

THE MOVEMENT IN THE PROVINCES
OF MANITOBA AND SAS-
KATCHEWAN.

SOMETHING OF ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY,
GATHERED FROM THE OFFICIAL RECORDS.

(For *The Review*.)

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(Concluded from last number.)

AN ACT TO IMPOSE A TAX ON WILD LANDS.

Her Majesty, by and with the consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Manitoba enact as follows: 1. From and after the passing of this Act, an annual tax of five cents per acre shall be assessed and levied upon all save as hereinafter exempted, that is to say, the said tax shall not be assessed or levied in respect of the following land: Dominion and Provincial lands; lands within the limits of any town or village; Indian lands, church, hospital and school lands; lands occupied under Dominion Homestead law; lands upon which permanent improvements to the extent of five dollars an acre were made; land *bona fide* owned by any resident householder in the Province, and whether he resided thereon or not; land held under any lease or leases for timber cutting, or grazing purposes; lands held by the Canada Pacific Railroad Company; "land belonging to the inhabitants of this Province who go out on the prairies of the Northwest territories, and who are commonly called Winterers."

It is stipulated in the Act that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may from time to time appoint a collector in each county, township or parish as he shall see fit, and such county, township, or parish shall thereafter be held as Land Tax Districts. The duty of the collector requires him to make out a list of all lands liable to the land tax, describing the lands with names of persons required to pay the tax with the amount to be paid. This list to be deposited for inspection free of charge at some convenient place within the district and a notice of the place of deposit published in the *Official Gazette* and in the local

newspaper nearest to the district. It is also stipulated that land sold for non-payment of taxes could be redeemed within one year by paying an addition of ten per cent. of taxes and costs of sale, etc. and that the absence of the owner shall not invalidate any of the proceedings.

On Friday, July 3, 1874, a proclamation was read by the Clerk to the Legislative Assembly, signed by the Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris and Acting Provincial Secretary, John Norquay, in which the following paragraph appears:

"Now know ye, that the aforesaid Bill, intituled: An Act to impose a Tax on Wild Lands, * * * We have been pleased to declare that the said Bill has received the assent of the Governor-General of Canada in Council, * * *. Of all which our loving subjects are hereby required to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

In an editorial in its issue of March 1, 1873 under the caption of *Wild Land Tax Bill*, the *Manitoba Free Press* said:

"The speech from the throne was calculated to inspire a hope that a check would be placed upon heavy land speculators, and monopolists, by imposition of a wild land tax. The result, however, has sadly disappointed the expectation. Of all the land in the Province held by speculators the Bill only secures the taxation of about 30,000 acres—a mere bagatelle of the whole. It is only the wild lands whose owners are not resident householders of the Province which are to be taxed under this Act. The Hudson's Bay Company's one-twentieth of the whole country, and the lands accruing to the Canada Pacific Railway are specially exempted from the operations of this law. Scarcely could anything more ridiculous be imagined than such an Act. In the first place it does not begin to meet the supposed object; neither is it just. The official reports show that only some 30,000 acres are held by non-residents. Everybody knows that this is but as a drop in the bucket to the whole quantity in the hands of speculators. We fail to comprehend what claims to monopolize the country the resident has over the non-resident. We cannot see that the operations, of

like extent, of the one are less injurious than those of the others. To talk of 30,000 acres being held by non-residents, when it is generally believed that there are single individuals residing in the country who have more than that is absurd. Then there is the Hudson's Company's grant—the most gigantic land speculation in British North America. Is there any good reason why this land should not receive the same treatment as that held by other speculators? We trow not. The Company will hold every acre of it till it will not pay to do so any longer, and till the last possible cent can be extracted for it. The very same may be said of the Pacific Railway grant. People from Ontario are familiar with the hindrance to settlement, and the incubus upon development which the Canada Company's operations were. What these were in that Province, the Hudson's Bay Company aided by such legislation as that under mention, will constitute its land grant in the Northwest, in an intensified form. After all the fuss that has been made about the necessity of the imposition of a wild land tax, to protect the interests of the country, against speculators and monopolists, the production of the Bill under mention is the veriest farce—a sham. It suggests the mountain bringing forth the mouse. The Government and its supporters may, however, rest assured that the industrious settlers of Manitoba will appreciate this partial legislation at its real value. They possess the necessary discernment to see in this a mask under which it is calculated that other men will be made participants in the fruits of their labor, and parasites upon, and stumbling blocks in the way of every settlement.

THE MOVEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN.

The municipal organizations in Saskatchewan are classified as follows: Cities, Towns, Villages, Rural Municipalities, Small Local Improvement Districts and Large Local Improvement Districts. There are only four cities in the Province, viz: Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and Prince Albert. These cities were created under special charters, but in 1908 they were brought under "The City Act," which covers alone the cities and their manage-

ment. This Act provides that the aldermen may be elected by wards or from the city at large. It also empowers the city to have government by commissioners. Taxes are levied on lands, businesses, incomes and special franchises. Prior to 1911 improvements were assessed at sixty per cent. of their value. On March 23, 1911 this Act was amended to read as follows: "At not more than sixty per cent. providing that the assessment of buildings and improvements shall not in any year be reduced below the assessment of the same for the previous year by a greater amount than fifteen per cent. of the actual value of such buildings and improvements." A population of 5,000 is required before a town can secure the status of a city.

A special "Town Act" governs the towns of the province, of which there are 46. A mayor and six councillors from the governing body, and these are elected from the municipality at large. The assessment system is the same as that of the cities, the business tax being adopted for the first time in 1909. A population of 500 is now required to secure the organization of a town.

Villages are governed by "The Village Act." Any hamlet having a population of 50 persons on 640 acres or less may claim the advantages of local self-government. The area of the great majority of villages is 160 acres. A governing body of three councillors is elected annually and one of these is appointed chairman or "overseer" by the council board itself. A secretary-treasurer (who cannot be one of the councillors) is appointed to do the clerical work. Under the Village Act villages are allowed to adopt what is known in the Province as the Single Tax system, when it is shown that two-thirds of the rate payers are in favor of that plan. In February, 1910, out of 145 villages in the Province of Saskatchewan eleven (11) villages had adopted the Single Tax as their basis of assessment, that is, taxes are levied on land values and not on land areas. Some villages object to the exemption of improvements from taxation because it would exempt certain grain elevators from taxation.

Rural Municipalities are governed by the "Rural Municipality Act." These com-

prise an area of 324 square miles or 18 miles square—nine townships each, consisting of 36 square miles. These are laid out in a uniform plan both as to size and shape as far as survey and topographical conditions permit. This is divided into six divisions, each of which is represented by a councillor, while a reeve is elected by the body at large.

Taxes are levied on lands only, irrespective of improvements or valuation. The rate is limited to \$10 per quarter section or $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents per acre, except in cases of a debenture levy which can not exceed 13 cents per acre. Two rural municipalities organized in 1884, Indian Head and South Qu' Appelle are governed by an old municipal ordinance which provides for an assessment on valuation. The Small Local Improvement Districts are governed by "The Local Improvement Act." Their powers are more circumscribed than rural municipalities, and they are prohibited from borrowing on debentures. They are limited in making improvements to the building and improving roads and small bridges. Taxes are levied on land areas only, but they cannot sell land for taxes. They are of the same area as rural municipalities, consisting of nine townships or 18 miles square. At anytime the rate-payers decide by vote if they wish to change to a rural municipality.

Large Local Improvement Districts consist of the provincial constituencies minus any small local improvement or rural municipal organizations therein. They are sparsely settled and have no self-government whatever, taxes being levied by the Provincial government on land areas, the money thus collected being expended within the district from which it is collected. The foregoing enactments, until amended in 1911, were the outcome of an investigation.

In October, 1906, a commission of five was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan to make an investigation as to the laws prevailing in the urban and rural municipalities of the Province and to make such recommendations for future action as would seem to be in the general public interest. Circular letters were sent to every official of the

cities, towns, villages, and local improvement districts, inviting them to attend at least one sitting of the committee either in person or by delegates. An outline of a number of topics giving an indication of the nature and scope of the inquiry to be held was embraced in the circular. In all, the board held sittings at 26 centres. Among the recommendations made by this committee in its report was a definite reduction in buildings and improvements from the "fair and actual value" for the following reason in the language of the commission: "This is obviously good policy as it officially encourages building and improvements; and there is a very general demand for the uniform adoption of the system."

While the Committee recommended for cities and towns a business tax similar to the one in vogue in Regina it stated that provision should be made for allowing villages to shape their assessment on a solely land tax basis. Out of 87 villages in the Province at that time ten villages were exempting improvements and buildings from taxation and were raising their entire revenue from a tax on land values.

The commission in its report says: "There has been a general expression of opinion inclining toward taxation of land values only, but this opinion has in almost every case been qualified by the statement that a sudden change in the manner of assessment would be impossible. It is also felt that a municipality is considerably burdened by the police and fire protection required by land occupied by buildings which it does not have to meet in the case of vacant land." (See page 2 of this issue for rebuttal of this argument.)

The commission recommended for rural municipalities a uniform rate of taxation per acre regardless of valuation, with a maximum rate of $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents per acre or \$10 per quarter section and a minimum rate for 160 acres or less of \$2.00.

The great land monopoly created by a profligate king in 1670 is bearing fruit. In every township throughout the most "fertile belt" of the Province of Saskatchewan the heirs and assigns of the favored cousin and his boon companions hold nearly two square miles so located that

no improvements nor increase of population can be made in any of these townships without enriching these foreign shareholders, who contribute nothing towards adding an iota to the value of this territory. (See article on the Hudsons Bay Company page 1). These shareholders meet annually in the metropolis of the world to hear the report of their chief servant (and he certainly has served them well) and these reports and the discussions thereon when published make not only entertaining reading but are highly edifying. Certainly they will cause even a "stupid farmer" to think. Only in July 11, 1911, this chief servant boasted that in the arid districts of the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan no irrigation could be made without their being able to compel those making the improvement to "stand and deliver."

A learned professor of the University of Pennsylvania, and the compiler of the pretentious Dictionary of Political Economy, says: "The recent tendency among advocates of the Single Tax is to place the weight of their argument upon the principle that the rental value of land justly belongs to the community, rather upon the economic and social blessings to be obtained from the measure. It thus becomes a question of ethics rather than of economics. Economic prosperity could not survive the carrying out of the proposal, as the main spring of individual energy would be broken."—E. T. Devine, Ph. D., University of Pennsylvania, in R. H. Inglis Palgreaves, Dictionary of Political Economy. He can see nothing immoral in getting something for nothing, yet the farmers of this vast territory can readily see it and they are determined to put a stop to it. It would have been a rare treat to have heard the farmers of the Western Canadian provinces reply to the learned professor, had he supported his proposition at the Grain Growers conference held in Winnipeg, Man., in July, 1911. Perhaps the exact language of this chief servant, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, should appear here. He said: "The system under which the Hudson's Bay Company retains its one-twentieth of the fertile belt, namely: sections 8 and 26, in each township * * * enables the Company to dispose of its lands

* * * to much better advantage than it could otherwise have done, it being absolutely necessary for the C. P. R. and other companies before undertaking irrigation to acquire the Hudson's Bay Company's sections in this district to be irrigated, so that you had, I may say, a good pull against any company undertaking irrigation, and you may feel assured that in the price obtained you will have your fair share of the profit."

Among the numerous definitions given the word "pull" in the Century Dictionary are two, viz: 9. To pluck; fleece; cheat. 11. To steal; filch. (Thieves slang.) The brightest farmers of Saskatchewan and Alberta are beginning to analyze the methods for the acquisition of wealth and have decided there are but three ways in which it can be economically acquired, viz: by earning it; by begging it; or by stealing it. The most stupid farmer in Saskatchewan and Alberta would not contend that the Hudson's Bay Company earns the money annually distributed to its shareholders in London from the sale of lands in the arid district of the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The discussions on taxation in the legislative assembly of Saskatchewan in March 1911, give evidence that in the near future all municipalities will raise all their revenues by taxing land values. Amendments were made to "The City Act," and "The Town Act," making it possible for cities and towns to totally exempt improvements and buildings from taxation by a gradual reduction of fifteen per cent each year for four years, improvements having been previously taxed at forty per cent of their value. The premier, in the discussion that followed the introduction of the bill to exempt improvements from taxation said: "The difficulty in making it optional with the cities and towns to make any reduction of the building assessment they saw fit to was the difficulty of framing a by-law to provide for one of several reductions. He was firmly convinced that the majority of the people in the cities were in favor of the land tax system. He suggested that cities be given the right to levy the whole tax on the land, with the proviso that the new system would not come into

force for one or two years. In the meantime many of the aldermen and the councillors would be elected on the tax question."

The leader of the opposition, Mr. Haultain, said that he was in thorough accord with the principle of raising public revenues by taxing land values but he would not urge a radical departure from the present practice. In the case of Regina, he said, he would vote for a Single Tax by-law at once. However, he thought that the people should be given an opportunity to say what they wanted in the matter.

Mr. Bradshaw, a member, in the course of the debate said that he had not the least doubt that every city in the West would in the very near future adopt the Single Tax. In Prince Albert, he said, the people were almost unanimously in favor of it. Cities in his judgment, should not be hampered in any way, and suggested that the towns and cities be allowed to introduce the new system on January 1, 1912. Vancouver had brought about the Single Tax system gradually, he said, and it had been successful there and other cities were now ready for it at a jump. In Prince Albert, the keeping of land out of the market by one rate payer, he said, had done more to retard the growth of Prince Albert than anything else.

Notwithstanding the amended act will require four years before cities can totally exempt improvements from taxation, I have had assurances from the Premier of the Province and the leader of the opposition that in the very near future the total exemption of buildings and improvements from taxation will be made mandatory in all the municipalities of the Province of Saskatchewan. As these two men are pre-eminently the leaders of the two parties and are conceded to be the ablest statesmen and shrewdest politicians in this Province, it is a certainty that they know the sentiment of their constituents and were simply voicing it when they gave me this assurance. It matters not which party may be in power in the near future, the present premier, and the leader of the opposition, will be the dominating factors in shaping future legislation for this Province, and as both are committed to the taxation of land values and the exemption of all

forms of industry from taxation, there can be little doubt that this great agricultural section will soon take this advanced step.

The Premier, Hon. Walter Scott, has worked himself up from the ranks of labor and was a member of organized labor when he entered politics. In his youth he worked at the printers case. At the age of 25 he was part owner of the *Standard*, published in Regina. Two years later, 1894, he became proprietor and editor of the *Moose Jaw Times*. In 1895, he succeeded the founder of the *Regina Leader* as proprietor and editor, editing and managing the same until 1900, when he became president of the *Leader-Times* Company, Limited, a position retained until 1906. During 1899 he was president of the Western Canada Press Association. Elected to House of Commons for Assiniboia West at the general elections of 1900 and 1904, and participated in the legislation creating the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In August, 1905, he was chosen as leader of the Provincial Liberal Party for Saskatchewan by general convention at Regina and on September 5, 1905, was invited to form the first Provincial Ministry, which was sustained at the polls, Dec. 13, 1905, representing the Lumsden District in the Legislative Assembly. In redistricting the Territory the Lumsden District was eliminated in 1908. At the general election August 14, 1908 he was elected for Swift Current Division, when his administration was sustained by the return of 27 members of the liberal party to 14 for the opposition. Hon. Frederick William Gordon Haultain, the leader of the conservative party, has been more prominently identified with the legislation of the North West Territories than any other member of the legislative assembly. He was elected to North West Council in 1887; and was member of Advisory Council in 1888, and member of First Executive Committee in 1891. He was elected to the Northwest Assembly for McLeod District by acclamation in 1888, and at each succeeding election until the old Northwest assembly was dissolved by the creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905. In October, 1897, under a new Act, he became territorial Premier and was re-elected, serving as Attorney-General

and Commissioner of Education, remaining in power until the dissolution of the North-West Territory in 1905. Mr. Haultain represented the N. W. Territory at the Coronation of King Edward VII., August 1902. At the first general election after the creation of the province of Saskatchewan he was chosen to represent the District of South Qu' Appelle in the Legislative Assembly and was re-elected in 1908. Mr. Haultain has taken issue with his party in the Reciprocity Treaty and succeeded in carrying the opposition party with him in the legislature, voting to sustain Sir Wilfred Laurier's policy. Mr. Haultain is a native of Woolwich, England, born there November 25, 1857. His father was an officer in the British Royal Artillery, who on retiring migrated to Canada, when the present statesman was a child, making his home at Peterboro, Ontario. Mr. Haultain was educated in the schools of Peterboro, Montreal and Toronto, graduating from the Toronto University with first class honors. He was admitted to the bar in 1882, and to Kings Counsel in 1902. In the leaders of either party in the law making body of Saskatchewan progressive democracy has nothing to fear.

HENRY GEORGE, JR.'S, VISIT TO CALIFORNIA.

Cheers greeted Henry George, Jr., at the banquet given in his honor at the Argonaut Hotel in San Francisco Thursday night, October 19th. Every mention of the guest's name by James H. Barry, the toastmaster, drew forth renewed applause.

Gathered about the board were representative citizens from the different cities about the Bay.

After the repast had been disposed of, Herman Gutstadt, secretary of the San Francisco Single Tax Society, read letters of regret from Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President of the University of California, and Charles L. Lathrop, the acting head of Stanford University, Dr. David Starr Jordan having not yet returned from Japan. Judge James G. Maguire, having been called to Los Angeles to argue an

important case before the Supreme Court, was unable to be present, but sent a strong letter, reviewing in burning words some of the moving events of the past in connection with the philosophy so convincingly presented to the world by Henry George, the Prophet of San Francisco, and so ably maintained by his son.

"I rise here tonight surrounded by memories that move me to most solemn thought; thoughts not of sorrow but of rejoicing. I bring you tidings of great joy. We have seen the growth of the idea that was born here a generation ago coming to fruition. We have witnessed its growth and development. We see that Great Britain, progressive Japan, Germany, British Columbia, Australasia, are putting in to effect the doctrine for which we have so long fought. And we are about to put it into effect in California." (Applause.)

Turning to Congressman William Kent of the second congressional district of California, Mr. George paid a glowing tribute to that gentleman, as one who has the courage to say his thought, without fear or favor, recalling those refreshing days when California had another such man in Congress in the person of Judge Maguire. This evoked enthusiastic applause. Mr. Kent, like Judge Maguire, stood for what he believed to be the right, no matter what forces were arrayed against him, holding as did Tolstoy that you cannot lose if you have right and God on your side, as one with God make a majority, and in the end must win.

Mr. George said that he stood there as a representative of conservative New York, yet in sentiment he was a representative of Western spirit and the spirit of California, in progressive action the leader of States adopting the initiative, referendum and recall, even to the judges, and last but not least giving a measure of delayed justice by the enfranchisement of the women. There was so much applause during the address that it is inconvenient to indicate the place where it occurred.

There was laughter too, when the ridiculous workings of the tariff were exemplified, and the serious side was presented in showing that the tariff protects nothing but privilege. The tragedy