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It is a good rule in the agitation of social reforms requiring legislation, to take one step at a time if you can't take two. For that reason a limited extension of the suffrage to women may properly be worked for as an advance toward suffrage unlimited. But, while partial measures are better than none if in the right direction, they are worse than none if in the wrong direction; and tried by this test the bill proposed by the Political Equality League of Illinois for enactment by the present legislature is distinctly bad.

That bill would allow officials who collect or distribute taxes to be voted for by women who own property which they do not earn, while it would withhold it from women who consume property which they do earn. Of course, among the property owning women would be included those who earn their property; but the distinction of the bill relates to owning and not to earning. The bill, that is to say, is based upon the familiar but false principle that the property owner is the tax payer, and that therefore taxation and representation go together when property owners are allowed to vote and the propertyless are not. Inasmuch as the bill is urged by such intelligent and sterling democrats as Catharine Waugh McCulloch, the widely known Chicago lawyer, who approve it not as sound in principle but as a step toward full suffrage, its merits in that regard are to be respected if it has any, and this necessitates a searching question as to its tendency.

Would such a law tend toward the extension of suffrage to all women, regardless of their accumulations of property, or would it tend toward the withdrawal of the suffrage from propertyless men? In other words, would it strengthen the democratic idea of manhood suffrage (including womanhood suffrage, of course), or would it strengthen the reactionary aristocratic and plutocratic idea of property suffrage? In our judgment it is the latter idea that would draw most strength from such a law. Wouldn't the whole influence and voting force of the propertied classes, both men and women, be attracted by it, not in the direction of extending the suffrage to propertyless women, but in the direction of withdrawing it from propertyless men.

We can even now almost hear in response to this objection, a swelling chorus of "why not?" And these "why nots" are fortified with arguments for the control of public expenditures by the tax paying class. Those arguments need not be discussed. It is enough to mention the fatally false assumption they rest upon, without even considering that broad question of human rights which is the only complete refutation of kingcraft. The false assumption is the notion that the property owning class is the tax-paying class. In truth the property owning class, as such, pays the least taxes. Most taxes are paid by the consuming class, as such; and that class includes everybody. Some among the propertyless do not earn what they consume, and are therefore not taxpayers strictly speaking. The wandering "hoboe" is the only type of this class. But by that test non-taxpayers are to be found also in the property class. The idle rich furnish a variety of types who consume without earning.

That consumers are the principal taxpayers is evident upon a little reflection. Take for illustration the proposition to make street car companies pay the city for franchises by a tax on gross receipts, instead of allowing a reduction in fares. Who would pay that tax? The street car passengers, of course. No one denies it. On the contrary, it is argued that they ought to do so, as that is the only way of taxing them. Now among those taxed passengers would be propertyless saleswomen; and they would pay into the city treasury, even if they rode but 600 times a year, about as much (at 1 cent tax on each passenger) as a propertied woman, who didn't "dodge," would pay on \$500 worth of property. Yet, under the proposed property-woman's suffrage bill, the latter could vote, while the former could not. Why? Because, forsooth, the \$500 woman would be a taxpayer, and the saleswoman would be a non-taxpayer! This is only an illustration. The propertyless classes are taxed on all hands. On their food, on their clothing, on their living rooms. On everything they eat or drink, or wear, or amuse themselves with, they pay a public tax in the private price. Yet they are not taxpayers! Each individual among the propertyless doubtless does pay over less than each individual among the propertied, for he consumes less. But taken as a whole, the poorest of those who would be disfranchised under a property suffrage law, bear the burden of a larger aggregate of public taxes than do the richest of those who would have voting rights.

When Alderman Foucek, of Chicago, offered in the city council this week a street car ordinance, which fixed maximum fares at 3 cents, the council disposed of the bill by referring it to the committee on local