

the works for a period of seventy-five years, beginning December 31, 1907; shall pay the city \$20,000,000 cash, with which to reimburse the United Gas Improvement Co. (the present lessee), for improvements and betterments; and shall guarantee to pay the city \$1,250,000 annually. The city shall participate in net annual profits of works in following manner: For the first twenty years, 33 1-3 per cent.; for the remaining fifty-five years, 50 per cent. All gas shall be furnished to city free of cost, according to terms of existing lease. City shall have one-third representation in management of affairs. City may reduce price of gas to consumer by applying annual payment of \$1,250,000 to this purpose. Otherwise price shall be \$1 a thousand feet for first twenty years and 90 cents for remaining time. At end of lease period all property shall revert to city without cost.

In addition, the syndicate offers to meet the city's need for immediate funds by lending it \$25,000,000 at 5 per cent.

#### Party Reform in the United States.

Originating in and especially related to the Democratic party in Illinois, but with bearings of national import, the Majority Rule League of Illinois (p. 91) has undertaken to wrest, by popular action, the machinery of that party from boss domination. Following is the declaration of principles of this League:

The overwhelming defeat visited upon the Democratic party in Illinois at the last general election is largely traceable to the disgraceful and lawless methods which characterized the conduct of the men who were in control of the party organization at that time and who still dominate the State committee. Believing that all the suggestions of "getting together" and pleas of "harmony" that are being urged by those who were responsible for the outrages committed, are but part of a deliberate plan to perpetuate the power of those who have injured the party and brought dishonor upon the great name of Democracy in this State, we assert the cause of true democracy requires that active preparations be instituted among all Democrats of the State who are in favor of honest methods, for the purpose of giving assurance to the rank and file of the party that their voices shall not be stifled nor their rights trampled under foot by any combination of unscrupulous politicians at the next State convention of Democrats. If it were merely a matter of party policy that was in issue, there might be reasons offered which would be sufficient to justify even great effort to get together the contending elements of the party.

But when the issue is one of principle or of honesty, there can be no middle ground on which an honorable compromise can be effected. To harmonize with fraud and crime would bring honest Democrats into deserved criticism and weaken the cause they thus foolishly sought to strengthen.

This organization will not assume to make declarations of party policy. Nor will it attempt to foster the ambitions of any candidate for party favors. It will deal solely with the questions that relate to fair primaries, honest procedure in conventions, and the selection of a State organization that shall be worthy of confidence and capable of honorable leadership. Many of the present members of the State committee are holding their places through force, fraud and forgery, and are thus wholly discredited as party representatives. They can effect no organization among the true members of the party because they are believed to be lacking in sincerity and good faith. Some of the members of the committee, a minority, were fairly selected and are not in sympathy with the ruling spirits, and as such we invite their co-operation in this undertaking to free our party from the baneful influence of dishonest and selfish bosses.

#### The Land Question in Great Britain.

British interest in the taxation of land values was again voiced on the 28th (vol. vii, p. 823; vol. viii, p. 72) at a conference held in Edinburgh, which was attended by 270 delegates, many of them officially representing British municipal councils. Over 300 local taxing authorities are reported by the Glasgow Weekly Herald of the 6th to have been represented, but full reports of the proceedings are not yet at hand.

In the evening at a public meeting on the same subject, also in Edinburgh, and presided over by George McCrae, member of Parliament, a message from Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, the British Liberal leader, was read, which declared of the land values taxation question that "the question gains ground every day." Mr. McCrae, in his chairmanship address, said that—

the question had been making rapid strides, and he had been amazed at the progress it had made both in the House of Commons and in the country. He believed that in it they would find the solution of not one problem but two. He did not hesitate to say that any fair-minded man approaching the question without bias would give

but one answer, namely, in favor of the measure which had been before the House of Commons. Giving a practical application of the question to Edinburgh, Mr. McCrae mentioned that in 1899 the taxation of the city was something like \$1,500,000. They had an area of some 8,000 acres, of which 2,300 were unbuilt on, and paying in local taxes to the amount of only \$1,625. He had had the curiosity of calculating what was the rental value of that unbuilt-on land, and taking it at one-half of the renting rate, he found that it would have brought to the city not \$1,625 but \$145,000 per annum. Referring to the capital value of land near the city, he showed how the water trust had had to pay for 45 acres rented at \$15, \$100,000, or 136 years purchase of the rental value; and \$620,000 for 105 acres of land for the gas works, or 212 years of the rental value.

Another distinguished speaker at this public meeting was C. P. Trevelyan, the member of Parliament who has championed the land values taxation bill in the Commons (p. 72). In moving the principal resolution, he said that—

the whole of the local taxation was imposed in a way to be the most destructive and the most evil tax which existed in our fiscal system. They were not nearly sufficiently impatient in denunciation of the badness of the system of local rating. They believed that cities rich with their multitudinous riches bear, if it was on the right shoulders, the great burden of their present local tax, but it must fall on that part of real property which fluctuated only in value with the general prosperity, and it must not fall on the property which was the creation or due to the energy of the owner or lessee of the property. The proposal in his bill was to put the whole local tax on the selling value of the land, and so accomplish half the objects they had in view. It was an extraordinary privilege that landlords might ask their own price for land when it was needed. Greed or necessity might force them into the market at a reasonable price, but their own whim and their own greed operated constantly in the other direction. It prevented their selling land at reasonable prices when it was wanted.

The resolution which Mr. Trevelyan moved, was seconded by Joseph Dobbie, a member of Parliament, and adopted. It was as follows:

That this meeting, holding that land monopoly is a root cause of rural depopulation, urban overcrowding, lack of employment, and their attendant evils—intemperance, disease, insanity, excessive mortality, immorality, and