

the amount a candidate could spend, but not the amount which might be spent by others in his behalf; it provided punishment for "wilful" violation only—a thing which is next to impossible to prove in court.

When asked on the floor to explain these charges Mr. Rucker went into a rage and proceeded to prove himself a first-class understudy for the chief actor in that grand old play, "Caught With the Goods." He denounced the author of the letter, but he failed to explain the charges.

A non-partisan fight was precipitated which lasted all day. The progressives of all parties were aroused. They made several amendments of a minor nature over the protests of Mr. Rucker, but the parliamentary status of the bill was such as to inhibit them from doing much. Their attitude toward the whole bill, however, is reflected in the vote on the motion to recommit with instructions to strike out of the "two or more States" joker in one place. (Only one amendment was possible at this juncture under the rules.) This carried by a vote of 134 to 116.

But the bill is still of little account. The interests are free to get in their work both at primary and general elections without publicity from State or local committees, while candidates must report. There is no limit to the amount any individual can spend to help elect any candidate. Reports of national or interstate campaign committees must still be filed only with the clerk of the House at Washington, D. C., not less than ten nor more than fifteen days before election. An attempt to have them also filed in the various States, where they would be promptly available was voted down. What chance is there to get the information to the voters before election? The amount that can be spent on postage and stationery is not limited. The "wilful" violation joker is retained.

To sum up—the bill is still bogus. The stand-patters, united under Mr. Rucker, Democrat, and Mr. Mann, Republican, were successful in preventing genuine publicity.

The bill is now before the Senate Committee on Elections. That committee has also before it a bill by Senator Owen, giving real publicity. The Owen bill eliminates all the jokers in the Rucker bill and other minor jokers which time and space will not permit including in this writing.

What will the Senate do? Will the reactionary members of this body in both parties repudiate the platform pledges of the Democratic and Republican platforms of 1912?

D. E. McCRAE.



SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Washington, D. C., July 6, 1914.

More fundamental than the movement for just taxation and public ownership in the District is the struggle now going on to secure suffrage and self-government. More fundamental because the people must own and control their government before they can make any safe and enduring progress on the road to economic justice.

If "an injury to one is the concern of all," it should

be a matter of serious concern to every citizen of the United States that in sixty-nine square miles of territory, under the very shadow of the Capitol dome, a third of a million Americans are denied the right of self-government and are "taxed without representation." The present form of government by committees of Congress, by three appointed Commissioners and several independent and irresponsible boards and officials, was introduced in 1874 and made permanent by the act of June 11, 1878. In form, it is an absolute despotism. It would be impossible in this brief article to trace the historical causes which imposed this un-American form of government upon the people of the District; but the question will naturally arise, Why has the District remained disfranchised? It is inconceivable that any other American city could be disfranchised without violent protests, and perhaps armed resistance. Why has Washington been so patient during the past forty years? What influences have been at work here to maintain the status quo?

It is very largely a case of economic determinism and class rule. Under the so-called Organic Act of 1878, the Federal Government defrays one-half of the expenses of the District to the extent that Congress approves the estimates submitted. The actual proportion now paid by the Federal Government is about 40 per cent. To this Federal subsidy, taxes and land values have become adjusted. The land owners, real-estate operators and other special interests are agreed that the "half-and-half system" must not be disturbed. "It would hurt business," we are told, "and cause a slump in real estate." Now, to agitate for the right of suffrage is believed to imperil the Organic Act, which is the fountain-head of the sacred "half-and-half system." So it has long been understood that any Washington newspaper which demands the right of suffrage in the District will incur the wrath of the special interests, who are known to control much valuable advertising patronage. Some of the newspaper men are personally in favor of suffrage, but not one of the four daily newspapers of Washington is actively supporting the present campaign for popular government in the District, while they are all enlisted in support of the "half-and-half system." In point of fact, the average home owner and renter would be benefited financially if the present Federal subsidy were cut in half, provided that we could secure just assessments, a heavier tax on land values and the partial exemption of buildings from taxation, but it is difficult to obtain newspaper publicity for facts of this character.

Ever since 1878 there has been more or less local agitation for the rights of suffrage, self-government and representation in Congress. The spark of freedom has never been quite extinguished. Within the past few years there has been a well-organized movement in behalf of popular government. The Central Labor Union is on record in favor of popular government. In 1911, the first District platform of the Socialist party demanded popular government. But neither the trade-unions nor the Socialist organizations are especially active or aggressive in their work for the cause.

In 1912 the District of Columbia Suffrage League was organized. Its executive secretary and recog-

nized leader is Dr. Thomas E. Will, a Harvard graduate, formerly president of a Kansas college, and long identified with various radical movements for the common good. He has made a special study of the District situation, and preaches the gospel of political freedom at regular street meetings. In this open-air campaign he is ably seconded by James Hugh Keeley, and other speakers are occasionally heard. This organization has drafted a bill, recently introduced in Congress by Hon. Warren Worth Bailey, which authorizes the people of the District to frame their own municipal charter. Among others who have been active workers in the District suffrage cause for many years back are E. W. Oyster, now one of the District assessors, and E. J. Dakin, both of them veteran Singletaxers.

The Citizens' Committee of Forty was organized last November. Its avowed purposes are to watch the Congressional situation and to unite the business and professional elements, labor organizations and government employes in support of such measures as will secure popular government. Its Chairman is Dr. A. J. McKelway, Southern Secretary of the National Child Labor Organization and a Democrat of the fundamental type. Its Vice-chairman is Dr. Harvey W. Wiley of pure-food fame, and its Secretary, Louis Ottenberg, a hustling young lawyer. This committee has framed a bill, introduced in the House by Hon. D. O'Leary, which provides for the creation of a commission to investigate the relations between the Federal and District governments, to hold public hearings, and to frame a modern and democratic charter for the District. A bill along these general lines has recently been adopted by the House District Committee and is expected to pass the House during the present session. Much depends upon the personnel of the proposed commission. If it is fairly democratic, Congress will soon have the opportunity to enact a new Organic Law which will include not only municipal self-government but a permanent and equitable settlement of the disturbing "half-and-half" question. The friends of the commission idea believe that Congress is ready to act as soon as the right kind of a plan can be worked out. If the commission plan fails, powerful financial interests will, no doubt, continue to oppose any change in the present form of government.

There are many indications of a strong local sentiment in favor of genuine popular government, including equal suffrage for men and women, and the initiative, referendum and recall. No matter how efficient our District government or how democratic in spirit and purpose our present District Commissioners may be, the people of the District want to have a voice in their own government.

WM. DUNCAN MACKENZIE.



REVOLUTIONS IN OLD MEXICO.

Monterey, Mexico, July 1.

It should be clear to the minds of all well-informed persons that the present revolution in Mexico is a social war, a struggle that has at its bottom the land question. In fact, the three great revolutions really deserving the name, in the history of this country, have been on the land question.

The insurrection for independence from Span-

ish rule in 1810 was led by a priest named Miguel Hidalgo. He saw the great injustices done the Indians by the taskmasters in the haciendas of the rich. He was himself a half Indian, his mother being of the native race. He eagerly read French revolutionary books and was caught by the desire to ameliorate the condition of the Indians. His war cry was, "Lands for the Indians!" He knew nothing could be done unless the Spanish yoke was thrown off. In that work he was bitterly opposed, persecuted and finally sent to his death by the beneficiaries of vested rights, especially church and civil authorities. A decade after his death independence from Spanish dominion was achieved, for the idea had been widely diffused among the people and the rich class knew they must favor it if they were to save their riches.

In 1860 Benito Juarez, a full-blood Indian, and a group of patriots around him, led a movement in behalf of the poor oppressed classes, and against vested church privileges, and the effort to establish a Napoleonic protectorate on American soil. The Roman Catholic Church had in her possession two-thirds of the lands of Mexico, including the best and most valuable territory. This was the power that counted in politics, and Juarez saw that it was useless to oppose it unless it was shorn of its strength forever. Accordingly all church property was confiscated and in various ways distributed among the people. This was the real cause of the peace we enjoyed for thirty years, and not the menacing sword nor the crafty policy of Porfirio Diaz.

This sly old statesman had many opportunities to make his country a great one, especially had he taken pains to subdivide landed property and to destroy the land privileges of the rich class. He was surrounded, however, by a group of unscrupulous men, who boldly claimed to be making up a third party in politics, by the name of Cientificos. In fact they were working to profit by the old man's friendship and to get rich quick by abusing the law against the poor Indian small land owner. They even went so far as to use the military force of the nation to expel these land-owners from their own homes, where they had had immemorial possession.

This is the best explanation which can be given of the origin of such large estates as can be seen at present in Chihuahua, Morelos and all over the country. It is a noteworthy fact that the regions where war has waged the hottest ever since 1910, and where the revolutionary spirit has not been quenched by any means, are precisely those parts of the country where the largest estates are.

All the principal leaders such as Villa, Zapata, Gonzalez, Villarreal and others, including Carranza himself, are for the solution of the land problem, and are earnestly at work for it. In all of the States where the revolution has prevailed, Agrarian committees have been appointed by the proper authorities and they are working hard. We have heard those leaders themselves utter words to this effect: "If the revolution does not bring a satisfactory solution of the land question, then we may rightfully say, 'Accursed be the revolution.'" This shows that the end of the large land owner in old Mexico is near.

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