

A New Note

THE Single Tax Party in the different States are providing a new literature with a new appeal. We like it and we think our readers will like it. It is so in England too, where Messrs. Outhwaite, Grant, Graham Peace, and Mr. Pearsall are addressing the voters in a new language drawn from the old fonts. We shall print some of this from time to time.

A widely circulated pamphlet was issued during the last campaign in New Jersey by the Single Tax party of that state, where the party had assembly candidates, 4 in Bergen and 12 in Essex County. The appeal reads:

"The Single Tax Party has again nominated candidates for Members of the General Assembly, and would be very much pleased to receive your vote for these candidates at the coming election. It would encourage us to believe that you had come to a better understanding of the principle for which this party stands and that it has your approval and support.

We hold that there should not be private ownership of land. That it is unjust, that it is obstructive to progress, that it robs both labor and capital of their just dues and that it creates class distinctions not founded on service or merit.

The change we propose to correct these present evil conditions is to take the rent of land for public purposes and the justification of this course is in our belief that

THE RENT OF LAND BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

The people have the right to take it because they create it. It is a public product, created by the combined work and activity of all of us, and it belongs to all of us. It is the natural source of public revenue, and its collection for this purpose would bring a change in our public and private relations that would start this country forward on a new career of prosperity and progress; one that would be durable and permanent and in which all of us would share according to our activity and usefulness.

A government that uses land rent for public purposes prevents the exploitation of the people by land owners; it secures to all the people their equal right to the use of the earth and their equal right to share in the revenues from the earth, and places the people into relations with it and with each other that are fundamentally just and right.

The effect would be increased honor and respect to the government and a peaceful, prosperous and contented people.

Having, we trust, made our purpose clear, we feel that it is necessary to go into greater detail in comparing present conditions with those that will be realized when the change occurs.

It is the hope and desire of all of us to have a home free from debt and free from the exactions of the tax gatherer; also for many of us a business location from which we may not be ejected by an avaricious

land owner 'seeking all that the traffic will bear.'

Homes should be cheap, not dear. It is no evidence of a healthy community that homes are hard to get and difficult to pay for, and that the vast majority of the people have no hope ever to realize their natural longing for a refuge to shelter them and their family free from the burden of rent.

The Single Tax will make homes cheap. The first and most obvious effect would be that taxes would be taken off the building, which would at once relieve home owners of their annual tax bills on their houses. The next effect noticeable would be that the cost of the building lot or plot would disappear and no capital would be needed to purchase the location; thus relieving prospective home owners of the necessity of accumulating enough money to purchase the lot as well as build or buy the house.

The next change would be in the cost of building materials.

They would be cheaper. The brick clay land, the stone quarries, the coal lands needed for making cement and lime, the iron deposits now reserved for the indefinite future and to maintain the high ore prices of the present, would come into the market for use if needed, as no combination of capital could pay rent for them and keep them idle. This would work for lower prices of building materials.

What of labor? Labor in the building trade would receive the normal wages fixed by competitive conditions free from the domination of labor monopoly or trade unionism. The public would not stand for trade union restrictions on labor where all could be prosperous without them. The only excuse for them now is the belief that without them in the present condition of society labor wages would descend to a bare living. With this view there is much to be said and it accords with Single Tax beliefs, but when the conditions are changed in the relations of the people to the land, trade unionism will disappear.

Home owners will find no costs for home lots, only an annual rent to the community equally and fairly assessed according to desirability of location, no taxes on the house, lower costs of building materials and a readjustment of labor wages which will bring the wages of the building trades in line with other industries, and in line with the means of home buyers.

But beyond the cheapening of the cost of homes there will be a much greater ability to buy homes. For industry, relieved of the dead weight of land speculation and the inability to secure land except at the prohibitive prices now charged, will bound forward with new vigor, creating a universal demand for labor in all lines that will be steady and dependable. Business will follow labor wherever labor chooses to reside. Factories will seek the homes and will be located at points that will permit labor to live in uncongested localities where there is space for light and air, for gardens, trees and rural surroundings, and which have all the advantages of suburban communities.

Located there the home owner will find that he can, if he will, raise many garden products, but he will also find that as no land is kept back from use by land speculators the farms and truck gardens will be much nearer the users of their products. He will find that he can readily and cheaply supply himself with these necessities, all of which have been raised on land that does not need to pay extortionate rent to land owners.

He will buy whatever he needs from stores which pay very moderate rents and no taxes. What a delightful country it would be if such a condition of life for all could be attained. Is it not worth while to spend a few minutes to see if it is possible that it may?

The world is a great storehouse of natural resources useful to man. There is enough and to spare for all. Fertile soil, timber, stone, minerals, oil, but all monopolized by land owners who exclude all others but themselves from the possessions of these good gifts of God to men.

It is not the niggardliness of nature that makes life hard and uncertain, but the folly and selfishness of man.

For is it not foolish to take our common inheritance, the earth, the prime necessity of our existence, and let a part of our people own it and permit them to give it to their heirs and assigns forever and make all other tenants and wanderers over the earth resting only where the services they may be permitted to perform obtain for them a temporary home?

Is it not foolish to gather together in cities, to work in offices, factories and mills, making and distributing useful products, and to pay out wages and profits to idlers for permission to use the land made valuable by our own work?

But it is not only the foolishness but the selfishness of the people that permits these conditions. Land owners desire a continuation of their monopoly of land. This is understandable. Notice how they avoid any reference to the Single Tax, especially when remedies are proposed for social troubles. Interrogate the leaders of public opinion, our social, business and political leaders, and see how unanimously and with what resignation they assure us that these troubles are beyond them and therefore unsolvable. And so they are to many of them without doubt, for all knowledge of the subject of the distribution of wealth is denied them from the fact that they have never taken the trouble to learn anything about it. Their whole attention is centred on the problem of how to get theirs. They are familiar with the phrase Capital and Labor, and display their total ignorance of economic thought every time they use it. For there are three elements in production, not two, namely: Labor, Capital and Land.

Labor is the human element.

Capital is the wealth produced by labor and used to produce more wealth.

Land is the gift of God to the human race. The natural element on which man expends his labor and from which he produces wealth. To ignore land is to ignore God!

To treat it as private property is to ignore His law, for He has said: 'The land shall not be sold forever.'

As a protest against present conditions and as the expression of a desire that our legislative body in Trenton shall, during the coming winter, seriously consider the relation of the people to the land, we ask your vote for the Single Tax Party candidates."

Look! Listen! Shudder! The Tort Feasor!

All you in California, who'd take the rent of land,
Who prate about the rights of Man, now look and understand.
A Mr. Ralston tells us to eschew such sort of stuff.
Go leave the landlord with his mug deep in the public trough;
And let the little children starve, and let the state decay,
And let the speculator go unhindered on his way.
For if his game you seek to block, beware of dire things!
Of old the Pterodactyl flew, a shape with dreadful wings.
But there is something worse than this in its ferocity—
No Boojum and no Snark is half so terrible as he.
And Mr. Ralston tells us, "Look, listen and beware!
The tort feasor is after you—he'll get you by the hair."
And who is Mr. Ralston who utters this complaint?
He knows a lot of things that are and then some things that ain't.
He says a very solemn thing in such a solemn way—
Perhaps its mostly hokum—that's not for us to say
But all the burden of his song appears to be about
Is—some dreadful fate will catch you

if
you
don't
watch
out!

THE EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:—

We are informed that notwithstanding many defeats, diminishing favor from the voters as measured by percentages; growing distrust on the part of the electorate of the Single Tax idea—as so many on the ground allege—the Great Adventure proposition is again to be pressed upon the voters of California.

Stated in a few words this proposition contemplates that thru taxation the State of California shall take for public purposes at once, or practically so, the entire rental value of the land of California. I undertake to say that such a scheme from purely a Single Tax standpoint, whether immediate or spread over a number of years, is just about as immoral as our present system of taxation, and would not advance the cause in which we believe.

Why do I say this? Let us analyze the situation.

Land values to the economist represent the sum of the benefit arising to the community from the growth of civilization, including all advantages accruing from the existence of city, county, State and national governments. As the common product of innumerable agencies, no one agency of government has a right to more than its share, ordinarily to be measured by its needs economically determined.

This rule the Great Adventure absolutely violates. Its bald idea is that the State of California for itself and for its agencies shall take to itself this entire community value.

Conceive the State of California a self-governing island,