

to it that the agitation does not cease until the voters know about what that something is.



Maine is naturally an agricultural State, with the added advantage of great water powers and tide-water transportation; but hitherto the speculative holding of the latter resources has interfered greatly with development. Such manufacturing and transportation projects as have been carried out have usually demanded and received substantial concessions in the shape of tax rebates. Under the general property tax this has left agriculture more heavily burdened than any other industry, with the inevitable consequences. Both capital and population have been driven from the farming towns, and but for the growth of Aroostook county and the few manufacturing centers, the entire State would have gone backwards in population during the past decade. But the very hardships of the Maine farmers were probably blessings in disguise.

Indirectly they were a tremendous stimulus in the organization of the Grange, which is now represented in nearly every hamlet of the State by from 1 to 100 of its 60,000 members.

Years ago these hard-headed farmers, in talking things over in their halls, came to the conclusion that something was wrong. The politicians became scared and resolved to do something. They did, and succeeded in making a bad matter worse.



Maine politicians are probably more highly skilled in manipulating that political football known as "the rum question" than any others in the world. While the game was young, they divided an empire of virgin timberlands among themselves without let or hindrance, and in more recent years have brazenly maintained a powerful lobby to protect their privileges.

While these timberlands were paying a 3-mill State tax on nominal valuations, property in the incorporated towns and cities had to pay the State tax, with county and municipal rates added. This comparison was all but meat and drink to the demagogues.

The State Constitution specifies that "all taxes upon real and personal estate, assessed by authority of the State, shall be assessed and apportioned equally, according to the just value thereof." To tax the wild lands, therefore, it was necessary to tax all other real estate at the same time; but one ingenious politician discovered what he thought was a way out of the difficulty. He suggested a State-wide tax for school purposes, with the proceeds re-allotted to the towns and cities according to their valuation. As finally passed by the legislature, the act apportioned part of the money according to school enumeration and part by valuations, but the immediate result was to make the farmers and property owners dig up more money for taxes than they had ever paid out before. Hence the landslide.



But while the old Grange leaders and the politicians were wrestling with the tax question, a few far-sighted men were "sawing wood" in another corner.

By some exceedingly shrewd and clever political maneuvering, they secured a good and workable Initiative and Referendum, applying to legislation but not to Constitutional amendments. The omission was a necessary concession to the prohibitory law imbedded in the Constitution. Two years ago the progressive crowd followed up their advantage with an Initiated direct primary law that is a "corker." The legislature turned it down cold, but the people passed it 65,000 to 21,000, and we are just entering our first campaign under it.

The next step in line with true progress is to secure an amendment to the Constitution permitting the classification of property for the purpose of taxation. This will require a two-thirds vote in both branches of the legislature, and ratification by the people at the polls. But the outlook for its passage is bright. All that is necessary is to insert the phrase "any given class," so that the Constitution shall read: "All taxes upon any given class of real or personal estate, assessed by authority of the State, shall be assessed and apportioned equally, according to the just value thereof."

This change is one of the letter rather than the spirit, and meets with favor wherever proposed. The Governor has called a special session of the legislature beginning March 20th, and a resolution passed at that time can be submitted to the people at the regular September election at only nominal expense. If passed by a regular session it would have to go to the people at a special election.



Nearly everybody is by this time ready to admit that the tax system needs an overhauling, and candidates before the primaries next June are already declaring themselves for tax reform.

Meanwhile, on the first of January the law for separating land values and improvement values went into effect, so that the data for a real Singletax campaign should be at hand as soon as we are ready to make use of it. Progressives throughout the State are responding well to the requests of the Maine Tax Reform League for support, and numerically we are already in a position to make uncomfortable all politicians of reactionary tendencies.

The best and most unanswerable arguments for our immediate program, are the enumeration of the glaring inequalities that under the present law exist on every hand.

CHRISTOPHER M. GALLUP.



SIGNIFICANCE OF MAYOR TAYLOR'S DEFEAT IN VANCOUVER.

Winnipeg, Feb. 2.

We must not be too sure that Vancouver will not revert to the old system of taxation. This was not an issue at the recent municipal election in Vancouver. Mayor Taylor stated that it was, but his opponent disclaimed any intention of touching the taxation question.

However, it is quite possible that the present mayor, who, I believe, represents all the plutocratic interests may, in spite of his word to the contrary, do something to upset the present status. The peo-

ple of Vancouver themselves approve the present system; but the example of Vancouver is being cited far and wide throughout the country, and a good many of the landlord class are beginning to fear that the municipal Singletax is but "the thin end of the wedge." Therefore, they are taking counsel together as to what may be done to stop the present trend of affairs, which is really going against them faster than any of us a couple of years ago dared hope.

The Interests do not object to superficial applications of the singletax principle; but now that the people in large numbers are beginning to apprehend its logical conclusion, we may look for a big fight.

I am certain that the progress which we have made so far cannot easily be lost. Indeed, I believe that nothing can stop our onward march. But rest assured we are going to have a bigger fight in this country within the next five years to retain what we have, and get more of what we want, than we have had in the past. The Interests are beginning to think they have been acquiescent too long, and I believe from present indications that they will soon be thoroughly well aroused. They are importing professors of political economy of the old school to stem the tide.

ROBERT L. SCOTT.



THE MELTING POT IN PITTSBURGH.

Pittsburgh, Pa., Feb. 5.

The report of the Pittsburg Civic Commission on Taxation* is not the only indication that the civic conscience of the Smoky City is aroused.



The Men and Religion Forward Movement closed an eight-day campaign in this city last night. Although not noticed by the city press, the most sensational and significant incident of the week's campaign was the denunciation of Congressman Dalzell by Raymond Robins from the pulpit of the First Presbyterian church for his efforts towards defeating the Esch bill.

It is a significant fact that Robins was permitted to deliver from this pulpit his eloquent and logical plea for the right of labor to organize. Of all the churches in Pittsburgh, it is the last in which one acquainted with conditions here would expect to hear from its pulpit a defense and eulogy of organized labor. It is doubtful if there is an influential member of this congregation who is not a thorough believer in an ultra protective tariff and a staunch defender of plutocracy and imperialism. For nearly forty years the maternal grandfather of the late Justice Shiras was its pastor, and from its organization it has been chiefly supported by beneficiaries of unearned wealth.

So far as Pittsburgh is concerned in the Men and Religion Forward Movement Robins was the stellar attraction. The opening meeting on Sunday afternoon, January 28, was held in the Exposition Auditorium, which seats between three and four thousand. Over four thousand men were crowded into the auditorium and several hundred were turned away. More than two-thirds of this vast audience

was of men past forty years of age. The entire audience was made up of male adults.

In its report of the opening meeting the Gazette Times said: "When the speaker first graphically dwelt on the evil days that threaten the country, it seemed to many that his words savored of Socialism. They allowed this thought to be dispelled when he, in a cogent appeal, sought the awakening of the Christian Church from its state of dormancy and its entry into the fight for the nation's welfare armed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."



On Monday forenoon Robins addressed several hundred ministers in the First Presbyterian church. During this address he said: "There are now voices speaking in this country—speaking the doctrine of division, of class struggle, of the materialistic conception of history—with proposals to remedy present social ills, 97 per cent of which is indictment and three per cent constructive." At the conclusion of this address the Chairman announced that an opportunity would be given for asking questions. A clergyman asked if the speaker referred to Socialism when speaking of those whose remedy was 97 per cent indictment and three per cent constructive. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, the questioner challenged Robins to a debate on Socialism and a spirited colloquy then ensued for several minutes.

The significance of this episode and other similar ones at meetings held by Robins here, is the evidence of the strong foothold Socialism has taken among evangelical ministers in this section of the State.



Robins' final talk here was made Friday evening in the Fourth United Presbyterian church, at the conclusion of which he hurried to catch a train to carry him west to Wichita, Kan., where he was to open a meeting of the Men and Religion Forward Movement on Sunday, the 4th.



The week preceding Robins' visit to Pittsburgh, Peter Witt, Street Railway Commissioner of Cleveland under Mayor Baker, addressed the Young Men's Democratic Club of Pittsburgh. He scored revenue tariffs as well as protective tariffs. In introducing Mr. Witt the toastmaster, Mr. B. B. McGinnis, said: "We have with us tonight the Railway Commissioner of Cleveland. He is a Democrat, and one who does not hesitate to say just what he thinks regardless of the consequences. He is big intellectually, but what endears him to those who know him is that his heart is as big as his head. He is known in his home city as the diamond in the rough, but we who have learned of his real worth regard him as a diamond well cut and polished. There is not a newsboy, not a slum dweller, not an honest toiler in Cleveland but loves him, and on the other hand there is not a greedy corporation or selfish plutocrat in that same city but hates him and fears him."

Witt spoke with unusual force and from start to finish carried the audience with him. When he mentioned the name of his departed leader, Tom Johnson, the audience of over two hundred rose to its feet

*See current volume, page 105.