

from me is in the nature of an anti-climax. You have a poor instrument to express the thanks of us all to our genial host." Mr. Doblin spoke of the responsibility that all must feel rests upon us. "We need not worry if the full Single Tax does not come in our time. Perhaps if it should come now before public opinion was educated up to it we would not know what to do with it. I shall now dismiss you all with the hope that we will all meet at the next Conference, but before doing so I want to make an appeal for the support of our work. Napoleon said armies moved on their bellies. More emphatically still a movement like ours moves on its belly. So I ask your moral and financial support, and with renewed thanks to our host and others who have helped to make this affair a success, I dismiss this Second Conference of the New York State Single Tax League."

Thus the Second Annual Conference came to an end.

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## PROPAGANDA IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

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By CHAS. LE BARON GOELLER.

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*(Read at the Buffalo Conference of the New York State Single Tax League.)*

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Our first consideration should be the present temper of the farmers and other rural dwellers toward the Single Tax. The attitude of practically all of these people is hostile, which is a fruit of the intense opposition to Henry George when Progress and Poverty appeared.

The writer can illustrate this by his own experience, having come from the city of New York to a village of 1500 inhabitants. In May, 1910, we purchased the *Union-Endicott News*. At once we seemed to be on the outside of things. We had difficulty in getting the news. Word had been spread that we were Socialists and Anarchists (a Single Tax man is always called a Socialist here) and people gave us a wide berth. A few months after we received what was practically orders from the political throne to say certain things in the paper. We refused and printed something distasteful to the rulers, and then war was declared. We were told that we would be run out of town, our paper ruined if we would not sell out cheap. We determined to fight it out, and a year or so later a paper was to have been started to oust us, but we told a thing or two to the man who was imported to run the office, and the paper was dropped. This we speak of because it occurred on account of our being Single Taxers. In the early '80s my father preached Single Tax when he was here visiting, and in that way we were at once spotted. It is impractical for a country paper as yet to say much about the Single Tax. The one worst thing happens. The subscribers just drop the paper. The best thing for a paper to do is to print contributed articles.

These articles should almost always be anonymous for it is about all a man's business is worth to write such an article and sign his name to it. Such a man would be boycotted. In our own case we were boycotted and lost hundreds of dollars worth of work, all for political reasons. We know only about six men in these twin villages, of about 7000 people who dare to say anything of what they think. The mass of the people seem to be afraid that the big business men will move away, etc., if they are opposed, and the town will be ruined. A general spirit of fear seems to be upon people, a feeling that I never heard of in a large city. Around here people who might think that there was some merit to the Single Tax would hardly dare espouse the cause for fear of losing business. A minister even told me, "You must remember that this is a country of free thought, but *not* of free speech." This shows a condition to be met, and it will need millions of tracts and letters to papers to let in even a little light.

The conception of the Single Tax that the average farmer has should be noted. The general idea seems to be that we propose to confiscate all land to the State. And this idea is so ingrained that emphatic denials do not seem to have any effect. Much propaganda work must be done before these people are fitted to work for the Single Tax. Education is needed first. This brings us close to a pet subject, and that is a Single Tax newspaper. We have been working toward such an end for years, and now seem to be upon the verge of the attainment of it. We want to publish a weekly four-page paper that will be cheap enough for the average man to buy, and above all to give away to his neighbors. We believe that we can successfully establish such a paper, and think it can be made to be one of the most efficient propaganda means in the United States. Such a paper, treating the Single Tax in its relation to the farmer, which might be done at intervals, would accomplish the most, we believe, to finally show the farmer that he would be greatly benefited. The newspaper seems to us the very best means of propaganda in the world. The newspaper must be cheap, so that it will reach the people we want to help, and the constant word should be "Pass this paper along."

One criticism we might make about most Single Tax literature is that it is usually gotten up too expensively. The condition is very much like the condition described in England, in the life of Henry George. A member of the English Parliament, Labouchere, could publicly say without meeting any refutation, "That he was not such a visionary as Henry George." He did not propose to take the land from the landlords and rent it out again. What he was in favor of was putting a tax on land values." Tolstoy, speaking of this incident says, "Thanks to the collective efforts of all those interested in defending the institution of landed property, the teaching of George, irresistibly convincing in its simplicity and clearness, remains almost unknown, and of late years attracts less and less attention." This was written nine years ago. Yet this is largely true in the section of the State that the

writer is acquainted with, and we believe, from conversation with others that it is well nigh universal. We need propaganda literature in vast quantity. An immense number of people must be reached and the cheaper the paper and form of pamphlet, or newspaper, the better.

Mark Twain in his famous book, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," recognized the primary need of education along lines of progress as the only sure mode of progressing. In his inimitable way he tells how he sent certain people to what he called "the man factory" to educate them up to the revolution grade. "I know," he wrote, "that the Jack Cade or the Wat Tyler who tried to get up a revolution without first educating his materials up to the revolution grade is almost absolutely certain to get left." It is well to bear in mind that a reform that will be of benefit cannot be forced. People must be educated up to wanting to do the right thing rather than the wrong, otherwise not understanding the reform it will not be put into operation effectively. A great reform like the Single Tax will take a comparatively long time, and it must be presented in its simplest form. The farmers believe they are large land owners and that to touch the land is to threaten their livelihood. We must show them by our newspapers, lantern slides, etc., that while they hold large areas of land they are holding the least valuable land. The Single Tax, by turning monopoly and speculative rent into the pockets of the laborers, will reduce the relative value of farm land, or its price, so that such land as is situated a few miles from centers of population will pay *practically no taxes at all*, and all other taxation will be abolished.

It is to our mind poor policy to try very much to get legislation through at Albany by influencing legislators. The application of such laws is very likely to fail for want of adequate understanding on the part of the people. It is sometimes thought best to try to influence merely the most prominent men of the land, as they are many times leaders. This however will be less effective than in former times because of the many sources of information that the people now have. More and more people try to get information on which to base their own conclusions. The greatest leaders come from the ranks of the common people. We should direct our attention to spreading the light very widely.

Another form of propaganda activity would be the illustrated lecture system, by stereopticon slides. We believe that the League is about to produce such a set. We have a standing invitation to give such pictures in two Churches in the city of Binghamton, and believe we could easily get permission to give the same in the Y. M. C. A.'s and other places. As to the content of these lectures, they should be very simple. It is surprising how little the average person, whether minister, doctor or lawyer knows about Political Economy and our reform. We have published a few things in our present paper, all of which seemed simple enough to us, and several well educated men said they couldn't make head or tail as to what we were driv-

ing at. We never seem to get the thing simple enough, though we thought that was just what we were doing.

Aside from a prejudice that we would confiscate their lands, a large problem is this, to show that there is really need for a reform. We had never before resided in a small community and it took us some time to get acclimated, so to speak, and it seemed hard to find any common ground on which to stand with the people. For the most part they do not think there is any problem to solve. There seems to be no conception of what the word "slum" means to the dweller in the city. Everything is all right because we are comfortable. The very poorest class is irresistibly driven into the city and not as some might think drawn into it. The poorest haven't even a fighting chance in the country. They have in the city. Almost all who successfully hold out to stay in these small communities, do so through relatives. This applies of course to the poorest. The rich are worshipped everywhere.

To show people the need of reform, the illustrated lecture should show the condition of the cities at their worst, because even then some will say "I don't believe it." A newspaper should likewise print stories of the actual conditions under which so many people are forced to live. A reform can make absolutely no progress if nobody believes there is anything to reform.

This brings a larger question. Much of what might be called the successful Single Tax work has been to introduce the Single Tax "Limited" in cities and villages. The proportionate amount of elementary education that we might expect to have been given to the farmers in propaganda, seems to have been neglected. Yet this neglect in educating the farmers reacts against the limited application of our reform in centers of population. The object of the Single Tax is to raise wages, and produce a just distribution of wealth. Wages depends, as you all know, upon the produce that labor can obtain at the highest point of natural productiveness open to it without the payment of rent. Thus as the poorest land is affected, will wages respond and we will see the desired results from the Single Tax. The Single Tax Unlimited must be inaugurated.

It is easier to handle people in a village or city, and so this reform is often urged in these localities as a way to raise the taxes. Instead of that we might better say, that we propose to abolish all taxation, and raise revenue for government by collecting ground rent through a Single Tax on land values. It may be easier to work the field in little isolated places, but I feel that in the long run a general, wide propaganda through a National weekly newspaper will do the most good by presenting the philosophy in its entirety, and keeping everlastingly at it. There are several ways in which the Single Tax may be presented, one of which is as a Tax Reform, and another as a moral reform. On which of these is adopted the result largely depends.

For our own part we always take the latter. This reform is truly a moral reform, and of such importance that to deny it is to condemn our civilization.