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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

transportation. This was proper, because that committee is now dealing with the general subject of street car transportation. But the majority of the council exhibited an animus against low fares which it will be well for voters to remember. According to one report, that of the Chicago Tribune of the 10th, the ordinance "was practically laughed out of court," the aldermen being so unwilling to "even listen to what the mover of the proposition had to say in its favor" that they "in a hurry sent it to the committee on local transportation for burial."

The true inwardness of this hostile attitude toward low fares may be inferred from a statement which Alderman Bennett is reported to have made recently, when explaining the traction situation. It should be noted that Alderman Bennett's evident disposition is to save taxes for real estate men at the expense of street car riders. He asserted on the occasion referred to that the legitimate cost for operating expenses in carrying each passenger is more than three cents, and that about another cent would be fair remuneration for invested capital, making a total cost of something over four cents per passenger. To this assertion he appended his opinion that the remaining fraction of a cent out of a five cent fare ought to go to the city. Of course he favors 5-cent fares. The very foundation of Alderman Bennett's scheme is rickety. It is not true that it costs more than 3 cents for operating expenses to carry each passenger. The operating expense is very much less than 3 cents.

In the course of the franchise negotiations now in progress in Chicago, it has been proposed that policemen and firemen be allowed to ride free, and the suggestion is advanced that the same privilege ought to be extended to postmen. That all these public servants should ride on street cars without expense to themselves, in aid of the performance of their public duties, is true. It is also true

that the expense ought to be borne by the locality—as much so regarding postmen as firemen or policemen, for the privilege for postmen would contribute to the efficiency of the mail service locally, rather than nationally. But there is no more reason why any public servant should be carried free back and forth between his home and his work, or to the theater, or the church, than there is for carrying mechanics and shop girls free. It would be a private service for which, if he didn't pay others would have to. Moreover, even when public servants on official business are carried free, it should be upon trip passes, so that no opportunity might be afforded the traction companies of throwing sand into the eyes of the public by pleading the burden of an indefinite amount of free transportation. Just at this time, if any extension of franchises must be made, especial care is necessary to avoid imposing obligations upon the companies which cannot be measured in dollars and cents. There ought to be no general provisions of any kind for free transportation for anybody. But between classes of public servants to be carried without personal expense to themselves, when on public duty, whatever system of keeping tally of their rides may be adopted, it is evident that postmen should not be discriminated against.

Whether we like it or not we shall all have to recognize, sooner or later, the fact regarding labor strikes which Henry D. Lloyd bluntly declared in summing up the case of the anthracite strikers before the arbitration commission at Philadelphia. To one of Chairman Gray's nagging questions, one of the kind that some of the labor leaders had dodged, Mr. Lloyd declared that the obloquy which falls upon "scabs" is analogous to that which the American patriots of 1776 visited upon Tories, because strikes are industrial wars. That is a statement of fact, not an expression of opinion, and it is the solemn truth. It is puerile, there-

fore, to condemn strikes because "scabs" are incidentally deprived of their natural rights by strikers. The question is not whether bad happenings occur in strikes, but whether strikes themselves are to be tolerated. And that question hinges upon another, one which men like Chairman Gray try deftly to avoid, namely, whether culpability for striking is attributable to strikers, or to the industrial institutions which are robbing the working class for the benefit of an idle or worse than idle privileged class. Our own view of this matter is that strikes are bad, but that strikers are not to blame for strikes. It is not necessarily the persons that deliver the first blow who break the peace. Those who drive them into a corner where they must either hit or suffer are the real offenders.

Tenants of some of the "sky-scrapers" of Chicago, 16 stories high and more, have been forced for several days either to abandon their offices or to climb laboriously up to them by stairways. After a test of endurance for a week, the dispute has now been submitted to arbitration, something that should have been done at first. The cause of the struggle originated in a disagreement between two labor unions—the union of elevator men and the union of building managers.

The building managers' union (called "association" because it represents "financial" instead of "labor" interests), resisted demands from the elevator men's union for a trifle higher pay, a slight degree of participation in "this wonderful American prosperity." In addition the elevator men wanted the privilege of sitting down at times during their long hours of monotonous work; they wanted their distinctive uniforms to be furnished by the building owners who require them to be worn, instead of being charged to themselves; and they wanted their union recognized. It was the wages question, however, that made the strike, buildings that conceded the scale of \$55 a month