

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"We have seen how the ownership of land and the tools of production enables the owners to fleece labor," said Brown, "and we have also noted the cause which places labor and productive capital in opposite camps. I think I have clearly shown that the interests of the employer and the employee are not identical, and that they cannot be identical while the competitive system exists. The question then arises how best to abolish it, as there are many who labor under the impression that the abolition of the competitive system is an impossibility. If, these people would but notice how conditions are constantly and most rapidly changing, how all the tendencies of our commercial life are towards centralization, they would form far different opinions. The day of small things and the man of small means are gone. As the manufacturer employing hundreds of men has forced the once fairly prosperous master of two or three journeymen to the wall, so now the combine threatens the existence of the manufacturer himself. And while some, as yet, hardly realize their position and would foolishly risk their all to maintain their individuality, greater combinations still have arisen which not only control their trade in one State or Province or upon one continent, but whose influence is felt throughout the globe. And yet all this has taken place within the last decade. I can't say that I have any ill-feeling towards combines or trusts; on the contrary, I rather like them. They are an object lesson to the people, because they demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is possible to place industry upon a scientific basis. A few years more and people will begin to realize that what is possible to a private corporation may safely be undertaken by a Government. The aggressiveness of capital is becoming more unbearable and the struggle for existence more keen with every day; as yet the people bear it patiently, but the day will come, and that in the not far distant future, when the people will demand that the Government shall supersede the combine and assume control of all tools of production and run them in the interest and for the benefit of the whole people. This will take place whether you like it or not or whether you do anything or not to bring it about. It is simply a question of time."

"But it is our duty," said Phil, "to do all in our power to bring it about, and to prepare the people for the coming change. We each and all can take an active part by insisting on municipalities owning and controlling their street railways, lighting, cleaning and paving their own streets, building their own sewers and waterworks, etc. We should insist on State ownership of railways, telephones and telegraphs, and upon the right of the community to the unearned increment of land. All these reforms are distinctly socialistic, and who will say that they are not beneficial to the people at large?"

"They are socialistic, no doubt," said Brown, "but not a bit more so than your parcel, paper, book or letter post. I have never yet seen an individualist object to the postman delivering a letter at his door on the ground that it interfered with his individuality or liberty of action. He takes the letter and is mighty glad that the Government saves him the trouble of going for it. Neither have I ever seen a man so individualistic as to prefer getting water at a pump to drawing it from a socialistic contrivance in the shape of a water tap in his house. And I don't believe that people would object to receive their groceries or garden truck from a Government store; I don't believe that they would refuse to wear Government boots and shoes and

clothes any more than they would refuse to live in a house built and looked after by the Government, and, above all, I don't believe they would object to work for the Government. So far as my observation goes, men seem to me not only willing but very anxious to get a Government 'sit,' and they are not socialists either. As a matter of fact, the most pronounced individualist that I have ever run across holds a fat Government job, and I don't believe it possible that either you or any body else could coax him out of it. These individualistic coons are generally the ones most anxious to avail themselves of the benefits arising from distinctly socialistic reforms; at all events, there are happily not many of them, and as the struggle for existence becomes keener there will be still less. State socialism is bound to come; the sooner men realize this, and the sooner it comes, the better."

BILL BLADES.

SINGLE TAX IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Recent transactions in British Columbia, in which large tracts of land have been sold at a great advance over the original cost, stirs up the Daily News Advertiser, of Vancouver, to support the Independent party, which proposes that the tax on wild land shall be so increased as to be a penalty on those who withhold land from profitable use. It evidently sees further than this, for it intimates that a tax on land values, exclusive of improvements, is also necessary.

NATIONALIZING WATER POWER IN SWITZERLAND.

Michael Elurschein writes that in Switzerland the Federal council has decided to submit a law to parliament according to which Swiss water powers are to be nationalized. President Schar, of the Swiss land nationalization society, is the principal originator of the project. He published an excellent paper on this question, by which he showed the justice of the petition which his society had addressed to the council demanding the nationalization of water powers, and the paper attracted a great deal of notice in the Swiss press.

THE TRADES COUNCIL.

Bureau of Labor Statistics—Widow Flynn Fund and Other Business.

The regular meeting of the Trades and Labor Council was held on Thursday evening last, the president, Mr. L. Z. Boudreau, in the chair.

Credentials were received and accepted from Messrs. V. Dubreuil and Lucien Girard, representing Tinamiths' and Roofers.

Moved by Delegate A. P. Pigeon, seconded by Delegate Corbeil that the question of nominating a candidate for the proposed Bureau of Labor Statistics be laid over until the second meeting of January and that Mr. Lepine, M.P., be notified in writing to be present and give full explanations.

An amendment to have the matter brought up at the next regular meeting was proposed, as also a sub-amendment to lay the whole matter on the table which, after some discussion, was carried.

The Widow Flynn Committee reported as follows:—

Your committee on the Widow Flynn case have held two meetings since the last meeting of the Council.

They have made all the necessary arrangements for the holding of a grand drawing for the benefit of the fund.

About \$900 has so far been raised, and as the Council is expected to raise the sum of \$1,500, your committee hope to raise the balance (\$600) in this manner.

The committee hope that every effort will be made by individual members of the Council to make this drawing a grand success.

On motion the report was approved and adopted.

The Water Tax Committee, and the committee in regard to the abolition of property qualification for alderman also reported. Both reports were adopted, and Messrs. Pigeon, J. Brennan, Pelletier and Dubreuil were added to the latter committee.

A motion to have a mass meeting on the

Champ de Mars of all the labor organizations represented in the Council, and thereafter march in a body to the City Hall and demand the abolition of property qualification and readjustment of the water rates, occasioned a warm discussion. The motion was subsequently disposed of by an amendment to lay on the table.

A motion to petition the City Council for a grant of \$500 towards the Widow Flynn fund was also laid upon the table.

A committee having been appointed to take action in regard to so-called labor bureaus, the meeting adjourned.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE ECHO.

DEAR SIR,—I was glad to read Alderman Thompson's explanation concerning the \$750 increase of salary to one of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners' officials. I take with pleasure, that he is, as he says he is, the same in a secret conclave as he is in the open. It is hoped that he will infuse some of his spirit into the Board. It sadly needs it. As to the admission of the press into the meetings, there should not be lost one day in doing what Alderman Thompson foresees. If the press had been present there would probably have long since been a different method of raising salaries and arriving at other conclusions. Alderman Thompson's letter says as plainly as anything can that he is opposed to what he calls the "enormous" increase of the official in question. I wonder (if the Board is asked to explain to the taxpayers) how it will reconcile refusal to increase teachers' salaries by \$50 a year, on the plea of economy, increase of an official's salary by \$750, and application to the public for more money on the plea of poverty. Alderman Thompson has a fine opportunity now to show himself to be all the people's representatives should be. If I did him an injustice, by supposing him a party to the \$750 deal he will easily realize that it was inadvertently, as people do not easily learn when, how and by whom \$750 increases of salary are voted in a secret conclave. That it was voted now appears for the first time as a fact over his signature. Yours truly,

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and Finest things to do is to overcome your prejudice and remember there can be just as good Goods made in your own town as any other.

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