

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### The Singletax in Oregon.

As may be seen from Mr. Eggleston's letter in another column, it is now finally and authoritatively settled that the Singletax for local taxation will be voted on next fall in every county in Oregon in which a petition under the Initiative law shall be presented to the Secretary of State. The right to this Initiative was inserted in the State Constitution of Oregon at the election of 1910,\* over the opposition of land speculators and public utility corporations; but as that amendment did not create special electoral machinery for separate voting by counties, a notion took root to the effect that nothing could be done under the amendment until the legislature should create the necessary machinery for giving it vitality. To the uninformed, the point seemed strong; and there was fear on one hand lest the benefit of the amendment be lost, while on the other there was intense satisfaction for the same reason. There was also a third state of mind. This ran into "the jubilant jeer" at Wm. S. U'Ren, C. E. S. Wood, E. S. J. McAllister and the other engineers of the amendment. Needless to say that the electric-power interests in Oregon, with their allies round about, were particularly well pleased and cunningly active. But all who raised this point in good faith overlooked the rather simple fact that there was already on the statute books of Ore-

\*See The Public, December 30, 1910, page 1233.



gon as complete a system of electoral machinery for the purpose as could be desired.



Inasmuch, however, as the point had been confidently raised, a decision of the Supreme Court of the State was desirable before the expense of circulating petitions had gone far. Consequently, a petition for Clackamas County was obtained and proffered to the Secretary of State under the general law for Initiative procedure. The Secretary of State, aware of the objection, referred the question to the Attorney General. Fortunately, the Attorney General thought the point might possibly have enough weight to make a Supreme Court decision directly upon it worth while. He therefore advised the Secretary of State not to file the petition, and this action on his part opened the way for mandamus proceedings to compel the Secretary to file it. The Supreme Court has now decided the question in favor of the petitioners.



Our Oregon friends are therefore getting under full headway for a referendum next fall on the Singletax for county purposes in every county of Oregon. The expense of this work is not light, and they will need financial help. None will come from electric-power interests or other land speculators—not for the work. All help will have to come from persons who believe in fair play in taxation, regardless of private interests. And now, gentle reader, whoever you are and wherever you live, "it is up to you" in a degree, if you are sympathetic with the Singletax idea or antipathetic to land monopoly. Do you wish your Oregon friends to win? If you don't, don't help them; but if you do, prove it.



### Another Oregon Experiment.

Oregon will try for the first time at the coming primaries there, April 19th, not only to instruct delegates to the national conventions but also to send delegates who sympathize with their instructions. The delegates will be chosen, as in some other States, at the direct primaries which give the instructions; but, not as in any other State, they will have their traveling expenses paid, so that the chosen delegate of the voters may go, be he never so poor in purse, without dependence upon politicians or corporations.



As an illustration of the workings of this new law of Oregon, Portland affords an example. Among the candidates for delegates there is a La-

bor-union man for each party—C. M. Ryerson for the Republican convention, and Alfred D. Cridge for the Democratic. These are official candidacies. As a further illustration of their value in promoting discussion on public questions, we might refer to Mr. Cridge's declaration of principles, filed under Oregon law in the office of the Secretary of State. He here promises that if elected a delegate to the national Democratic convention, he will "advocate and support the following fundamental Democratic principles:"

Application of Initiative, Referendum and Recall to national issues, officials and judges; all tariffs are frauds (ample revenue in land values exclusive of improvements and personalty); four transcontinental railroads owned and operated by the government, also all Alaska railroads; parcels post, postal telegraphs and telephones; proportional representation for Congress, abolition of United States Senate; equal suffrage regardless of sex; Congress to forbid Supreme Court to pass on constitutionality of laws; largest navy in the world, but engaged in commerce, transporting passengers and freights.



Regardless of the merits of Mr. Cridge's proposals, what better evidence could be desired of the civic value of this Oregon method? At a cost of \$200 for each delegate, only \$4,000 in all for both conventions, Oregon may secure representatives of public sentiment instead of representatives of franchise loot. It is economical as well as democratic; and unless the party system is abandoned, all the States will have to come to it.



### Woman Suffrage in Great Britain.

Supplementary to our recent editorial on this \* subject we may say, upon the authority of "The Common Cause" of January 4, that in Great Britain "there is only one body, national in its scope," so far as this woman-suffrage publication knows, "which refuses to believe it possible to proceed by way of amendment" to the Ministerial bill to secure votes for British women. Evidently the one organization alluded to is that of which the organ is "Votes for Women." The ostensible grievance of this organization is that the Prime Minister, although he promised last year that this year an equal suffrage measure would be given a fair chance in Parliament, brings in as the official bill one for manhood suffrage only, and leaves woman suffrage to "fend" for itself in a hopeless effort to amend that bill in Parliament.



Now the fact happens to be that what the Prime

\*See current volume, page 52.