

NEWS—FOREIGN.

GREAT BRITAIN.

THE MOVEMENT ADVANCING—DANGER OF
ALLIANCE WITH PARTIES—LET US BE
SINGLE TAXERS FIRST AND ALL THE TIME.

The Single Tax Movement has gone forward by leaps and bounds since the last letter I wrote to you received such mixed treatment from our friends. Twelve months ago, when I and others contended that the taxation of land values was a matter for the House of Commons entirely, and had nothing whatever to do with the Hereditary Chamber, we were pooh-poohed and told that a Valuation Bill must go first, and that the House of Lords would not pass such a Bill. Therefore, some of our friends very foolishly joined in the Liberal cry of "Down the House of Lords!" and undoubtedly alienated many from the cause.

History has been in the making since then, and all are on the side of those who contended that the House of Commons is alone responsible for the delay of this great reform. We hear nothing about the Hereditary Chamber now, and are all united in the demand that the Government shall put a tax on land values in their next Budget Bill. Of course, valuation must precede the collection of the tax, but the machinery for it can be included in the same bill, as in the Australian States, where the tax and the machinery for carrying it out were passed together. When this is done here the Lords Spiritual and Temporal will have no finger in the pie, however much they would like to have.

You will be glad to hear that Josiah Wedgwood, of whom you gave a nice little notice in your last issue, is thoroughly on this job. The other day he promoted a member's petition to the Government asking them to tax land values in their next Budget and this was signed by 245 members of the House of Commons, including almost all the Labour members. That was a unique petition of which we ought to hear further. If these 245 members of Parliament have backbone (Josiah has!) the Gov-

ernment will be as potter's clay in their hands.

Meanwhile, the stars in their courses work for our great cause. The Government is financially in a bad way, and Single Taxers are coming to its rescue. It is threatened with a deficit of something like £25,000,000, and my friend Mr. Arthur Withy has made the Government a present of a very workable scheme which can be tacked on to the next Budget, and be the means of defraying the cost of old-age pensions, achieving a free breakfast table, paying members of Parliament and election expenses, to say nothing of the flip given to industry and trade. This is the imposition of a penny in the pound tax on unimproved land values, which will work out a return to the treasury of something like £25,000,000. The proposal is supported by a powerful London daily paper, said by the *Spectator* to be inspired.

I want to say a word about the term "Single Tax." Of course I cannot judge for the United States, but I feel that to attempt to change the title would be a setback to the movement here. We are used to being taxed, and as our great leader (Henry George) said, it is good policy in all reforms to follow well accustomed lines. What is the matter with the term, anyhow? It will take a lot of beating for being short and easily understood. It is a title by which we have become known all the world over. Let us go forward with it, and not have to make up a great deal of leeway in promulgating a new title.

This brings me to another matter which met with much adverse criticism when stated in my last communication to you, but is now making progress among us. I refer to the necessity for solidarity in our ranks. "Now let us turn to our own work," the heading of your leader, should be our motto. The necessity for making our movement self-dependent and independent is being more and more felt on this side, and before Parliament meets in the Spring I trust the people of all political and religious feeling will be found meeting together and demanding this great reform of the taxation of land values. Already in various parts, conferences are being called.

and there is a general wakening up on the subject.

This great work can be accomplished without allying ourselves with any party. Indeed that is the only way in which it can be accomplished. It cannot be obtained by stealth—smuggled through incidentally in some omnibus bill promoted by a political caucus. It is the greatest reform of modern times, and as such must be fought for as a distinct issue. The sooner, therefore, we make up our minds to this, and set to work accordingly, the sooner shall we reach the realization of our hopes. People will not take us seriously until we do this. Indeed, they will suspect and distrust us till we do. Let me give you an illustration. I am the editor of a newspaper that has for a number of years steadily advocated the taxation of land values as the only solution of the social problem. But practically there has been no result, because, in consequence of the known alliance of Single Taxers in this country with the Liberal Party, people not of that party are suspicious. A clergyman of the Church of England and a number of his parishioners came to see me the other day and put the difficulty very bluntly: "We believe with you that land values should be taxed, but we cannot take issue and vote upon it, because, in doing so, we shall be supporting this Government which is pledged to disestablish our Church and rob our schools."

When Single Taxers are that and nothing else, we shall arrive—not before. We must be neither Liberals, Conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, nor Socialists. Of the last named Henry George said truly that a man could no more be a Single Taxer and a Socialist at the same time than he could go east and west at the same time. We can only be Single Taxers. It is a unique position. It is a magnificent heritage. Let us be worthy of it. All the time in this struggle, all that we do is for the public good. We do not propose to do evil that good may come. Palliatives that do not palliate, but oppress industry with grievous burdens, form no part of our programme. A little bit of the Single Tax will do real good to the masses of the people. And if we

"get" the people with the little bit, then we shall raise an appetite that grows with the tax it is fed on.

Let us therefore go in for the taxation of land values and that alone. It is the only thing worth struggling for. When young men come to me, as they do, and complain that they do not understand politics—and they may well not—I tell them to read "Progress and Poverty" like some Christian men read the Bible—constantly and continuously. It is education in itself—the portal of science, art, and literature. So with the Single Tax. To work for the accomplishment of this great reform is the sumum bonum of life. That accomplished and there will remain no more worlds to conquer. Do I believe that the taxation of land values is the panacea for all social ills? No, but I know that freedom is, and we cannot be free until land is made free by the Single Tax.

I entirely agree with Joseph Fels that our organizations all over the world should be federated, but let us have done with such terms as "branch" or "auxiliary." The Single Tax League or the League for the Taxation of Land Values let it be, but League always, each separate League being federated and not "branched" or "auxiliarized." But we must be Single Taxers first and only. The world will take us at our own estimate, and if they find us Liberals first, or Democrats first, or Socialists first, with the Single Tax as a tag only, they will treat us accordingly. But if we are Single Taxers all the time, with our faces fixed and our steps directed towards the goal of freeing the human race from economic bondage, the people will respond. I tell you they are positively hungering for the word of our gospel. Ask anyone who has with earnestness and confidence explained the Single Tax to meetings of people, and they will confirm this statement. I have been heartened and wonderfully pleased with the response I have received from young men, when I have represented to them the Single Tax as the only way out of the social quagmire. I have in my mind one fine young fellow, only 21 years of age, who was trained in the John Stuart Mill fallacies and had never heard of Henry

George till I told him. One reading of "Progress and Poverty" and he saw the cat. He and others associated with him are now setting a very big Lancashire borough on fire with our principles. The people hear them gladly and persist in sending resolutions and petitions to Parliament in favor of the taxation of land values.

The future is ours, the days of monopoly and privilege are numbered. Let us be true to our great cause—firm, unflinching, constant and untiring, and it will not be long before victory is achieved.

JOHN BAGOT.

ST. ANNES-ON-THE-SEA, England.

BRITISH NEWS NOTES.

A great land demonstration at Inverness was signalled by a speech of Solicitor General Ure, in which he assured his hearers that the Government contemplated no retreat from its position on the land question. He took occasion to pay a high compliment to our old friend, Edward McHugh, whom many Single Taxers will remember for his work in the campaign of 1897 in this city, and who has been doing splendid work in the highlands.

At a meeting at Inverness Mr. McHugh startled his hearers by the announcement that in Scotland 80 per cent. of the inhabitants live on 1 per cent. of the land, leaving 20 per cent. of the population spread over the remaining 99 per cent. of the land. At this meeting Mr. McHugh spoke for over three hours.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

A REVIEW OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE COLONY—UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE OF MR. WAKEFIELD, WHO, THOUGH WEALTHY, HAD TO WORK FOR HIS LIVING—ENORMOUS INCREASE IN LAND VALUES.

In beginning articles for the Single Tax REVIEW dealing with the land question in South Australia it may be of interest to briefly review the steps leading up to its present stage, leaving for subsequent numbers the more recent legislation on the subject. For from the inception of the found-

ing of this State the importance of securing the land was clearly recognized and taken advantage of, and while Single Taxers know that the system of land tenure of a community plays the same important part in the welfare of its people whether they are conscious of it or not, still in few countries can this knowledge be traced so clearly and completely as here. Being colonized comparatively so recently there are still pioneers living who have seen the growth of land values from nil to its present £33,000,000.

South Australia began its career as a British Colony in 1836 and was founded on a system of colonization advocated by Edward G. Wakefield. A few years earlier this gentleman published a book in London (purporting to be written from Sydney), describing the annoyances that a man of taste and means must endure if he emigrated to Australia. No intellectual or artistic society, none of the delights of easy retirement were his, seeing that he had to go forth on his land and with his own hands labor for food. "For," said the writer, "you cannot long have servants in the country; if a man arrives in the colony, though he may for a short time work for you as a servant, yet he is sure to save a little money and as land is here so excessively cheap he at once becomes himself a landed proprietor; he settles down on his farm, and, though he may have a year or two of heavy toil, yet he is almost certain to become happy and prosperous. Thus the Colony is an excellent place for a poor man but a wretched abode for a man of means and culture." Wakefield, therefore, proposed to found a new settlement in which a sufficiently high price should be charged for land to prevent the poorer people from buying it, and three-fourths of the money so obtained to be spent to bring out servants and farm laborers for the service of the land owners. "Now," (to quote once more from this wide-awake author), "on account of the immense natural resources of these Colonies, their splendid soil, their magnificent pasture lands, their vast wealth in minerals and their wide-spread forests of valuable timber, which stand ready for the axe, a gentleman possessed of only £20,000 will obtain as large an income from it as could