

NEWS DOMESTIC

RHODE ISLAND.

CHURCHES INSTITUTING CLASSES IN ECONOMICS—BOLTON HALL IN PROVIDENCE—RHODE ISLAND MAY BE WON WITH HARD PERSISTENT FIGHTING.

Several of the churches here have instituted classes in economics as part of their regular work. Among these is the First Baptist, the society of which Roger Williams was pastor and the oldest church society in the city. There are also the Beneficent Church on Weybosset St., a Congregational society, and the Church of the Mediator, the latter of the Universalist persuasion. The Church of the Mediator is conducting a course of lectures on Socialism. Two Sunday evenings have been given to advocates of Socialism and two to their opponents. The managers of the lecture course have extended an invitation to the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association to furnish a speaker for one of their Sunday evening meetings and the Association has accepted the invitation. Mr. Bolton Hall was the speaker, on Sunday evening, January 3rd, 1909. Readers of the REVIEW will envy the congregation that has the privilege of listening to an address on taxation by Mr. Hall. The class at the Beneficent Church is called "Beneficent Church Social Institute for the study of vital social problems in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

It becomes more and more manifest as time goes on that "the gulf that separates the doctrine that man is endowed by his creator with certain inalienable rights—rights that no government gave and that no government can rightfully take away, and the doctrine that "rights are gracious grants from a sovereign government to a subject people", is too wide to be bridged.

These who hold to the one must deny to the other; there is no middle ground. The one means liberty and the other slavery and the republic can no more endure now, "half slave and half free" than in the time of Lincoln. The one means Democracy and the other Socialism. Between these two the choice must be made and that soon.

Things cannot go on as at present indefinitely. Discontent is making itself heard on all sides and unless relief is given it will soon make itself felt. The socialists are very active. They have an organization of nearly if not quite 50,000 dues paying members which gives them a working fund, and they are using it with telling effect. Single Taxers also should be in the field which is ripe and ready for the harvest. All that is needed to secure acceptance of the Single Tax doctrine is that it should be presented alongside the socialist doctrine to open minded men. What our central body should do is to organize the Single Taxers into a dues paying membership as the socialists are organized; as the trade unionists are organized; as Mr. Van Cleave's society is organized; as every body which seeks to accomplish a particular object is organized and must be organized to accomplish its purpose. The agitation here about, so far as the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association is concerned, has been quiet since election. A bill is being prepared for presentation to the incoming legislature, along the lines of the bill presented last year. This proposition will permit any town or city to raise its revenue for local purposes from any class or classes of property. Whether it will receive greater consideration than did that of last year, remains to be seen. Such propaganda work as has been done here has been more or less sporadic; this of course has been inevitable from lack of means to inaugurate and maintain a systematic campaign for the education of public opinion. This is a work which will require the co-operation of Single Taxers generally. If there are a sufficient number of Single Taxers in the country willing to co-operate to that end, that it may not be necessary to travel three-fourths of the circumference of the earth for an object lesson to illustrate the truth of their theory, it will be much easier to get that result right here in Rhode Island than anywhere else in these United States. Not that it is an easy matter anywhere. It will take long, persistent and intelligent application. Set backs will be encountered, but if consistently pursued, there is no doubt of success. Rhode Island has a small area

and a large population, about 350 to the square mile, so that there may be attained a maximum of result with a minimum of effort. If the Single Taxers of the United States would free themselves from the reproach of having accomplished nothing practical to demonstrate the efficiency of Mr. George's remedy for poverty in this, Mr. George's native land, the opportunity presents itself here and now in Rhode Island.

Our city is now passing through a scandal which has developed in connection with the purchase of some land for school purposes. Early in 1906 the city was in the market for a parcel of land on which to build a school house. One McKendall hearing of this approached a member of the committee having the matter in charge, and offered a certain plot for \$11,000. The committee man was not favorably impressed, apparently, but in the course of a few days McKendall was approached by a broker who claimed to represent a Mr. Landegon, who was claimed to be a prospective customer for Mr. Kendall's lot. These negotiations resulted in the sale of the property to Mr. Landegon for \$10,000. Two or three days afterward the property was transferred to the city for \$16,500. This story has been current on the street for the last two years, but the first official notice it received was in a message from the Mayor to the city council on the 3rd instant in which the facts were recited and a committee of investigation advised. This committee was appointed, the investigation has been held and the facts substantiated, but whether anything further will come of it is uncertain.

GEO. D. LIDDELL.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

OUR readers will regret to learn that A. Freeland, whose long and unselfish work for the cause has endeared him to all members of our movement, has lost by fire a wagon load of letters, tracts, books, including a complete file of the REVIEW—the accumulation of twenty years as an active propagandist.

FROM GOVERNOR GARVIN.

GOVERNOR GARVIN WRITES OF THE WORK IN THIS STATE—GROWTH OF WOONSOCKET UNDER THE EXEMPTION OF MANUFACTURING PLANTS—THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

With Election day, November 3rd, our open air meetings came to a close. For five months on every week day evening, except perhaps four or five when the weather was inclement, the Single Tax was expounded at Cathedral Square, Providence and frequently elsewhere.

During November and December meetings have been addressed in various localities, the most interesting situation being in the city of Woonsocket.

Through the National Women's Single Tax League an invitation was extended to me by the Fortnightly Club of Woonsocket to give "The Moral Side of the Single Tax," as one of its course of lectures. This I did on November 20th, there being a large attendance of women, including the wives and daughters of leading citizens of the city. An unusual degree of interest was shown and very pertinent questions asked.

In order to understand the significance of the Woonsocket meetings, it should be understood that more than any other municipality that city has availed itself of the law, passed in 1892, permitting any town or city to exempt from taxation for a period of ten years any new manufacturing establishment. Some seven or eight of its largest concerns have therefore been exempted, two of them for a period of fifteen years, although the law does not so specify. The population of the city has increased from 20,000 in 1890 to 32,000 in 1905.

About half of the population of Woonsocket consists of French Canadians and their decedents, one of the number having just been elected governor of the state. This gentleman, Mr. Pothier, has been the most active of any one in the State in inducing new industries to come here under the ten year exemption law. Through his agency several manufacturing plants have