

NEWS—DOMESTIC.

RHODE ISLAND.

NONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ADOPTED—THE REDISTRICTING AMENDMENT IN THE INTERESTS OF PRIVILEGE—ADDRESS TO LABOR.

None of the recommendations contained in the report of the "Joint Special Committee on the Taxation Laws of the State of Rhode Island," which was appointed by the legislature of 1909 and whose report was presented to the General Assembly at its January session, 1910, has as yet been enacted into law. As the report was printed it contained two valuable recommendations, and only two. These were as already printed in the REVIEW: First, "The separate listing of realty and personalty liable to the general property tax, under the headings of land, improvements, tangible personalty, and intangible personalty;" and Second: "Complete assessors' plats as a part of the public records in cities and towns." These two recommendations would furnish data from which an intelligent analysis of the situation could be made, but when the taxation bill which the committee reported to the legislature appeared, these two features were absent; they had been "lost in the shuffle."

The committee's bill passed the lower house at the January session, but failed in the senate; that is, it was laid over until the special session in August, when the committee was continued and the whole matter referred to the next legislature.

What the next legislature will do with the bill is problematical. The legislature has heretofore consisted of a house of 72 representatives, and a senate consisting of one member from each city and town, 38 in all. At the election in November, 1909, the people adopted an amendment to the constitution dividing the state into 100 districts for representation in the lower house, and one member is to be elected by the people in each district, no town or city to have more than one-fourth of the whole number of representatives, and each town

to have at least one. This gives Providence 25 of the 100 representatives, but where before when it had one-sixth or 12 of the 72 representatives they were elected on a general ticket, and each elector voted for all of the twelve, they are now to be elected by districts and each elector will vote for one. The senate remains unchanged, consisting as before of one member for each city and town.

This redistricting amendment is something that the "interests" have been trying to get through for years. It simply adds to the number of rotten boroughs that they can control or that they think it will be possible to control. Under the old system it was always possible that the opposition might gain the upper hand, in the lower house at least, but the adoption of this amendment has made such a contingency very, very remote. The "interests" have always had the senate; twenty small towns with less than 8 per centum of the people electing a majority of that body, so that it has never been possible to enact any legislation to which the "interests" were opposed, but a recalcitrant lower house might some time prevent legislation that they desired.

This is the danger that the "interests" are confident has been removed by the adoption of this amendment. And as long as the electorate permits itself to be hypnotised by a party name, this confidence of the "interests" will be justified.

The following communication is being sent to every labor organization in the state by the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association: "To organized labor in Rhode Island: An important election is approaching. On the complexion of the new Congress and of the new Legislature, much depends for those who produce the wealth upon which society subsists. Whether or no Labor shall receive a more equitable share of its production rests finally with those to whom is entrusted the law-making power, but to whom the law-making power shall be entrusted rests with Labor itself. It behooves Labor, then, to see to it that those candidates for seats in the law-making bodies who are friendly to labor are supported, and those who are inimical are opposed. And the

time to act is now. Partisanship should be forgotten. Pledge the candidates of all parties in writing. Support those who pledge themselves to support the measures which Labor demands, and oppose those who refuse to make such pledges, regardless of their party label. Form clubs in every District for the purpose of questioning candidates. Labor has the strength, if rightly used, to absolutely control the governments, both State and National. Why, then, does not Labor wisely use its strength?

"The Rhode Island Tax Reform Association will send a speaker or speakers on this subject to any organization that will communicate with this office. Let us get together and use the privileges that we have to secure the rights of which we are deprived."

What response the communication will elicit will develop later. Meetings are being held nightly, addressed by local speakers. The audiences are large and seemingly interested. There have also been held every Sunday, during the summer, meetings at the two leading shore resorts—Crescent Park and Rocky Point. These meetings have also been large and the auditors have listened attentively, and there have been many manifestations of approval of the doctrine set forth, which of course has been the equal right of all men to the use of the earth.

The Peoples' Forum—the Sunday name of the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association—is growing to be an institution. Time was when the Monday papers used to carry an item something like this: "The audience at the meeting of the Peoples' Forum, last night, in Tax Reform Hall, comprised eleven men and two women. Mr. So-and-So, told what he knew about this-or-that," but the papers don't carry that kind of an item any more. The capacity of our room is about 100, and it is filled at every meeting, and often overflows into the corridor. I am enclosing for such use as the editor of the *REVIEW* may see fit to make of it the *Tribune* report of the meeting of Sunday, August 11th.

But what's the use? If one were to sit down and try to contemplate the wall of ignorance, indifference and prejudice that

must be demolished before the right can prevail, one would surely go insane. It isn't to be supposed that human nature differs much, but it sometimes seems that if there is anywhere under the sun a more sodden, sordid, soulless community than Rhode Island, it has yet to be discovered. Compared with it the "Man with the Hoe" is an intelligent giant. It can be described in a very few words, so that its condition will be plain to all men, and here is the description:

If United States senators were elected by the people and Nelson Aldrich were the candidate to succeed himself, he would be triumphantly returned. And Why should he not? He has faithfully represented this constituency in that body for nearly 30 years. He is a typical Rhode Islander. Need more be said?—GEORGE D. LIDDELL, Providence, R. I.

FROM EX-GOV. L. F. C. GARVIN.

In my last communication to the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW* I stated that we were anticipating the coming to Rhode Island of John Z. White. Duty, however, called him West instead of East, and his time has been spent, seemingly to excellent purpose, in the embryonic states of New Mexico and Arizona.

In spite of our disappointment as to Mr. White, we have not been idle here. As was the case two years ago we were enabled to take advantage of the shore resorts during the summer outing season. So Sunday after Sunday during July and August, Col. Liddell, Mr. Chase, myself and others, spoke to the crowds at the two most popular resorts on Narragansett Bay. The meetings were better attended and the interest shown much greater than was the case in 1908.

Our evening meetings in the best location in the city of Providence, have continued every night and have proved the most successful ever held.

The Peoples' Forum, held every Sunday evening in Tax Reform Hall, to our surprise have been well attended all summer, as they were in the winter. From these meetings has sprung a movement for ques-