

Selkirk, a town about 25 miles north of Winnipeg, with a population of 3,200, and the oldest town in the Province, will apply to the legislature for power to raise its revenue by means of land value taxation. The decision to do so was reached at a recent joint meeting of the Town Council and the Board of Trade.

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The result of the reciprocity negotiations with the United States is received with mixed feelings. Any step, however faltering, in the direction of free trade is a welcome one; but the farmers had demanded free admission of agricultural implements, and the reduction is only from 17½ to 15 per cent. The free admission of vegetables and fruit will be very welcome in Winnipeg and the other mid-west cities and towns.

SEYMOUR J. FARMER.

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THE COMMON LIFE IN SWITZERLAND.*

Switzerland.

In my old home in Switzerland, where I have had time and opportunity to investigate land ownership, I found laws and customs practically the same as they were over fifty years ago when I left there and as they had been centuries before.

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In the Gemeinde Buchs, with over 4,000 inhabitants, there are 600 Vollburgers who own collectively the community land—1,227 acres of valley land, 490 acres of timber land and 4,290 acres of Alp land. The Alp land is pasture land high on the mountain above timber line.

Vollburger or full citizenship is inherited, belongs to married men or their widows, and entitles them to a share of the community land. Single men obtain one-fourth portion after the age of 24. As soon as a man marries he obtains a full portion.

There are many citizens who enjoy political rights since there are no difficulties in obtaining political citizenship, but this does not entitle them to communal property rights.

The management of communal land and property is conducted by a council of five members elected by male Vollburgers. The political or civil affairs and school management are also controlled each by a council of five members elected by direct vote of all citizens. Church affairs are conducted by the members of the respective churches, who pay their share of church tax according to the amount of taxable property they own.

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High up in the Alps where the most nutritious grasses grow cows are sent for summer pasture. The entire business of milking, making butter and cheese, taking care of the cattle and keeping buildings in repair has been conducted on the co-operative plan for centuries.

The timber lands are mostly on very steep slopes and gullies, so steep that without the utmost

*The writer of this letter from the country of his birth is a Kansas farmer, a disciple of Henry George, who has served repeatedly in the legislature of Kansas, part of the time as a Senator.

care in cutting and replanting the small amount of soil with a large portion of rocks would be washed down the valley leaving the bare mountain sides, and destroying valley land by covering it with gravel. Since 1897 the supervision of forest land has become national, and no timber can be cut, without consent of the federal authorities, and must be replanted again according to regulations. Even private forests are under the same regulations, and no reduction of forest area is allowed.

The valley land is mostly under cultivation except a portion which is too low; this is planted to timber (Erlen), which grows very fast and makes a fair fuel. When the water is high gates can be opened to let the muddy water flow in, and sediment is deposited so the land will gradually become very good agricultural land. In the meantime it brings a fair income through the growing of timber.

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To accommodate the growing population many building lots have been sold from the communal land. They are sold at auction to the highest bidder. From the proceeds of these the Gemeinde has a fund of over 200,000 francs, from which the interest is used for the public good.

Agriculture and dairying could not support the present population. Embroidery brings in more money than agriculture. Nearly every family has an embroidery machine. The work is usually done in the home, and the majority still work their portion of the communal land. Most people own their own homes with a small garden. No one is very rich according to American ideas, and scarcely any entirely destitute.

While in St. Gallen, the capital of my old Kanton, our consul told me that on the embroidery exported last year from there to the United States, duty to the amount of \$11,000,000 was paid. The tariff is 60 per cent. How would it affect the mass of the people in the United States and the embroidery workers in Switzerland if we changed our method of raising federal taxes from indirect to direct?

M. SENN.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF PROTECTION.

Thomson, Ga., Jan. 25.

Let me call your attention to the fact that we have at last ample evidence to overthrow the infernal tariff system by assailing it on Constitutional grounds.

In his official message to Congress, President Taft has confessed that the true purpose of the new law was to enable manufacturers to "pay high wages," and to "reap reasonable profit" on the capital invested in this branch of industry.

Without entering into the question of alleged high wages and alleged reasonable profits, let me call your attention to the legal effect of his amazing admission—an admission never before made in this official, Constitutional way.