

it is said, was all that was needed to make the tax amendment the big issue of the coming election.



The report of the Globe-Democrat was as follows:

At two meetings yesterday of members of the Equitable Taxation League of Missouri at Hotel Jefferson and the League's headquarters in the Times Building, plans were outlined for an active campaign this fall in behalf of the two amendments on the ballot for the adoption of the Singletax idea. One amendment proposes all taxes shall be levied on land values and franchises, to be in full force by 1916. The second asks a permanent tax commission to be appointed by the governor. Dr. William Preston Hill is president and S. L. Moser, secretary of the League. Officers of the Joseph Fels Fund of America attended both sessions. They were: Daniel Kiefer of Cincinnati, president; George W. Briggs of Elkhart, Ind., member of the executive board, and A. B. du Pont of Cleveland, treasurer. William Marion Reedy, Messrs. Black and Whipple, workers for the Singletax of Kansas City, were present. The work of the League was approved by the officers of the Fels fund. They offered the Missouri workers a goodly fund at once to prevent delay in opening the campaign. The League has obtained 30,000 signatures as required by law to place amendments on the ballots. The Fels fund was established by Joseph Fels to forward the Singletax idea. The founder agrees to duplicate every dollar raised by the Singletax organizations and it is said this now amounts to about \$300,000 a year. In addition to an immediate donation, yesterday's visitors promised to increase the donation as campaign needs require it. It was said yesterday interest in the success of the amendments is increasing, particularly in farming districts and among members of labor organizations. Socialists also have proffered aid. The campaign will invade every Congressional district and county.



Progress Toward the Singletax in Texas.

The tax commissioner of Houston, J. J. Pastoriza, makes this report upon the effect of partial exemption from taxation by that city of personal property and improvements upon land:

In the first six months of 1912 there were 219 more buildings erected than in the first six months of 1911, and the value of these buildings erected in 1912 amounted to three times the value of the buildings erected in 1911, which goes to show that the partial exemption of improvements and personal property from taxation had the effect to stimulate the building industry. It also has the effect to increase the number of land sales without depreciating the price of land. So that it appears that the assessing of land at seventy per cent on the dollar of its full value and taxing it for city purposes at the rate of one and one-half per cent on the dollar or \$15 on the \$1,000 value in addition to the State tax of \$3.60 per \$1,000 valuation, will not affect the selling price of land, but will stimulate its sale at an advanced price. This makes a tax rate of two and twenty-three one-hundredths (2.23) per cent on a seventy (70) per cent valuation

of land and a twenty-five per cent valuation of improvements. In 1911 the assessment of the land values of Houston, Texas, were increased twenty-five per cent over former assessments. At the beginning of 1912 land values were equalized and all land was assessed at about seventy per cent of its fair selling value, which in most cases was its speculative value. All personal property in the hands of individuals, such as money, furniture and other household effects, was totally exempted from taxes. Buildings and other improvements upon land and machinery of manufacturers were assessed at twenty-five per cent of their productive value. Franchises of public service corporations were assessed for the first time in Houston; the assessed value of the franchises of the various corporations amounting to \$1,799,900. A former charge for building permits was repealed. In fact, there was more done to relieve industry from taxation in Houston, Texas, during 1912 than has been done in any other city in the United States up to date.

[See current volume, pages 298, 578.]



Influenced by the experience of Houston, Beaumont has taken initial steps similar to those with which Houston began this reform, namely by the adoption of the Somers system of land valuation. Land-monopoly interests were quick to oppose the movement, as they have been in other places, their first step being an application for an injunction on the ground that the appraisal company using the Somers system usurps official powers. But the court decided otherwise and dissolved the injunction. Meanwhile the City Council had ordered a tax-payers' referendum. This referendum came to vote on the 6th, and notwithstanding vigorous campaigning by the land monopolists they polled only 71 votes against 501 for the immediate use of the Somers system. The work of valuation by the Somers system in Beaumont is therefore proceeding.



The Singletax in Canada.

In reply to inquiries made by E. F. Allen of Kansas City, Mo., the following letter of June 1, from F. S. Watson, of Watson & Company, real estate agents at Edmonton, Alberta, explains the tax reform in operation there:

The Singletax system has been in operation here for the past five years, and I would say that it gives entire satisfaction. I have yet to meet the business man who is opposed to it as it is working out here. At first we had a business tax extra, little different from that in the States. That is to say, so much per square foot, the amount varying for different lines of business. This has now been done away with and all taxes put on land. The only other taxes we have are a few licenses such as dog license, milk license and carters' license, and other lines of business which require special regulations.

At the last session of the Provincial parliament, they adopted an act putting the whole Province under Singletax. I will send you a copy of this act as soon as I can get it. A number of fair sized cities

and towns in the Province have adopted the system, and I inclose a little paper from Toronto which shows the movement in Vancouver and Victoria and also in Ontario, although the present Premier, a Conservative, is opposed to it.

You will notice that a petition is in from all the cities and towns, and also practically all trade unions and other bodies have applied for it. I have no doubt that if it were put to vote it would carry.

[See vol. xiii, pp. 1086, 1193, 1227; vol. xiv, pp. 197, 233.]



Presidential Vetoes.

President Taft vetoed the steel-tariff bill on the 14th, giving as his reason therefor that it provides for revenue only and takes no account of protection. He explained also that the bill affects not only the iron and steel industry but 59 allied industries. On the 14th the bill was passed over the President's veto, which is still before the Senate. The vote over-riding the veto in the House was 173 to 83, Republicans to the number of 61 being absent and 16 of those present voting with the majority. [See current volume, page 754.]



By 174 to 80 (21 Republicans voting with the majority) the wool tariff bill was passed over the President's veto on the 13th. The veto is still before the Senate. [See current volume, page 778.]



The President's veto of the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill, on the ground that it menaced the merit system by fixing a seven-year term for classified civil service employees, was sustained by the House on the 15th. The vote, although 153 to 107 against the veto, lacked the necessary two-thirds.



The Cotton Tariff.

On the 14th the Senate passed the House cotton-tariff bill by 36 to 19, but with an amendment repealing all of the Canadian reciprocity act except its free print-paper provisions. La Follette's substitute, drawn by the Tariff Board, was defeated by 46 to 14. [See vol. xiv, pp. 803, 876, 993, 1001, 1028; current volume page 539.]



A Parcel Post.

As the post office appropriation bill passed the Senate on the 13th, it contained provisions for a parcel post system, in different form, however, from those adopted by the House. When the bill came back to the House, Congressman Lewis of Maryland secured a modification, similar to the Bourne plan in the Senate, and on the 16th the bill went to conference committee of the two Houses. The Lewis plan provides for mailing parcels not exceeding 15 pounds in weight, 100 miles or anywhere in the country of mailing, for

5 cents for the first pound and 1 cent for each additional pound; to points outside of this local zone, 6 cents for the first and 2 cents for each additional pound for the first 150 miles and an additional 1 cent for each additional 150 miles; no charge for any distance to exceed 12 cents a pound, and the present rate for four ounces or less to be retained. The Lewis plan calls for a board of three experts to operate the system, and for a joint committee of three from each House to investigate further the feasibility of a general parcel post and report at the next session of Congress. The measure as it came back from the Senate had been referred to conference on the 15th, but through a technical blunder Congressman Mann (Republican) was able to move on the 16th that the House accept the Bourne plan. Thereupon the Lewis plan was substituted by the Democrats by 143 to 86. [See vol. viii, pp. 131, 152; vol. ix, p. 1066; vol. x, p. 771; vol. xiv, pp. 124, 1223; current volume, page 723.]



The Battleship Question in Congress.

When the question of constructing battleships came up in the House on the 17th, raised by the Senate's amendment to the naval appropriation bill, Congressman Foss (Republican) moved to authorize the construction of two. His motion was lost, by 79 to 150, but several members crossed party lines in the vote. The Democrats who voted for the increase from none to two, against the decision of the Democratic caucus compromising on one, were Murray and Curley of Massachusetts, Hammill and Kinkead of New Jersey, Lee of Pennsylvania, Mayer of New York, O'Shaughnessy of Rhode Island and Reilly of Connecticut. The Republicans who voted against the increase were Anthony, Campbell, Jackson and Young of Kansas; Bartholdt of Missouri; Davis, Lindberg and Steinerson of Minnesota; Helgeson of North Dakota; McKinley of Illinois, Mondell of Wyoming; Norris of Nebraska; Parran of Maryland; J. M. C. Smith and Wedemeyer of Michigan; Switzer and Willis of Ohio. The bill went to conference and came out with provisions for only one battleship. It was finally adopted by the Senate on the 19th and by the House on the 20th. [See current volume, page 722.]



Panama-Canal Tolls Question.

An agreement by conference committee on the Panama Canal administration bill was reported on the 14th, under which American ships engaged in foreign trade are required to pay tolls like all other foreign vessels, so that the bill as it came back to the two Houses from the conference provides as follows:

Free passage for American ships engaged in coast-wise trade.