

On this total a rate of \$2.00 per \$100 would produce \$20,000. If of this \$40,000 is for interest and principal of bonds, \$180,000 for current expenses would be raised on the total valuation of \$11,000,000, or \$1.6363 per \$100, by the proposed plan, and \$40,000 for interest and principal of bonds must be raised on land valuation of \$4,500,000, or .8888 per \$100.

We can thus figure—

PRESENT PLAN.

A sample improved property, land \$500, buildings \$3,000, personally \$200, total \$3,700, and present total tax, \$74.00.

A sample parcel of land, unimproved, land \$500, tax \$16.00.

PROPOSED PLAN.

The sample improved tax on \$3,700 at \$1.6363, tax...\$60.54
 Special tax on land for bonds, .8888 on \$500, tax..... 4.44

Total\$64.98

The sample unimproved, \$500 at \$1.6363, and \$500 again at .8888, total rate \$2.5251, and total tax...\$12.63

Thus the tax on the improved property would be reduced \$9.02, or about 12½ per cent, and the tax on the unimproved property would be increased \$2.63, a little over 25 per cent.

All students of taxation who are keeping informed as to changes being suggested or made in various parts of the world, such as Australia, Germany, Canada and England, know that good results have come from measures designed to relieve industry and the products of industry from part of the burden of taxation, making up the shrinkage by increasing the amount of taxes paid by owners of lands, according to the value of their holdings. The tendency of changes in methods of taxation is away from the plan of treating all classes of property alike, and towards giving taxing districts some option as to how moneys shall be raised. Only recently the Mayor of Boston publicly called attention to the need of a change there; and in Colorado, Oregon and Rhode Island much attention has been given to propositions for local option in taxation.

A bill was introduced in our own legislature January 18, 1909, by Assemblyman Blauvelt, allowing officials of municipalities to provide by resolution that any class of property should be wholly exempted from taxation, and this bill received the endorsements of many public spirited citizens. Such a measure, no doubt, is too radical; but the suggestion here made provides for a certain elasticity in local taxing plans, involves no serious change in taxing practice, and would simply allow the people who have resolved to take advantage of legislative permission, to be sure that the current and future cost of public improvements should be met by the owners of the one class of property the value of which is kept up or caused in large part by such improvements.

To provide for street paving by assessment on abutting owners of lands, is an automatic system, if it may be so called, in that the increased value of the landowner's property enables him to pay assessments with cheerfulness. To provide for the cost of general public improvements, impossible to assess against any district within a taxing division, by a special rate on land values only, would also be an automatic system, in that the increased value of landowners' property should lead them to submit gracefully to the necessary increase in tax bills. It also opens up the possibility of providing more improvements than are possible under the present system, since there is necessarily a greater chance for

popular approval of large expenditures in proportion as the people see that those who are in a position especially to benefit will bear the cost. It has been the experience of many districts that meritorious propositions have been time and again defeated by the votes of citizens who find taxes on their homes and personal belongings too burdensome, and who realize that the financial profits from the proposed improvements will not attach to their homes, but often go largely to the owners of tracts of hitherto undeveloped lands.

Such a partial local option as suggested, moreover, must tend to bring about a valuable popular discussion and experiment in relation to methods of obtaining local public revenue, and there can be little doubt but that, if you could find it possible to express a favorable interest, the Legislature might be expected to give careful consideration to the suggestion herein embodied.

Those who live in States where assessors separately list the values of lands and of other taxable property, may especially find use for this proposition.

Even in States where the Constitution does not seem to permit local option in general taxation, a legal way might nevertheless be found to assess land values alone for the cost of public improvements, since the principle of assessing property benefited by improvements, and that only, is well established.

It may even be possible, in cities where land values are separately listed, for the governing body, by simple resolution, without special State legislative authority, to make the annual charge for interest and maturing bonds, the proceeds of which have been or are to be used to make public improvements, a special item in tax bills, figured on the land values only, and not on or against the buildings or personal property owned by taxpayers.

The difference between old plans and this new plan may not be very important or decisive in probable results. The main thing is to propose something definite, in order to promote public discussion, and preferably something that is moderate in departure from current practice, and not too far advanced for the average man to become interested in.

GEORGE WHITE.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, January 31, 1911.

Initiative and Referendum in Illinois.

“For the restoration of representative government in Illinois,” the Committee of Seven of the Peoria Conference (vol. xiii, p. 1035), of which

Walter S. Rogers is chairman, submits its proposed form of Constitutional amendment for the adoption of the Initiative and Referendum, as follows:

Article IV.—Legislative Department: Section 1. The legislative authority shall be vested in a General Assembly which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives, both to be elected by the people; but the people reserve to themselves power to propose laws and to enact or reject same at the polls, independent of the General Assembly, and also reserve power, at their own option, to approve or reject any act or measure passed by the General Assembly. The first power reserved by the people is the Initiative, and not more than eight per cent of the legal voters of this State shall be required to propose any law by Initiative petition, and every such petition shall include the full text of the law so proposed. Initiative petitions shall be filed with the Secretary of State not less than thirty days before any regular session of the General Assembly, and he shall transmit the same to the General Assembly as soon as it convenes and organizes. Such Initiative measures shall take precedence over all other measures in the General Assembly except appropriation bills, and shall be either enacted or rejected without change or amendment by the General Assembly within forty days. If any such Initiative measure shall be enacted by the General Assembly, it shall be subject to Referendum petition, or may be referred by the General Assembly to the people for approval or rejection. If it is rejected or if no action is taken upon it by the General Assembly within said forty days, the Secretary of State shall submit it to the people for approval or rejection at the next ensuing regular general election. The General Assembly may reject any measure so proposed by Initiative petition and propose a different one on the same subject, and in any such event, both measures shall be submitted by the Secretary of State to the people for approval or rejection at the next ensuing regular election. If the conflicting measures so submitted to the people shall be approved by a majority of the votes severally cast for and against the same, the one receiving the highest number of affirmative votes shall thereby become law as to all conflicting provisions. The second power reserved by the people is the Referendum, and it may be ordered (except as to laws necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health or safety) as to any measure passed by the General Assembly, either by Initiative petition or by the General Assembly as other bills are enacted. Not more than five per cent of the legal voters of the State shall be required to sign and make a valid Referendum petition. But if it is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety that a law should become effective without delay, such necessity and the facts creating the same shall be stated in one section of the bill, and if upon aye and no vote in each House two-thirds of all the members of each House shall vote on a separate roll call in favor of the said law going into instant operation for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety, such law shall become operative upon the approval of the Governor. Referendum petitions against measures passed by

the General Assembly shall be filed with the Secretary of State not less than ninety days after the final adjournment of the session of the General Assembly which passed the measure on which the Referendum is demanded. The veto power of the Governor shall not extend to measures referred to the people. All elections on measures referred to the people shall be had at the next ensuing regular general election. Any measure referred to the people shall become a law when it is approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon and not otherwise, and shall take effect from the date of the official declaration of the vote. The style of all Initiative measures shall be "Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois." This section shall not be construed to deprive any member of the General Assembly of the right to introduce any measure. The whole number of votes cast for the State officer having the highest number of votes at the regular election last preceding the filing of any petition for the Initiative or for the Referendum shall be the basis on which the number of legal voters necessary to sign such a petition shall be counted, provided that not more than fifty per cent of the signers shall reside in any one county. All signatures must be verified by the circulators. Petitions and orders for the Initiative and Referendum shall be filed with the Secretary of State and he and all other officers shall be guided by the general laws and the resolution submitting this amendment until legislation shall be specially provided therefor. This amendment shall be self-executing, but legislation may be enacted specially to facilitate its operation.

The Committee of Seven calls attention to the fact that the demand for an amendment of which this is proposed as a proper form, was made at the election last fall by a vote of 447,908 to 128,398—a majority of 319,510; and to the further facts that it had "a substantial majority in every senatorial district," that every political platform endorsed it, that a constitutional majority in the House of Representatives is pledged to its passage, that the form proposed is unanimously adopted by the Committee of Seven, and endorsed by the Referendum League of Illinois and the Direct Legislation League of Illinois and all other public bodies and associations actively concerned in securing the Initiative and Referendum in this State. The Committee of Seven has established legislative headquarters at room 308, Odd Fellows' Building, Springfield, Ill.

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The Chicago Mayoralty.

Ex-Mayor Harrison issued on the 28th his declaration of principles as candidate for the Democratic nomination for Mayor of Chicago (p. 26) at the primaries on the 28th of February. As summarized by the Hearst papers, whose candidate Mr. Harrison is, his declaration commits him to the following:

General good demands public ownership of public utilities at the earliest possible moment; pending municipal ownership of public service corporations,