

Selkirk, a town about 25 miles north of Winnipeg, with a population of 3,200, and the oldest town in the Province, will apply to the legislature for power to raise its revenue by means of land value taxation. The decision to do so was reached at a recent joint meeting of the Town Council and the Board of Trade.

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The result of the reciprocity negotiations with the United States is received with mixed feelings. Any step, however faltering, in the direction of free trade is a welcome one; but the farmers had demanded free admission of agricultural implements, and the reduction is only from 17½ to 15 per cent. The free admission of vegetables and fruit will be very welcome in Winnipeg and the other mid-west cities and towns.

SEYMOUR J. FARMER.

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THE COMMON LIFE IN SWITZERLAND.*

Switzerland.

In my old home in Switzerland, where I have had time and opportunity to investigate land ownership, I found laws and customs practically the same as they were over fifty years ago when I left there and as they had been centuries before.

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In the Gemeinde Buchs, with over 4,000 inhabitants, there are 600 Vollburgers who own collectively the community land—1,227 acres of valley land, 490 acres of timber land and 4,290 acres of Alp land. The Alp land is pasture land high on the mountain above timber line.

Vollburger or full citizenship is inherited, belongs to married men or their widows, and entitles them to a share of the community land. Single men obtain one-fourth portion after the age of 24. As soon as a man marries he obtains a full portion.

There are many citizens who enjoy political rights since there are no difficulties in obtaining political citizenship, but this does not entitle them to communal property rights.

The management of communal land and property is conducted by a council of five members elected by male Vollburgers. The political or civil affairs and school management are also controlled each by a council of five members elected by direct vote of all citizens. Church affairs are conducted by the members of the respective churches, who pay their share of church tax according to the amount of taxable property they own.

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High up in the Alps where the most nutritious grasses grow cows are sent for summer pasture. The entire business of milking, making butter and cheese, taking care of the cattle and keeping buildings in repair has been conducted on the co-operative plan for centuries.

The timber lands are mostly on very steep slopes and gullies, so steep that without the utmost

*The writer of this letter from the country of his birth is a Kansas farmer, a disciple of Henry George, who has served repeatedly in the legislature of Kansas, part of the time as a Senator.

care in cutting and replanting the small amount of soil with a large portion of rocks would be washed down the valley leaving the bare mountain sides, and destroying valley land by covering it with gravel. Since 1897 the supervision of forest land has become national, and no timber can be cut, without consent of the federal authorities, and must be replanted again according to regulations. Even private forests are under the same regulations, and no reduction of forest area is allowed.

The valley land is mostly under cultivation except a portion which is too low; this is planted to timber (Erlen), which grows very fast and makes a fair fuel. When the water is high gates can be opened to let the muddy water flow in, and sediment is deposited so the land will gradually become very good agricultural land. In the meantime it brings a fair income through the growing of timber.

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To accommodate the growing population many building lots have been sold from the communal land. They are sold at auction to the highest bidder. From the proceeds of these the Gemeinde has a fund of over 200,000 francs, from which the interest is used for the public good.

Agriculture and dairying could not support the present population. Embroidery brings in more money than agriculture. Nearly every family has an embroidery machine. The work is usually done in the home, and the majority still work their portion of the communal land. Most people own their own homes with a small garden. No one is very rich according to American ideas, and scarcely any entirely destitute.

While in St. Gallen, the capital of my old Kanton, our consul told me that on the embroidery exported last year from there to the United States, duty to the amount of \$11,000,000 was paid. The tariff is 60 per cent. How would it affect the mass of the people in the United States and the embroidery workers in Switzerland if we changed our method of raising federal taxes from indirect to direct?

M. SENN.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF PROTECTION.

Thomson, Ga., Jan. 25.

Let me call your attention to the fact that we have at last ample evidence to overthrow the infernal tariff system by assailing it on Constitutional grounds.

In his official message to Congress, President Taft has confessed that the true purpose of the new law was to enable manufacturers to "pay high wages," and to "reap reasonable profit" on the capital invested in this branch of industry.

Without entering into the question of alleged high wages and alleged reasonable profits, let me call your attention to the legal effect of his amazing admission—an admission never before made in this official, Constitutional way.

The Congress has no legal right to legislate higher wages into any field of employment. It has no authority to enact profits, reasonable or otherwise, into any favored province of production. It can only levy customs duties to raise revenues for the support of the government.

Inasmuch as tariff bills invariably carry, in the preamble, the fiction that they are meant for revenue purposes, lawyers have thought that they could not be attacked on Constitutional grounds. That has never been my own opinion. I have always believed that, if the question were raised, the courts would hold that the purpose of the law would be determined by the character of its provisions—not by the name given in the preamble. Thus, a disbursement might be named a bill to raise revenue, but no court would stultify itself by holding that the preamble should govern its decision as to the true nature of the law.

In my judgment, the courts would admit in evidence not only the whole of the Payne-Aldrich bill itself—with its confiscatory or prohibitive rates—but also the drawback provision, the punitive features, and the discretionary powers delegated to the President. Furthermore, the speeches made by the Senators and Representatives whose votes passed the bill. Lastly and conclusively, the official admission of the President whose approval made the law.

It seems to me that the case against it is absolutely impregnable.

As you know, I'm not a Single-taxer; but as between the damnable, indirect tariff system and that of Henry George, I infinitely prefer the latter.

THOS. E. WATSON.

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HENRY GEORGE IN SPAIN.

Chicago, Feb. 4.

The daily of Cadiz, Spain, Jan. 13, reports a meeting of "The Republican Center of Instruction" in that city on the evening of Jan. 12. This center is composed of clubs. It was called to discuss the theories of production, rent, interest, wages, capital, and labor, as explained in the works of Henry George. Mr. Antonio Albendin, the leading single taxer of Spain, was the speaker of the evening, and is reported as having handled the subjects in an able manner, receiving much applause and a vote of thanks at the termination of his speech.

C. L. LOGAN.

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HORACE GREELEY AND THE TRIBUNE.

Sheboygan, Wis., Feb. 3.

Reading in your issue of Feb. 3 the story of Greeley's broken heart (p. 98) brings to my memory the fact that the story as you relate it was known at the time of Greeley's death wherever admirers of Greeley lived. It was told me by my father in 1872 and shortly thereafter many of the old subscribers of the Tribune discontinued the paper because of what was considered the perfidy of Whitelaw Reid. Following Mr. Reid's career since, I have never been able to overcome the feeling that his advancement was largely due to his betrayal of Greeley.

PAUL T. KREZ.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, February 7, 1911.

Progressive Republicans at Work.

The Constitutional amendment providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people (p. 35), having been placed in the order of unfinished business in the Senate, the following address to progressive Republican Governors, members of State legislatures, Mayors, national and State committeemen, officers of civic organizations, and other persons of influence in communities large and small, has been issued by Senator Bourne of Oregon as president of the National League:

The joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote will be acted upon by the United States Senate within a few days. It is not certain that it will receive the necessary two-thirds vote. It is certain that 90 per cent of the people are in favor of it. Will the Senate represent public sentiment upon this question? Do you know how your Senators stand? If their position is in doubt wire and write them. Bring the force of public opinion to bear upon them. It is a critical time. Your influence may determine the result. Wire them today.

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The National organization has now been completed, with Frederic C. Howe of Ohio as secretary, and with offices at Washington. Literature is being issued to promote and assist in the organization of local Leagues.

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The Fight for Direct Legislation.

A movement to prevent the next step for direct legislation in Illinois (p. 105), was begun by the Civic Federation of Chicago last week. This federation was organized several years ago by Ralph M. Easley, who left its secretaryship to form the National Civic Federation. Since that time the Chicago organization has not been obtrusive in civic affairs until recently, when the popular demand for the Initiative and Referendum, on the Peoria Conference petition (p. 106), was carried by 447,908 to 128,398. Half of its executive board then called a banquet meeting for the 4th to oppose the reform. One of the most prominent