

unlike many of the services of government it is participated in by all the people; it conduces to what we call "the common good." Old age pensions systems under present modes of taxation however can be subjected to a criticism wholly destructive. But if it is proposed to show that because land values are created by the people in quite a different way from other values, and that it may be returned to the people in part through old age pensions, our position is a strong one. Whether old age pensions would be needed at all under the Single Tax, whether the resultant improvement in the distribution of wealth would not wholly remove any apparent justification for measures of this kind, is of course quite another argument.

We hope to see our Ohio friends get together on some measure on which they can agree. The more radical it is the more likely it is to succeed, not in one election nor in two. For it still remains true that in the battle for principle the direct route is the shortest.

MR. R. C. MARR, of Glasgow, Mo. writes us this account of the following incident:

An adjoining county had just voted down a bond issue to build rock roads in the county. This defeat was due largely to the retired land lords—living in the different towns in the county. A short time afterwards the merchants of one of the leading towns held a private meeting to consult with an expert advertiser. At the meeting complaint was made that the retired land-lords opposed every progressive move and some one asked, what could be done about it.

The expert replied, with an oath, "Single Tax them."

MISS GRACE ISABEL COLBRON sailed for Europe last month, and will visit Berlin and other German cities.

E. T. MEREDITH, publisher and editor of *Successful Farming*, has been nominated by the Democrats for governor of Iowa.

THE USE OF VACANT LOTS FOR SINGLE TAX SIGN BOARDS

BY GEORGE L. RUSBY

(For the Review)

Effective propaganda effort depends primarily on two things: devotion to the cause at stake, and a wise choice of method in applying this spirit of devotion to the accomplishment of the desired end. If the importance of the second of these requisites were as widely recognized as that of the first more study would be given to the relation between cause and effect (with the result, incidentally, that fewer of our good people would support and perpetuate the causes of the evils against which they so sincerely protest); and propaganda effort would attain greater effectiveness.

Among the various methods chosen to propagate Single Tax sentiment, a method that is growing in popularity as its effectiveness becomes more clearly recognized, is that of maintaining appropriate sign boards on vacant lots. The value of this method of advertising has long been recognized by vendors of merchandise; and if they, with their business sagacity have accepted this as one of their most effective methods of telling the public what they have to offer, we Single Taxers would do well to take our cue from them. Indeed, we have a most decided advantage over them all, because of the direct connection between reform to which our signs call attention and the vacant lots themselves, on which the signs stand.

Not only does this connection tend in a general way to attract attention and suggest the proper line of thought to him who reads, but there is a more specific advantage in this: that the uninitiated owner of real estate, who is so often adversely prejudiced because he believes that the Single Tax would injure land owners, is apt to ask himself why a vacant lot owner should be advocating such a reform. This question raised, the way is open for the next step. The Single Tax sign on one of the writer's

vacant lots has often elicited inquiry as to why the owner should be so foolish (much stronger language has not infrequently been used in making the inquiry) as to advertise a tax reform that would lower the price of his land. It is obvious that such inquiry carries a fine opportunity for educational work. If we are careful and tactful it is easy to show the average land owner that though the Single Tax would eventually destroy the selling value of his lands, the accompanying benefits would, even from a material point of view, greatly outweigh the loss thus suffered.

Necessarily a sign cannot be made to offer a complete explanation of the Single Tax; but before a man is ready for an explanation of the subject he must have his attention called to it, and his interest awakened. And I doubt if there is a cheaper or more effective method of doing this than by the use of vacant lot sign boards bearing brief, pointed arguments. It seems hardly possible that \$25.00 expended for the printing and distribution of literature could be made to excite as much interest among those to whom the subject is new, as a vacant lot sign board costing the same amount and centrally located.

Instead of being glanced at and then thrown into the gutter, as with a tract, the sign board is "passed on" to the next passer-by whether the first reader so desires or not; it works seven days of every week, from sunrise to sunset, and many a moonlight evening besides. Indeed the addition of electric lights would keep it "on the job" even on dark nights.

The first Single Tax sign board ever erected was that built by J. J. Pastoriza, of Houston fame, on two of his vacant lots in that city. It reads as follows:

In 1903 I paid \$370.00 for these two lots. I will not sell them until they are worth \$5,000.00. This profit I will receive instead of the community which created it, and who would receive it if we had the Single Tax. Read Progress and Poverty by Henry George—For sale by Bottler Bros., Stationers.

Mr. Pastoriza recently told the writer that the value of the lots bearing this sign has now reached the \$5,000.00 level, and that he was then negotiating for a sale at that price. He says that the erection of the sign was advertised widely by the local papers, that it caused endless discussion, and that it in fact furnished the basis of the educational work and change of sentiment that eventually made it possible for him to be elected Tax Commissioner, and to do the splendid work for tax reform that he has accomplished in Houston, the influence of which is shaping present taxation changes in many other Texan cities.

Another Single Tax sign is that erected by Mr. Chas. Hecht, at Lakewood, New Jersey, which appears in the illustration. Mr. Hecht's observations of the effects of this sign tend to constantly strengthen his enthusiasm for this method of arousing sympathetic interest in our reform. Only a few days ago the writer was introduced to a man who had become an ardent advocate of the Single Tax, and who testifies that his attention was first aroused by seeing Mr. Hecht's sign every time he passed on his way to the railroad station.

The writer has for fifteen years maintained a large sign on a vacant lot, a photograph of which is also presented in illustration.

This sign is 40 feet long and 10 feet high, each letter being about 10 inches in height, black on a white background, and so conspicuous that not only "he who runs may read," but they, also, who travel that way by trolley, for the location is on the trolley line, and at a corner where the cars usually stop. The original cost of this sign was \$66.00, and it has cost \$15.00 on each of three subsequent occasions, for repainting. There has been the additional expense of moving the sign twice, for twice has the vacant lot been sold on which it stood.

The writer is satisfied that the amount expended for erecting and maintaining this sign has brought more than commensurate results, from a propaganda point of view. On one occasion the *Newark Evening News* reproduced the sign across its front page,

Many inquiries have been received and much discussion has been aroused. And it might be well to here emphasize the importance of having such a sign furnish the address of some one or some organization where appropriate literature can be secured; for the passer-by whose attention has been awakened will often make a note of such address and communicate with the proper party, whereas he may otherwise permit the whole subject to pass from his mind. It is not necessary to have much of an organization for this specific purpose; anyone can call himself the "Jonesville Single Tax Club," and give the post office authorities instructions as to where to deliver mail so addressed.

The sign board of the New York Single Tax League (see frontispiece) is one of many similar the League expect will be erected in different places in the State of New York by Single Taxers who favor this method of propaganda.

The letters of the words "Poverty and Land Monopoly" are each three feet high.

It may be that some Single Taxers would prefer a different motto; the one pictured was adopted after careful consideration of a great number. When all the conditions are weighed the effectiveness of this motto will be more apparent. It is one that will arrest the wandering attention of a passenger in a rapidly moving train, idly viewing the landscape from the window. A terse, snappy, thought-provoking sentence that can be comprehended at a glance, is absolutely necessary. The first sight visions only the sign board itself; because of its unusual reading matter, seeing it repeatedly, the idea conveyed by the words will finally find lodgment in the consciousness of the readers. Some will become actively hostile, others passively acquiescent, while others of thoughtful mind will be curious and want to know more about the Single Tax, and that desire to know is the first essential step to the making of a Single Taxer and propagandist.

The Single Tax reform is still in its educational stage, and will be for a long time. It will emerge from this stage as soon as we

have properly done our work, which is to agitate and educate, applying in this vitally important field that we have chosen for our life's work the homely, but pertinent truth to which we, in our business affairs, attach so much importance:

"The man who whispers down the well
About the goods he has to sell,
Will never reap the shining dollars
Like the man who climbs a tree—
and hollers."

EVERY now and then some one who has been a Single Taxer for a number of years, acting with us, voting with us, preaching with us, awakes to a realization of what the Single Tax really is. He never knew what it meant. He runs away from it with something very like horror. He then tells the world that of course the Single Tax is all right, but it is too radical and revolutionary for early adoption; it should be attained by very slow and gradual steps, and in about fifty years he would welcome it, and the world would be ready for it.

Such men are more dangerous foes of the movement than its open and declared opponents.

FROM THE FIELD

JAMES F. MORTON, JR. WRITES OF HIS LECTURE WORK

June is not much of a lecture month; and a bare statement of the field activities at the fag-end of the season cannot fail to appear meagre in its suggestion of accomplishment. The month, however, was far from being an idle one; and from some phases of the work done results of no mean importance are probable. The most notable opportunity to spread the good news of economic justice was offered by the annual convention of the Western New York Federation of Women's Clubs. This gathering was held in the town of Webster, near Rochester, and had a large attendance of leaders in progressive women's activities. It is not too much to say that the Single Tax message was greeted with positive enthusiasm and the many questions which