

no adequate investigation was made by that body, and the verdict totally ignores the subject.

John H. Hamline is now quoted as stating that the tentative traction ordinance proposed by a committee of the Chicago council (p. 648) is disingenuous. He seems to be right. When first published this ordinance looked at best like a crude makeshift. It now begins to look like an unmistakable fraud. The indications are numerous that it was from the beginning in no sense tentative, but was instead (as to everything but amount of royalty) a hard and fast agreement, secretly made, between the sub-committee of the council and a group of more or less scrupulous local capitalists.

The annual report of the New York Tax Reform association,—the efficient and tireless secretary of which is Lawson Purdy, who has been the leader in securing the change regarding tax assessments in New York which has disclosed the remarkable facts noted last week (p. 659) and emphasized in Stephen Bell's editorial correspondence in our present issue—has just been published. It is a model report of marvelously good work marvelously well done. Of the assessment reform the report modestly says:

The passage of this amendment to the charter was the result of many years' work. We believe it gives the city of New York the best law for the assessment of real estate in the United States. The assessment roll will be published for the first time next October.

United with the Tax Reform association in its work are the committee on city affairs of the Reform Club, and the Brooklyn Revenue Reform Club, both of which join in the report. Their great accomplishment, referred to above, is supplemented by an encouraging report of progress on the next step in this sane movement for sound fiscal methods. Leading civic and business organizations in 13 counties of New York are named as having within the year

joined those already so recorded, in approving the apportionment and local option bills of the Tax Reform association. The apportionment bill would do away with apportionment boards and would apportion State taxation to the different localities on the basis, mathematically, of the expenditure of the localities respectively for local purposes; while the local option bill would allow localities to levy their taxes ad valorem upon land, improvements, personal property, or all three, at their own discretion. These bills have been endorsed within the year also by the Association of the Bar of the city of New York.

How American sympathy went out to the evicted Irish some years ago, when as many as 3,000 families were turned out of their houses for nonpayment of rent! But 60,463 families were evicted in the city of New York, Manhattan borough alone, during the year 1903, without exciting special wonder. Yet where is the difference? Apparently the only difference is in the fact that New York evictions last year were about 20 times as many as in the worst year of Irish evictions. In proportion to population the disparity is much greater. Whereas the Irish evictions of the heaviest year numbered about 1 to every 1,300 of population, those of New York numbered about 1 to every 35 of population.

PROGRESS IN ENGLAND.

Some weeks ago The Public called attention in its notices of periodicals (p. 256) to a remarkable leading article in the Westminster Review in which the importance of the land question and its inevitable entrance into English politics were set forth with great force and clearness. Now comes the Contemporary Review for January, with an article more political than economic, which in a different way bears similar testimony. It is entitled "The Need of a Radical Party," and, after giving some of the history of the Liberals, shows that the signs now point to the new issue.

"There remains," says the writer, "the condition of a great question which will fire men's imaginations with the feeling of a distinct and vital need. Can there be any doubt that the land question answers to this description? 'Man is a land animal,' says Henry George, and in England man and the land are parted. It is not surprising, therefore, that not one but a thousand currents of thought flow into this channel. What, for example, is the one solid feature of the national economy which gives force to the revival of Protection? The decline of agriculture, the fact that a yearly decreasing body of Englishmen live and work on the soil, and a yearly decreasing proportion of food is raised on English land. From 1851 to 1891 the number of agricultural laborers has declined 36 per cent.; during the ensuing ten years a further decline of 25 per cent. has taken place, while in fatal testimony to the tendency to make land the sporting ground of the rich rather than the patrimony of the entire people, the number of gamekeepers has increased 25 per cent. in the same period. Is it possible to state a fact of greater social significance?"

The writer goes on to describe further the desertion of English fields and the degradation of the landless laborers, and asks, "What are the remedies?"

"Not the discredited device of protection, which the laborers will not have at any price," he answers, "but the reform of our land system. For that system furnishes the most effective bar to the application of the wonderful discovery that the old Malthusian specter of the pressure of population on the means of subsistence is laid forever, and that, as Kropotkin shows, the land of England could sustain out of its own resources, not merely the foreign-fled multitudes of to-day, but double and treble that number."

As a second division of the question the Contemporary writer turns to the allied subjects of urban land and taxation, and speaks of the remarkable development of public opinion on this matter.

"This is not surprising," he says, "for it is on the towns that