

While thoughtfully conservative, the citizens of the "Old Granite State" are not slow to adopt methods which give promise of bettering political conditions; so the advocates of the Initiative and Referendum look forward confidently to the Convention, feeling sure that the wisdom of the adoption of these improvements to our system of government will appeal to the best judgment of the delegates.

GEORGE H. DUNCAN.



CAUSES OF POVERTY IN CHINA.

Christian Hospital, Nanking, China, February 25.

In her review of Edward Alsworth Ross's "The Changing Chinese," which appeared in the Public of January 19, on page 67, the reviewer, Miss Grace Isabel Colbron, thus summarizes Professor Ross's handling of the causes of poverty in China, with comment thereon:

In one respect, however, this clear-sighted economist fails to explain the terrible poverty of the Chinese masses. He claims that it is not due to the system of land tenure, as most Chinese farmers own their own little plot of land rent free. But in a later chapter he tells of the aversion of the "upper classes" to work of all kinds, tells of the pitiful attempts of even the hard-worked coolie to pretend he is a gentleman of leisure when he has earned a few pence more than usual; he tells of the long finger nails which are the badge of freedom from labor. Now, where a large class refuses to work in any way, refuses to render service to the community, and yet it is this very class that lives in luxury—may not this be an explanation of the heart-rending poverty of unold uncounted millions? This, and not altogether a too great pressure of population against the producing power of the soil, as Professor Ross seems to imply? How does one class live in luxury except from the labor of the others?

The true answer to the last question, as the reviewer evidently surmised, is, Through landlordism. The "upper classes" referred to as hating work, are officials and landlords. Half the farmers are tenants, and poverty in China is chiefly due to two causes, landlordism and the miseries of famines.

W. E. MACKLIN.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

A GROWING TENDENCY.

Port Arthur, Texas.

The following editorial from a recent number of the Beaumont (Texas) Enterprise is significant:

When you render your property for taxes this year just put about twenty-five per cent more value to the land and deduct it from the improvements. The total being the same, there can be no complaint from the board of equalization, and in all probability the board will be glad to see the change. By rendering the land at high value the owners of improved property can set the example for increasing the value of the vacant property and thereby eventually bring about a reduction in the tax required of improved property.

That editorial represents a tendency to soften taxes on improvements in an informal way, the discouraging effect of such taxes having come to be better recognized through the teachings of Single-tax advocates these many years.

In this city, Port Arthur, 20 miles from Beau-

mont, the assessors themselves appraise improvements for taxation at 50% of their real value, land at 100% and merchants' stocks at 75%, this being also a recognition of Singletax principles.

It is quite possible that a request for further examples of such practices would elicit information going to show quite a movement around the country along these informal lines.

O. OWEN.



CURRENCY AND INTEREST RATES.

Atlantic, Iowa.

There is a very general opinion that a low rate of interest would be a benefit to the common people. Along with this, generally goes the idea that a larger volume of currency would lower the rate. It does lower the rate temporarily. But if this lower rate does not cause the surplus currency to flow to points where the rate is higher, it tends to distribute it through the country and hence to increase the number of buyers in general and at the same time to decrease the number who wish to sell or who are forced to do so. Hence a general rise in prices. The rise in prices calls for more money for the same business, and the rising prices cause more business. So the new demand for money causes the rate of interest to swing back higher than before, but only temporarily. Writers for The Public persistently ignore the truth above stated.

HENRY HEATON.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, March 26, 1912.

La Follette versus Roosevelt.

At the North Dakota primaries on the 19th first indications were had of the triangular contest in the Republican party over the Presidential nomination which is now at white heat. The candidates were President Taft, ex-President Roosevelt and Senator La Follette. La Follette was nominated by a majority over both the others. Following is the vote as reported by the Associated Press on the 22d, with returns for 350 voting precincts out of 1,800 missing and not expected until the official count:

La Follette	28,620
Roosevelt	19,101
Taft	1,543



In response to the questions of a newspaper interviewer and as reported on the 21st, Senator La Follette said of this primary:

The returns so far reported from North Dakota are confirmatory of the impressions formed in a

three days' campaign in that State. Never in my experience have I known the people of any commonwealth more profoundly aroused than in North Dakota. They thoroughly understand the issue. Sentiment does not enter into the result. The people of that State could not be influenced by any attempt to make a personal issue. I am convinced that the situation in North Dakota is typical of the progressive movement in all the progressive States. The politicians in some instances may have been stampeded, but the people generally have not been, and will not be. They know the great problems that confront us have not been aggressively and constructively met by either the Roosevelt or Taft administrations. They do not want the experience of that period repeated. They want to go forward.

You will find in all Progressive territory protest against the surrender of Progressive movement into the hands of soft-shell Progressives and reactionaries. The people are not following the politicians in their hasty jump to what they believed to be a band wagon. The result in North Dakota is proof that the great body of the people are not willing to sacrifice the organization and movement which has cost a quarter of a century of struggle to a policy of expediency and compromise. They want to make headway in the solution of the social and economic problems that confront us. They demand deliverance from the burden of the thousands of millions of over-capitalization of the great transportation, tariff, trust and money monopolies. Political manipulation may have succeeded in obscuring the issues and bringing about temporary disorganization of the Progressive forces here at the capital, but the people throughout the country never saw more clearly, never were more strongly united for progress. In devoting my time so largely to public discussion of the issues throughout the country, I am confident that I shall be rendering my best public service at this time. No substantial legislation of importance to the people can be expected until both the Executive and Congress shall hear from the country in a way to make it understood that the Progressive cause is the greatest power in the land, and that it is still one of principle, not expediency. The time for talk has gone by, the time to do is at hand. I shall campaign from now on until the last delegate is elected, in the same spirit, with the same definiteness as to principle, and with the same confidence in result as in North Dakota.



Special Session of the Illinois Legislature.

Governor Deneen called on the 25th a special session of the Illinois legislature for the 26th. It is understood to be for the purpose of passing an emergency measure permitting Presidential preference primaries. Thirteen objects are enumerated in the call, but the Governor expects action prior to the primaries of April 9th on the Presidential preference question only, the requisite two-thirds of the members having expressed themselves to him as favoring such primaries. The thirteen objects specified in the Governor's call are as follows:

(1) To amend the primary election law. (2) To amend the election law. (3) To make an appropri-

ation for the repair of the State capitol building. (4) To make an appropriation for the repair of the buildings at the State fair grounds. (5) To amend the State insurance law. (6) To propose an amendment to article 14, section 2, of the Constitution, permitting the adoption of more than one amendment to the Constitution at the same time. (7) To amend the existing laws so as to confer greater powers upon boards of park commissioners and particularly to authorize such boards to condemn riparian and littoral rights as well as lands and property, and otherwise acquire the same. (8) To make an appropriation for the maintenance of the State grain inspection department. (9) To make an appropriation for the maintenance of the department of State factory inspection. (10) To amend clause 50, section 1, of the act providing for the general expenses of the State government, by providing additional appropriations thereunder. (11) To make an appropriation for the medical department of the University of Illinois. (12) To make an appropriation for the maintenance of the soil survey and for other agricultural departments and purposes. (13) To make an appropriation for the payment of the expenses of this extraordinary session of the General Assembly.



Milwaukee Politics.

An extraordinary political situation exists in Milwaukee. The Republican party has virtually dissolved for local purposes and melted into the Democratic party. At the direct primaries on the 19th two Republicans contested for the Democratic nomination for Mayor, and one of them was nominated and will lead the Democratic ticket at the election on the 2d of April. Following is the result of the primary vote on candidates for Mayor:

Socialist party:

Mayor Emil Seidel (unopposed).....17,229

Democratic party:

Gerhard A. Bading (a Republican)...26,248

William J. Carey (a Republican).....14,875

The contest for Mayor will therefore be between Emil Seidel, the present Socialist Mayor, and Gerhard A. Bading, a Republican with the Democratic nomination. For City Treasurer and Comptroller the Democrats have nominated in each instance a Democrat whose only opponent will be a Socialist. All these Democratic nominations were made under a bargain between the organizations of the Democratic and the Republican parties in co-operation with the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. The Democrats were to nominate a Republican for Mayor and a Democrat for each of the other two offices, for the purpose of defeating the Socialists by uniting all opposing elements. Republicans voted as Democrats at the primaries. [See vol. xiv, pages 348, 436.]



Taxation in Houston.

Through the patient and thoughtful service of J. J. Pastoriza, the Commissioner of Houston (un-