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## THE MORNING GUARDIAN

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1902.

### THE QUESTION OF TAX EXEMPTION.

When a large body of water has been ponded up the sudden opening of a sluice gate disturbs the equilibrium of the entire mass and causes a rush toward the opening. This is the working out of a natural law and illustrates fairly well the disturbance of economic and industrial conditions in our City caused by the hasty resolve of the City Council to exempt the Packing Company from taxation for twenty years. It has awakened other industrial concerns to the possibility of obtaining like concessions, and as in our illustration the water seeks the sluice-gate, they are looking to the City Council and the new opening it has made. And by a logical deduction from what the Council has done these industries new and old may fairly claim what they ask.

The essential features of the new departure brought about by the Mayor's casting vote is that an old industry has the same claim to exemption as a new one; that an existing term of five years may be extended, and that twenty-five years at least may be considered as a fair term for such exemption. These are sweeping changes not contemplated by the taxpayers or by the Legislature when a brief term of exemption for the encouragement of new and important industries was entered upon. In the light of the new precedent now established there is no logical stopping place short of giving a lengthened term of exemption to every industry new or old which is now in existence or may be hereafter established in our city. We may rest assured that companies, firms and individuals will claim the advantage given them by the new departure.

If an industry which has been in operation five years may get twenty years further exemption, it may be logically argued that another industry, ten, fifteen or twenty years in operation, and whether heretofore paying taxes, or exempt from taxes, may fairly claim exemption for a term in the future. No one believes that the Council intended to go so far as this. For that matter, the great body of our citizens would not tolerate such sweeping exemptions, which must of necessity shift the burden of taxation more and more from the shoulders of the rich to the shoulders of the working classes and the people of limited property. Our City Council should take note of what is going on in other cities in regard to this very question.

The labor unions are taking the matter up east and west. Only this week the different unions of Montreal are considering this question with a view to making their united influence felt in favor of abolishing all tax exemptions. They see the men of millions putting their money into industries and factories for which they have influence enough with legislatures and councils to secure immunity from taxes. The working classes and those in moderate circumstances never escape the tax gatherer, but the hundreds of thousands of dollars of a wealthy man invested in a big factory may wholly escape taxation, while yielding to its owner five to twenty per cent interest on

his investment. The men of great wealth are more and more sheltering themselves under these exemptions while the large middle class who have a little property—a modest home perhaps but no capital, and the burden of taxation ever increasing.

The question is not one to be dealt with in any hasty or perfunctory way. It ought to be considered in all its bearings and decided in accordance with sound economic principles. It is right enough to encourage new industries, to entice capital from abroad if we can, and for such an object we may sometimes make an exception to the sound rule that all must pay something in taxes for the benefits which they or their property receive from the taxes paid by others. But the term should be limited. It is monstrous to assume that an industry needs to be pap-fed like an infant until it is twenty-five years old,—that poor men must carry the burden of taxation for a quarter of a century while the capital of the rich invested in such an industry shall be exempt. And the line of demarcation between new and old industries must be maintained, or otherwise the object of exemption for the encouragement of new enterprises will be wholly lost sight of and defeated.

Great are the resources of modern surgery. A young man in Annapolis, Maryland, was injured in a foot-ball game with the result that a large clot of blood formed under the skull, causing unconsciousness, and imminent danger of death within a few hours. Dr. W. W. Keen of Philadelphia, a skilful brain surgeon, was called in, who cut out a triangular section of the bone of the skull, removed a clot of blood weighing four ounces, and then closed the wound, leaving a drain. The patient has regained consciousness and is expected to make a good recovery.

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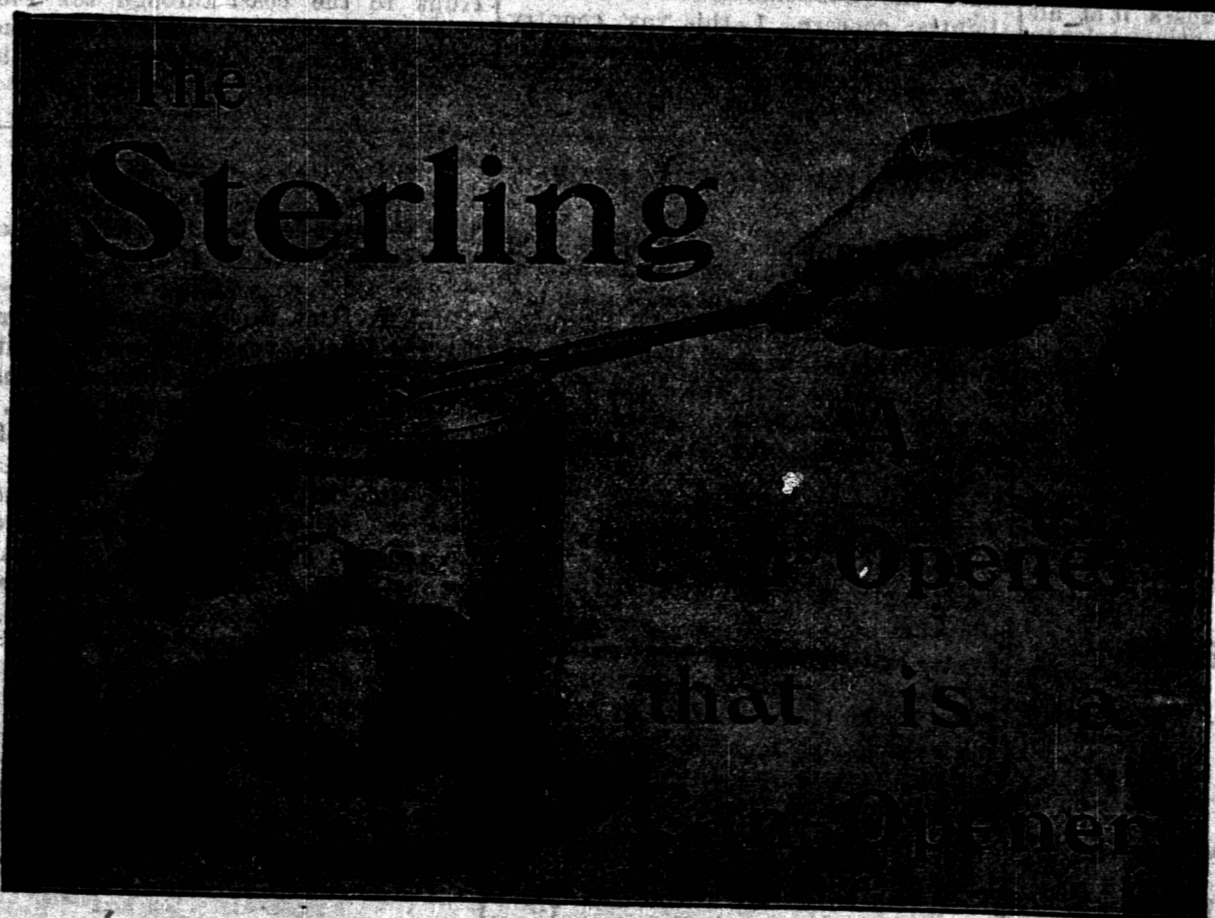
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