

Massachusetts

THE following resolutions prepared by Rev. A. W. Littlefield, of Middleborough, and Lincoln Crowell, of Sandwich, were presented by the latter at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts State Grange, in Boston, in December, and adopted without debate:

Whereas, There is going on, unobserved by most persons, a continual confiscation of the labor and capital values of the citizens of this Republic, under the present disorderly and unjust method of taxation—local, state and national; and

Whereas, Progress is being made toward establishing natural and honest taxation, as follows:—

1. The provinces of Canada do not tax personal property or improvements, with the result that 65,000 American farmers have emigrated to Canada to escape the unjust taxation of their labor values in the United States;

2. The passage of a resolution by a Board of County Supervisors in Michigan, to wit:—"Be it resolved, that this Board go on record as favoring a graduated system of taxing the unearned increment of land;"

3. The city of Pittsburgh, Pa., under a system of graduated land tax, issuing more building permits, in proportion to population, than any other American city;

4. The recognition by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by Chapter 360 of the Acts of 1922, that the general property tax when applied to forest land confiscates capital and labor values;

5. Denmark rapidly improving the condition of her rural population by a land tax.

In the light of these facts, be it, therefore,

Resolved: That the Massachusetts State Grange recommend, to all Patrons of Husbandry in Massachusetts, at their Pomona and Subordinate Meetings, the desirability of investigating these matters; and devote one meeting, at least, during the coming season to this important matter.

New York

THE Single Tax Party of New York, has shifted its headquarters to 3 West 14th street, and its regular Saturday night Forum to the Hotel McAlpin, 34th street and Broadway. The first Saturday of each month is given up to regular meetings of the Single Tax Party.

The Saturday night lectures have been well attended. Following are the speakers and dates:

Dr. Anna Ingerman, on "Russia Under the Soviets," Feb. 24. Dr. J. P. Warbusse, on "Co-operation," March 3. Louis Waldman, ex-Assemblyman, "Our Legislature and How It Works," March 10. James A. Robinson, "The Coming International Single Tax Conference," March 17 and 24. Capt. Paxton Hibben, "The New Russia," March 31.

Other activities have not been neglected. Lecture dates have been filled by speakers. Mr. George Lloyd spoke before the Sheet Metal Workers on March 21, about a hundred men present. Mr. Oscar Geiger spoke at the Labor Temple, 2nd Ave. and 14th St., before a large audience.

Ohio

E. W. DOTY, of Cleveland, has submitted to the Hon. Vic Donahey, Governor of Ohio, a measure looking in the direction of the Single Tax, to which the Governor replies that he cannot lead the General Assembly or interfere with its prerogatives. In this, of course, the Governor ignores his own prerogatives, among which is the power to recommend legislation. He invited Mr. Doty to come to Columbus and discuss the matter privately. Mr. Doty sharply replies:

"I do not expect to be in Columbus soon, but if there were anything I could do to show you how the Governor could help get the great landowners of the cities off the backs of the workers, I would be very glad to make the journey. There doesn't seem to be any chance of this, however."

Addressing the Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Frank J. Goodnow, president of Johns Hopkins university, declared that "the poor have steadily increased their wealth" and that the middle class have "brought the poorer up to their standard." He sees betterment of all classes, higher wages, and "democracy a reality." And this extremely optimistic outlook was given in a city which raises nearly \$5,000,000 a year to support 115 charitable organizations; whose Associated Charities have given relief to 10,000 families in one year; where murder, feeble-mindedness and illiteracy are admittedly an appalling problem; where the authorities acknowledge helplessness in handling the narcotic evil; where dry law enforcement is becoming a mercenary affair for replenishing public treasuries; where the sheriff makes about \$50,000 a year for himself in supplying meals to prisoners in the county jail; and where, not long ago, a fund of \$100,000 was subscribed to "provide work for the unemployed."

Members of the National Educational Association, meeting in Cleveland in February, appeared more interested in taxation than in any other subject; at least, the headlines used by Cleveland newspapers in reporting the sessions gave that impression. It was an unintelligent interest, however. Like the women members of Ohio's legislature, the "educators," as they are called, are more anxious about the amount of revenue than in the way of raising it. Some suggestions as to method were heard, and they indicate what David Gibson is fond of calling "economic illiteracy." The occupational tax was paraded as a means of filling the school treasuries. The idea of "taxing wealth" was popular, although how it can be done no one explained. One prominent "educator" denounced the present tax system by saying that it "flatly presents to every citizen the option of being an intelligent liar or an economic fool." Then he suggested the income tax for school purposes in Ohio, although that tax causes more perjury, probably, than does the personal property tax, and is more expensive in administration. The "educators" adopted no tax method; but their resolutions do demand that school boards be given the taxing power, fully independent of the State or municipal legislative bodies. It is also agreed by the "educators"

that more and more money must be used for their ideas. "Spend money or expect chaos," exclaimed Dr. George F. Strayer, of Columbia university. There seems to be an idea that there is safety for civilization in what is now called education. The fallacy this involves is clearly pointed out by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty." The "educators" demand that the bureau of education at Washington be elevated to the Cabinet. There is to be no pruning knife used on the spreading tree of our educational system. Supervisors of this and that are to multiply. A Cleveland wit declares that in Cleveland schools there are "supervisors supervising the supervisors." Soon there will be almost as many directors as teachers if this tendency to multiply useless jobs is not checked. And the land speculators who grab the first slice of every bond issue for school buildings were not mentioned; instead, the "educators" adopted a resolution demanding "new sources of revenue," although Ohio now goans under the weight of 100 taxes.

Oregon and Hermann's Great Victory

THE defeat of the measure introduced into the legislature of Oregon making it a felony to receive pay for the circulation of initiative petitions, is a great victory for the friends of popular government. Its intention was of course to kill the Initiative. For the securing of signatures to petitions requires time and labor. Payment to canvassers is part of the procedure. To require that those desiring to initiate popular measures should themselves do the work without compensation is analagous to a requirement that their stenographers and clerks should serve without pay. The design was so obviously to nullify the I and R that its defeat was perhaps foreseen from the outset.

But of this we cannot be too sure. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and it may have been that the friends of privilege did hope to catch the supporters of popular government napping. That they did not do so is largely due to the efforts of J. R. Hermann. The Single Tax League of Oregon issued a statement that this would not prevent the measure going on the ballot as they would go to the Court House en masse and sign the petition. As the leader of the movement which cast forty thousand votes in the State for a straight-out Single Tax measure Mr. Hermann's words carry some weight. His warning to the people that this measure would sound the death-knell of the control by the people of the power over their representatives, assured its defeat. Just as these forty thousand votes were the cause of this last attempt to nullify the people's power, so the threat to use this vote, no negligible quantity in a State as small as Oregon, to strike back at the powers seeking to deprive the people of the machinery they have struggled for so long, was perhaps wholly instrumental in preserving the Initiative.

Again it is demonstrated what even a loose organization may effect for the preservation of popular government.

The people of Oregon owe a debt to these forty thousand Single Taxers. It is all very well to discuss the Single Tax in parlors before groups of the dilettante, but when it is represented on election day by such a magnificent host it becomes a political power which politician and privileged will not recklessly defy.

The Portland *Telegram* editorially recognizes that it is the last assault likely to be made on the Initiative Law, and is rubbing it in on the *Oregonian*. The *Telegram* says:

"Our irreconcilable friends point out the Single Tax measure as a perennial abuse of the initiative principle. Single Tax has found a place on the ballot in eight or nine general elections. What of it? Each time it was decisively defeated, and if it should be offered at every general election for the next twenty years, it would still serve the good purpose of forcing large numbers of otherwise indifferent citizens to go to the polls to defeat it."

In the meantime the *Oregonian* writhes at the defeat of its pet measure. Note this hypocritical whine: "Are not unbought petitions, free signatures, more nearly in accord with the ideal uses of the Initiative?" Coming from the chief journalistic enemy of the I and R this is not without a certain humor.

In the meantime the legislature has passed an income tax which nobody is satisfied with, and which will be referred to the people. J. R. Hermann, with his aids, will endeavor to get his petition for the Single Tax amendment filed before the special session of the legislature in November.

Single Taxers are apparently united in Oregon. They will present a solid front against the income tax. The *Telegram*, of Portland, significantly says:

"W. S. U'Ren, frequently conspicuous in reform and advanced legislation in Oregon, says advocates of Single Tax (tax on land and income from land) are not interested in the voters of the State ratifying the legislature's income tax measure. J. R. Hermann and H. D. Wagnon, apostles of the Single Tax, also are unconcerned about it.

The attitude of these three conspicuous workers for reformation in taxing methods is significant. Undoubtedly the weight of their influence will be on the side of the mass of people who would reject the State income tax act of the legislature."

Ottawa

OTTAWA'S tax reformers are circulating a petition to permit the city of Ottawa to exempt improvements for any year not less than ten per cent. nor more than twenty-five per cent. of the assessed valuation and from year to year a further additional percentage of such assessed value of not less than ten or more than twenty-five per cent. of such value until the entire value is exempt, or such portion as may be fixed by the by-laws.

This is in accordance with the Municipal Exemption Act passed by the Ontario legislature in 1920.

NO WONDER governments are hard up when so much of the revenue is spent in raising it.—H. M. H.

EARLY Saxons had a proverb: "A landless man is an unfree man."