

NEWS—DOMESTIC.

OREGON.

The tax fight is getting interesting in Oregon. The Graduated Single Tax and Exemption measure is filed. There are seven others. The Equal Taxation League, a fake organization of the plutocrats, circulated a petition that purported to make the Single Tax forever impossible in Oregon. It was found, however, that it absolutely destroyed the power of the initiative to apply to any tax measure whatever. Its father had to kill his own child! It was withdrawn after enormous expenditures had been made to secure signatures, and the entire electorate had been given two rounds of the most mendacious aggregation of appeals against the Single Tax that has ever been published.

The measure relied upon to defeat the Single Tax in Oregon now is one repealing the local option county amendment passed in 1910 and needing only the vote of the people in some one county to be tried out. Under this present constitutional provision three counties will vote on measures putting all county, city, school, road and special taxes on land values only. Should the anti-measure carry this will be done away with. The anti-measure was passed by the legislature. It forbids poll taxes and "emergency" tax laws. This latter are laws passed with a clause preventing the referendum. Oregon has been running under such tax laws for over eight years.

The other tax measures submitted are not direct attacks on the principle of land value taxation, but homeopathic doses of it to cure the disease. One abolishes taxes on household goods; another on certificates of indebtedness, bank deposits, etc. Another provides for an income tax.

The opposition has a retinue of writers, speakers and mailing clerks and is spending fully \$10,000 a month to oppose the graduated measure and to pass the anti-measure. Boiler plate matter is offered in any quantities. Special articles against the measure and speakers at pleasure.

The sentiment against the Single Tax is strong throughout the rural sections of

the State. Wherever the farmers read the graduated measure they drop their antagonism; but to get them to read it we must send out speakers.

This has been impossible to do. The resources of the Graduated Single Tax League are absorbed in securing the initiative petition and in literature.

As an instance, F. E. Coulter recently addressed an audience of 150 farmers in a remote part of Marion county about 60 miles from Portland. At the start all but three were opposed to the measure. After two hours of questions and elucidation all but four endorsed it. Two men brought out by the opposition to debate with him respectfully declined. They said they wanted to know more about the measure before they undertook to controvert it. One of them said he was in favor of the measure if it was as represented.

We hope to secure the services of Mr. Coulter for three months to tour the State. What is wanted is more men like him to carry the gospel of economic justice to the farmers who have had dust flung in their eyes by the landed plutocrats misinformation bureau.

A few years ago a measure to abolish the poll tax would have been considered progressive. Now no body of men dare propose anything else! If in 1908 the tax commission had proposed to exempt all household goods and personal belongings in use, and to give power to the legislature to enact an income tax, graduated and from any source, we would have said the commission was headed for the Single Tax. Now, with such measures this body proposes to head off the Single Tax, and writes a note to the plute anti-Single Tax league to say that these measures will do the trick.

Out of the eight tax measures something is going to happen. If all are defeated we will be where we are now. If any three of them pass we will be making progress.

Some eastern criticism of the graduated measure has come out to us. The situation here is not understood. The measure is a distinct and positive step toward the placing of all taxes on land values. The opponents recognize this and fight accordingly, for they know that the people will

not stop short of the real thing if they once get the bit in their teeth.

Their frantic opposition, their teeming lies, their expensive campaign, their muzzling of the press, their costly mistakes, their flood of literature—all show that they realize that the people must be fooled now or never. It is with regret that the workers digging trenches on the firing line see that the forces of economic justice are squabbling over details and criticising the gun that is to smash down the fortifications of the enemy. Perhaps it is not perfect; perhaps it overshoots its mark; perhaps it should have been dragged up this way and mounted that way, loaded with less powder, or more; but the battle is on, and the firing has begun. Already its shots are telling. We should afford it massed support and not allow the enemy to sneak up on the blind side and spike it because its shells spread havoc among them, while we are debating whether it is a flawless, perfect Single Tax measure. A gun that can draw the fire and the desperate assaults of the enemy is worth defending.

Constitutionality? Well, it is constitutional enough. Don't worry. The people have a tame supreme court in Oregon. It eats out of their hand!

The supreme court of the United States! Oh, that body is likely to let Oregon alone. It has trouble of its own, and more coming. The plutes howl "unconstitutional!" at everything progressive proposed! Let them do it by themselves. We don't need to holler for them.

What we want in Oregon now is light to spread among the people. We have the men who can spread it. We have printing presses. We have examples of land monopoly, robbery and fraud. The Single Taxer who is determined to wait until a full, straight, out-and-out Henry George Single Tax measure is put before the people of Oregon that is approved unanimously by every Single Taxer in the United States—well, he is dead in the shell. The people of Oregon may accept this measure, and if it looks good to them after trial we know, and the opposition is tearfully admitting, that they will go further. If they want to they can go back. Every endeavor is now being made to push them

back before they can enter the gate of the Promised Land. Should they get a glimpse of its beauties, should they secure a whiff of the feast the Almighty has spread for the children of men, they will crowd through until every nation of the earth shall have passed over.

Which way are you pushing, you who boast that you once touched the hem of the garment of Henry George?—ALFRED D. CRIDGE, Portland, Oregon.

MISSOURI.

Attempts to in some degree correct existing absurdity and injustice in the laws of taxation are quite a different matter from a clean cut discussion of the theories of public revenue. Theories deal with a complete application of a given method, while practical proposals deal more largely with the opinions and interest of individuals or groups.

In the latter case, the manner of presentation usually is determined on the disposition of votes, rather than by the essential validity of the argument. Because of this, we find in Missouri that opposition to the proposed constitutional amendments in relation to taxation is directed chiefly to exciting the wholly unreasoning prejudice of the farmer. To this end, there is no limit to utterly absurd assertions to the effect that farmers will be completely ruined if the proposed plan is adopted, and that owners of farms will advance rents to defenseless tenants, who will be compelled to put up the price of their produce—to the entire ruin of both!

To induce a reasonably careful consideration of any phase of taxation among the noisy speculators is a considerable task. To the claim that the less land value is taxed the easier it is to hold land vacant, the reply comes back—"You want to rob the poor farmer." If it is asserted that taxes on business operations are burdens that retard development and place producers here at a disadvantage with those of the other States, response is made that we wish to let off the money lender. In the absence of any other reply, we are informed that Joe Fels makes soap.