

## News—Domestic.

## CALIFORNIA.

DEBATE BETWEEN JOHN Z. WHITE AND PROFESSOR PLEHN.—IMPORTANT DECISION OF JUDGE SEAWELL.

Mr. John Z. White has just concluded a series of lectures, which attracted excellent and responsive audiences. The opening event was a debate between Mr. White and Prof. Carl C. Plehn, Secretary of the State Commission on Revenue and Taxation, the subject being "The Best Method of Taxation." Judge Maguire presided. The hall was crowded, and many were obliged to stand throughout the evening. There was no contention between the speakers as to the inadequacy of most of the present forms of taxation, and Prof. Plehn particularly condemned the general tax in vogue in California, mainly on account of the difficulty of collection; but he thought a scientific scheme could be devised by which tax dodging would be prevented. Under such a scheme he claimed that real estate and improvements, corporations, and business and general licenses should bear an equitable proportion of taxation. He also favored an income tax, deprived of inquisitorial features, and following the lines of that tax as used in Great Britain, where, for instance, the known rental paid by a tenant is taken as one measure of a landlord's income and the tax thereon is collected from the tenant, other measures of value being obtained from avenues similarly open to public knowledge. Mr. White's arguments were, of course, on straight Single Tax lines, he claiming that individuals should bear the governmental burden according to the value of the privilege enjoyed from the government.

This debate was opportune. Prof. Plehn is well known here by reason of his connection with the University of California and his position as the practical expert of the State Commission. This Commission was created by the last Legislature for the purpose of devising a new revenue system in which the Professor's ideas will no doubt prevail. The impression of the audience at this debate seemed to be that Mr. White had the best of it. Certainly those who listened were given food for thought, which is the object sought to be attained by such meetings.

During his stay in San Francisco and vicinity Mr. White has spoken in various churches, and before a number of social bodies and trades unions, the series closing with an address on "Henry George and his Doctrine," before the Academy of Sciences. The "Bulletin" gave three full columns to its report of the opening debate, with cuts of the speakers, a very unusual notice of a Single Tax meeting in this community. The *Call*, in a leading editorial criticising

his application of the Single Tax theory to the matter of the public ownership of railroads, referred to Mr. White as "a distinguished Single Tax orator from Chicago." Both of these are conservative papers. Our friends here feel, if Mr. White had accomplished nothing else, that this breaking through of the "conspiracy of silence" heretofore adopted by our local press is well worth the expense and effort attendant upon his trip to the coast.

A decision, which may be of interest, was recently rendered by Judge Seawell, of our Superior Court. The plaintiff in the action held a lease of a building on Market street in this city, with the privilege of a renewal upon due notice. He allowed the time for giving notice to lapse, supposing that the owner understood that he wanted the lease for the additional term. In the meantime he spent about \$9,000 in refitting the building for the purposes of his business, when he received notice to vacate. The Court held that his action in fitting up the place was sufficient notice of his intention to renew the lease. Judge Seawell is a Single Taxer, and has always received the support of our friends in his campaigns for office. He has shown us that our confidence in him has not been misplaced by this character of decision, where no precedents could be cited, and he was at liberty to pronounce against the landlord's harsh demands.

STEPHEN POTTER,  
San Francisco, Cal.

## CALIFORNIA.

JOHN Z. WHITE'S GOOD WORK IN LOS ANGELES—SWEEPING AWAY THE COBWEBS OF SOCIALISM.

The Single Tax has had quite a shaking up in this city recently. It was due to the presence of John Z. White, who had for some time been expected to visit this coast and deliver a series of lectures. I had known White in Chicago, years ago, and was a member of the same Single Tax organization in which he was so prominent and active as a speaker. I knew that if he came here to lecture he would surprise those who heard him, and stir up such an interest in the cause as had not been felt here for many years. He more than met the expectations of the most sanguine among us.

Of course he came under the management of the Chicago Henry George Association, and was preceded by the efficient managing agent, Mr. F. H. Monroe. After a long period of stagnation in the cause of genuine industrial reform in this city of speculative booms and booming speculations it was no easy task to induce any large number of residents to attend such lectures, or to appreciate them when they heard them. But all things considered the

visit of White was a success, and the heaven of truth which he introduced among us must be felt for good during an indefinite period.

The task of preparing the way for the speaker's eloquence and logic to reach the people was chiefly assigned to Mr. Wm. H. Danford and myself, though some assistance came from a few others. Mr. Danford, like the writer, was formerly a Chicagoan, and knew White there. We succeeded in making arrangements for the delivery of six lectures in this city and two outside places. The first one was on the evening of June 14th. It was in Blanchard Hall, one of the largest and best auditoriums in the city. It was well filled, and the audience was very attentive and deeply interested. Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills presided, and did so very efficiently. Of course numerous questions were answered after the lecture proper, and of course White was equal to the opportunity. The eyes of most of those present was considerably opened, and the applause was frequent and hearty.

At noon the following day, by invitation Mr. White delivered a masterly address before the Los Angeles Realty Board, and dined with them after the speaking. He made a fine impression upon his hearers—speculators in plots of God's earth though most of them are.

His addresses thereafter were given before the Young Men's Christian Association of this city, next at The Working Men's Club of San Pedro, (the coming seaport of the southern portion of California), the general public of Long Beach; and lastly Sunday afternoon in this city, before a very appreciative gathering of exceptionally intelligent hearers.

I regret to say that the newspapers of this city and a few nearby places did not give Mr. White a tenth—no, not a hundredth—part as much courtesy as he richly deserved. In one instance a socialist who tried to hold his own with our champion, as a debater, was the recipient of eulogistic lines to the extent of nearly a column while White received scarcely a good sized paragraph. This occurred concerning the debate at Long Beach.

Of course the Socialists were on hand at every one of White's meetings, and of course they attempted to "wind him up" during the periods when questions were permitted. But the ease and rapidity with which the speaker swept away the cobwebs from before their eyes was amusing to all except perhaps those who ought to have been most benefited.

RALPH HOYT.

Los Angeles.

The account of the lecture tour of John Z. White arrived too late for publication in this issue.

## MASSACHUSETTS.

HOW THE MASSACHUSETTS LEAGUE HAS INFLUENCED PUBLIC OPINION—LIBERAL ATTITUDE OF THE BOSTON PRESS.

The idea that Henry George stood for is making rapid headway here in many directions. William Lloyd Garrison, now secretary of the American Free Trade League, has recently sent out two "broad-sides" that fairly ring with moral enthusiasm for truth and justice. The selections are choice, gathered from the best authors. These, together with Mr. Garrison's excellent editorials, give the papers a permanent value. The "Broad-sides" are sent to all the leading journals and newspapers, and through them free-trade doctrines are being widely disseminated. This League is now national in its work and membership. Any one can join by paying one dollar, for which each member will receive all the literature sent out by the League for one year. These are well worth the dollar, and it is worth another dollar to be a member of this League, and yet another to feel that one's small mite is assisting in so grand and broad a work. Here is an investment where "moth and rust doth not corrupt." May a white shower of letters, each containing one dollar or more, be sent at once to *The American Free Trade League*, 6 Beacon street, Boston, Mass., for the League needs more funds and more members.

The Massachusetts Single Tax League is not idle. During the year it has carried on three important lines of work. First, it has sent to teachers and to those interested a choice collection of single tax literature, much like that sent out by Mr. Swinney of Brooklyn. Second, it has sent out 10,500 pamphlets to college professors, clergymen, officers of labor organizations and others, containing a report of the address of Prof. Seligman on taxation, given before the Economic Club of Boston, in which he made clear the soundness of the proposition that purchasers of land, already subject to a tax, own it free of that tax, and hence are exempt from taxation on their investment. Brief extracts were given from other prominent speakers at this dinner-discussion. The report contains also a letter from Charles Francis Adams, in which he states his conviction that the necessary expenses for municipal purposes, town and city, should be drawn exclusively from ground rent.

Henry George once said that next to knowing the right way was to see clearly the wrong, and all the speakers at the Economic Club dinner agreed that our present system of taxation was wrong. The press the next morning declared quite generally the same, and the Boston *Transcript* talked much like an old-time Single Taxer, saying: "A land Tax cannot be evaded. \* \* \* It cannot be shifted. \* \* \* A tax on land becomes imperceptible after it has been in operation some time. \* \* \* Unquestion-