

much vacant land in large cities with overcrowded quarters would be brought into market and built up, if the premium upon keeping it unused and untaxed were removed. It was estimated that with a rate of two shillings to the pound on the land valuation of the metropolis, existing burdens of occupiers might be reduced one-half. A royal commission had recommended a general revision of local taxation on these lines, and the London County Council, at various times, had urged changes in the law with special reference to levying a portion of the cost of improvements upon untaxed landowners who were enriched by them. Value was imparted to sites by the movement of population and by the settled and progressive order of municipal administration, and there was no convincing reason why the owners of vacant property should not pay adequately for the services now received gratuitously. Land would be cheapened by taxation; the problem of housing working people would be solved more easily, suburban districts would be improved more rapidly, and ways and means would be found for easing the burdens of rate payers, who were complaining of the increased cost of living in large towns. These pleas were urged in favor of the reform of local taxation on enlightened principles, but all to no purpose, for the last word had been said, so far as the Tory landholders were concerned, when an injudicious advocate had ventured to refer to the 'unearned increment.' That settled it, and the bill was rejected summarily."

One of the disappointing features of the agitation over this question that in England and Scotland is everyday gaining headway, is the comparative indifference among the Irish leaders. Since Michael Davitt, once the head and front of the movement in Ireland, consented to minimize his far-reaching influence by allying himself with movements for peasant proprietorship and other makeshifts, bleeding Ireland has no advocate of equal personal force and commanding intellectual powers to plead her cause. The Irish journals are in great part silent or indifferent on this great question. Exceptions there are, it is true; the Cork County *Eagle*, one of the most influential of the Irish papers, which has always been sound on the land question, has this to say:

"Mr. Field and a few members of the Irish party support the taxation of ground values in conjunction with the redress of the other grievances which press so severely on town tenants; but this solution has not yet received the sanction of the party as such; consequently, we would urgently and earnestly refer this important point to the careful consideration and dispassionate reflection of the Irish party, particularly the committee having charge of the Town Tenants' Question, as it comprises issues of momentous importance to the country. So long as town tenants remain in a state of uncertainty

and insecurity they will never develop their industries as they would if they received proper encouragement; and so long as laborers are compelled to coop themselves up in dreary and comfortless tenements, or to live in hovels unfit for human beings, emigration is positively certain to continue. By placing a tax on ground values an unfair burden is taken off the tenant, and he is thereby given a strong incentive to increase and extend his industry; and the tax being imposed, whether the site be built upon or not, will in a great measure compel the ground landlord to either let or sell at a reasonable market value, and so provide ample building space for the erection of healthy, sanitary, and commodious dwellings for the laborers. This, therefore, is a question which immediately affects all sections of the community, and is worthy of careful study and united and intelligent action."

England is paying the price of allowing her attention to be diverted from domestic affairs to the enterprises of empire. The protectionists are busy, and it is not improbable that under cover of England's dire necessities for revenue the thin end of the protection wedge may be inserted. Sir Robert Griffin, who has furnished some notable statistics showing the growth of British commerce since the abolition of the Corn Laws, even proposes a small tax on grain and lumber. Years ago Gladstone said the only competition Great Britain need fear was that of America under free trade. In like manner the adoption of protection by Great Britain would remove our strongest competitor from the field.

SCOTLAND.

The Glasgow Bazaar to promote the taxation of land values seems to have been a pronounced success. The committee reports that it realized more than the sum aimed at. The takings for the three days amounted to £1 140, of which sum over £40 was taken for literature. We heartily congratulate our Scottish co-workers on the results of their efforts.

TORONTO.

The winter season just closed has marked a decided advance in single tax propaganda work in Toronto. We have held a series of thirteen very successful Sunday afternoon meetings in the pavilion. The meetings were advertised as being in the interest of religion and social reform. We had an attendance varying from 500 to 1,200 and averaging at least 700.

Addresses were given by the following well known single taxers. Ernest Crosby, L. F. Post, H. V. Hetzel, Rev. S. S. Craig, Prof. L. F. Lybarger, J. S. Crosby, W. A. Douglass, Henry George, Jr., Rev. Mr. Cooley, Rev.

Dean Williams, Jas. R. Brown, and Mr. M. Buchanan. At each of these meetings about 5,000 cards, samples of which we inclose, were distributed to the audience, containing the announcement of the following Sunday's lecture, and having on the back of the card a few printed single tax remarks. We also gave away between 20,000 and 25,000 tracts. Our collection totalled over \$400, and with the funds of the society paid the whole expense of the meetings, amounting to about \$1,200.

Our meetings were reported in all the Monday papers, and in this way reached fully 200,000 people who were not in the audience.

Fifty or sixty new names were added to the society's list of single taxers, and several new active workers secured. The series was brought to a close by a social evening in St. George's Hall on Feb. 22d. The program consisted of short speeches, music by an orchestra, and refreshments. About 100 of our friends were present.

The *Toiler*, the official organ of the Trades and Labor Council, has a lot of good single tax matter in every week, mostly from the able pen of W. A. Douglass, and the leaders of the organization are becoming alive to the importance of the subject.

They requested the mayor to call a public meeting to discuss the report of the Ontario Assessment Commission, and is called a "Protest against the Taxation of Industry." The Commission, which was appointed by the Ontario government to consider the whole matter of taxation, takes in two pages of their report in considering the single tax, and then condemns it as "confiscation," because no other country had adopted it. They, however, recommend a tax on franchise as a direct result of our arguments and advocacy, for we were the only persons who asked for such a tax. The Single Tax Association have been framing a reply to the trustees of the Commission on our principles, and hope to have it ready for distribution among the members of the Legislature and others in a few weeks. If anything of importance occurs at the meetings I will report later.

—ALAN C. THOMPSON.

MONTREAL.

The custom of holding open air meetings is with you a popular one, not only in Single Taxdom, but in all sorts of political and religious movements. In Montreal it is a rather unusual sight to see an open air meeting upon any subject whatever. Now and again, during a political campaign, an aspiring candidate has been known to declaim upon the street corner, but those who give ear are seldom sufficiently numerous to attract the attention of the "move on" men. A so-called "overflow meeting" was held in one of our parks once, but the instigator

lost his deposit at the polls. In the throes of its despair, an occasional theological group congregates upon a corner to make its expiring gasp, and it does not even suffer martyrdom. So we do our principal work during the fall and winter months, and we strictly avoid the fresh air.

We opened up with our regular meetings on Oct. 3d last and have since held at least one meeting a month. The subjects treated were as follows: "The Progress of Single Tax Throughout the world," R. B. Capon; Oct. 17th: "Antæus and Hercules," showing how Hercules could only strangle Antæus by raising him from the earth, by B. A. Marcuse; Nov. 21st: "Questions and Answers, and Absurdities of Present Day Taxation," by John Anderson; Dec. 19th: Chart lecture by T. C. Allum, tracing the rise in land values, first, through increase of population, and second, through public improvements; Jan. 23: "Direct and Indirect Taxation," by Richard Dawson; Feb. 26: "The Place of Single Tax in Social Progress," by T. J. Griffith. On Mch. 18 four short papers were read: "Labor Unions," by T. J. Griffith; "Prohibition," by John Anderson; "Municipal Ownership," by Henry Timmis; "Immigration," by R. B. Capon. B. A. Marcuse, the president, referred to the fact that it was just 45 years ago to the day since the Berlin revolutionists were shot at the barricades in their fight for liberty. He then proceeded to point out that it was because the land had not been freed when chattel slavery was abolished, that industrial slavery was able to survive. Our next meeting takes place on Apr. 17th, when the election of officers for the ensuing year will be proceeded with and a *resume* of the past years work given. A paper will also be read if time permits.

During the season a circular dealing with municipalization, with a direct bearing upon the civic affairs of their city, was printed in French and English, and 5,000 copies of each were distributed where they will do most good. We have not had our usual public lecture owing to lack of funds, and it is not likely that we will now be able to have one. This is a matter of regret, but it is apparently unavoidable.

We have been able to secure considerable space in the newspapers, as a result of our monthly meetings, though in all truth it is not because of the large attendance. Thus we reach a much larger number of people through our meetings than a casual visitor might suppose.

At the best, however, the work goes on all too slowly. Not that we feel at all discouraged. I sometimes think that it would be quite impossible to discourage an out-and-out single taxer. We know that we are right and we know that eventually the people must find it out. From the very nature of our reform it is impossible to carry on a campaign of a revivalistic character. A man cannot become a single taxer