

The SINGLE TAX

THE ORGAN OF THE SCOTTISH LAND RESTORATION UNION.

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Notes and Comments.

With this issue the *Single Tax* completes its first 12 months existence. We send greetings to all subscribers and friends. Our work has been considerably lightened during the year by the support and encouragement we have received, and our success has far and away exceeded our highest expectations. We have succeeded in no small way, both in bringing into line old friends and making new converts. The Scottish Land Restoration Union is a power to be reckoned with in the political and social reform circles of Scotland. We have endeavoured to serve the cause of the Single Tax and to be true to its principles. As an agency to the complete destruction of land monopoly and the opening up of the natural opportunities to employment it is making headway with all reformers. But the Gospel has still to be preached, and we appeal to all land restorers to continue to assist us in every legitimate way during the coming year, to place this monthly messenger of ours—the *Single Tax*—into the hands of all democrats.

JOHN SMITH'S REPLY TO "MERRIE ENGLAND," BY J. W. S. CALLIE, EDITOR *Financial Reform Almanac*.—This is a thorough criticism of *Clarion* socialism by a Single Taxer. It exposes in a most unmerciful and convincing way the shallowness of the arguments and quack remedies advanced by "Nunquam," in the guise of economics. It is also a defence of the Liberal Programme, and every reformer should secure a copy. Price Sixpence. Post free from *Single Tax* Office, 45 Montrose Street, Glasgow. Henry George says of Mr. Callie's effort:—

"I congratulate you upon the little book which seems to me excellent. Socialism is so vague and contradictory that it cannot stand argument. Its very vagueness commends it to men who will not or cannot take the trouble to think, but in the long run the men who do think will win if the discussion is only kept up."

Mr. Stead predicts the downfall of the Liberal Party at next election, because they are going to tax land values shilling by shilling until the whole unearned increment is taken for public purposes, which he calls confiscation. Perhaps it is confiscation; but that is no reason why the landlords should continue as confiscators of the unearned increment. And our opinion is that the Liberal Party are more likely to be defeated if they don't put a period soon to this same confiscation. Let us hope Mr. Stead is correct for once and that the Liberal Party will risk a fall on such a genuine and practical reform as the Taxation of Land Values.

HENRY GEORGE.—"I have seen the whole problem of labour's degradation worked out in practical life before my own eyes. Thirty years ago, sir, labour in California was comparatively

free, because land was comparatively free there. Labour was then paid according to its production and not according to the lowest standard of living among the labourers as now. It was then worth what it produced and it was paid accordingly.

"Labourers being free to go upon the virgin soil and build their homes and establish their own industries, and being able there to comfortably feed and clothe their families, and to educate their children in the standard branches of useful learning, were not obliged to remain in the labour market when it offered less favourable conditions. Then California was labour's 'Promised Land.' Then California was the last rampart from which the boasted and really glorious 'Standard of American Labour' has been permitted to float.

"Then there were in our land no tramps, few paupers, and no surplus labour in enforced idleness.

"Then sparseness of population and the consequent lack of social advantages, imposed the only hardships that were known. What wonder that those who knew the freedom and the happiness of those conditions yearn for their return.

"I saw the change of social conditions come. I saw the shadow of land monopoly steal over and encompass our Golden State. I saw a few hundred men become the absolute owners and masters of her great material resources, that were manifestly intended by their Creator to furnish homes and subsistence to 40,000,000 people. I saw an empire of her best and richest land pass by Act of Congress under the dominion of a single, soulless corporation. I saw the gates of natural independence in home industry closed against American labour."

The Deer Forests Commission have reported that nearly 1½ million acres of land are available for crofter uses. The Tories and their defenders were wont to say there was no land in the Highlands fit for cultivation, and favoured emigration schemes involving enormous sums of money for this purpose. They have dropped this no land assertion, and now want to know where the money is to come from to assist the crofter and cottar back upon the available land just discovered. Verily the ways of these defenders of privilege and land monopoly are beyond our common understanding; but they are being found out. "The mills of the Gods grind slowly but they grind exceeding small."

THE SINGLE TAX IN JAPAN.

SHIBAKU, TOKYO, JAPAN, Feb. 20, 1895.

To the *Single Tax* Clubs of the World! Greetings:

The undersigned have devoted such time and funds as they could command to the advancement of the Single Tax cause in Japan. In many respects conditions here are favourable to a propaganda of this kind. More than half the area of Japan is yet government land. Besides this, nearly every village has its commons, which should be surveyed and leased, the rent being divided; besides this, the subject of taxation is now prominently before the people. We want to do what we can to enlighten the thinking people on the two subjects of the Single Tax and proportional representation. "The Story of My Dictatorship," fitted to oriental conditions, is ready for the printers. Single Tax stamps, printed in short pithy sentences, are now in use. Lectures

and newspaper articles have been doing their work.

To this we would like to add the distribution of the *Single Tax Courier*. Its fresh news, coming week by week, would do more than most anything else to help the cause along. There are hundreds of people here who can read English, and the papers do not object to publishing Single Tax matter. It only costs one-half sen to mail a paper, which in American money is only one-fourth of a cent. Our request is that every Single Tax Club subscribe for one copy of the *Single Tax Courier* through the National Committee, thus helping the committee and the paper, and doing great things for the cause here in Japan.

We can think of nothing that will go farther in the cause we all love.

We make no appeal for money, but the papers would be so much to the work here and cost you so little there! Single Taxers in England and Australia could send us their home Single Tax papers. We make occasional reports through the *Single Tax Courier* and could do the same in other papers if encouraged by these subscriptions.

Yours for Equity,

CHAS. E. GARST,
S. Jo.

Address 26 Fukidecho, Shibaku, Tokyo, Japan.

Henry George has just finished a highly successful lecturing tour in Canada. In reply to an interviewer he said the Single Tax theory has a steady growth in the United States, particularly in the Southern and Western States. "Time is all that is required," he continued, "and as the years roll on it is very gratifying to observe the growth of public opinion on this subject. Intelligent opinion the world over appears gradually to be assimilating the Single Tax Theory, and at no distant date, I believe, we will see the practical application of the tenets of the Single Tax theory."

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY.

By L. H. B.

The speeches made and the programme adopted at the Annual Conference of the above Party, which was held during the past month, betray both the strength and the weaknesses of of this latest factor in the political arena. However small their numbers, however inconsiderable the funds at their command, however weak their faith in freedom, however misplaced their manifest confidence in the advantages of restriction and coercion, however unconvincing their arguments on matters of detail, and however undemocratic their methods of organization, yet can it not be denied that this young, active, and enthusiastic party is doing much work that should recommend itself to every earnest reformer. In the first place, they are certainly arousing amongst the toilers a keen and wholesome interest in political questions, and are spreading amongst them the knowledge that their well-being is largely determined by the political and social institutions under which they live. And of all political work this is perhaps the most needed at the present time. What though many of the views they hold and

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many of the doctrines they promulgate may be erroneous? *Wrong-thinking* is better than *non-thinking*, at all events in political questions. The thinking man may be convinced by arguments, despite old prejudices and deep-rooted habits of thought; but with what weapons of the mind can the non-thinker be convinced of the necessity for some radical change in those institutions to which he has grown accustomed, and whose equity he has never questioned? True it is that anything that awakens thought makes for progress; and those who have faith in the people, in humanity, cannot doubt for a moment but that those whose minds are once awakened to the injustice of present conditions, and whose desire is for truth, peace and progress, must, sooner or later, come to recognise and embrace the fundamental truth that what is really requisite to the attainment of their aims is Justice, not State Aid; Freedom, and not Coercion.

In his short opening address, the temporary Chairman, Mr. Pete Curran, gave voice in unmistakable tones to the main object of the new party. "They declared war," he said, "against all those who supported class privilege and monopoly of every description." Without doubt it is this sentiment that inspires all the enthusiasm and loving self-sacrifice manifested, to our own knowledge, by many of its rank and file. And if this principle, of opposition to monopoly and privilege, and of the desire to establish social justice, were adopted as the sole constitution of this or any other party—without any rules determining the methods of warfare, or any regulations restricting the actions of its members—it would soon gain in strength, numbers, and influence. Such an organisation would appeal to reformers of every shade of opinion; for they are all engaged in the same war, all fighting against the same enemy, albeit with different weapons and different methods. And in such a society, in which both freedom of action and freedom of opinion would be recognised as fundamental rights of every member; in which the freest discussion could and would take place, without the fear of offending any majority or any leader; there would soon be more true unanimity and harmonious action than in any association in which uniformity of opinion is demanded as a necessary condition of membership, and the sacrifice of personal judgment enforced by one of the chief planks in their constitution.

But to our subject. In Mr. Keir Hardie's speech, on the second day of the Conference, there are several points of interest. Many, even of those who doubt the wisdom of his actions in Parliament, will welcome his severe denunciations of the Whig wire-pullers of the present Liberal Party. Though it might temporarily wreck the Liberal Party, the Liberal Cause would undoubtedly be advanced if these gentry were to transfer their services to the avowed party of privilege and monopoly, with whom their interests and class bias cause them to be more in sympathy. Altering the name of the party of progress would, however, do nothing to alter its character, and in this connection it is noteworthy that Mr. Keir Hardie's pointed description of the Liberal Party applies also and with equal force to that of which he is now the accepted chief. "There was a section of honest reformers," he said, "men really in earnest, and who endeavoured to use the party for the purpose of securing the reforms to which they were pledged. There was another section of sharp, scheming politicians, who supported the party simply for what they could get out of it for their own personal benefit; and then there was the Whig element, which was as timid and stupid to-day as it had ever been at any period in the history of the nation." Of such elements, every political party, by whatever name it may call itself, is almost inevitably composed; and that for the simple reason that such diverse elements will be found in almost every body of men who come together for any purpose. The party of progress, however, need never hope to be perfectly unanimous on all points of detail; it is sufficient if it is able to unite all the different sections on some underlying and fundamental principle. Under such circumstances all earnest reformers, instead of playing into the hands of the common enemy by quarrelling amongst themselves, could assist one another's

projects in all cases where this could be done without any sacrifice of principles or convictions.

There is one other point in Mr. Hardie's speech to which we feel bound to refer. He claimed for himself "absolute freedom to say what he liked . . . and to take his own line of action in and out of Parliament," in the interest, of course, of those whose cause he has espoused. Good! But, then what about the much discussed Fourth Clause, which makes membership of the I.L.P. possible only on giving the following pledge:—"I hereby pledge myself a Socialist, pledge myself to sever all connection with any other political party, and to vote in the case of local elections as my branch of the Independent Labour Party may determine, and in the case of general parliamentary elections as the conference specially convened for that purpose may decide." Should not the same "absolute freedom" be secured, as a matter of principle, to every other member of the I.L.P.? Or are we to understand that such "absolute freedom" is a special privilege, to be enjoyed only by the different leaders of that very party which is opposed to all class privilege? This point deserves discussion by the different Labour Organisations affiliated with the I.L.P. They have to choose between freedom and restriction. But whichever be chosen, it should be enforced on all alike, on the leaders as on the humblest member of the rank and file. As things now stand the only member of the Independent Labour Party who is in any sense independent is Mr. Keir Hardie, the rest are bound hand and foot. Hence, doubtless, the expressed desire to change the name of the organisation so as no longer to prostitute the word "independent." For surely no man of any independent thought or feeling could join a society demanding from its members such a pledge—except, of course, as leader; i.e., as a free and independent leader of bound and dependent followers.

The programme adopted runs as follows:—

AGRICULTURAL.

That the land being the storehouse of all the essentials of life, ought to be declared and treated as public property, and be so cultivated as to provide the food supply of the people; and as steps towards this we recommend for immediate adoption the following programme:—

1. The creation of a State Land Department.
2. The establishment of free agricultural colleges and model farms, at which the requisite training in every department of food production may be obtained.
3. That parish, district, borough, and county councils be invested with compulsory powers to acquire land which they shall themselves cultivate or let within their respective areas.
4. Fixity of tenure with compensation for improvements in case of disturbance.
5. The reforestation of land unsuited for cultivation, and the reclamation of waste lands and foreshores.
6. The proper utilisation on the land of the sewage which now pollutes the rivers and lakes. Local authorities to be invested with full powers to give effect to this.
7. An agricultural produce post for the systematic collection and transmission to markets of the produce of the farm, the orchard, and the dairy.
8. Land values, urban and rural, to be treated as public property.
9. In cases where it is necessary to acquire land by purchase, such purchase shall take the form of terminable annuities. The Government shall issue land bonds, to carry current rates of interest, and be redeemable at par within a period not exceeding fifty years.

INDUSTRIAL.

The true object of industry being the production of the requirements of life, the responsibility for this production should rest with the community collectively; work and the wealth resulting therefrom should be equitably distributed over the population, and, as a means to this end, we demand the immediate enactment of the following programme:—

1. A maximum eight hour working day, with the retention of all existing holidays and Labour Day, May 1st, secured by law.
2. No child to commence wage-work under fifteen years of age.
3. State pensions for every person at fifty-five years of age, and adequate provision for all widows, orphans, sick and disabled workers: the necessary funds to be obtained by a tax upon unearned incomes.
4. The nationalisation of railways and waterways, pending which the equalisation of rates.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL.

1. Free secular primary, secondary, and university education.
2. Free maintenance for school children.
3. Municipalisation and popular control of the liquor traffic.
4. The substitution of arbitration for war, and the consequent disarmament of the nations.

FISCAL.

1. Abolition of indirect taxation.
2. A direct cumulative tax on all incomes exceeding £300 a year.

3. Taxation to extinction of all unearned incomes.

A clause under the industrial heading bearing on the question of providing work for the unemployed was left to be dealt with until the whole question had been dealt with in the shape of resolutions.

On this it is unnecessary for us to comment, and we can safely leave it to the judgment of our readers. It certainly shows that a knowledge of the importance of the Land Question is rapidly spreading amongst those whose attention has been once directed to the social question; and we have reason to believe that on this question many of the rank and file of the I.L.P. are well in advance of their leaders. But it also betrays that many of our fellow workers are still tainted with that imperialistic and reactionary spirit that looks to Governments, State Aid, and Legislation to grant palliatives which in themselves will do nothing to remove the causes of the evils against which all reformers are contending, and to enforce reforms that would evolve naturally and more healthily under the beneficent influence of equitable conditions and true freedom.

By the Way.

Four members of the executive of the Scottish Land Restoration Union have been elected Parish Councillors. Mr G. B. Waddell and Mr Wm. Webster, Glasgow; Mr Thomas Cameron and Mr Thomas Lindsay, Campsie.

The London Post states that the purport of the Deer Forests Commission is to drive the Landlords from the Highlands, and gravely warns us that this would be a fatal mistake, as once away they might refuse to come back, and the Highland population could not exist without them.

This beats the record scored by the Glasgow Herald when it pictured the Crofters feasting on ham and eggs for breakfast, and the landlords thinking of taking up their quarters in the workhouse.

Mr. Harry Ll. Davies, one of the Glasgow Henry George Institute men, has an article in the April Free Review on "Arnold Toynbee and Henry George," which every Single Taxer should read.

THE ARITHMETIC OF THE I. L. P.—We are told, for example, on official authority at the conference that the number of paying members is 35,000. Mr Hardie in the *Nineteenth Century* puts the total we think at 50,000 and the contribution from each member at 3d. per week. Let us take the lower figure and only assume 1d. a week as paid to the centre. That, on 35,000 paying members, is, in round figures, £145 a week, or £7,540 a year. But the treasurer, Mr Lister of Halifax, has received, from all sources, he says, much less than a tenth of that sum and the organisation owes him £133! It is a mistake and harms the movement to set out such incompatible figures as these. We make these criticisms in no unfriendly spirit. We don't care a straw ourselves where the money comes from to keep the *Labour Leader* afloat nor to run the candidates. That is the affair of the Independent Labour Party. But though there is no discredit in being poor there is discredit, which attaches unfortunately to the whole labour movement, in such financial fudgery as that we speak of.—Justice.

Bastiat truthfully says:—"Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavours to live at the expense of everybody else." We add that it ought to be the great power which prevents anybody from living at the expense of anybody else. Abolish privileges, and men will find it cheaper to live by their labour than by plunder.

The following are the only possible systems of government:—

The present system; when the few plunder the many.

Socialism; when the many plunder the few.

Anarchism; when everybody plunders everybody else.

Single Tax; when nobody can plunder and everybody enjoys the full result of his labour.

Ask all Candidates for Municipal and Parliamentary Honours this Question—