

enlistment is an oath of bondage. It brands the man who takes it as of a lower caste. You could exhaust the possibilities of useful training in a month. After that you would be merely teaching them to salute and do routine drills that are unnecessary. Caste is fostered by the idle barrack life."

Major Harlee is a Single Taxer and a good one, so his views on the military system and his courage in stating them can be understood.

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## THE REFORM WORK OF FREDERICK F. INGRAM

(*For the Review*)

By **JUDSON GRENELL**

(See frontispiece)

Some years ago Detroit, Mich., had a voluntary association entitled "The Progressive Alliance." Frederick F. Ingram was president and Isaac N. Payne was secretary. The office was in the Whitney block and thither those with progressive tendencies gravitated to give what aid they could in the work of educating the people in (1) direct legislation, (2) home rule, (3) efficient non-partizan civil service, and (4) the public ownership of public utilities.

Mr. Ingram was head and front of this organization, which had no constitution or by-laws, no board of directors and no dues. In these respects it was particularly anarchistic—a voluntary association to which no one was tied and which tied no one to it.

A series of tracts were printed and circulated by tens of thousands, most of them written by Mr. Ingram himself. While the Alliance did a great work in making familiar the particular subjects on which it expended its energies, it did a still greater work immediately preceeding the calling of the Michigan Constitutional Convention, by obtaining the signatures of a majority of members elect pledging the subscribers' support to the initiative and referendum, and usually in most specific and satisfactory language.

Mr. Ingram was a member of the convention, and after the fight for the initiative became hot, he let the rumor circulate that he had these letters on file in his desk. The result was that one morning the desk was found broken open and the drawers rifled.

"It was fortunate that every night I took my file letters to my room," Mr. Ingram told me, "otherwise I might have lost these letters with their important signatures."

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I found Mr. Ingram one of the best, if not the best, informed manufacturer and employer of labor in Detroit on economic problems. No phase

of the many-sided problem of the production and distribution of wealth was unfamiliar to him, and, unlike most manufacturers who are not interested in subjects outside their particular business, he could see matters from both employers' and employees' standpoints.

In one respect Mr. Ingram reminded me of the late Tom. L. Johnson. He believes in full and free competition and in abolishing all tariff restrictions, yet he takes advantage of any law that gives him a monopoly, just as Tom L. Johnson, while working for the abolition of tariffs on iron and steel, still took advantage of tariffs on his products to obtain as high a price as possible.

"In a competitive market under normal conditions, one must do as his competitors do, or he will go under," said Mr. Ingram to me on one occasion. "He can pay no higher wages than do his competitors and he must take advantage of all the aids to financial success to which they have access. But while doing this, he will be false to his ideals if he does not strive to throttle monopoly, in whatever form it may appear, and to give all an equal chance in obtaining a living."

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Mr. Ingram is a good talker. With his friends around one of the tables of the Detroit Board of Commerce restaurant he gets off many pat sayings. Asked why he was a municipal ownership man, for instance, he remarked:

"I believe in municipal ownership of public utilities because public business should not be transacted for private gain. The service given is seldom adequate, and the charges are always excessive. The reason for the inadequate service and the excessive charges is that there has been thrust into the public business the matter of private gain."

Mr. Ingram was appointed a member of the Detroit Public Lighting Commission three years after the plant was installed. Its early success was owing to the energy and fine administrative ability of Alexander Dow, who had to fight for everything he got. Mr. Dow finally resigned because of better personal opportunities, becoming the head of the consolidated electric light interests of Detroit, which up to that time was a competitor of three electric light companies.

When Mr. Ingram took hold, the public lighting plant had not yet gained the public's confidence. Still in a formative condition, it was regarded with indifference by the common council and the board of estimates, and appropriations were made for it grudgingly. Then came a clash between the Public Lighting Commission and the private utility companies, and the Public Lighting Commission had to fight for its life. Mr. Ingram was compelled to assume personally the whole burden, the other five commissioners assuming a passive position and permitting him to fight. The public press was dubious and yielded little or no support.

The *Electrical World* of New York city sent experts to Detroit to examine

books and plant, and attacked from all angles. In the end the afternoon newspapers closed the controversy with splendid editorials, saying that Mr. Ingram had vindicated the plant and himself, and proved the wisdom of its establishment. Even the *Electrical World* acknowledged that Mr. Ingram had disproved its charges, but had not proven that public ownership of public utilities ought to be adopted as a municipal policy. He had only shown that six capable business men could be found in Detroit who were fools enough to devote all of their talents and much of their time gratis to running a lighting plant for the rest of the city, a situation that no one would be foolish enough to claim could exist anywhere else.

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While the service Mr. Ingram gave as lighting commissioner was important, the greatest service Mr. Ingram ever did the public was when he was a member of the Michigan Constitutional Convention and worked for a section allowing the public to initiate constitutional amendments, instead of permitting a third of the legislature to block all attempts to amend the fundamental law. In the end the initiative was defeated, although it carried on the first reading. Its defeat would probably have been overwhelming had not Mr. Ingram had possession of the letters of the members pledging themselves to vote for it. As it was, its defeat was because of the defection of three members.

"The right of the people to initiate constitutional amendments, is as old as their right to approve or reject them," Mr. Ingram told his fellow members. "Reactionaries—so called 'conservatives'—protest, on the plea that it will destroy our republican form of government to allow the people to initiate laws. These conservatives invariably have some other kind of representative government in mind, not the people, but of some self-assuming class."

"My last words, the last day of the consideration of the initiative," Mr. Ingram tells me, "was a declaration that the foes of the initiative had made a mistake; that the initiative they were about to defeat was difficult to operate and uncertain in its provisions, because of the numerous amendments that had been forced into the proposal. If it were adopted, there would probably be no more attempts in this direction for many years; but if defeated, within ten years the people would get not only the initiative, but one that was workable, and with many less signatures than was required by the constitutional convention initiative." And this is just what happened, only the time required was six instead of ten years.

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Mr. Ingram believes the taxation of site values, which are created by the public collectively, would afford sufficient funds to run an economically conducted government, and that all taxes on industry and enterprise should be abolished. "Such a system would boom all legitimate business," says

Mr. Ingram, "and be bad for land speculators only. It would release millions of money for legitimate enterprises, and provide a comparatively steady market for labor and labor's products."

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Mr. Ingram is also a "farmer," with a considerable "plantation" under cultivation on Grosse Isle, in the Detroit river, a few miles below the city. He is a member of the Grange, and delights in telling his "brother farmers" why they are exploited, and how they can recover their "inheritance." And when he visits Granges, which he does on invitation, he always leaves behind him converts to his theory of taxation—the Single Tax and freedom from monopoly.

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## BY-MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

By THE EDITOR

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On another page of this issue will be found a California letter which details the failure of the two divisions of Single Taxers to get together in that State. The Great Adventure group will present for adoption in 1918 an amendment nearly identical with that of 1916 which resulted in an affirmative vote of 260,000 against 576,000 in the negative. Already the campaign has begun. A million copies of Henry George's explanation of the Single Tax will be circulated. That splendid patriarch of the movement, Judge James G. Maguire, is the Director-General of the Great Adventure forces. Their enthusiasm is at least contagious. Of this sort of enthusiasm there has been too little in recent years. The fiscal side of the Single Tax has been emphasized to the exclusion of its moral and revolutionary side, and whatever eccentricities, or seeming exaggerations, may crop out in the Great Adventure movement these are but the natural recoil from the timid and conservative spirit which has characterized so much recent agitation.

The friends of the Local Option plan, in refutation of the arguments of the Great Adventure group, claim that all successful attempts to apply the Single Tax anywhere have been by the "piece" rather than the "whole loaf," and this influences them to stick to present methods. They believe the Home Rule method is the very best and shortest way to get the Single Tax. They point out that the adoption of Local Option Single Tax in a number of suburban cities in New So. Wales paved the way for its adoption in Sidney, and they point to the fact that several counties in California in 1914 gave majorities for the Home Rule Amendment.

A recent development of the movement is the growing hospitality of the farmers. The government of North Dakota has passed into the hands of the Farmers' Nonpartisan League and the governor, Lynn J. Frazier, has