

accepted the guidance of the De-Youngs and the Hannas. This plank is welcomed by Joseph Leggett, editor of the single tax department of the San Francisco Examiner, as something which is "as unexpected as it is gratifying to single-taxers."

And well it may be. To say nothing of the crass ignorance which could describe the single tax, or anything else, as both anarchistic and socialistic—two ideas that are antipodal—this plank will soon bring its sponsors to grief for having attempted, with that little knowledge which is a dangerous thing, to fool California farmers. It is easy to say in a platform that the single tax would exempt stocks and bonds from taxation; but it is very much easier to prove on the stump that the stocks and bonds that the California farmer hates are the kind which the single tax would wipe out of existence. So again it is easy to say in a platform that the burdens of taxation under the single tax would fall wholly upon farmers; but it is ever so much easier to prove to the satisfaction of farmers that they pay the great burden of taxes under the present system, whereas under the single tax they would pay a comparatively small tax. The value of farming land, irrespective of improvements, is a trivial part of the working farmer's possessions; and that would be the basis of his single tax. But the value of land is a very large part of the possessions of big ranchers, railroad moguls, and city landlords; and that would be the basis of their tax. Congressman Maguire is to be envied. He has in his campaign not only a good cause and the support of a host of shrewd friends, but what is often of more use in a fight, the opposition of a fool enemy.

The democratic party of Iowa has taken a stand from which it ought never to recede, and to which the national party and the people themselves must come if this country is to be saved from the clutch of plutocracy. It has demanded an amend-

ment of the amending clause of the federal constitution, to the end that any alteration of that instrument may be thereafter made by a majority vote of the two houses of congress, confirmed by a majority vote of the people at the succeeding general election. The author of the plank in the democratic platform of Iowa which makes this demand, is John H. Quick, mayor of Sioux City. He argues for it in this vigorous fashion:

The United States constitution is a tool to promote the public welfare. Only the intellectually dead look upon it as a fetish to be worshiped. People who delight in using the brains of a century ago to do their thinking with are apt to froth at the mouth when constitutional amendments are spoken of. Yet, nobody can deny that the only safeguard of the constitution is its power of growth, and it can grow through amendment only. The stagnationists will always oppose amendments. But if the constitution is to live, it must change, for life is only another term for change, and the constitution of the United States, as it now stands, is, to all intents and purposes, practically unamendable.

It is unfortunately true, as Mayor Quick says, that the federal constitution is practically unamendable. It cannot be amended unless a two-thirds vote in both houses of congress is secured for the amendment, followed by a ratification by the legislatures or conventions of three-fourths of the states; and while it is true that a convention for proposing amendments may be called by two-thirds of the states, yet the amendments so proposed, like those proposed by congress itself, do not become valid until the legislatures or conventions of three-fourths of the states have ratified them. With such restrictions upon amendments, no amendment is possible without virtual revolution. A more unelastic system of government could not be conceived. No other nation is so trammeled. Even autocratic Russia could be changed to a democracy with greater ease than we could substitute direct for indirect taxation. The voice of the people is said to be the voice of God, and properly under-

stood that saying is a true one; yet in our constitution we have placed insurmountable obstacles in the way of its expression. Mayor Quick's proposition would remove those obstacles. To what he proposes no one can object who does not wish to keep the people in a strait-jacket. Any change that congress might adopt and a majority of the people ratify could do no real harm. To oppose this reform is to oppose the doctrine that the majority should rule.

The democrats of Ohio are to be numbered hereafter with the political parties that have demanded the adoption of the initiative and referendum. In their platform of this year L. A. Russell, of Cleveland, secured the insertion of the following plank: "That as this is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, we favor a reference of all laws to the people themselves, so far as practicable, under the mode first devised and successfully practiced by the enlightened republic of Switzerland, known as the initiative and referendum." Under this wise system, as we have frequently explained, no legislation could be foisted upon the people without their consent. The occupation of the lobby in all its forms would be gone. The boss would lose his greatest power. No laws would be valid under that system, no steals could take effect, unless the people had voted upon them directly and approved them. Legislatures would be what they ought to be, committees to frame bills and discuss legislation; the act of legislation would be performed by the people themselves.

The tin plate ring, which drummed up tariff protection for tin plate, all for the benefit of the American workman, is now preparing to establish a tin plate trust. According to the statements of some of the leaders in this laudable scheme for the protection of American industry, tin plate production in the United States