

**REPORT OF SECRETARY AMERICAN
SINGLE TAX LEAGUE.**

IN WHICH IS INCLUDED FULL AND DETAILED
REPORTS OF THE WORK IN RHODE ISLAND
AND OREGON.—THE LEAGUE CO-OPERATING
WITH THE WORK IN THESE STATES.

The American Single Tax League moved into its new headquarters, 27 Union Square, New York, about the middle of January and immediately commenced the work of getting into communication with the Single Taxers through the country.

The enrollment of names is proceeding with gratifying success, and it is particularly desired that those who have not yet responded to the letter sent out, will do so as soon as possible. The officers of the League believe that in order to have a basis of work, the most complete enrollment possible must be secured.

Single Taxers generally will be interested to know that the League has undertaken to direct to the extent of its ability, practical work for Single Tax in Rhode Island. The constitution of Rhode Island imposes practically no limitation upon the action of the towns and counties within the State as to how their taxes shall be raised, and a law now on the statute books permits towns to exempt real estate or personal property. It does not, however, permit the exemption of improvements apart from the land on which the improvements are located, and owing to the requirement of a personal property qualification for voters, there is some doubt as to the way in which the law exempting personal property from taxation would work, if put in operation.

Under the wise guidance of Ex-Gov. L. F. C. Garvin, aided by Frank Stephens, of Philadelphia, and Geo. D. Liddell, of Providence, the matter has been placed before a number of the leading men in educational, ecclesiastical and business life, in Rhode Island, with the result that a very gratifying number of signatures have been procured in favor of a bill permitting full Local Option.

The work which the League has been doing in Rhode Island has been rendered possible largely by the liberality of Mr. Jos. Fels and Mr. DuPont among others. The

following is a report in detail of the work so far done in Rhode Island.

THE RHODE ISLAND MOVEMENT.

On Friday morning, January 24th, Frank Stephens, of Philadelphia, came to Rhode Island, that being the first practical step towards a Single Tax campaign in that State.

He was sent by the Executive Committee of the American Single Tax League in response to an invitation by the Rhode Island Henry George Club.

On that first evening he made a short address on "The Hard Times" to the Central Trade and Labor Union, some twenty-five or thirty members being present as delegates from as many local labor organizations. Mr. Stephens' proposed remedy for hard times, the Single Tax for municipalities, was listened to with interest.

On Saturday the 25th, upon invitation of Henry B. Gardner, professor of political economy of Brown University, Mr. Stephens addressed the students interested in that study in the Rockefeller Building. Some forty were in attendance and many questions asked and answered.

On Sunday the 26th, in the afternoon he addressed the Typographical Union, one of the most intelligent labor organizations. On the evening of the same day he spoke to a large audience of men and women at Olneyville, a suburb of Providence. The meeting was in a course of Sunday night lectures held by the Textile Union of that center for the manufacture of woolen goods. The hall holds about three hundred and was well filled. The address was followed by an animated discussion participated in by Single Taxers and Socialists. Mr. Stephens' statement that the contest now on was not between the educated and uneducated, nor Republicans and Democrats, nor rich and poor, but between those who were satisfied with present conditions and those who were dissatisfied, did much to disarm opposition among the socialists, and caused a challenge to debate, which had been given and accepted, only to be withdrawn.

Beginning January 28th, Mr. Stephens spent Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the City of Providence. The first day was devoted to securing headquarters.

An ideal room, capable of seating a hundred persons, and in the most central possible location, was hired for one year upon very moderate terms.

Mr. George D. Liddell, President of the Rhode Island Henry George Club, who is a master of the Single Tax doctrine, a very able writer and speaker, has been secured as the local agent of the movement, and will give his entire time to the work.

On Tuesday, February 4th, in the attractive headquarters, Mr. Stephens met with and addressed the Henry George Club. Each member present took one of the printed petitions for circulation. They read as follows:

PETITION FOR LOCAL OPTION IN TAXATION.

To the Honorable, the General Assembly :

"The undersigned, citizens of Rhode Island, respectfully and earnestly petition your Honorable Body to provide by law that any city or town may raise its revenue from land values by voting to exempt from taxation buildings, other improvements on land, and personal property."

Since that time additional blank petitions have been given out, some have been returned filled with signatures and many are still in circulation.

The next evening Mr. Stephens addressed the People's League, which had been invited to meet at the headquarters of the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association—the name given to the local organization and appearing upon a swinging sign in front of 198 Westminister street, Providence, and upon the ground glass door of Room 6. The League is not large numerically, but is composed of men very influential with the people and devoted to the accomplishment of constitutional reform.

On the same evening, in company with the Mayor of Providence, the Hon. P. J. McCarthy, and former Governor Garvin, Mr. Stephens discussed the hard times before the Carpenters and Joiners Union, Local 1520, some twenty-five members being present. One week previously he had addressed Local 94 of the same trade.

Representative Thos. F. Kearney, of Providence, is a member of this union and took an active part in both of these meetings. He stated that of the 1,600 carpenters in

the city nearly seven hundred were out of work.

Upon his next visit to Providence, on Tuesday, Feb. 11th, Mr. Stephens addressed the Machinists' Union with seventy-two members in attendance. An open meeting of the same organization, with a larger number present, was addressed by Mr. James MacGregor, of New York, presenting the Single Tax remedy for hard times, and Mr. Fred Hurst of Providence, advancing the Socialist doctrine. Great interest was manifested, the machinists evidently being impressed with the simplicity of the Single Tax proposition.

Up to this time the larger number of the audiences addressed were labor organizations, but during the daytime the hours were devoted to interviewing men of business influence. Manufacturers, lawyers and members of the General Assembly were found ready to consider favorably the proposition that local option in taxation should be granted to the cities and towns of the State.

As a result of these interviews a number of gentlemen of standing, most of them manufacturers, accepted an invitation to meet Mr. Stephens at headquarters on Wednesday evening, February 12th. They listened with great interest to an exposition of the Single Tax, and subsequently, with one exception, gave formal approval of the platform adopted by the R. I. Tax Reform Association. Other endorsements have since been secured, so that the present situation is well explained by the following, which is the first page of Bulletin No. 1, issued by the Rhode Island Tax Reform Association:

"Home Rule in Taxation,"

Rhode Island Tax Reform Association,
198 Westminister Street.

PLATFORM.

Local self-government is the right of a free people, and every community is entitled thereto. The method of taxation by which local revenue shall be collected is such a matter, and each city and town should have power to decide this for itself, without being held back by those indifferent to the injustice and dishonesty of the present systems.

Approved by—

B. A. Ballou	Chas. H. Harriman
Wm. A. Copeland	Thos. A. O. Gorman
W. H. T. Faunce	Edwin C. Pierce
Edgar W. Martin	Chas. Sisson
L. F. C. Garvin	Willis H. White
Wm. N. McVickar	John C. Pegram

Besides leading manufacturers and business men the list includes the names of the Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island and the President of Brown University.

On Feb. 19th Mr. Stephens was the guest of the Radical Club of Providence, opening a very interesting discussion upon "Production and Distribution." The Club might properly be called liberal rather than radical, as its membership of 100 includes professors of Brown University, clergymen, lawyers, teachers, business men and wage earners. The evening of the meeting was very inclement, but all of these classes were represented in the thirty-five persons present.

On the same evening Mr. John J. Murphy of New York was the invited speaker at the regular monthly meeting of the Olneyville Business Men's Association. This is a very live organization long established in a suburban center of the City of Providence. Owing to the weather only a small percentage of the numbers usually in attendance heard Mr. Murphy's very able and convincing exposition of "Municipal Taxation." A large proportion of those present seemed to be convinced of the superiority of a tax on land values over the present method of raising city revenue. This is a promising field to cultivate. Indeed the business men's organizations of the State have been very hospitable to Single Tax speakers. The Economic Club of Providence, at whose dinners 250 men of affairs were wont to listen to both sides of live questions, has invited Lawson Purdy of New York to open its next discussion upon the subject "Practical Reform in State and Municipal Taxation." The other speakers announced are Chas. J. Bullock, Professor of Economics, Harvard University, and Henry B. Gardner, Professor of Economics, Brown University. On the same evening Mr. Stephens is to speak before the Pawtucket Business Men's Association upon "The City's Income."

Beginning with Friday, Feb. 28th, Mr.

Stephens is to be in Rhode Island most of the time. Arrangements are being made for reaching and interesting manufacturers, merchants and professional men throughout the month of March.

It is expected that the legislature will adjourn to meet again in the course of the year, about the 1st of April.

Appended is a copy of the local option act now pending in the Rhode Island General Assembly.

AN ACT IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 46 OF THE GENERAL LAWS "OF THE LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF TAXES."

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows :

Section 1.—Section 8 of Chapter 46 of the General Laws is hereby amended so as to read as follows :

"Section 8.—The assessors shall make a list containing the true, full and fair cash value of all the ratable estate in the town, placing land, improvements and personal estate in three separate columns, and distinguishing those who give in an account from those who do not, and shall apportion the tax accordingly."

The American Single Tax League has communicated with the leaders of the struggle for a Constitutional Amendment in Oregon. The Oregon Single Taxers are making the bold stroke of endeavoring by means of the initiative, to amend the Constitution of Oregon in such a way as to take it out of the power of the legislature to impose taxes on improvements or personal property.

The following report from the Secretary of the Oregon Tax Reform League is herewith given :

OREGON TAX REFORM ASSOCIATION AND ITS WORK TO DATE—REPORT OF SECRETARY CRIDGE.

We have the situation well in hand, lacking only means as yet to carry on a vigorous and winning campaign. The leading local daily publishes nearly everything we write.

The other leading daily opposes it vigorously, but frequently publishes communications and news in its favor. Many papers throughout the State have declared for it, and others denounced it. The demand for

lecturers to instruct country audiences concerning it come to us daily. We cannot plan a campaign of speakers because our financial energies were strained to the limit in getting our proposition on the ballot and praying for the printing of the argument in its favor which is sent by the State officially to every voter. An answer to it is being prepared, we understand, which will also be circulated with our argument in the same pamphlet which will be an utter demolition of the entire Single Tax fallacy in general and the Amendment in particular! To this we hope to reply with a special article in the *Daily Journal* covering a page giving up-to-date facts and figures, local instances, etc., which will be circulated over the State. It is merely a matter of funds for legitimate education of the people. Some 20,000 copies of this edition will be printed, so we are assured, and the paper is read all over the State.

There are 19 Initiative and Referendary propositions on the ballot, but none of them—and scarcely all of them put together—have provoked the discussion ours has already.

Oregon is larger than all New England, and is sparsely populated. Probably about 110,000 votes will be cast at the State election. It goes overwhelmingly Republican nearly all the time, but sometimes elects a Democratic Governor. We have one now in his second four-year term. We therefore want not so much volunteer speakers and in discriminate circulation from outside of literature not adapted to the local conditions, as means to carry out a purely Oregon campaign.

Any Single Taxers possessing definite facts in regard to the results of exempting manufacturing plants from taxation are requested to forward them, as such documents are of great value in pushing the campaign.

A few authentic facts along this line will be worth many arguments without them.

The reason we adopted the amendment proposed was that to provide for local option would have required several separate amendments to the Constitution, all of which would have to carry in order to make any of them effective. Also, there had been a 800 dollar exemption of furniture from taxation knocked out by the Supreme

Court of the State, which it was likely would be placed in this clause of the Constitution and submitted if we did not jump in. At first we had two amendments, one with manufactures exempted, the other with the rest, but on account of the cost of securing petitions and in order to secure co-operation with some influential members we finally combined them.

Should our campaign fail we will go right on with the fight, and prepare another amendment more sweeping and with the education given for two years to the people undoubtedly carry it.

Among our able co-workers is Mrs. Clara H. Waldo, for many years State lecturer for the Grange, an avowed Single Tax woman. She has set the thinking farmers to reading Henry George, Judge Maguire's speeches, Tom Johnson's talks, has told them of the progress of New Zealand, and kept them considering local tax questions.

A. D. CRIDGE.

PORTLAND, Oregon.

The American Single Tax League wishes it to be understood that its headquarters at 27 Union Square are at the disposal of Single Taxers visiting New York City and would take it as a favor if the Single Taxers visiting the city would make it a point to call, leaving their street addresses.

The following letter outlines the plan upon which the League proposes to proceed.

First—To enroll every Single Taxer in the country so far as possible. These have been estimated at a quarter of a million, and we would ask you to start now and assist us, as this work will all be a favor to us and the cause. This is preparatory to organization in each State. Enclosed are enrollment blanks.

Second—To co-operate with press bureaus (a) by supplying editorial matter to favorable papers, and (b) a general proofsheets service; all under expert management.

Third—To procure and circulate through every channel, popular Single Tax literature, especially tracts and cheap editions in cooperation with Mr. E. B. Swinney's work, also the Land Question, Social Problems, etc.

Fourth—A unique neighborhood library plan.