

## Single Taxers Prominent in New Pittsburgh Administration

PITTSBURGH'S new Single Tax-Democratic administration was auspiciously launched on the first day of January, with record-breaking crowds storming the corridors and Council Chamber of the City-County Building where the inaugural exercises were held at high noon on New Year's Day. William N. McNair, Pittsburgh's first Democratic Mayor in more than a quarter of a century, has promptly selected the members of his cabinet and other important officers of the new city government, though the final choice for the important post of Director of Public Safety had been deferred, but at this writing is about to be determined.

Percy R. Williams, Executive Secretary of the Henry George Foundation for the past eight years, has been appointed Chief City Assessor and will serve as the head of the Department of Assessors, in which department he served as a minority member of the Board of Assessors during the second Magee administration, 1922 to 1925, inclusive. He is also serving temporarily as Secretary to the Mayor, pending the selection of his successor for that position.

Cornelius D. Scully, a trustee of the Foundation, is City Solicitor under the new administration. William E. Schoyer, Treasurer of the same organization, has been named a member of the Traction Conference Board. William B. Foster, President of the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh, has been appointed a member of the Board of Assessors. Charles A. Poth, also active in the Henry George Club, is a new appointee as a member of the Board of Water Assessors. Thomas C. McMahon, for twelve years Chief Assessor under previous administrations and an outstanding friend of the Pittsburgh graded tax plan, has been retained as the minority member of the Board of Assessors by Mayor McNair.

In the organization of City Council on Jan. 1, Robert Garland, independent Republican and the oldest member of Council in point of service, was elected President of Council, former Mayor William A. Magee, elected to Council in the recent election, casting the deciding vote as between the four Republicans and four Democrats in Council. Mr. Garland has for years been an ardent advocate of the graded tax and of its extension and is heartily cooperating with Mayor McNair, though not of his party.

OVERPRODUCTION actually exists, and it is not underconsumption either, in turning out of paving material for the broad and crooked highway leading downward. The biggest producer is General Hugh S. Johnson of the N. R. A. What a pity that he is stopped by ideas of propriety from urging a processing tax on his own product.

## Keeping Step With Progress

### CALIFORNIA CHALLENGES PRIVILEGE

THERE is a movement under way in California that is attracting wide attention. An Initiative measure is being circulated for the purpose of giving the people an opportunity to effect a redistribution of opportunity, by forcing the release of natural resources for use. This is proposed to be done by progressive steps and by an intelligent, constitutional and discriminating use of the taxing power. Personal property and \$1,000 of assessed homestead improvements values, are to be tax free immediately and all improvement upon land are to be untaxed progressively, until the chief source of public revenue for state and local governments will be an ad valorem tax upon land.

If the ambition of those sponsoring this movement to make economic democracy a fact in California is realized, it will become in truth and in fact a "Golden State." With the products of labor and capital tax free there will be an upswing of production that will excite the admiration of the world.—*The Roman Forum*, Los Angeles, Calif.

### SCHOOL REVENUES

THE public has a barrel of money, several of them, that it hasn't opened yet—doesn't know about them.

Public sentiment is overwhelmingly favorable to public education. Not only is this true with the original New England stock, but those who have emigrated here more recently from foreign lands.

Really, I do not think that there is any real complaint of the high cost of education so-called frills; I think it is entirely regarding the source of school revenues.

This relatively untouched source of public wealth (barrel or barrels of money which have not been opened as yet because they are not publicly known) is for the most part in the downtown districts of great Ohio cities.

They are publicly created values now being privately appropriated.

They should be used for school purposes, other public improvements and services and to the relief from taxation of other classifications of property now carrying an unjust burden of assessment.

Take Cleveland for instance: It has a total land value of about one billion dollars exclusive of other classifications of property; it is totally held by 84,000 owners. Half of this value (not area) is held by 500 owners and one-third by 125 families—mostly the double cream of downtown or retail area.

Some of it, even stores of small area, on prominent corners, rents for as high as \$25,000 annually in low buildings erected years ago, so that the rental is almost totally one on land or location value made by traffic, the public, or people walking past it.

Here are the barrels of money, belonging to the public, that haven't as yet been opened because they have not been seen by the public and which should be used for school and other public purposes.

The same is true of all other great cities of Ohio just in proportion to their population.

Public school teachers have a wider influence upon public opinion, and outside the school room, than they realize, and together with the heads of their organization formed for the purpose of getting their money, they should study this proper source of obtaining school and other public revenues.

Their position will not be secure until they do.

That clause in the Constitution of Ohio which provides that all property shall be assessed equally for its value in money should at once be taken out of the Constitution.

The question of public revenues, particularly their source, should clearly be left to the legislature.

For years it has been kept in the Constitution by the great land owning families in the great cities of Ohio, who now propose further protection to themselves by a sales tax.

DAVID GIBSON, in *Lorain* (Ohio) *Journal*.