

BELFAST

Mr. Arthur W. Metcalfe, on 9th December, delivered the third of the series of lectures in the Y.M.C.A. Minor Hall, which have been organized by the Literary and Educational Section of the Belfast and District Public Officers' Association. Mr. S. B. Quinn presided.

Mr. Metcalfe's address, which was entitled "A Solution of the Housing Problem by a new Source of Local Revenue," was reported in the BELFAST NEWS LETTER, the BELFAST TELEGRAPH, and the NORTHERN WHIG. He said:—

People were at present being herded together for want of housing accommodation, and some way out of the difficulty must be found as soon as possible. The Belfast rates were staggering now, but they were going to be even more staggering in the future. Unsatisfactory and insufficient housing was bad for the health and morals of the people. He saw a pamphlet the other day in which there was a sentence, "Ask for houses, and see that you get them." They might as well call spirits from the vasty deep. The strange thing about the Government's schemes was that the more they got of them the fewer was the number of houses that were built. It seemed to him that those schemes were simply making jobs for people, and that if they were passed into law the country

would be overrun by inspectors and other officials. Personally, he did not believe that Government interference in the building of houses was helpful. The fact was the housing question was a business question first and last. House-building employed nearly every trade and profession in the country, and if they could get a proper scheme started they would stop the stagnation in trade which was now being experienced. The whole trouble at the present time, he submitted, arose from the fact that unoccupied land was immune from rates. Several cases were quoted to show the incidence of rating on buildings in comparison with the land forming the sites, and said the blame for the anomaly did not rest on the landowners, but on the system, which punished industry and encouraged idleness. Lawyers and economists were agreed that the land should bear its fair share of taxation, and in many places effect had been given to that principle. In Sydney, where the taxation of land values had been in operation since 1916, there had, as a result, been a phenomenal development in the building industry, and the same thing had happened in Vancouver. Many municipalities in England and Scotland had passed resolutions in favour of the system he advocated, and the Belfast Corporation should come into line with them.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL NEWS

CALIFORNIA

Defeat of the Anti-Single Taxers

Mr. William L. Ross, President of the Great Adventure League, has issued a statement, from which we quote:—

The big wave of reaction that has swept across the country has given us a shock, but it has not overwhelmed us. We have some things to be thankful for. The Anti-Single Tax measure has been beaten by over 100,000 majority. Besides, our vote has nearly doubled over that of two years ago. Our measure then received about 118,000 votes. Incomplete returns now indicate that we shall get over 200,000 votes and also an increase, in the percentage of the total vote, over that of the last election.

Mrs. Lona Ingham Robinson, 332 N. Maryland Ave., Glendale Calif, has been elected secretary.

What shall be done in the future? Shall we give up or shall we go ahead with our work?

If our workers and contributors say the word I shall continue on with the work. The leaders here want to forge right ahead with the same amendment except to change the dates to fit the next election. What we need in this State more than anything else is organization. It's a big state, nine hundred miles long.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee arrangements have been made to have the GREAT ADVENTURE published monthly in San Francisco, with Mrs. Zoe D. Hoffman as editor. The Committee has decided also to move the State headquarters there when re-organizing next spring.

Already George A. Briggs, who has done such splendid work here during this campaign is arranging to start out and organize Southern California. A number of our friends here in Los Angeles have agreed to contribute the funds necessary for this work. After a trip East for a few months I expect to do the same kind of work in Northern California. We must organize. Who will help make this work possible? I wish to thank all our good friends for their splendid support during this campaign.

Mrs. Anna George de Mille (daughter of Henry George), Hollywood, Cal., in a recent letter, refers to a social gathering, "a Single Tax dinner, held to celebrate the defeat at the polls of a measure that would practically have prohibited any future initiative and referendum on taxation matters, and to rejoice over the vote we polled on our

Single Tax amendment. We did not win, of course, but we gained nearly 100,000 votes over our last election, and in face of a very concerted and powerful campaign against us. We are very much encouraged and have already started plans for the new campaign."

The Treasurer's statement shows income \$21,889; expenditure \$21,694.

The campaign literature was enlivened by a pamphlet by Mr. de Mille, consisting mainly of advertisements the writer had placed in the local daily papers, and a searching criticism, in the form of a letter, by Mr. John Moody, expert on finance and business, New York, of a pamphlet issued by the People's Anti-Single Tax League of California—a district band of hope similar in composition to our Land Union.

Wm. C. de Mille to the Land Owners of California

Greetings—

I have just bought three acres of ground in Hollywood, and it is my intention to do nothing whatever to improve this property, but to wait quietly until the industry of the thousands of Hollywood rent-payers, whose growth in numbers alone makes my land valuable, has added so much value to my property that I can sell this added value for enough to support me without my having to work.

That is right—

Why should I work when I can cash in the value put into my property by those who do work?

Furthermore, if I started to be a "useful citizen" and improve my property, the taxes on the improvements would cut into my profits from the increasing land value.

No, sir; I can make more by doing no work and letting the industry of the community put thousands of dollars into my pocket.

But now comes this iniquitous Single Tax Amendment, No. 20, which would deprive me and you, brother landowners, of our God-given right to take for our own private use that value which the common people have put into our land.

Are we going to permit such an outrageous doctrine to gain strength? A doctrine which dares say openly that a man is not entitled to values which he doesn't create,