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The Democrat

N. BLACKBURN, Proprietor.

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Democratic State Ticket.

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Clerk of the Supreme Court—C. W. Weiman.
Superintendent of Public Instruction—Charles W. Thomas.
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CONGRESSIONAL TICKET.

For Congress, 11th District.
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For Clerk.

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For Sheriff.

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For Coroner.

S. C. CLARK.

For Surveyor.

W. E. FULK.

For Commissioner—2nd Dist.

CONRAD BRAKE.

For Commissioner—3rd Dist.

DAVID ECKROTE.

THE County Commissioners at this session should take up the idea of disposing of the old Fair grounds. It is the opinion of real estate dealers, that if laid out into town lots they would find ready sale at good figures.

It is now Mayor B. W. Quinn, if you please. The induction or change having occurred yesterday. THE DEMOCRAT extends the new executive of the City of Decatur the right hand of fellowship with all rights and privileges thereto belonging to an American citizen, and hopes that his sun of deserved popularity may shine as resplendent in his present official capacity as it did during and since his last official regime.

WHAT say the County Commissioners to putting in a telephone in the Court House and County Jail? As many as fifty of our business houses and private residences have already subscribed for this very convenient way of communicating with each other, and as the Court House officials are often called upon in business matters with our merchants and others, it would be very proper to have a phone at the Court House and Jail to connect with the general exchange.

A PETITION is being circulated asking the City Council to improve Second street from the south end of the brick street to Adams street by resetting the curb and placing on the street a top dressing that will make it good and lasting, at a very slight expense to the property owners. This is a good move as the street needs some repair, and by such work the same can be made so that it will last for a long time, and then when they want to brick the street the material will be there ready for use so that it will make a good street now and be ready for use in the future.

One of the Hardest Workers in Congress is the Hon. A. N. Martin, of this District.

The following from the Indianapolis Sentinel shows some of the work he does:

"Mr. Martin is one of the most popular men in Congress and his strongest opponents speak of him in terms of great respect. He is serving his second term as chairman of the committee on invalid pensions. This is one of the great committees of the House and the duties of its chairman are more laborious and exacting than fall to to the head of any other committee.

"Since last August Mr. Martin has worked faithfully almost day and night with his official business and his committee has reported a large number of bills. These bills must be considered at the Friday sessions, and as the attendance at night sessions is always scant, it is in the power of a single member to prevent consideration of a pension bill by raising the point that no quorum of the House is present. A few men on the Democratic side and a few on the Republican side have constituted themselves the guardians of their colleagues, and for some unaccountable reason, which none of them can explain, whenever a bill is pending which they do not approve of they will not allow the majority present to decide its fate, but block all proceedings by stubbornly raising the point of no quorum, and the House must thereupon adjourn.

"Mr. Martin has been present every Friday night since December begging and pleading for the consideration of pension bills; in the face of such petty opposition, always patient and a gentleman, never losing his temper, conciliating in one place and otherwise smoothing away difficulties in another, and that there has not been more pension legislation this season is certainly not his fault nor that of the overwhelming majority of both Democratic and Republican members.

"These Friday night deadlocks have occasioned much bitter discussion, but through it all no political enemy has insinuated that Mr. Martin was not able, fearless, honest and patriotic in his efforts to aid the old soldiers and their widows and orphan children. His many speeches on this subject have been brief and to the point as he always aims to convince the judgment of the House rather than to tickle its fancy.

"He drafted and secured the passage of the bill providing that no pension should be suspended for any reason until after due notice to the pensioner and full opportunity given him to defend his right to the pension.

"He also drafted the bill recently passed giving to the insane, idiotic and permanently crippled or deformed orphan children of soldiers pensions after they arrived at the age of sixteen years, thus humanely supplementing the present law.

"Mr. Martin is in daily receipt of letters from soldiers all over the United States and to each one he gives a respectful and whenever possible, a helpful answer."

DON'T THROW YOUR MONEY AWAY.

Many merchants and business men pay out large sums of money for humbug advertising schemes and newspapers of limited circulation. They sustain the same relation to legitimate advertising that quack nostrums do the intelligent practice of medicine. Experience has taught careful business men that the very best returns are invariably secured by advertising in an established and generally-read newspaper. THE DEMOCRAT is this kind of paper.

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INDIANA TAX REFORM.

Invaluable Service to the People by the Democratic Party.

History of the Tax Law of 1891 and Its Beneficent Results.

A Barbarous System Replaced by a Just and Equitable Code—Burdens Equalized and Taxes Proportioned to Possessions—Illinois and Indiana Contrasted—Former Still Complaining of Partiality in Exemptions and Favoritism to Corporations—Latter Favored at the Expense of the People—Facts and Figures in Illustration—Superiority of the Indiana Plan—Democracy's Great Triumph.

For many years the necessity for reform in the system of taxation was one of the most pressing questions in the state of Indiana. It was recognized that the prevailing system was unjust, vicious and oppressively unequal in its operations, but every effort for a change long proved abortive. Under the old laws prevailing in the state up to the year 1891, the corporations always managed to evade payment of their just proportion of taxation. The corporate influences appeared to be in complete control of the machinery for levying taxes, and for years, by means known only to themselves and the revenue officials, shifted almost the entire burden of taxation to the shoulders of individual property owners. While only a small percent of the taxes were paid by corporations and railroad interests, their holdings largely exceeded the total assessed valuation of the entire state. Hundreds of thousands of individual property owners throughout the state were years assessed at from one-third to one-half the actual value of their possessions, while the corporations were either entirely overlooked by the local assessors and state board of equalization, or succeeded in having their aggregations of wealth listed at, one-tenth, or even one-twentieth, of its value. Nor was this all or the worst. Many rich corporations, such as the Pullman Car company, escaped taxation altogether. Though doing business in the state on a large scale, enjoying the protection of her laws and getting the benefit of her rich resources, they returned not a dollar to the treasury in compensation. The attempts to remedy this iniquitous system long proved vain. The Republican party, though often in power, refused to do anything. The demands of the people were unheard or unheeded. The old code, out of date and unjust to the last degree, was allowed to remain on the statute books.

Such was the situation when the Democratic party assumed control of the legislature in the winter of 1890-91. The leaders of the party had determined to make a sweeping change in the whole system of taxation and the session was largely taken up in framing and passing the new law. It was carefully studied and framed on scientific principles, in accordance with the views of the most enlightened and progressive students of political economy. Its passage was opposed at every step by the privileged corporations, backed by the Republican party. It was only after a bitter struggle that the measure finally became a law. The Republican press and speakers assailed it with utmost virulence, attacking both its principle and details, and calling upon the people to defeat the Democracy and restore the old system. In fact, opposition to this great law was made one of the cardinal Republican tenets in 1892, and had that party been given power there is no doubt that it would have been repealed. Every device was resorted to to prejudice the people against it. The operation of the law was obstructed in every possible way, payment of taxes was resisted and suits were brought to declare the law unconstitutional.

The basic principle underlying this law is that all persons shall pay taxes in proportion to their means. While none are allowed to escape, they will all be assessed equitably. The wealthiest corporation must bear its burden equally with the small farmer or householder. While according equal rights to all, special privileges will be allowed to none. How unjustly the old plan operated and the inestimable reform that has been accomplished by this great Democratic law may be judged from the single item of railroad property. The total assessments of railroad properties in the state of Indiana for the year 1890, under the old system, was \$69,763,676. For 1891, after the new law came into effect, the assessment of the same properties was \$161,039,169. For 1892 it was \$160,595,802 and for 1893 it was \$159,248,873. It will be seen that the aggregate for these three years was \$480,883,844, as against \$209,288,028, which would have been the assessment during these three years on the basis of 1890, showing an excess under the new law of \$271,595,816. But while railroad property, being the largest item, attracts the most attention, the operation of the law worked a similar reformation proportionally in all kinds of corporate property which had theretofore escaped taxation in whole or in part. This enlargement of the list of taxables, while greatly increasing the state's resources, also operates to relieve the smaller taxpayers of the unjust burdens put upon them by the inequitable operation of the old method.

Perhaps no better way can be employed to bring into bold relief the public benefits conferred by the great Democratic reform law of 1891 than to contrast the present conditions of the two neighboring states of Indiana and Illinois. In the latter the old system still prevails, the tax law there being very similar to the one in operation here up to 1891. The state boards of equalization of the two states have been in session during the past two weeks, and the merits and demerits of their respective laws may readily be compared. In Indiana no complaints are heard except from a few big corporations, who are begging for a lowering of assessments on account of hard times and bad business. The people generally are satisfied, understanding that they now have a law that is perfectly just in its provisions and only needs honest and fear-

less administration to secure ideal results. In Illinois the complaints are loud and deep and a demand comes up from every quarter of the state for the passage of a tax law similar to that in Indiana. The records in Illinois show that more than \$100,000,000 worth of railroad property does not pay a cent of taxes, while every acre owned by the farmer is assessed to the fullest extent. The same records show that the colossal corporations of the state, with capital stock reaching into the hundred million figures, pay taxes on but \$5,363,947. It goes without saying that such a condition of affairs constitutes a crime against every individual taxpayer in the state. It is wholesale robbery of the people by the trusts and corporate monopolies, aided and abetted by officials chosen by the taxpayers to secure an equitable distribution of the burdens of taxation. Farming lands throughout the state are assessed at from \$12 to \$50 per acre, while a corporation like that of the Pullman Palace Car company, having a paid-up capital of \$36,000,000, owning a city in itself and possessed of assets valued at \$50,000,000, is permitted to pay taxes on less than \$2,000,000, or about 4 per cent of its real value. Owners of humble homes worth from \$2,000 to \$5,000 are assessed at from \$1,000 to \$2,500, or half their real value, while railroads owning \$30,000,000 worth of property are allowed to escape on an assessed valuation of less than \$1,000,000. Real estate experts estimate the value of railroad property in Chicago at \$600,000,000, yet the state board of equalization places the assessed value at less than \$13,000,000 and in the entire state of Illinois at \$32,000,000, although known to be worth \$1,000,000,000. In other words, the individual taxpayer has to pay taxes on about one-fourth the real value of his property, while the big railroad corporations escape with assessments of from one-tenth to one-twentieth of the real value of their holdings. The \$30,000,000 paid-up capital stock of Pullman's Palace Car company is assessed at the pitiful figure of \$672,346. This same company has never paid a dollar of taxes in Indiana until the present year, which is the result of a law passed by the last Democratic legislature of Indiana. It has made millions of dollars in the state during the last 30 years without returning a single dollar in taxes. The remedy for this glaring abuse is due solely to the Democratic party.

Last year the total assessed value of property in Illinois was \$347,191,516, of which \$760,837,855 was placed on real estate and personal property, \$79,531,738 on railroads, and \$5,363,947 on capital stock corporations other than railroads. This tells the story of how the people pay the taxes while the corporations, which have the people by the throat, escape the burdens of government. Precisely similar to this were the conditions prevailing in Indiana until the legislation of 1891 plucked up the abuse by the roots, made mandatory provisions for equal and just assessments and compelled all classes of property to bear their fair share of the taxation. How it has operated as to the railroads is illustrated in the figures above given, contrasting the assessment of 1890 with subsequent years. But it is not simply necessary to have a good law to insure justice to the people. To the Democratic party of Indiana belongs the credit of first enacting the tax law and then enforcing it with vigorous impartiality and stern justice to all. The administration of the law was resisted by one of the most powerful combinations ever formed for such a purpose. All the railroad companies of the state united in refusing payment of taxes and in a suit to declare the law unconstitutional and void. This litigation involved more money than any other tax case ever before tried in the United States. How it was fought through for the state and finally won by the Democratic attorney general; how the railroads were compelled to come to time and settle their long withheld dues, are matters of recent history and form one of the proudest triumphs of the Democratic party. Valuable as was the service to the people of enacting such a law, the honest and fearless enforcement of its provisions constitute a still stronger claim for public approval and public gratitude.

REPUBLICANISM AND DEMOCRACY.

Look Upon This Picture and Then Cast Your Eye Upon This.

As another campaign is on, it is well to contrast the records of the two great parties now contending for supremacy in Indiana. During its tenure of power at various times in the last decade the Democratic party has done these things: It passed the mechanics' lien law. It passed the law giving laborers a lien upon the product of their labor for wages and material furnished. It passed the law protecting labor organizations. It passed the law providing for the safety of miners and the proper ventilation of mines. It passed the law constituting eight hours a day's labor in public employment. It passed the law prohibiting the blacklisting of employees. It passed the law prohibiting "pluck-me" stores. It passed the employees' liability law. It passed the law prohibiting the importation of Pinkerton detectives. It passed the law against the importation of alien or foreign laborers. It enacted the school-book law. It enacted laws to purify elections. It enacted the Australian ballot law. It devised and passed the present tax law. It passed the new fee and salary law. It enacted the Barrett improvement law. It passed the state board of charities law.

The Other Side. Every one of the above mentioned laws, now admitted to be valuable, was opposed to the last by the Republican party. It fought the school book law with utmost desperation. It arrayed itself against the labor reform laws. It opposed the 8-hour day law. It was against the employees' liability bill. It was the champion of Pinkerton detectives. It fought all the laws to purify elections. It arrayed itself like a stone wall against the Australian ballot law, which it regarded as an attack upon its inalienable right to buy votes. It was savagely against the present equitable tax law and fought it at every stage, and if returned to power is pledged to repeal it and go back to the old system of corporation favoritism. It opposed the fee and salary law.

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ADDITIONAL HORRORS.

Hinckley's Awful Experience Repeated at Sandstone and Elsewhere.

ST. PAUL, Sept. 3.—The situation at Sandstone is even more appalling than at Hinckley, except in point of numbers. Of the 200 people in the town, one-fourth are dead. Otto Stafferfeldt reached here from that place last night. He says the people were just preparing to leave when the fire closed in on three sides and not a single person saved a thing except his clothing. About 160 went to the river and 50 or 60 were burned to death. The people who were saved are living on potatoes and carrots left in the ground.

In addition to 47 bodies at Sandstone there are 30 at Kettle River Junction. All the settlers in the vicinity are probably burned to death. O'Neill Bros. had 12 camps in the woods there and all these are burned. Most of the inmates, however, are believed to have escaped with their lives. There are 11 homeless families at Mission Creek, and the same story is true of several other places in that vicinity.

No trains are running west of Hinckley and it is impossible to get accurate information.

Carlton, Rutledge and other towns in the north are reported burned to the ground.

HEARTRENDING.

Hospital Incidents and Search for Missing Relatives.

PINE CITY, Sept. 3.—Pine City has turned the skating rink and courthouse, as well as many private houses, into hospitals, where 50 sufferers are receiving medical attendance and careful nursing. The town hall is used as an eatinghouse, where all the homeless men, women and children are substantially fed.

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

Council met in regular session last evening, Mayor Quinn in the chair. Councilmen Niblick, Patterson, Buhler, Coverdale, Vail and Teeple present.

The term of office of City Attorney, Secretary Board of Health, City Civil Engineer and Chief of Fire Department having expired, Councilman Patterson made a motion to have the same filled and an election taken to that effect.

Before any vote was taken on Councilman Patterson's motion, Councilman Teeple offered an amendment to Patterson's motion deferring the election of said officers until next regular session of Council. On a vote being taken on the amendment, the count stood a tie, and the vote of the chief executive of that body deferred the election.

A controversy as to the actual ownership of a wedge-shaped piece of ground in the northwest corner Fifth and Marshall streets between the City of Decatur and Catharine Brake, the owner of in-lot No. 432, the Council ceded that part in chancery to Mrs. Catharine Brake, making it a part of the above-in-lot.

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