

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.

Minister did promise was a fair chance in Parliament for the "Conciliation bill." This promise he is keeping in both letter and spirit. He is keeping it more broadly than its terms require. He is keeping it as broadly as "Votes for Women" says he must. The "Conciliation bill" would greatly limit woman suffrage. There is another and broader measure, one which Lloyd George is supporting by way of compromise in the belief that adult suffrage, in which he believes, cannot yet be got. And then there is adult suffrage—the abolition of all property qualifications as to both men and women. By assuring the woman suffragists of full opportunity in the Commons to amend the official bill by adding to it *any of those measures*, the Prime Minister keeps his promise more comprehensively than its terms require and as fully as "Votes for Women" asks for. And this is no empty assurance. For Mr. Asquith gives his own word and that of the Ministry, which includes woman suffragists and anti-woman suffragists, that any woman suffrage amendment adopted by the Commons—and whether by Liberal, Conservative, Irish or Labor members—shall be *an integral part of the official bill*, and as such will be forced through the House of Lords with all the influence and power of a united Ministry.



What more in fairness could be asked of any ministry, of any political party, of any coalition? Nothing. And so all the woman suffrage organizations of Great Britain, national in scope, appear to believe, with the exception of the one which publishes "Votes for Women" as its organ and maintains a physical force campaign against the Liberal Ministry. This is truly an organization of vast proportions, and as representing woman suffrage sentiment it may count for more than many others. Of that we are not now speaking. We speak at this time only of the absurd demand it makes upon the Ministry. Its demand, supported by none of the other suffrage organizations, amounts in effect to this, that the Ministry itself must put woman suffrage in the official bill or go out of office.



Whatever the motives for that demand may be, its effect, were it conceded, would be to turn over the government to the Conservatives, whom the coalitionists have twice defeated in hard-fought elections within two years on democratic issues, and invite another such contest under a grossly undemocratic electoral system—one so toryistic as often to enable "one rich man to cast twenty votes easier than twenty poor men can cast one vote."

The Ministry are pledged never to allow another election under that system, and that they shall keep this pledge is more important to British democracy just now than anything else. Then why this drastic demand of the violence wing of woman suffragists? It cannot be because Asquith doesn't keep his promise; he is keeping it. It cannot be because the Ministry won't give woman suffrage a fair hearing in Parliament; such a hearing is assured. And so fair is this hearing to be that it cannot fail to establish woman suffrage in Great Britain unless the reform lacks a majority in the Commons.



### Prosperity.

Erwin's "Market Letter" of December 26 (26 Beaver St., New York) does not look at business prospects through lenses brilliantly colored; it prefers an honest microscope. "If fundamental conditions the world over are as we think they are," it advises investors, "it is highly improbable that this country can have anything like a business boom until the uncompleted liquidation of 1907 has extended to *land values*, to the trading and transportation industries and, possibly also, to the labor market." The acknowledgment here that we are still in the midst of the business depression that began in 1907\* is unmistakably true. It is generally recognized outside of speculative circles. Such facts as may be cited against it are fully explained by Erwin's reflections upon the future: "We expect to see only spurts of improvement with the spurts getting shorter and shorter until we reach the bottom of the next depression." Those are the prosperity facts we have had since 1907—"spurts," spurts that get "shorter and shorter." The files of any responsible business periodical, examined over periods of **from three to six months**, furnish evidence of it. According to Erwin's the "big fundamental factors" that are unsound factors in the present situation are many, but they include one which we should think enough if there were no others—"inflated *land values*."



### One of the Signs of the Times.

A fine program of economic reform is that of The Twentieth Century Magazine which it emphasizes in its January issue. Immediate relief of the unemployed through useful constructive work by government; collective ownership of public utilities; extension of the public domain to mineral deposits, forests and water power; shorten-

\*See The Public, volume x, pages 314, 362, 506, 723, 746, 963.