

interest. And when the cause of industrial emancipation is complete these six names must be indissolubly connected with its legislative beginnings. And the Congressman from Albany who would otherwise have been forgotten will have secured imperishable fame though his good nature in permitting himself to be tempted by "Bluff Tom Johnson's" offer of a good cigar!

MR. GEORGE'S TAX BILL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Congressman George has introduced his bill for the taxation of land values of the District of Columbia. It provides for separate assessment of land and improvements, and then (Sec. 7) stipulates that with the year 1913 land shall be assessed at eleven-fifteenths of its true value, with a progressive increase which, in 1917, will have arrived at its true value. It also provides (same section) that in the year 1913 improvements shall be assessed at nine-fifteenths of their true value and each year the assessment shall be decreased progressively until in 1917 improvements shall be exempt. It provides (Sec. 8) that the rate shall be not less than one and one half per centum each year upon the assessed valuation, but this rate is not a fixed maximum but may be increased as the Commissioners may determine necessary, depending upon the needs of revenue as set forth by the Commissions in their estimate to Congress.

These are the provisions of the bill which chiefly concern us now; the remainder deals with the administrative measures. The measure is admirable in its simplicity. The bill now rests in the hands of the committee on the District of Columbia. Single Tax readers of the REVIEW who possess any influence—and who does not?—can now be of use in calling attention through the public prints and otherwise to the provisions of this measure.

THE election of Herbert S. Bigelow as president of the Ohio constitutional convention is a great personal triumph.

TAXING WHAT WON'T BE THERE.

Our Socialist brethren are looking at the land question: some of them propose to take the rental value of land as a means of raising the funds to buy out "the means of production." They also want to reduce the values, not of "big business," but of special privilege by taxing it, in order to be able to buy it for the community at fair prices.

But most of them hunger for the German plan of making the Government a sharer in the profits of land speculation by levying transfer or periodic taxes on the "unearned increase" of land values.

As land speculation is the most profitable "honest graft" in the world, it is clear that as the government would share only the profits and none of the losses the revenues to be raised that way are enormous. Of course that would make speculation in land less profitable than it is now, if it made no other changes; but it would make other changes. It gives the land owner a reason for urging Government expenditures for the benefit of the land owner; because, as they urge, the Government is a partner in the speculation.

As it will be an essential source of revenue it will naturally be stopped by Chancellors of the Exchequer at the point where it will yield the largest revenue. "You must not kill," they will obviously say, "the goose that lays the golden egg." "If we tax land prices nearly out of existence by taking nearly all the unearned increment, where will the Government's share come from and the Government needs the money?"

Such taxation of the unearned increment then will have little or no effect in freeing land for use: it has had little or no effect of that kind in Germany.

The danger to land value taxation now is not that it can be opposed but that it is likely to be perverted if we do not proclaim the "right to the use of the Earth" instead of the right to the unearned increment.

Like the income tax, the transfer taxes on increased land values look so reasonable that they will be harder to do away with than our present hodge-podge "plan."

Personally I would rather see our pre-