

about 75 per cent of those entitled to vote, registered by affidavit on February 4 instead of waiting for the regular registration date, March 17.



Revised registration figures for Chicago indicate a total of approximately 159,000 women on the polling lists. The Chicago women are debating in public and private whether or not to declare party affiliations by voting at the primaries on February 24. Their leaders are divided and give urgent advice on both sides. [See current volume, page 131.]



Court Asked to Restrain Popular Majority.

To prevent consolidation of the municipally owned water and electric light plants at Springfield, Illinois, a plea for a restraining order was filed on Feb. 11 with the State Circuit Court by Edward W. Payne, president of the State National Bank and director of the local street railway company. The consolidation had been ordered at a referendum election on January 27 by 668 majority. Commenting on this move, Commissioner Willis J. Spaulding, who initiated the consolidation, said:

I have claimed from the start that the fight over the combined plant was not between the commissioners, but between the city and the utilities company, and was due to its fear of the competition which might result from the great advantage in the reduced cost of production which the city would enjoy. Mr. Payne's suit asking for an injunction is no surprise and only confirms my contention and incidentally emphasizes the fact that our plan is a good one for the city. According to the 1913 report, Mr. Payne is one of the directors of the Springfield Consolidated Railway Company, which, of course, is a part of the syndicate which includes the Light, Heat and Power Company. Mr. Payne has been a promoter and a go-between for the Utilities Company for years and it must be apparent to all that the Utilities Company is the real complainant.

[See current volume, page 127.]



Tax Reform News.

A straight Singletax bill was introduced in the New York Legislature on January 28 by Senator Duhamel. It provides for exemption of "all buildings, improvements and other articles and structures, substructures and superstructures erected upon, under or above, or affixed to land, and all personal property."



In answer to a series of questions, Tax Commissioner J. J. Pastoriza of Houston, Texas, publishes the following information. In Houston land values are assessed at a fair value and improvements at twenty-five per cent of cost of reproduction. The effect has been to stimulate building

enormously. The first six months of 1912 showed an increase of 55 per cent over 1911 before the plan was installed. Sales of land during 1913 show increases in value over assessments of 1912 of from 10 per cent to 50 per cent. So far from discouraging loans on mortgages, the equitable assessment of land better enables the lender to ascertain the value of his security. The proposed law in New York State to halve the tax rate on buildings will require five years to accomplish what Houston has done in one.



Chinese Civil Courts Instituted.

President Yuan Shi Kai continues to impress his arbitrary will upon his helpless country. His latest move is an attempt to institute civil courts that will render unnecessary the placing of autocratic power in the hands of local governors. In one of his numerous orders, the President says:

There never have been institutions for training judicial officers. The choice of judges has not been made with care, and the salaries are small. Consequently inefficient men are placed on the bench and corruption prevails. In extreme cases corruption is practiced jointly by the judges and barristers, and the evils thus brought about are worse than those of the past dynasty. Good citizens are usually meek and feeble, while bad characters are cruel and strong. These two elements can be made to live peacefully together only through the operation of the law. But if the law fails to protect the weak from the strong, then anarchy ensues. Confucius says that if justice is not impartially administered the people will not be able to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, and that if they fail to make such distinction there can be no stable government. In Peking and the provinces there are some good judges, but there are many who are inefficient and unprincipled; who, instead of protecting the people, employ their offices for corrupt practices. I, the president, have inquired into the feelings of the people, and am painfully aware of their grievances. It is my intention thoroughly to clean up the system and start afresh.

[See current volume, page 156.]



Political Riots in Japan.

The action of a Tokio mob on the 10th in attempting to storm the House of Parliament for supporting the government in the naval scandal, was repeated on the 13th, when several thousand anti-tax advocates made another demonstration. Five hundred policemen were required to hold the mob in check. Many men were injured by clubs and sabers, and 200 were arrested. Mass meetings have been called to insist upon the resignation of the cabinet. Riotous scenes occurred in the lower House on the 15th when the opposition members destroyed the ballot box in order to prevent the adoption of the business tax, to which the masses are so much opposed. The government has yielded to the extent of ordering Vice Admiral Fujii and