

THE SINGLE TAX MEANS INDUSTRIAL PEACE

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Your discussion of William Z. Foster's book interests me for what you say of his account of the Steel Strike, and even more for what you say to Mr. Foster himself. I realized from Mr. Foster's testimony at the time when the strike was investigated at Washington that he was in his theoretical convictions an extreme individualist and he impressed me as being essentially an honest man. As to the steel magnates, we know them pretty well, and they are a far greater menace to orderly social development than the wildest of direct action radicals, because they so abuse their power as to convince many that direct action is the only course to bring results. Recent revelations in the building scandal in New York have put one of the great steel corporations utterly beyond the pale of decent business, have branded it as little better than a criminal conspiracy against not only unionism, but against the public. It is notorious that when the steel magnates increased wages during the war so as to add greatly to the labor cost in a ton of steel, they increased prices in a greater proportion, so that they were far the richer, not the poorer, by reason of the higher wages paid.

As you necessarily imply, but do not directly say to Mr. Foster, unionism and massed capital buttressed by corporate privilege, the protective tariff, patents, and above all the control of natural opportunities, are engaged in a gigantic industrial war, mitigated by brief truces. The incidents of the actual war threaten to starve the public; the effect of the truces is often, perhaps usually, to fleece the public, which becomes the meal between the upper millstone of the great employers and the lower millstone of unionism. Apparently the worker must choose between a truce which too often amounts to a conspiracy between the hostile powers to do all the rest of us, or war with the ever growing conviction of the least intelligent workmen that direct action leading to the seizure of the industries is the only remedy for an intolerable condition.

As our industries are now organized there is no standard of wages except that established, and always in a condition of unstable equilibrium, by exhausting war that leads to the truce of exhaustion. There is, nevertheless, a well recognized natural minimum wage effective without artificial laws establishing it wherever natural opportunities are free by means of an approximation to the Single Tax. That minimum wage is what an able bodied man can earn in the application of his labor, and whatever capital he may have, to no-rent land. In every such region as the tidal basin of the Chesapeake the power of an approximation to the Single Tax to free natural opportunities and establish the minimum wage is beautifully illustrated. In that region, which has probably the richest waters in the world, anybody can catch fish, and the natural oyster beds are open to all comers, resident of the bordering States, who pay a tax in proportion to the size of boat and character of tools used. No person can make private property of the natural oyster beds. The effect of this situation is that nobody afloat or ashore will work for much less than he can earn as a self-employed oysterman, fisherman, or crabber, and involuntary poverty is practically unknown. I have seen prosperous little hamlets of fishermen in that region in the midst of a farming country where the farmers were hungering for laborers at high wages, but where the fishermen could not be attracted from the water. Some farmers, with considerable families of sturdy sons, manage to cultivate the ground, and to reap also the tidal fields. The condition is the ideal one at which the labor unions aim, where there are two jobs running after one man, and not two men after one job. The Single Tax means peace, and it is the only way to general prosperity.

Chestnut Hill, Mass.

E. N. VALLANDIGHAM.

WE tax ourselves to pay ground rent to maintain families in luxury, and then tax ourselves again to support families in poverty!—H. M. H. in *Cleveland Citizen*.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

THE organization of a Charles Frederick Adams Council of the Brotherhood of the Commonwealth has been effected in this city, with John J. Murphy, president, and Morris Van Veen, secretary. There is a good chance of building up a strong neighborhood Council in the new organization. Two dinners have been held in Keen's Chop House in this city, and these were well attended and evidenced real interest in the Brotherhood.

FROM a letter of Frederick Verinder we extract the following: "We have been much cheered lately by the Manchester City Council's decision to ask Parliament for power to rate land values. I am told that Bradford is likely to follow. Parliament, in my opinion, is not likely to grant local option even to these two great towns. But other towns will follow, and the discussion will make opinion in favor of a general alteration of the law of rating."

A DINNER in honor of Mr. and Mrs. William L. Ross was given in Philadelphia on Jan. 27, by the Single Taxers of that city. About seventy-five were present, and among the speakers were C. F. Shandrew, Mrs. F. A. Burleigh, Henry W. Hetzel, Harold Sudell and Frank Stephens. Mr. and Mrs. Ross told of the work in California, and spoke with enthusiasm of the splendid prospects of ultimate success at the polls in that State.

AN interesting series of papers, reminiscent of old Harlem have been running in the *Harlem Home News*, an excellent paper devoted to the news of that section. These articles are from the pen of John J. Hopper, late Register of New York County and a veteran Single Taxer. The title of Mr. Hopper's paper is "Country Life in Harlem Village Fifty Years Ago." The story is told with much literary skill.

JOHN CAIRNS will remove with his family from South Manchester, Conn., where he has lived for many years, to Los Angeles, Calif. Mr. Cairns is the leading jeweller in South Manchester, and ran for the legislature in that town on the Single Tax Party ticket, receiving a surprisingly large vote.

HAVANA reports that the construction of more warehouses near the docks, which are sorely needed, is hampered by the inflation of land values that discourages the investor and makes construction almost prohibitive.

AN admirable pamphlet addressed to Irishmen and written by that sterling Single Taxer, Patrick Kelliher, of Chicago, has reached us. Its title is "A Real Irish Republic." We congratulate Mr. Kelliher on a most effective brochure on the Irish question.

THE San Francisco *Star* founded in 1884, by "Jim" Barry, as he is affectionately termed by his intimates, has suspended publication. A hope is held out that it may resume if circumstances permit. We sincerely hope that it may be able to do so. It was long a healthy moral influence on the Pacific Coast, dealing with fundamental democracy, and though we have had occasion more than once to differ with its policy, its office was a distinctly useful one, and its editor a brave and uncompromising opponent of all forms of civic corruption, some of which he was instrumental in overthrowing by the tremendous vigor of his castigations.

FROM a letter received from C. J. Ewing, of Peoria, Ill., we extract the following paragraph in which he described a recent meeting of Single Taxers in that city: "Remarks were made on the Single Tax Party and gratification was expressed that we need no longer be content with such programmes as have been offered us by the old parties but can whole-heartedly push our cause in the Single Tax Party."