

and governmental institutions and between man and man. We derive some amount of comfort also from the reflection that S. A. with a mere handful—370,000—of people can have but a very small influence in either retarding or accelerating the reform, but all the same it is not very creditable to our S. T. L. that it should not be making much more effort than it is to put sound economic ideas into the heads of the people rather than allow those heads to be filled up with so much socialistic rubbish, which will all have to be cleared away before much benefit can accrue. It seems likely however that this socialistic phase will have to run its course before we shall be able to get the real thing. If this be so, we can only go on quietly dropping a seed here and there which may increase and multiply and produce the proverbial hundred fold results. We are told that "no good work done in the right spirit is ever lost," and so we may congratulate ourselves over the fact that for a good many years the S. T. L. of S. A. did good work and really had a much larger influence than the number of members would have seemed to justify, but Ichabod may now be written over the door.

J. E. S.

SWITZERLAND.

THE FREE SOIL MOVEMENT—THE LATE STEPHEN GSCHWIND, ITS FIRST PIONEER—DIRECT LEGISLATION OF DOUBTFUL ADVANTAGE TO OUR MOVEMENT.

Our dear little Republic has become noteworthy for many achievements in the progress towards Democracy, but on the main road to industrial freedom we are still very much behind the times. To tell the truth, there is at present no Single Tax movement at all in our country. There are a good many people who have read works by George, Fùrscheim, and some of the present German writers, and there are some who believe that Single Tax is the most needed reform, but they do not see their way how to promote the cause. Thus our movement here is sleeping.

There was not, as in many other countries, any sign of a similar movement in Switzerland before the clarion call of "Progress and Poverty" reached our country. But the German edition of that great book found many readers here. As early as 1885 the first lecture on the Georgian philosophy was held in Basle by Mr. Schär, to-day professor at the Berlin University. In 1888 the first Single Tax Society of Switzerland was started in Basle by Mr. Schär and his friends under the name of "Free-soil Society." At the end of the same year Mr. Fùrscheim made a lecturing trip through the country, which had as its result the founding of land reform societies in nearly all important cities of Switzerland. In the following year all local

societies were united into a national union for land tenure reform which had for its object the nationalization of the land. For some time a lively agitation was carried on. Twenty thousand copies of an ably written pamphlet describing the views and aims of the society were distributed throughout Switzerland. From April until December, 1890, the Basle land reformers published a daily to promote the cause, only a few copies of which have come down to us. But soon the enthusiasts had to learn the lesson they have been learning everywhere. They had to discover that the cause was better understood by those who would lose than by those who would gain by it. They had to learn that no matter how much they tried to make their proposals palatable to the vested rights, their work was looked at askance by the powers that be. They had to learn that working for our cause meant disfavor in public opinion. Newspapers ceased to support it, professors of political economy began to talk against it. The zeal of those inspired by the hope of an easily gained success soon faded away. Many there were who were willing to support a good cause costing nothing but money and time, but there were few ready to take upon themselves that martyrdom inevitably connected with a propaganda hostile to the rich and greedy. Many also had failed to conceive its true meaning. The breakdown of the movement in Germany which then passed through a period of stagnation also discouraged the Swiss land reformers. The movement practically ceased to exist. Only a few of its leaders remained faithful to the cause.

Most notable among these was Mr. Stephen Gschwind, a prominent co-operator and leader of the socialist party in the Canton of Basle country. He was the type of a man one often meets among the Single Taxers, a practical business man with a clever brain and a big heart. He tried his best to promote our cause. An attempt to lighten the burden of the small peasantry of his home canton by a reform of the mortgage laws on Single Tax lines was defeated in a popular vote by a rather small majority. In 1895 he proposed to the socialists' party's conference a reform of the party's platform such as to make voluntary co-operation on the one side and land reform on the other the chief demands of the party, and to drop the nationalization of the means of production altogether. Though he received a good deal of support from several prominent leaders, his proposals as well as the attempted reform of the platform were abandoned, because the party was too much absorbed by the political struggle for life. Unfortunately, Mr. Gschwind, who had won great esteem and love by reason of his charming personality and his singleness of purpose, died all too soon on the 28th of April, 1904, after a long and painful sickness.

Since his death some signs of a revived interest in our cause have appeared. A few years ago a book was published by a protestant clergyman of Zurich, Mr. Kutter, under the title, "Sie Müssen," which created great and well-deserved interest. In this book the author showed himself thoroughly imbued with Henry George's teachings, of whom he speaks with the highest praise. In Basle our movement has found a convinced and able leader in Mr. Bernhard Jäggi, a friend of the late Mr. Gschwind, and member of the legislative body of the Canton of Basle-City. An offshoot of the agitation of the land reformers in Swiss national politics is the attempt to nationalize, or at least to regulate the exploitation of the water-powers for the supply of electricity. It is to be expected that something will be done in this direction ere long.

The history of our movement in Switzerland, though poor in results, may yet serve as a lesson to many Single Taxers. We are often told that other reforms are more necessary, that direct legislation must come first, that municipal ownership and free trade must precede the Single Tax. We have here direct legislation to the fullest extent; we have had, until a few years ago, practically as much free trade as England has to-day; in all our big cities we have municipal ownership of the trams, the gas and water-works and the electrical supply; we have nationalized our railroads with the exception of a single line of some hundred miles, which also will be nationalized ere long. Yet all this has profited our movement absolutely nothing, and the people not much more. Children go hungry and underclothed to school, a large number of unemployed and poor have to be supported by public means, people are crowded in slums, while the advantages of municipal ownership tend to raise rents and swell the landlords' profits. And our system of direct legislation has benefitted only the politician. Statistics show that by far most of the polls taken are about political questions and the like, in which the political office hunters have axes to grind. To social reform direct legislation has often proved a hindrance, and I do not believe that our movement is to fare better under this institution. It can scarcely be said that it has tended to enlighten the people. There are people here who think that horse-flesh eating will solve all social difficulties, but there are very few who venture to hope the same from the Single Tax. I think we may have something to hope for from the co-operative movement which is rapidly increasing in Switzerland, and whose leaders are, just as those in England, looking with favor and lending support to our movement whenever it comes up. The growth of co-operation is the more useful as it shows that what the Socialists claim for the nationalization of the means of pro-

duction can be achieved more safely by voluntary effort, whilst on the other hand the help it offers the people is in the end frustrated by land monopoly. The practical results of co-operation in Europe have already converted many of the orthodox Marxian Socialists to more liberal views.

But, after all, there is no step to the Single Tax except to work for Single Tax and nothing else. GUSTAVE BUSCHER.

AUSTRALIA—SYDNEY.

The Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council have now agreed on the final form of the Local Government Extension Bill shall take and its enactment *this year* is therefore now assured.

It applies to all *existing* Municipalities (with the exception of the City of Sydney). It makes a rate of *1d in the £* on unimproved land values *mandatory*; and allows Municipal Councils to rate on unimproved land values up to *2d in the £*. *No exemptions of any description.*

It means a great advance in Municipal Government in this State, and is next to our Shires Act, the greatest triumph Henry George's New South Wales followers have yet achieved.

J. R. FIRTH

SCOTLAND.

BOLD WORDS OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND.

I am in the constituency represented in Parliament by the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Ure) who is at present addressing the little villages around on the Taxation of Land Values. The small local papers report his speeches in full, and the result is that every collier and mine worker in Linlithgowshire is studying our question at the moment. We hope to keep them interested.

Here is the way the Solicitor General for Scotland talked at Bo'ness (Linlithgowshire):

"And when I venture to lay down the proposition that rates, like taxes, should as far as possible be so imposed as not to check or hinder industrial enterprise—that hence it is an excellent move, if possible, to drop buildings and improvements out of the rating standard, I am told that this is the doctrine of a confiscator, of a humble disciple of Henry George. When I observed—as I have for the past three weeks—this is the only criticism of my fundamental doctrine, I rejoiced and was exceeding glad, for now I know that the battle is won. The citadel is safe, and nothing remains to be done save some skirmishing at the outposts."

Yet Mr. Ure in his address at Fauldhouse confessed that he had never read a line of Henry George; He said:

Let me add two sentences in conclusion