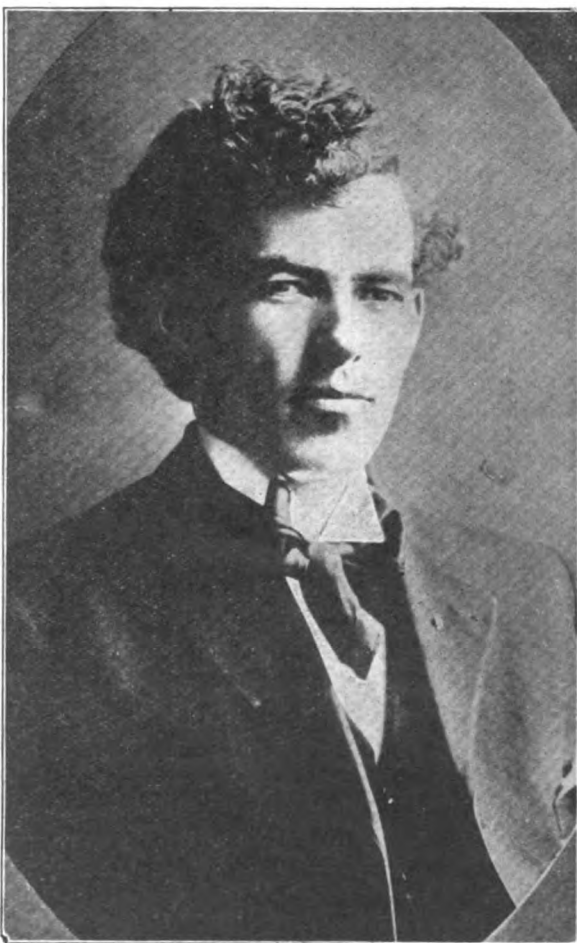


requires a two-thirds vote in the lower house before an amendment can be submitted to popular vote, this amendment lacked 9 votes of the required number, and the reactionary minority prevailed.

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#### The Socialist Mayor of Berkeley.

Berkeley, California, seat of the State University, and the first city adopting the Des Moines type of commission government to improve upon it by substituting second elections for direct primaries, has passed under the administrative control of a Socialist Mayor, J. Stitt Wilson.



Mayor Wilson is a Socialist Party socialist of international renown, who has been in active service for many years as a leader in the Socialist movement. He was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1868, and educated at the Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., an institution with which he retained connection as a teacher. For a time he served as a Methodist clergyman in Illinois, but resigned his pulpit to devote himself to the work of Socialist lecturing and teaching, in the course of which he has made four European trips. At

the election in California last fall he polled 50,000 votes as the Socialist candidate for Governor. His election as Mayor of Berkeley took place on the 1st of April, when he polled 2,749 votes to 2,468 for his predecessor as Mayor—B. L. Hodghead, a Democrat—the total vote being the largest ever cast in the history of the city.

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The platform on which Mr. Wilson was elected, and to which he is committed as far as the laws of the State permit, are for direct legislation, ownership and operation of all forms of public utilities, reduction of water rates and immediate steps toward a municipal water supply system, a municipal electric lighting plant, a municipal incinerator, municipal gas and telephone service, regulation of public utilities meanwhile, trade union labor on public improvements, democratic development of the public school system, a "city beautiful" community, economy in city administration. Referring to the previous administration the platform on which Mayor Wilson was elected described it as having developed into "an obstructive and perfunctory bureaucracy attending to simple duties of municipal life, instead of being a constructive advance guard in behalf of the people, leading us on to genuine municipal achievements." It also paid tributes to the Socialists of Milwaukee and those of England and the European continent for their progress in municipal administration.

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A large part of Mayor Wilson's platform was devoted to the subject of taxation. This part was written by Mayor Wilson himself. He knew of course that its declarations cannot be realized in Berkeley until the laws of the State of California are changed; but he incorporated it for its educational value, and he reports that it has created a great deal of interest in the community. It is as follows:

No progressive policy for the socialization of our public utilities, or the extension of any public service, is safe, or indeed possible, unless accompanied by a sound and scientific policy of municipal taxation.

It is one thing to buy and build. It is another to pay. It is one thing to issue bonds for public improvements: it is quite another, and more vitally important element of city administration to secure city revenue without piling up a heavy public debt upon the tax payers, and pouring out a perpetual tribute of interest to the money-lenders.

We are opposed to any city administration heaping upon us heavy bond issues without coming forward with a municipal budget that will take the burdens of taxation off the backs of the common people.

In our campaign we shall unceasingly place before the electors that most sure, most scientific, and most just source of city revenue, viz: the unearned increment of land values in its two forms of (1) site values, and (2) franchise values.

The city itself is the greatest creator of wealth in its own domain. There is a veritable gold mine ever-increasing under the city. The city itself creates values annually, more than ample for all improvements and expenditures in that continually unsleeping increase which the normal growth of the city adds (1) to all the land values over which it stands, and (2) to all the public franchises within its limits.

No individual creates these values by labor, foresight, capital, or skill. They are socially created by the presence and activities of the whole community. And the values which the whole community thus socially creates should naturally become the source of the city's treasure.

But our present method of real estate taxation and of dealing with franchise values is unjust and disastrous. It punishes the man who improves real estate and rewards the owner of land kept vacant. It leaves the value which the city creates to fall into private hands which never earned it, while it collects taxes out of the people's earnings and values which the city did not create.

Therefore along with our program for the municipalization of public utilities, thus saving to the city and to the citizens the enormous values of public franchises, we demand an increase in the assessment of all land values of the city, and a uniformity of assessment according to location and site value, whether improved or unimproved. We favor a decrease in the assessment of improvements.

We further propose to agitate for a charter amendment to come before the people at the next election providing for the levying of an additional tax on all unimproved land.

In New Zealand 68 cities have adopted this principle of taxation of the unearned increment of land values with unflinching success. It is this principle which is now unhorsing the landed aristocracy of Great Britain.

**Taxation of the unearned increment of land values and the socialization of public utilities is the secret of a full city treasury, collected from the city's own socially created values and providing abundant revenue for every needed municipal enterprise without robbing the poor and the working classes and enriching the rich and the privileged.**

[See current volume, p. 321.]

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#### **Singletax Issue Raised Before New York Legislature.**

Intense excitement among land monopoly interests in New York city was reported on the 18th by the extremely conservative New York Times. It is over a measure recommended by Mayor Gaynor's Commission on Congestion of Population, to the effect that by five successive annual reductions of the tax rate on improvements, taxes on improvements should be reduced to 50 per cent of those on sites, value for value. [See current volume, page 300.]

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Two legislative bills based on that recommendation were introduced at Albany by Senator Timothy D. Sullivan. Little attention was paid to

them by the land-monopoly interests at first. But the New York Evening Post sounded an alarm. Without condemning the measures, it made an appeal for consideration of the fact that in principle they are Singletax measures, which may be a good thing or a bad thing, but that their real character as an entering wedge for the abolition of private property in land should not be overlooked. Thereupon the Allied Real Estate Interests took the matter up, under the leadership of their president, Allan Robinson. Meanwhile, however, favorable pressure had been at work and there seemed reason for the adversaries of the measure to fear favorable legislative action. In its reports on the 18th the New York Times told of a meeting on the 17th at the City Club of a dozen local organizations and fifteen New York members of the legislature, at which the consensus of opinion favored the measure as likely to encourage the construction of better tenements and the demolition of those that are unsanitary, and to reduce rents, break up land monopoly, and help the "little man to own his own home." Robert S. Binkerd, secretary of the City Club, presided at the meeting and opened the discussion by pointing out that such legislation is based upon the premise that the people have the right to create a tendency that will modify social conditions. He indorsed the bills on the ground that they will bring about the use of high price "strategic" lands for the purposes for which they are intended and the use of outlying districts for residential purposes. Raymond V. Ingersoll, chairman of a committee devoted solely to the support of recommendations by the Mayor's Commission, explained that the bills under discussion seemed to have a fair chance of passing and are therefore worth immediate encouragement. Edward T. Devine supported the bills because they are in line with the protective and conservative systems of taxation which have as their aim the modification of social conditions. Paul U. Kellogg, editor of The Survey, gave the testimony of one who had observed at close range certain readjustments that had been effected in the tax rates in Pittsburg. It was not so very long ago, he explained, that the business houses and tenements there were called improved property and heavily taxed as such, while the presence of a few shrubs and some grounds about a house won it a rural character that allowed it to escape with a much smaller rate. The owner of large tracts of land paid hardly any tax at all. All this was changed, as Mr. Kellogg put it, by recent legislation in behalf of the "small people of Pittsburg." The last speaker was John J. Flynn of the Brooklyn Central Labor Union, who was the labor representative on the Mayor's Commission. He said: "The time has come when organized labor is thinking beyond the two questions of shorter hours and higher wages, and in such a movement as this you will find our hearty support."