

These are some of the chief things which we want. How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote; by persistent, unceasing agitation; by hammering at the truth; by sacrifice and work.

We do not believe in violence, neither in the despised violence of the raid, nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob; but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, that willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right. And here on the scene of John Brown's martyrdom we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our property to the final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free.

Our enemies, triumphant for the present, are fighting the stars in their courses. Justice and humanity must prevail. We live to tell these dark brothers of ours—scattered in counsel, wavering and weak—that no bribe of money or notoriety, no promise of wealth or fame, is worth the surrender of a people's manhood or the loss of a man's self-respect. We refuse to surrender the leadership of this race to cowards and trucklers. We are men; we will be treated as men. On this rock we have planted our banners. We will never give up, though the trump of doom find us still fighting.

And we shall win. The past promised it, the present foretells it. Thank God for John Brown! Thank God for Garrison and Douglass! Sumner and Phillips, Nat Turner and Robert Gould Shaw, and all the hallowed dead who died for freedom! Thank God for all those to-day, few though their voices be, who have not forgotten the divine brotherhood of all men white and black, rich and poor, fortunate and unfortunate.

We appeal to the young men and women of this nation, to those whose nostrils are not yet befouled by greed and snobbery and racial narrowness: Stand up for the right, prove yourselves worthy of your heritage, and whether born North or South dare to treat men as men. Cannot the nation that has absorbed ten million foreigners into its political life without catastrophe, absorb ten million Negro Americans into that same political life at less cost than their unjust and illegal exclusion will involve?

Courage, brothers! The battle for humanity is not lost or losing. All across the skies sit signs of promise. The Slav is rising in his might, the yellow millions are tasting liberty, the black Africans are writhing toward the light, and everywhere the laborer, with ballot in his hand, is voting open the gates of Opportunity and Peace. The morning breaks over blood-stained hills. We must not falter, we may not shrink. Above are the everlasting stars.

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THE EDMONTON EXPERIMENT IN TAXATION.

A "Staff Special" Letter Written from Edmonton, Alberta Province, Canada, July 28, 1906, to the Cleveland Plain Dealer, by W. S. Couch.

This is probably the only town in the world with single tax. If there is another one Mayor Johnson alone knows about it. Edmonton is also a municipal ownership town. The public utilities now owned include waterworks, electric light and power

plant and a telephone system. Next year the city will build a street railway system, which it will own and operate.

Edmonton is unique in other ways. It is the northernmost point in Canada reached by a railroad. Here the steel horse stops and dog sleds take up his burden to carry on into the Peace river country and to the Yukon. Do you remember how your youthful study of Canadian geography ended with Fort Saskatchewan? Beyond that was the north pole. The pioneer has made more work for the geography man. Edmonton is beyond Fort Saskatchewan and yet Edmonton has weeks in winter when the ground is bare. It is true that such thaws are usually followed by a dive of the mercury to 20 or 30 degrees below, but the official records show that such cold snaps are of short duration.

Edmonton, although the "fartherest north," is rather the center of a thrifty farming district than a jumping-off place. It is a farming district, too, that looks for all the world like Ohio, with fertile fenced fields diversified by frequent bits of timber. You travel north from Winnipeg farther than the distance between Washington and Chicago, traversing miles of flat prairie country dotted with raw, new frontier towns, and suddenly come upon this contrast that is Edmonton and the Edmonton district.

As the country looks like Ohio, so the town might be Lorain or Ashtabula as far as appearances go. This is territory that one has always supposed to be the joint property of the Hudson Bay Co. and bow-legged polar bears. But this surprise is not greater than the discovery of the single tax system in operation. It is curious to contemplate the radical departures in economics by the colonies of staid old England. Australia has been making remarkable experiments for years. Canada and the Canadians show similar indifference to names and conventions of government.

When they want to do something up here they do it, serenely indifferent to the horror of the schools and of older civilizations. So Edmonton did not adopt single tax because its people were disciples of Henry George. The town was threatened with a boom, when the municipal charter was granted. The city fathers wished to restrain the land speculators at least, and to discourage them, if possible. They decided that taxing unimproved town lots at the rate charged against the same property improved would compel the speculators to build on their lots. Consequently, today, if one corner lot occupied by an office building is valued at \$5,000 the vacant lot on the opposite corner is assessed at the same valuation.

But, being indifferent to the theory of Henry George, and intent alone on carrying out their purposes, the Edmonton people added a modification of their own to this land system of taxation. Strictly speaking they do not have "single" tax in Edmonton. There is a double tax, a second tax after the one on land values. Edmonton taxes what it is pleased to call "business" on a basis of the floor space occupied. If you object to the Edmonton citizen that this is a departure from the pure single tax system, he says: "Well, what of it? Don't care anything about single tax. We are trying to solve

the problem of making all money contribute its proportion toward municipal support."

That was the answer of K. W. McKenzie, who was the first mayor of Edmonton after its peculiar taxation system was adopted. As mayor, Mr. McKenzie was also a member of a board charged with making the first assessment. He explained that the scheme of taxing business according to the floor space occupied originated in a desire to reach financial institutions and the incomes of professional men.

"A bank will usually escape an ordinary system of taxing, and all efforts to tax personal property are failures," explained McKenzie. "This is our substitute."

"The scheme is briefly this: banks and financial institutions may be taxed to the limit of \$10 per square foot occupied. Commercial houses may not be taxed beyond \$5 per square foot. Last year banks, trust companies and brokers' offices were levied on at \$7.50 a square foot. Jewelry stores were assessed at the limit of \$5, and the list ranged from that figure down to 50 cents a square foot for warehouses. The offices occupied by lawyers, physicians and real estate agents were measured and assessed. If a physician has no downtown office his residence was visited and the room he used to receive patients measured and taxed."

Mr. McKenzie admits that this system of taxing business is not altogether fair, but he does argue that it avoids discriminations. There is one standard for all. The board of trade has asked that business be taxed on rental values rather than on floor space. This feature of the Edmonton tax scheme will probably be changed. But there seems to be no complaint against basing the property system on land values. Secretary Fisher of the board of trade expresses the conviction that Edmonton will eventually come down to the pure single tax system, reaching all the business that is now assessed by the extra tax through the levy on land.

It is not easy to tell as yet how successful this land tax is to be in discouraging land speculation. The system has been in operation but a year. Edmonton is still characterized by jumping, erratic and probably inflated land value. Its boom is still on. With values jumping, the penalty of taxation on unimproved land is a small matter to the speculator. When conditions settle to something like normal the item of taxes begins to mean something to the property owner and the scheme will have its real test. At least so argue the Edmonton men. The history of Edmonton radicalism began, as was the case with Port Arthur, in a struggle between a small town and a powerful railroad. In 1898 Edmonton had 1,500 or 2,000 people.

Then came the rush to the Yukon that gave the town its first impetus. Still, in 1902, the population was but 2,600. And yet the Hudson Bay Co. has had a trading post at Edmonton for more than 100 years. But the Saskatchewan river was the only outlet to the world. Freight rates were prohibitive. A keg of nails cost \$50. The vital need of Edmonton was a railroad. For years its citizens pleaded with the Canadian Pacific. When that road at last decided to tap this district, however, the railroad magnates concluded that they could save the cost

of an expensive bridge over the river by founding a new town on the opposite side of the river. The new town was accordingly founded, five or six miles away, and unfortunate original Edmonton was invited to come over. Even the name was stolen. But the Edmonton people were obstinate. They stuck to their site. Accordingly the railroad requested the Dominion government to move the land office across the river. The land office is the vital spark for a frontier town. The Dominion government issued the order, the land agent packed the property of his office into a wagon, and then the people rose up with rifles and stopped the proceedings. The mounted police came and bloodshed threatened. But the mounted police officer kept his head. He persuaded the land agent to reoccupy his office pending an appeal to Ottawa.

The citizens grimly stacked their arms, posted sentries and waited for the verdict. The Dominion government decided that the land office should stay in the original Edmonton. That was the beginning of victory. For fourteen years the town persisted in keeping ahead of Strathcona, as the opposition town is now called, despite the handicap Strathcona had in the railway station. Now the Canadian Northern has a terminus at Edmonton, the Grand Trunk Pacific will stop there, it will be a station on "Jim" Hill's new line, and Mahomet is coming to the mountain. The Canadian Pacific is about to build a high level bridge that will bring its line to Edmonton, and that without the grant of a cent or a single concession from the town that would have been glad to make a valuable land grant for this railway station at any time in the past fourteen years.

William Short, a prosperous, middle aged lawyer, is responsible for the peculiar taxation system of Edmonton, at least the single tax feature of it. Short was mayor when the town secured its charter from the territorial government. McKenzie co-operated with Short. They called in C. R. W. Biggar, then city solicitor of Toronto and one of the foremost Canadian authorities on municipal government, to help them draft the charter. Biggar is now a corporation lawyer. McKenzie is a cool, middle aged man of business. These three had the cordial support of the town for their experiment. The custom of Alberta which, alone of the provinces, grants special charters to each city, permitted Edmonton to carry out these ideas.

Of course it is plain to be seen that such experiments as these in small cities in western Canada are quite another proposition from trying them in such a city as Cleveland. But it is interesting as characteristic of this new country that recognizes no precedents. For that matter any town that has a monopoly of the single tax experiment is interesting.

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Herein lies the tragedy of the age, not that men are poor;
All men know something of poverty.
Not that men are wicked;
Who is good?
Not that men are ignorant;
What is truth?
Nay, but that men know so little of each other.

—Du Bois.