

surprised that there is bustle and business in Chicago as well as in New York. Mr. Adams' visit to Chicago was the first time, according to his quoted admission, that he had been west of Pittsburg during his lifetime of fifty-eight years.

"I was simply amazed by the noise and bustle which greeted me here," our New York visitor said to the reporter who greeted him. "I went out on the street last night and, to speak soberly, I was almost dazed by the confusion I observed all about me.

"I don't know that more work is accomplished here, but there certainly is more visible evidence of what there is going on. My trip has been a liberal education to me. Like many other 'provincial New Yorkers,' I had never been West, although I had been in many countries of Europe. Here in the West I find bustling, thriving cities, sprung up everywhere, with young, virile, red-blooded men in them, and I tell you, sir, I have been simply astonished by what I have seen. It inspires hope for the country's future, and I would advise a similar journey to many who are afflicted with pessimism.

"I might not have been so forcibly struck by the busy life about me if I had passed a more bustling existence myself in New York. To an active New Yorker the scene might not seem to be strenuous. But my life has been passed between my home, my office and the law courts, and I seldom visit the theaters or hotels. That may account for it."

Mr. Adams' admissions are comforting. We have maintained all along that Chicago has made a mistake in permitting New York to have a monopoly of all the brain throbs affecting the affairs of this nation. New York has been permitted to speak for the nation without, in many cases, knowing anything first hand about its subject. Doubting New York editors have censored what laudatory matter has been furnished by honest writers about Chicago. Mr. Adams, like thousands of other New Yorkers, apparently made his trips to Europe, sublime in the impression that Chicago was not far removed from the stage when every other citizen had a wolf hide nailed up to dry on his front door. We hope that Mr. Adams was not too abruptly surprised upon his arrival here to find pedestrians minus long-barreled squirrel rifles and coonskin caps. He failed to find a log cabin the entire length of Michigan avenue.

While it's too bad for a hospitably-inclined city to disappoint the expectations of a friendly visitor from the East, it is well nigh impossible to contemplate Mr. Adams' various distinctions without wondering how he attained them with no wider first-hand knowledge of his country than the territory east of Pittsburg, no doubt, mostly within the confines of Greater New York. Considering the functions of the Department of the Interior, it is interesting to note that Mr. Adams was connected with it in an important capacity.

In ruminating upon the foregoing comments, we would respectfully suggest that New York, in its qualifications for the holding of public office, incorporate a paragraph requiring each candidate to submit a credential, certifying that he has successfully achieved a trip as far west as Chicago under the tutelage and guidance of a reliable tourist agency.

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CONGRESSMAN KENT.

Readers of *The Public* who have learned from it somewhat of William Kent of California (pp. 121, 434, 651, 915, 962, 1036, 1082, 1095) may like him none the less for this excellent likeness.



Mr. Kent was born at Chicago, March 29, 1864. He graduated from Yale in 1887, and received her A. M. degree in 1908. He was married to Elizabeth Thacher, February 26, 1890. He was a reform member of the City Council of Chicago from 1895 to 1897, the time of the round-up of the "gray wolves." After his experience in the Council he served on the executive committee of the Municipal Voters' League from 1897 to 1904, and as president of the league in 1899 and 1900. For several years he has lived at Kentfield, Cal.

Mr. Kent has large landed interests in Nebraska, Nevada, California, Michigan and Kansas; and out of his holdings in California he has given the

United States Government 295 acres of giant redwood forest, about six miles from San Francisco, for a public park.

He is a reflective student of economic and civic subjects, with a strong tendency to be radical in the sense of getting at the root of things. Naturally, his financial interests in land have brought the economic phases of the institution of land ownership to his attention, and he has not allowed his personal interests to deaden his sense of civic responsibility. To this his written references to the subject amply testify.

So did his speeches in his recent campaign for Congress. He had an uphill climb of it. Not only at the Republican primaries, but also at the election, the whole Standpat interest was against him. It is almost certain that it was the coming together of progressive Republicans and democratic Democrats, against a union of Standpat Republicans and reactionary Democrats, that elected him. For the Democratic candidate for Governor got 5,000 majority in Kent's district, whereas Kent, on the Republican ticket, won by 3,500.

The radical campaign he made is what elected Kent. He did not hesitate to trample upon Privilege, little or big, whenever it got in his way. This aroused the hostility of "pinhead" merchants fearing the parcels post, which he advocated, as well as that of the destructive "dredger" combine, of the lumber crowd, of the wool men and of the marauding railroad interests. So he was forced logically to advanced positions in the direction of his convictions, which doubtless brought him more votes than the Interests were able to take from him. And no one has thought of charging his election to corruption; which is highly significant, since he is a wealthy man and therefore an "easy mark" for that kind of charge. But such a charge could not stick, for every purchasable precinct in his district went for his Democratic opponent, who spent more money, we are advised, than either he or his friends.

Congressman Kent is one of the long line of Republican leaders who are forming behind La Follette.



A TENDENCY IN MUNICIPAL TAXATION.

From the Official Report of Clinton Rogers Woodruff as Secretary of the National Municipal League, at Its Convention for 1910 at Buffalo.

The Constitutions of 75 per cent of the States require the uniform taxation of all property under what is known as the general property tax system. American cities have practically no latitude given them by their State governments in the matter of taxation. Few statute laws have been passed dur-

ing the year touching upon the matter of municipal taxation.

A most significant occurrence, however, was the introduction into the New York legislature of a bill asked for by Mayor Gaynor's administration and the New York Merchants' Association, to exempt from taxation personal property in the City of New York. Although the request was denied, the action of the Mayor and of the Association was generally regarded as an official recognition of the breakdown of the idea of local taxation of personal property.

There has been an appreciable improvement in administrative methods in cities, especially in connection with the assessment of real estate. The most noteworthy changes in municipal taxation are occurring in Canada, where in several Provinces cities have been granted a large measure of home rule. In British Columbia a general statute has for years permitted municipalities to assess improvements at a lower percentage than land. A recent statute fixed a maximum assessment of 50 per cent for improvements, while allowing a lower rate or an entire exemption by vote of the local council.

Vancouver in March, 1910, exempted improvements entirely, while assessing land at 100 per cent of its value. This followed a progressive reduction of assessments on improvements extending over some years, beginning at a 75 per cent assessment, then 50 per cent, then 25 per cent. Several other cities in British Columbia have also gradually reduced the percentage, while they now exempt improvements entirely.

The abolition of taxes on improvements in Vancouver has caused great activity in local building operations. On the other hand, there has been stagnation in the real estate market so far as vacant lots are concerned. The experiment has not gone on long enough to be sure that this may not be due to some local or temporary cause, but it is the result that tax reformers expect from the policy adopted. The policy has prevailed among the municipalities of the Canadian West to value sites at par and improvements at a fraction ranging from 75 per cent down to 25 per cent. For some years Vancouver at first had it at 75, then dropped to 50, then to 25, and last March to zero.

Nanaimo has had the 100 to zero percentage for several years.

In the Province of Alberta the larger cities have for some years exempted improvements, raising their revenues chiefly from a tax on land values with a slight business tax and a tax on franchises of public service corporations when these are not municipally owned. Most of the new villages asking for incorporation are also requesting this same power of exemption which is granted upon petition to the local authorities.

In Ontario the local taxation of personal prop-