

December, 1898.

NATIONAL SINGLE TAXER.

### The Late Delaware Campaign.

BY HAROLD SUDELL.

The result of the election in Delaware from the standpoint of gaining votes for the single tax ticket was somewhat of a disappointment, although, as compared with the other parties, we more than held our own. But the effects produced by our vote exceeded our most sanguine anticipations. We polled for State Auditor 965 votes, as against 1,036 for Governor two years ago, a falling off of about 7 per cent. The decrease in the total vote polled was 10 per cent. Our decrease was all in Wilmington, where the vote fell off 21 per cent. In New Castle County, outside of Wilmington, we gained 20 per cent.; in Kent County 67 per cent., and in Sussex County 8 per cent.

Three factors unfavorably affected our vote. The first, and by far the most important, was the new registration law which imposed a fee of \$1. The hard times had left many of our men nearly or wholly penniless, and this fee virtually amounted to disfranchisement. They were unable to pay it and therefore could not vote. This did not affect the regular parties to the same extent, as, having funds, they were able to pay the fees of those of their followers who could not or would not pay it themselves. A leading Republican says that out of 34,000 who registered 13,000 had their fees paid for them. The Republicans are pledged to wipe out this "tax" as soon as they can change the Constitution, it being a Constitutional law.

The second factor was the strong desire of a number of our men to administer a crushing defeat to the Democrats, and to make the more sure of this some of them voted the Republican ticket.

The third factor was the influence brought to bear on the more weak-kneed of our followers by their old party leaders and associates, by which they were persuaded to vote the "old" ticket "just for this time."

This election was the first one under the new Constitution which changed the method of electing the legislators from the county to the district system. The State had been mildly gerrymandered so as to make it likely that the Democrats would control the General Assembly by a small majority. A number of districts were admittedly close, and we hoped to be able to hold the balance of power in two and possibly in three districts. But

we did better. In five districts our vote added to the Democratic vote (and our men came out of that party with very few exceptions) would have seated Democrats where Republicans now sit, and as the Republican majority in the General Assembly is ten, this would have made the vote a tie.

And what is even more important, it was shown that in several other districts we now nearly hold the balance of power—in fact there are twelve other districts

where the plurality is less than forty-five. So in the future it is pretty sure that the Democrats cannot carry the Legislature without our aid, nor can the Republicans control it unless we are in the field.

This puts us in a much stronger position than the size of our vote would show. We are in a position to extort concessions from both sides. The first feeling of the Democrats towards us after the election was naturally a very bitter one, as they largely blamed us for their defeat, but they are now manifesting a more reasonable and conciliatory spirit. A few weeks ago the Sunday "Herald," a Democratic organ, editorially demanded in very strong terms that something should be done to bring the single taxers back into the Democratic ranks, saying that the best of the young blood was being won into the single tax ranks because that party stood for a principle.

A very good fight was made by the local men who were, however, greatly hampered for lack of funds. A large part of the speaking work fell on the Wilmington workers, and in Meredith, Saring, Sterlith, and Brand, a quartette of strong and effective orators has been developed, as well as a number of others who promise well for the future.

An effort will be made to get a bill through this Legislature to divide the assessments of real estate into land and improvements, as is now done in Massachusetts. The benefits to be derived from this are too obvious to need pointing out.

The second trial of Senator Kenney (the first trial resulted in a disagreement of the jury) for complicity in the looting of the Dover Bank is now in progress. As politics enter largely into the view the jurors take of the case another disagreement is probable.

Political gossip now turns largely on the action of the next Legislature in filling Senator Gray's seat. The Republicans with a majority of ten are divided into the regulars and Addicksites, the latter having a majority. They should, therefore win, but four years ago Mr. Addicks, with a minority vote, held out, and consequently no Senator was elected, and it is possible that this time the regulars may follow his precedent.

New Castle, Del., Dec. 14, 1898.