

cept when out speaking. His main work in speaking during the winter has been before the various labor organizations of this city, and he has been very successful in getting them lined up in favor of single tax.

As the result of a printers' strike the workmen are running a daily paper, and for some weeks Rev. Polen has been furnishing all of their editorial matter, and consequently it is run very nearly a single tax paper without the label; and up to the present writing there has been no fault found with its being so run. Rev. E. Coil has also made frequent addresses to the labor organization during the winter. They rely upon the single tax club to furnish them with public speakers on nearly all occasions.

PENNSYLVANIA, JOHNSTOWN.—The democratic city platform, which Wm. J. Bryan terms the model platform for the democracies of cities, and which the Buffalo *Enquirer* commends, commits the party to the following:

First. To the support of the principle of the equal taxation of all property subject to taxation. We especially denounce the taxation of homes and industry higher than unimproved property held out of use for speculative purposes. There should be no fines upon industry or upon the building of homes.

Second. To the advancement of the principle that franchises are to be considered as real estate values and taxed for local purposes as such. We denounce the granting of free franchises for any period, long or short, and no franchise should be granted for a period longer than twenty-one years.

Third. To the principle of local option in taxation. We hold that each community should be permitted to raise its public revenues in its own way; and we point to the fact that this principle received the endorsement of the National Tax Conference held at Buffalo last May.

It will interest our readers to learn that Warren Worth Bailey, of the Johnstown *Democrat*, is prominently named for the nomination for governor.

A meeting of the Blair County Democratic Association was held last month, at which some two hundred members were present. It was a regular meeting of the body, and considerable outside of routine business was transacted.

The association unanimously endorsed Warren Worth Bailey as its choice for the democratic nomination for governor.

The nomination of Mr. Bailey for this office would put new life into the democratic party of Pennsylvania, and new hope in the hearts of those who cherish democratic principles.

EXPLICITNESS OF SINGLE TAX.

[To the Editor of The Chicago Chronicle.]

CHICAGO, Feb. 17.—In a recent editorial you said, referring to the single taxers: "It is certainly true that they claim their prescrip-

tion would have a magical effect in the way of abolishing poverty. But they are not so explicit as they might be as to the way in which that effect is to be produced. So far as one can judge from their writings it is to be produced in 'some mysterious manner.' Generally speaking, they are a little evasive as to two things: One is that the public appropriation of all 'economic rent' would amount to the confiscation of all capital invested in land value; the other is the manner in which their plan would promote the material welfare of mankind to so vast an extent as they claim it would."

First, as to your statements that single taxers are not explicit as to the way in which single tax would abolish poverty. Can anything be more explicit and direct than the statement that industrious persons are poor both because they are at times prevented from working, and because, when at work, a large part of their product is taken from them? Can anything be more explicit or more plainly true than our claim that people who do useful things ought to enjoy all the results of useful efforts, and that those who do nothing useful ought not to enjoy any results of useful effort? Is anything more plain and explicit than our statement that to the extent idlers get the products of labor, laborers must be deprived of those products? We show that the landlord does absolutely nothing as a landlord, and yet as a landlord gets a large share of all that is produced.

Now, as to your statement that it is "in some mysterious manner" that improved conditions are to be brought about. We show that all production goes to labor as wages to capital as interest, and to land as rent. (Of course by labor we mean to include all useful effort.) We show also that as the land belongs to humanity the rent fund is the matured public fund, and should be used for the common good—for all sorts of public utilities—and that when a man pays rent, as he does whenever he buys anything, for rent is included in price, he pays for all the public benefits he gets, wherefore it is robbery (confiscation of his private property) to make him pay for these things again in the form of taxes. It is plain to any mind that if the rent fund of right belongs to the public, its private appropriation by individuals for their own use, if sanctioned by law, is legal confiscation of what is rightfully public property, just as the defalcation of a public official is illegal confiscation of the public money. It is simply a different method of devoting public property to the use of individuals. The tariff and the proposed Ship Subsidy Bill are other methods of accomplishing the same thing.

All this being obviously true, your statement that "the public appropriation of all economic rent would amount to the confiscation of all capital invested in land values" has no force because the effect would be to stop confiscation. The destruction of land value would be confiscation in the same

sense that emancipating the negroes was confiscation, and in no other sense; but what shall we think of those reasoners who object to our plan on moral grounds, preferring that institutional confiscation of that which rightfully belongs to people (the product of toil) should go on year after year and generation after generation, because to correct it involves the so-called confiscation of that which never rightfully belonged to an individual? The same reasoning would prevent any change of the robber tariff after a few persons had invested money in the protected enterprises. Must we buy off all wrong at a capitalized value before we begin to do right?

Wages will be increased under the single tax, but whether they would be or not is not an important point. The important thing is that all production should go to those who do useful things, and this will be the result when we correct the condition which gives a large part to landlords for granting to others "permits to work." Whether, under single tax, production goes mainly as wages or in large part as public benefits for the common good, is of secondary consideration. When those who do useful things enjoy all the results of useful effort we shall have justice, and natural law will determine through what channels the rewards of toil shall come.

—J. R. CUMMINGS.

News—Foreign.

ENGLAND.

The incident of first importance to the single tax movement in England is the introduction in the House of Commons, on the 19th of February, of the bill for Urban Site Value Rating, and the debate that followed Mr. Trevelyan's motion for a second reading. This bill was framed with the object of carrying out the recommendations in the Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values in the final report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, which was printed in the October number of the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*. The bill is in the direction of genuine tax reform, empowering urban authorities to levy site value rates not to exceed two shillings in the pound, but applying only to England, and exempting agricultural districts from its operations. It was defeated, of course, but the vote has a significance. For a second reading the vote stood 158; opposed 229, a majority of only 71. When we reflect that the usual ministerial majority is from 150 to 200, the vote is a substantial victory. But more gratifying, perhaps, was the tone of the debate that followed, in which Sir William Vernon Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1894, took a prominent part as champion of the bill. We quote a few extracts from speeches delivered in the course of the debate, showing that the issue was clearly drawn and the

gage of battle cast at the feet of the privileged interests:

Mr. Holdane (Lib.) For the bill.—The site value is something which is due not to the exertion of the owner of the land, but to the movement of the population, and is therefore a proper subject for just and equitable treatment in the way of adjusting the burdens it ought to bear.

Mr. Cripps (Con.) Opposed.—The site value is taxed at present as part of the real estate. If that is so what is justified only on this unearned increment doctrine is to prevail, a special burden might as well be put on railway stock in the case of a line deriving its prosperity from the growth of two great towns which it connects, or on the interest on debentures as compared to ordinary stock.

Mr. McCrae (Lib.) For the bill.—In Scotland at the last general election there was hardly a Unionist candidate who did not commit himself to the taxing of site-values. It is fair and sound that a tax should be levied on land, which improves in value, and that a building, which depreciates in value, should be to that extent relieved. At present, land in this country does not bear its fair share of taxation. The great advantage of the bill comes in not only as a tax reform, but as a solution of the housing question. One of the main reasons that can be adduced for the proposal that land and unused land ought to be taxed, is that this would force more land into the market and therefore cheapen its price.

Most of the lesson of this debate was lost on the American newspaper correspondents, who gave it, in obedience of course to the policies of their journals, the merest obscure mention. Few of them realize that it is the beginning of the end—that landlordism in Great Britain and throughout the world is doomed, and that this result will be reached through the means indicated by the man who spoke as never man spoke since Christ for the poor and oppressed of all lands. But among the correspondents who under pressure of the editorial policy color their communications to suit, there is at all events one exception. The *New York Tribune*, long one of the heaviest and dullest opponents of our reform, has an English correspondent who is able to present the case in the strongest fashion.

The *Tribune* correspondent's review of the situation is one of the most intelligent that has appeared in any American journal. He says:

"There is a phrase which sets fine old Tories in a frenzy of excitement and indignation. It is 'unearned increment.' As soon as it is whispered, whether in or out of Parliament, there is a loud and prolonged rumble of disapprobation from the opponents of revolution, spoliation, confiscation, and chaos.

"Many arguments were offered in favor of taxing unused land. It was urged that