

## "SINGLE TAX TAYLOR."

PERSONAL SKETCH OF VANCOUVER'S MAYOR,  
THE NEW FORCE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

(For the REVIEW.)

(By NOEL ROBINSON.)

(See portrait.)

"Single Tax Taylor!" More than once during the recent mayoralty campaign this epithet was applied to Mayor L. D. Taylor. It is not improbable, indeed, that, if His Worship's public career of accomplishment should end now, he would be chiefly remembered as "Single-Tax Taylor." Those who know him intimately know that he would desire no better monument than this.

Although it is chiefly his attitude upon the Henry George method of taxation and its practical application to Vancouver which has rendered his personality of some interest to political economists upon this and other continents, Mayor Taylor holds advanced views upon other questions. But the principle that the natural resources of a country should bear all that country's taxation he regards as of chief importance.

An impartial pen picture of His Worship must take into consideration his limitations as well as his achievements. It would, for instance, not be correct to say that the Vancouver apostle of Single Tax has yet "found himself"—to quote an expressive phrase. Even during the last year his views upon economic problems have advanced and become more radical. A few remarks made by the mayor recently upon a public platform have a special significance. "I am firmly convinced that before another year has elapsed all the cities and towns of British Columbia will also adopt the Single Tax system of taxation. Personally, I would go still further in the methods of taxation. I would abolish the Provincial tax on personal property, believing that, should this be done, the manufacturing interests would receive a great impetus, and such a number of new industries would spring into existence as would astonish the whole world. I further believe that, if

the Provincial Government did away with the tax mentioned, the great natural resources of this province would be capable of producing sufficient revenue to carry on all work such as road and trail making, bridge building, etc., without any direct taxation of the people. Nothing that man through his own energy and labor has made should, in my opinion, be taxed; but all things owing their origin to the Divine Creator and meant for the benefit of the inhabitants should, when taken possession of by individuals, bear the burden of taxation."

After Mayor Taylor's first few months of office it was realized by the general public that a new force had arisen in Vancouver and the province of British Columbia. The first twelve months of office saw this force quietly, but none the less surely asserting itself in the interests of economic and social reform. During his second term as chief executive—having been elected to that position by an overwhelming majority, which has greatly strengthened his hands—he has been enabled to give far freer rein to his natural bent. Whereas he was at first regarded as an influence that would have its brief day and cease to be, he is now regarded as a force that will have to be reckoned with in the future in the larger as well as the municipal arena.

With the exception of one of his predecessors in the mayoral chair of Vancouver, Mayor Oppenheimer,—an admirable, but quite different type of man—no chief magistrate of the Terminal City has made so pronounced an impression, for Mayor Taylor is absolutely fearless. He has made mistakes, and he will make others, but this is inevitable in a man of original and progressive ideas who is determined to put those ideas into practice in circumstances where, as in the case of the Single Tax "experiment," doubt may exist as to its ultimate success or failure.

"Single Tax Taylor" has an unusual type of face and head. A particularly high brow suggests the thinker; the type which, had not the trend of circumstances plunged him into public affairs, would have been absorbed in books and the intellectual side of life. An intimate knowledge of the man confirms this impression.

That he finds time for more than a passing study of current literature, as well as some of the writings of the literary giants of the past, notably those of the politico-economic school, are known to friends who have chatted with him upon books, or seen him in his "den" surrounded by his favorite volumes. But it can be easily believed that the onerous nature of his duties as owner and business head of a large newspaper like the *Vancouver World*, in addition to the even more burdensome task of acting as head of one of the most rapidly developing cities on the Pacific coast, leaves him little time for reading or study.

The accompanying photograph, while it gives a very fair idea of Mayor Taylor's face in repose, fails to convey a suggestion of its expressiveness when he is strongly moved. The Mayor is not handsome, but he has what is far more unusual and of greater importance to the physiognomist and phrenologist, a particularly interesting type of face and head, and it is not often that one meets with a face which is so surprisingly transformed by a smile. He seldom smiles, but, when he does, the smile lights up his features and lends an expressiveness to the eyes and mouth which is at once winning and kindly. His eyes, when not thus lighted, are those of the keen, alert business man. In short he is the sort of man upon whom it is impossible to pass a rapid judgment as a result of conversation or after hearing him make a public speech. As a platform orator "Single Tax Taylor" has made great strides during his two years of public life. Two years ago he hesitated frequently while making a speech. During his recent campaign he succeeded in losing this hesitancy and can now talk with considerable fluency. As a public speaker his greatest drawback is a tendency to monotony and his greatest asset a thorough knowledge of the subject matter with which he is dealing. When roused, he becomes rapid and attractive. With practice His Worship will become a really good public speaker without ever perhaps becoming a great one.

Essentially a self-made man, the Mayor is proud of the fact that, a dozen years or so ago, he was employed in a very minor capacity in the Revelstoke railway sheds

of the C. P. R. His career in Vancouver has been full of interest, and his path has been by no means strewn with roses. Even when occupying a subordinate position upon a rival newspaper he more than once gave an indication of his future attitude towards labor by standing up for his fellow workmen in certain of their disputes and thereby endangering his own position. His career in connection with *The World*, from the moment when he took that newspaper over, is one of the most interesting journalistic romances of the Pacific coast. Evidently a strong believer in the sentiment—expressed in the lines of the poet:

"He either fears his fate too much,  
"Or his deserts are small,  
"Who fears to put it to the touch  
"To win or lose it all,"

the Mayor risked everything when, with a very slender backing, he entered upon an undertaking which was ultimately to lead to success and public life, a success which has been attained in the face of the most strenuous, and, at times, even vindictive opposition. Outside the personal aspect of this opposition it has upon many occasions been made apparent that the advanced radical views advocated by *The World*, particularly when dealing with sociological issues, has roused His Worship's political opponents to a sense of what to them, appears a serious danger ahead. Apart from one independent organ, the press of Vancouver, which is chiefly Conservative, has opposed His Worship and his organ in season and out of season.

With the exception of his Single Tax innovation, the most significant indication of the Mayor's rapidly broadening political and economic horizon was contained in several recent public utterances in the course of which he virtually cut himself adrift from both political parties and advocated what he designated as A Provincial Party, a party which, uninfluenced by political jobbery, would conserve the natural resources of the province for the people and reduce irksome taxation to a minimum by the adoption of a system which should make those resources, rather than the people's energy, pay—to put it in

business parlance—the expenses of running the province.

It will not be out of place to conclude this sketch of "Single Tax Taylor's" personality and principles by a brief reference to his attitude as a naturalized Canadian (he was born and raised under the Stars and Stripes at Ann Arbor, Michigan), towards Britain and British institutions. A striking feature, both of his private and public utterances, has been his oft-expressed sentiments of loyalty to the British Empire and admiration of its traditions. That these sentiments are no mere hollow word-spinning the Mayor has emphasised on several public occasions, and notably when King George (then Duke of York) visited Vancouver and Mr. Taylor had charge of the elaborate decorations. This loyalty to the country of his adoption has not in the slightest degree interfered with the affection which he cherishes for his native land.

The Mayor very happily indicated his position in relation to both the great English speaking races in a recent speech, and no more appropriate sentences can be quoted, than those with which he concluded.

"The naturalised citizen would be no man if he repudiated the country of his birth. Take as an example, a young couple who leave their father's house. They love that father's house, but they love their own home better. I am as proud of the fact that I was born on the other side of the line as I am of the fact that I am now a citizen of the British Empire."

How is Kansas to develop in manufacturing? Why not by the method adopted in New Jersey, which has taken from New York the bulk of its former large manufacturing enterprises by discrimination in taxes?

Experience in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and Connecticut shows that the development of manufactures, by increasing population and trade, enormously increases the value of real estate. If factories throw a heavier proportion of taxes on real estate, factories give real estate enhanced value far in excess of the tax burden imposed.—Topeka (Kas.) *Daily Capital*.

## HOW VALUES GROW IN VANCOUVER.

MANY INSTANCES OF GREAT INCREASES IN LAND VALUES AND FORTUNES MADE OVER NIGHT.—BUT ASSESSMENTS, TOO, ARE INCREASING.

(For the Review.)

By LUTHER S. DICKEY.

(In what follows Mr. Dickey has made a careful investigation of values in Vancouver. These investigations, with the figures here presented, are in their present form to all but the student rather dry reading, but they help to form a complete idea of conditions in the metropolis of Northwest Canada. Our readers will themselves draw their own conclusions as to the possibility of the dangers pointed out of an interruption of the prosperity of the city from over-speculation in land values. But it seems reasonable to hope, as Mr. Dickey does, that the public spirited citizens of Vancouver will see that it is a problem of keeping on, taking an ever increasing proportion of land values. It seems clear that this is a problem which will have to be faced by any municipality which seeks to imitate Vancouver's example. But the very necessity of continuing the steps that bring such prosperity, and add so enormously to the value of land, may be the means of accelerating the movement in its advance to the final goal of assured and complete victory.—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.)

Before I came to Vancouver I heard many thoughtful Single Taxers express a fear that the enormous increase in land values in Vancouver might be the signal of a sudden collapse, and that the Single Tax movement of the world would be retarded thereby. It was this fear that impelled me to make a thorough investigation of conditions here, in order to let the great army of faithful, intelligent Single Taxers of the world know what measure of progress has really been made along the lines leading to the goal for which they are devoting their means, time and energy. I believed there was a lack of definite knowledge as to the actual facts; that there was nothing tangible on which to forecast the future. It is not my purpose now to prophesy. I shall content myself with laying the facts before the readers of the REVIEW. As a result of my investigation my faith has been increased that the Founder of all Truth inspired the author of Progress and Poverty with the gift of prophecy. He says: "The tax on land