

Rastus seemed quite gloomy over the prospect of any improvement in the future. To see how he would take it I gave him a brief outline of the power of taxation of land values to break up trusts, raise wages, lower rents, cheapen commodities, etc. He listened very attentively and declared "it was perfectly cl'ar dat's de bes' and easiest way to make bettah times."

CARLOS LUJAN.

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WHAT THE PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE PARTY STANDS FOR.

A Letter from a New Adherent to the Party.

Mr. Erving Winslow, Secretary Anti-Imperialist League, Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir:—I received your esteemed letter of the 20th of July last, by the receipt of which I feel greatly honored, inclosing the manifesto of the Independence Party constituted in Manila, and to which you call my attention. I thank you very much indeed for the interest you take in our political situation, an interest which cannot but awaken in the bosom of the Philippine nation a feeling of gratitude and veneration.

I will state that in spite of my letter sent you on the 23rd of March last, I now belong to the Independence group, and consider it an honor to do so, and that every good Filipino should so consider it.

I say this, because without doubt you will be surprised that after having avowed evolutionary ideals (those of the Federal party, which look to improved economic conditions before Independence) in mine of the 23rd of March, I should now, on the 7th of September, nineteen hundred and six, belong to the Independence Party. This may appear to betray a lack of consistency on my part, which might cause you to form a rather unfavorable opinion of me, and I therefore consider it necessary to explain to you the motive which has induced me to change my political creed.

Formerly I believed, and I still believe that the Philippine Nation is essentially capable of being an independent nation and that with more reason than many other people that have long enjoyed such a precious liberty, because our nation united innate qualities of docility and love for good order as can be seen from the history of the two revolutions it has passed through, during which not one-hundredth part of the disorders and crimes have occurred which usually mark revolutions among nations called civilized.

If love for good order and morality are qualities which especially characterize nations predestined to be great in history, then, my dear sir, the Philippines are surely called to become in time a great nation.

To prove my assertion you only have to remember how few police officers are necessary to maintain good order here in towns of as many as ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants. There are towns in this province which have not more than four police officers whose only weapon is their baton, and yet good order in these places is not disturbed.

But even with these favorable conditions I had been

of the opinion that the moment had not actually come yet for assuming that heavy burden which must accompany the attainment of the supreme and constant aspiration of all nations.

Our great necessities on one hand, our limited resources on the other, and the critical situation which the Philippine Archipelago is passing through in general, had convinced me that in order to be able to maintain our independence we lacked the economic basis that is the cornerstone on which the prosperity and happiness of a nation repose.

Entertaining this idea I had found no other solution than a wise, although short evolution, so as to allow the people time to recover from its prostration and to avail itself of the school of experience, just as the fruit forms and ripens while still hanging from the tree.

But unexpected circumstances which I need not enlarge upon here, have convinced me that the death of our cherished and universal aspirations would result from this evolutionary process.

Above all, my dear sir, I have convinced myself that the protective system which prevails in the United States is incompatible with the economic progress of our country.

I have convinced myself that beneath another flag, which is not that of our nation, our agriculture, our commerce and our business cannot flourish because no country, however noble and unselfish it may be, will ever consent that its protegee ever should become an economic nightmare in its path.

This would be an unpardonable don-quixotism, and in this century of prose and money Don Quixote is an anachronism. I also have convinced myself that the idiosyncrasy and the character of a nation requires much time and much work if it is to be reformed, and in the meanwhile there must be a condition of paralysis and anxiety such as would be impossible for our people for any length of time.

To aspire to independence by means of evolution is to try to form a nation after the pattern of another, and this is a long and difficult process, if not an utterly impossible one. I have also convinced myself that those who speak of the incapacity of the Philippine Nation confound that which is essential with that which is purely accidental. While some among us advocate evolution as a means for instructing and educating the people, in fact the only thing that we need is that protection from without which guarantees our nationality, so as to avoid the danger of international ambition, because as regards social and moral education, we have as much of it as many European nations. The proof is found in the criminal statistics of the country.

We have money enough to maintain a better and less expensive government than that very costly one which is trying to make the people what the government wants it to be, and not to make itself what the people want and expect, dictating laws one day which the next day are cancelled and changed in a thousand places and in a thousand ways, so that justice is converted into a mere babel.

Believe me, dear sir, that even our ephemeral government at Malolos showed no such incapacity. This is due to the fact that he who governs the house does not belong to the house, and everybody knows the old Spanish proverb: "The fool is wiser in his own house than the wise man in his neighbor's."