

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.

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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