

Towards Democracy

A Record of Opinions and Events in the World of Progress

MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM

In the current issue of the Contemporary Review Mr. Havelock Ellis tells a story about a prominent public man of high intelligence who recently went to Glasgow to deliver an address on social reform. He warned his hearers against Socialism, and told them that, though so much talked about it had not made one inch of progress; of practical Socialism or Collectivism there were no signs at all. Yet, as some of his hearers pointed out, he gave his address in a municipally-owned hall, illuminated by municipal lights, to an audience which had largely arrived in municipal trams travelling through streets owned, maintained and guarded by the municipality. The audience was largely educated in state schools, in which the children nowadays can receive not only free education and free books, but, if necessary, free food and free medical inspection and treatment. Moreover, the members of this same audience, thus assured of the non-existence of Socialism, are entitled to free treatment in the municipal hospital, should an infective disease overtake them; the municipality provides them freely with picture galleries, golf courses, and swimming ponds; and in old age, finally, if qualified, they receive a state pension.

All these measures are socialistic, and Socialism is nothing more nor less than a complicated web of such measures; the Socialistic state, as some have put it, is simply the great national co-operative association of which the government is the board of managers. At the same time, Mr. Ellis shows the necessity for the cultivation of personality and individuality, especially as regards education. He points out that of late the Socialistic tendency that prevails here and there is a tendency to standardise rigidly an education so superficial, so platitudinous, so uniform, so unprofitable, so fatally oblivious of what even the word education means, that some day, perhaps, the revolted individualistic spirit will arise in irresistible might to sweep away the whole worthless structure from top to bottom, with even such possibilities of good as it may conceal.—The Scottish Co-operator.

THE "RICH MAN USING LITTLE LAND"

It may be a fallacy that "all incomes are invested in land," but it is a truth that all wealth is produced from land. In putting forward the case of the man who "might be a millionaire and yet not own an acre of land," or who "further might occupy more than an acre," and therefore "escape local rating altogether," the Municipal Journal betrays a very narrow view of land occupancy. The wider view of the case is that all industrial and commercial undertakings and all business are worked on and through land. Manufacturers, financiers, bankers, brokers and business and commercial magnates of all kinds may directly occupy but a small piece of land—a small office in a large building perhaps—but these people who seem to be producing wealth in a small space have interests in all kinds of concerns; in docks, coal companies, mines, factories, building estates, etc. Or they may be holders of mortgages, or interested in land development schemes.

In considering whether the taxation of land values would reach these rich men, we must consider, not the restricted area in which they personally operate but the whole country. If all land were rated and taxed according to its market value, every acre of land would be affected, whether it were used or held idle for speculative purposes, or by caprice. In this way the taxation of land values will reach out to all men, rich or poor; as they are interested in land personally, or as a shareholder in a land company so will they contribute to the public revenues. Under the Taxation of Land Values none will escape. Those who enjoy much land value will pay more than those who enjoy less, and those who do not enjoy any land value

will not be asked to make a contribution.—Land Values.

DIRECT LEGISLATION

There have been two striking indications recently of the fast gathering forces of Direct Legislation in the province of Manitoba. The first was when the premier felt called upon to launch the full broadside of his by no means limited vocabulary against it and its advocates, and so warned his henchmen who were moving toward it that



LATE JUSTIN MCCARTHY

Author of "A History of Our Own Times," and of numerous novels and other works, prominent member of British Parliament for many years, who died April 24.

they must choose between party loyalty and principle. Then on Wednesday evening last the magnificent gathering at the banquet of the Direct Legislation League showed the premier's fears to be well founded.

It does not take a prophet to discern that Direct Legislation is on the program for Manitoba in the immediate future. Maybe the present government will yet decide that it would be better to enact it themselves than leave it to successors to do.

Labor men can look on with a good deal of satisfaction at the growing popularity of the principle and see others carrying it on to victory. For it was in Winnipeg fourteen years ago when, at the instigation of the local delegation the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada incorporated Direct Legislation in its platform of principles. It was unpopular enough then to endear it to the affections of the most enthusiastic. In succeeding years the labor forces were left all alone in their advocacy of the cause.—The Voice.

BACK TO THE SOIL

Booker T. Washington raises the cry of "Back to the Soil!" in an appeal to the people of his race. "Uplift the social, moral and physical life of the negroes by encouraging agriculture among them," was his message to the African M. E. church conference at Kansas City. "In the rural districts," he said, "the negro is at his best in soul and body. In the city he is usually at his worst. If we would save the negroes," he continued, "82 per cent. of whom live in the country, they must be taught that when the Bible says 'the earth is full of thy riches,' it means that the earth is full of corn, potatoes, peas, cotton, chickens and cows; and that these riches must be gotten out by the hand of man and turned into beautiful church buildings and righteous, useful living." Yea and amen. But it appears that the earth is fenced in; it is pre-empted; access to it by the negro or the white man who would dig and delve in it for the riches with which it is filled can be obtained only by submitting to terms often more degrading than those of that old chattel

slavery which it took a great war to abolish. Dr. Washington for some reason religiously avoids any discussion of the land question as it relates to the race problem, a solution for which he so zealously seeks. Is this due to the fact that Tuskegee might suffer in its revenues from Big Business were he to put his finger on so vital a spot?—Johnstown Democrat.

THE PARCELS POST

The immediate adoption of the parcels post ought to be assured after the speeches by Senators Bailey and Heyburn.

Mr. Bailey said that with postal, banks, parcels posts, and Postmaster-General Hitchcock's proposed postal telegraphy the post office soon would become the most important institution in every community. Senator Heyburn said the effect of the parcels post would be to destroy the village and town life. "By and by we will vote by letter," he said, "and nobody will know anybody."

These troglodytes do not often fail to oppose the best things, but they are always picturesque in their belatedness. They have evidently never heard of the postal systems of other and better administered nations, although not only Washington, D.C., but Idaho and Texas receive parcels from these countries in greater bulk and more cheaply than they can be transported within the borders of their home communities. As to voting by mail, why not?—Twentieth Century.

LABOR AND LANDLORDISM

The chief cause of all labor troubles is landlordism; the rent of land keeps pace with all attempts of labor to escape. Education, invention, improvement of any kind, anything that would lighten the day's toil, is arrested and stifled by this constantly acting force. The advance of rent is an enduring ob-



EXTRACTING IRON SPLINTERS FROM THE EYE

An Electro-magnet designed for oculists by Dr. Haab of Zurich, Switzerland, which should be a benefaction to the human race. It removes iron splinters from wounds in any part of the body.

stacle to higher wages. In the words of Henry George: "It is a fresh and continuous robbery that goes on every day and every hour. It is not from the produce of the past that rent is drawn; it is from the produce of the present. It is a toll levied upon labor constantly and continuously." This power to appropriate the rent of land induces land monopoly, the standing barrier to the solution of the poverty problem. It checks production at its source and in itself constitutes a permanent lockout of labor and capital.—Land Values.

COMMISSION GOVERNMENT FOR ST. PAUL

The city of St. Paul, Minn., has voted for the commission form of government, to go into effect two years hence. St. Paul has about 215,000 inhabitants and it will be the largest city in the country experimenting with a municipal administration of this character. As the cities that adopt it include places of large size, the experience finally gained will universally increase in value and significance. While the details of the St. Paul plan are not at hand, the brief press dispatches describe it in outline as providing for a mayor, a controller and six councilmen. "The mayor assigns a councilman to head each of the several administrative departments. He also names a purchasing agent. The council elects a city attorney and a city clerk. The mayor is president of the council and is given both executive and legislative powers."

LA FOLLETTE ON SUFFRAGE

I cannot remember a time when I did not believe in woman suffrage. The great economic and industrial questions of today affect women as directly as they do men. And the interests of men and women are not antagonistic one to the other, but mutual and co-ordinate. Co-suffrage, like co-education, will react not to the special advantage of either men or women, but will result in a more enlightened, better balanced citizenship, and in a truer democracy. I am glad to say that the legislature of Wisconsin passed, at its last session, a suffrage law which will be submitted on referendum next November to the voters of the state. I shall support it and campaign for it.—Senator Robert M. La Follette.

MISTAKEN MARTYRS

Our English suffragette friends have also been suffering from unsound economics and logic. Breaking windows to reach cabinet ministers with notes containing stones is one form of demonstration and as justifiable as throwing tea into a harbor. But destroying the windows of innocent shopkeepers is another kind of demonstration, unjustifiable because inconsequential. The defeat of the compromise bill seems to be a severe rebuke for this irrelevance. But, perhaps, we should not demand masculine logic. One great need of equal suffrage is to supplement the clumsiness of logic with intuition.—Twentieth Century.

STEAD ON NAVIES

One of the last things written by W. T. Stead was a strong protest against great navies which appears posthumously in the Neue Freie Presse of Vienna. In it he says:—

Those naval armaments are a real pest, and the irritation they cause is mitigated only by the consolation that they are approaching an end. I am convinced that none of those dreadnoughts or super-dreadnoughts will ever fire one shot in a real war. They are like the oppressive medieval armor which was increasing in weight just when the invention was approaching of gunpowder which rendered that armour worthless.

Women voted for the first time in Belgium last month. They have lately been given the right to take part in electing the Conseils des Prudhommes, who settle trade disputes. It is reported that the women went to the polls in large numbers, and voted for candidates favoring equal rights for men and women.

"The first and paramount consideration in taxation should be equality of burden; and only by taking the rental value of land in taxes can such equality be secured."—Tom L. Johnson.

Privilege is the advantage conferred on one by law of denying the competition of others.—Tom L. Johnson.