

of New Jersey is as "local" as the city's suburbs, been compelled to print about a yard a day of Governor Wilson's demands for popular government, and there is no doubt that these clear cut statements and speeches have greatly aided the Independents of the Keystone State.



As Pennsylvania with its tremendous industrial vote may one of these days spring a surprise, it may be well to mark the point progress has touched.

The truth is that the Independents (they call themselves the Keystone party) have as little idea of their strength as the standpaters who managed to squeeze a victory out of the polls last November. The former are doubtful as to just how far they can go, but the latter are scared; so it's a stand-off.

Insurgency is perhaps too young in Pennsylvania to be expected to take a very brave stand just yet. Still, the Independents recently indorsed Henry C. Niles, of York, for United States Senator to succeed Penrose in 1913, and Niles has declared for the Initiative and Referendum. In their State Committee meeting recently a demand was made that the Initiative and Referendum be added to the party's platform. Those who spoke against and shelved the proposition said they favored the reform but thought the time too critical to come out for Direct Legislation. The election next fall, they said, would be on purely local issues and they probably were afraid to disturb the "honest business men" who forsook the Republican ticket simply because of Governor Tener's personal reputation. Their endorsement of Niles is evidently to be taken as a provisional earnest of a stand for Direct Legislation when they are more sure of their ground.

The Independents' absolutely extemporized party, organized on a shoestring, polled 380,000 votes, within 35,000 of capturing the Governorship. The very size of their unexpected success has staggered them, and they are wondering how they can keep their heterogeneous cohorts together.



But if their opponents lack courage, the standpaters are panic-stricken.

They first showed their disillusion by shying at the election of Maurer, the lone Socialist in the Assembly, and at the total Socialist vote in the State—53,000. After the silly error of starting to contest Maurer's seat, they hastily withdrew the contest and loaded him with committee appointments, which made the Socialists laugh.

Maurer is starting well. He has a good sense of humor and is ready to work with the insurgent Republican and progressive Democratic minority in the Legislature. He will introduce a bill providing for the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, patterned after the Oregon law. Better yet, the Socialists apparently are back of him in emphasizing this. This should have at least educational value and spur the Independents to hasten the polishing up of their platform.

With both the gang and the Independents bidding for the growing Socialist vote, the chances for a straight fight soon on this issue are daily growing better.

Other bills Maurer will introduce are for workingmen's compensation and the abolishment of the State Constabulary. This body of daredevil ex-Filipino fighters—Cossacks, they are called—have been recently especially offensive, storming the leather workers on strike at Bristol, dispersing peaceable crowds, and, it is even charged, entering workmen's houses. Their activity in the Philadelphia car strike cost the Republican organization a Philadelphia Congressional stronghold, Donohoe, a Democrat, going to Washington from the northeastern industrial section.

Donohoe and the eight other Democrats in Congress (sent there by Independents) from Pennsylvania, are trying to readjust the party organization which was wrecked by a framed up stalking horse State ticket in November. In the past the Democratic leaders have been able to count on about 40 per cent of the State's electorate. In November their vote fell to 13 per cent (129,000) little more than twice the Socialist vote. The Republicans got 41 per cent and the Independents 38 per cent, indicative of the "hovering" nature of conditions.



The meat of the problem is right here: When the Independents come out for Direct Legislation, will enough Socialists and Democrats come under their banner to make up for the certain loss of those "honest business men" who will sacrifice everything to make government "clean" just so it is not pure?

H. S. WEBER.



DEMOCRACY IN THE CANADIAN NORTH.

New Liskeard, New Ontario, Canada.

Even up here in this cold and frozen Canadian backwoods the waves of democracy are felt, and the people are demanding reform of the many abuses and graft that the present Provincial government of Ontario has sanctioned.

The District of Temiskaming is one of the richest silver mining camps the world has ever seen. Lying close beside the mineral lands is a wide clay belt of rich agricultural land. The land was covered with heavy forests, for despite the long, cold winters, vegetation is very rich. Into this country in which nature has provided with a prodigal hand for the wants of man, come the land grabber and the grafter, and the usual state of affairs follows in their wake.

Discontent and an ever growing appreciation of the fact that improvements should be exempt from taxation and that vacant land should bear its full share of taxes, combined with abuses sanctioned by the present Conservative government in Ontario are waking the spirit of democracy here, and the Liberals called a convention on Dec. 8th, 1910, for nominating a candidate to contest this riding at the next Provincial election. Mr. Arthur W. Roebuck was chosen as their candidate and he will make an active campaign.

Mr. Roebuck is the present owner and editor of "The Temiskaming Herald," the only truly progressive organ in the district. Until quite recently he

was also the editor of the "Cobalt Citizen," but that paper ceased publication a few months ago. Mr. Roebuck is a young man, with all a young man's energy and enthusiasm, and is an ardent and devoted disciple of Henry George. For some years he was the editor of the "Canadian Single Taxer," now "The Square Deal," published in Toronto. His platform will contain such planks as exemption of improvements from taxation, revision of the mining laws (a tax of a dollar per year per acre being advocated, whether the land is worked or idle), direct primaries, and the Initiative, Referendum and Recall.

Whether Mr. Roebuck is elected or not the educative value of his campaign will be great, as he is an accomplished public speaker and in addition has a full corps of energetic and enthusiastic workers to assist him, it being hoped to stump this entire district before election time, now about 18 months distant.

M. N.

* * *

LAND AND TAXATION.

Hackensack, N. J.

The recent amendment of the Constitution of the State of Oregon, in such a way as to give to counties local option in taxation and tax exemption, must encourage tax reformers in many States and lead them to inquire what may be done elsewhere. Perhaps many may be interested in a proposition I am trying to popularize in New Jersey.

Woodrow Wilson, in his speech accepting the nomination for Governor, mentioned as needing reform our complicated arrangements for obtaining public revenue. He probably did not have in mind especially the matter of local or municipal revenue, but what he did say gave an opening, and I sent him a copy of a letter of mine in a local paper (Hackensack) in which it was contended that the very large amount to be raised to erect and equip a high school should be considered as an expense to be met, not by general taxation but by taxes on land values alone. (In Hackensack at present seven-elevenths of all general taxes are paid by owners of buildings and personalty, and only four-elevenths by landowners.) Dr. Wilson, in replying, encouraged me to make a brief explanation and argument, intimating that he was prepared to try to form an opinion on the subject. The brief sent is as follows:

To Hon. Woodrow Wilson, Governor-Elect, Princeton, N. J.:

The following suggestion is made for the improvement in one respect of legislation providing methods of local taxation in the State of New Jersey:

It is a well recognized principle of American jurisprudence that it is equitable to legislate for special assessment upon owners of lands benefited by such public works as drainage, sewers, street paving, and even the establishment of public parks. The usual plan is, under general or special laws, to borrow money with which to provide such public improvements, and with the aid of commissioners, assess the cost upon owners of parcels benefited. The lands considered to be affected may be either abutting, contiguous or lying within a certain distance, near-by parcels affected being assessed more than those at a greater distance.

In New Jersey the practice differs even in adjoining political divisions in the same county. In some

towns streets are macadamized with the proceeds of general taxation, the expense falling upon owners of personal property, real estate improvements and lands alike. In others, macadamizing is paid for by special assessments upon abutting lands alone.

The rule followed in the case of special assessments is to consider lands as alone benefited and subject to special assessment, apparently because of a definite recognition of the fact that public improvements of a more or less permanent character increase the values of land only, and cannot be considered as affecting by way of betterment the values of either buildings or personal property. There appears to be at present no other resource than these two plans—either to raise money for improvements by general tax, or by special assessment on certain parcels of land.

In all towns of 5,000 population or over in New Jersey, it is now the rule to require assessors to list separately the value of lands, the value of buildings, and that of personal property. This gives in such taxing districts an annual separate total of land values. It is proposed that a law shall be drafted and submitted to the Legislature, permitting any municipality or taxing district of 5,000 population or over to obtain annually by a special rate of taxation on the total land value any money needed from year to year to apply on bonds or interest on bonds issued to pay for public improvements, or any money that is to be appropriated in one sum for the purpose of making a public improvement, local in character. The details of the proposition are to be worked out. The end desired is some simple way in which the people of a taxing district can by vote decide whether or not to discontinue the practice of collecting annually from owners of personal property and real estate improvements sums of money to be spent in making public improvements.

There is great dissatisfaction in many communities with the present method of taxation, both as to amounts of tax bills and as to the effects of the present system, and it is plain some relief should be obtained by those who improve property and are industrious or thrifty enough to acquire personal property. They should not be required to pay for public improvements to any greater extent than shown by the value of the land they own, if, as plainly appears to be the case, that value is the only one to be affected by increase as a result of public improvements made.

If the people of a district decide to avail themselves of the proposed legislation, it would be a simple matter for the local authority to fix the tax rate. If, for instance, \$10,000 is to be needed for special local public improvements in one year, and the tax duplicate shows \$10,000,000 of land values, a rate of ten cents on the \$100 would bring in the required amount, and this item would appear as a separate item on all tax bills.

A sample statement of working of plan to pay principal and interest of bonds by special rate on land only is as follows:

Suppose total valuations to be—

Land	\$ 4,500,000
Buildings, etc.	6,000,000
Personalty	500,000
	<hr/>
	\$11,000,000