

## Missouri

ACCORDING to present indications Missouri will take place with California as a State in which the voters will be given the opportunity at the coming November election to write the Single Tax into the fundamental law of the community. The work of securing the requisite number of signatures to petitions is going forward and the leaders declare that given the proper financial support from Single Taxers throughout the nation their programme will go on the ballot in good time.

Quite a number of reports have come in from those who were active in 1912 as to the more cordial reception they are receiving now in securing names. A Single Taxer in Gasconade County writes that he has filled five petitions (200 names) in his spare time and will soon have his sixth completed. Many who would not sign in 1912 are glad to do so now. Another in Camden County has secured practically every voter in his town (about 500) on the blanks. In one of the southeastern counties the farmer who was the secretary of the county anti-Single Tax League in 1912 has read "Progress and Poverty" in the meantime and has become a convert. Barney Haughey and G. H. Cox, two of the men who are devoting all of their time to securing signers, are finding that with the distribution of literature and the personal touch they are able to do a vast amount of very effective propaganda. Thousands of citizens are being reached and interested in the philosophy of Henry George who under any other circumstances would not be likely to pay attention to the idea.

As a basis for the favorable attention of the voter our measure has the endorsement of the State Federation of Labor at its last two conventions and the endorsement of every central labor union in the State and many of the local unions. There is a very encouraging disposition on the part of the newspapers over the State to give space to news articles concerning the programme and this will be increased to some extent as time goes on. Whenever the petitions are filed and a letter sent out to all the papers in the State announcing this fact and giving a short succinct argument for the measures, a volume of discussion will be started which will be of immense importance. Every cross-roads store and country home will buzz with talk about the "Homes for the Homeless" programme. Then the voters who have signed and the active spirits in each community will have their opportunity with literature and argument to mold an intelligent public opinion. Of course, the opposition will make every possible appeal to prejudice and blind selfishness and ignorance, but it will find it increasingly hard to stampede the voters into voting against their own interests and that of the community.

The situation created by the world war has opened the minds of thousands of people in Missouri for our propaganda. Everywhere the cry is "Produce more food, save, conserve," and the cost of the necessities of life has mounted skyward with little corresponding increase in wages for the great mass of the workers. Many are thinking: "Why should

there be a shortage of food in this great land of vast untilled areas? I would be glad to go on to a small farm and till it myself. I could not make less than I am making now as a wage earner and I would be assured of a livelihood, at least, without the ever recurring thought of what may happen to me and my loved ones if I should be thrown out of my job or be incapacitated by accident or sickness. Even with all the hard work involved in farming successfully, I could feel sure of my economic independence and would insure a chance for my children when they are ready to enter the ranks of the producers." We can show such the connection between idle acres, homeless and jobless men and our present unjust and unscientific system of taxation. Conscription of men has been carried out; the idea of conscription of the socially created land values so as to take the profit out of land speculation and monopoly is logical and appealing. It will find ready response.

Our appeal is being made in the spirit of Henry George and Father McGlynn with no desire to slip something over on the voter. We will distribute thousands of copies of the writings of George himself and emphasize the crying iniquity of any man or group of men being allowed to hold land idle for the profit there is in it while tenancy, unemployment, high prices and poverty mount and flourish. Our cry will be "Justice the end, taxation the means." At the the same time our presentation of the plan for State loans at three per cent. interest to home builders as a separate companion measure will give our programme a balance and a practical application with thousands of citizens who might otherwise be disposed to regard a one plank Single Tax programme as too Utopian and theoretical to merit their serious consideration. The fact that our movement is a direct attempt to put into effect the recommendations of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations that "all unused land should be forced into use by making the tax on non-productive land the same as on productive land of the same kind, and exempting all improvements," and that the Chairman of that Committee, Mr. Frank P. Walsh, of Kansas City, is president of our organization, is of tremendous value in the presentation of our programme.

MISSOURI CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

## Activity in Texas

TWO years ago today (March 16, 1916), the first Single Tax Conference in Texas was held, and the SINGLE TAX LEAGUE OF TEXAS organized and launched. There had been one year's work done under a volunteer organization, the Texas League for the Taxation of Land Values. The Dallas Conference but confirmed and endorsed the programme started and gave it the endorsement of a more definite and representative organization. Roy Bedichek, of Austin, was made Chairman, J. J. Pastoriza, of Houston, Treasurer, and the writer was made Executive Secretary and given authority to plan and carry on the work of propaganda with such help and advice as could be made available from time to time.

There has been a definite step-by-step programme, to work for since the inception of the organized movement in 1915. In a postscript to a letter of March 24, 1915, I wrote, "Why do I say that it can be done in six years? If we could start now, the next legislature would have thirty to fifty land values tax men. In four years there would be enough to submit an amendment which could be passed six years hence. This, providing the matter could be kept continuously before the people. It is not the kind of thing that can be done in a short pre-election campaign." There is no way to hurry work of this kind and pressing it too hard often defeats our purpose. The strongest single force in this movement has been its persistence. Something has been doing every day since the first day of April, 1915, and the organization has grown in strength and effectiveness very day.

In 1915 we took the matter up with the Extension Department of the State University, to make the Single Tax the subject for debate in the Interscholastic League for the year 1916-17. The subject was agreed on more than a year in advance of the debates and preliminary work done to get the most possible advantage from its discussion. The subject was discussed in more than 2,000 schools of the State and must have been carried into the homes of many thousands of our people.

In 1916 the State Federation of Labor passed a resolution of endorsement. Again in 1917 another resolution was passed. The Carpenters and other State organizations passed similar resolutions and these were used as the basis of propaganda with the rank and file of organized labor. This year we are asking the State Federation not only to declare for the Single Tax, but to demand the submission of an amendment to the Constitution and make that demand a preferential measure. We are hoping for favorable action that may be an accomplished fact before this is published. The Railroad Brotherhoods are asked to take similar action when they meet to decide on their legislative programme for the coming year. Whether we succeed or fail in these immediate details there will be no discouragements as to progress. We are getting close to the rank and file.

A Labor Local today reports as unanimously carried "that the Single Tax be endorsed and our delegate instructed to work and vote for the furtherance of the resolution." Many similar expressions like this come to the office. These tell the story of progress far better than the mere recital of speeches made and articles written. We are working on the proposition that there is no answer to the Single Tax principle; that it only needs to be understood to be adopted, and that our work is to see to it that it is understood by enough people. The one chief discouragement in the work is the hopeless attitude of many of our long time Single Taxers. They are still living in the past decade and do not realize that a new world is building today. Then there are a lot of these Single Taxers that are looking for an easy place for its adoption and that easy place is always some other place than here. Possibly they have gotten it into their heads that if it could be adopted

in some one State that that would carry it in every other State. The large measure of Single Tax in British Columbia doesn't seem to have impressed Washington very seriously. The so-called Houston plan of taxation in this State has not helped other cities very materially. I really question if it has not done more harm than good, as the people of Houston rest on the slight measure of relief it has given them, and prefer to sit still.

San Antonio, Texas

WM. A. BLACK

WE WONDER if Labor and Capital realize the enormous tribute, amounting to many billions annually, which they are always paying, without any return in service, to a limited number of individuals who have legalized titles to the land of our country.

AVERSION to the arid details of our fiscal system and those of the economic condition of people and country, characterizes most of the current Single Tax literature. Whether that be due to a misconception of the needs of the time or to the possession of greater imaginative than practical gifts, is not our purpose to inquire. What is, however, urgently wanted today is the patient, conscientious study of the concrete conditions and requirements of municipality, State and nation, and a clear and convincing presentation of definite fiscal measures to meet each case.

ACCORDING to Dr. Josephine Baker, of the Board of Health, 800,000 of New York's 1,000,000 school children live below the right standard of nutrition, or, in plain English, are underfed.

This is the undeniable fruit of a fiscal system that penalizes production and favors the hold-up of land, the only source of supply. While men traffic and gamble in land titles and the machinery of government obstructs the use of land, the fountains of natural fertility dry up and the new generation, with all its precious potentialities, is starved. Grave, indeed, is the responsibility weighing upon the men of today.

## Notes From Spain

THE Administrative Council of Melilla, the African colony of Spain, has, with but one vote in the negative, petitioned the Minister of War (upon whom the colony directly depends), for the necessary authorization to proceed with the preliminary land valuation required for the establishment of the Single Tax, a reform which it is proposed to put into practice for the year 1919.

GENERAL JORDAN, the Minister of War, is said to have declared himself an ardent believer in the justice of the Single Tax.

THE Spanish Georgists celebrated the Henry George Anniversary in the Fall of 1917, by a banquet at the Regina Victoria Hotel, Malaga. The President, Antonio Albendin, paid an eloquent tribute to the memory of the revered master.