

I have been in Vancouver and am now in Victoria, taking advantage of the close of the Seattle campaign and the nearness of both cities to visit them before returning to Portland. The talk in Seattle of either city going back to the old way of taxing improvements is laughed at here. I have talked with men in no way related to the Singletax, nor in favor of it, and they all said that there is no possibility of going back, and no move to do so.

Newspaper men in Vancouver assured me that no such thing was contemplated. The same here in Victoria.



The development and growth of Victoria since adopting the exemption of improvements is amazing. The city seems to have awakened from a long sleep. From the window of the Times office I can see four modern buildings going up, with new ones completed at every turn of the eye. A new skyline has arisen in Victoria since improvements were exempt. This new Times building itself is a product of the exemption. Victoria has nothing here in the way of railroads or new industrial developments of magnitude not here before the change, but things are a-hum with industry and life. This town of 30,000 expects to put up buildings for 1912 of \$8,000,000 in value.

In Vancouver they confidently predict 24 millions as against 17½ millions last year, and some told me 30 millions. With the opening of the spring the rush for buildings is enormous. The trouble in Vancouver arose mainly because of an unprecedented rush of idle labor from the south. Many of the men came from the United States, driven out by the harsh command of the police. Vancouver was advertised as booming, and they came and were fed. The new Mayor was a reactionary, who thought to stop the tongues of the Socialists with a club, and applied it. The mistake was realized by him, and now the men meet and talk to their hearts' content. The result of the opening up of new camps in the timber, railroads and building has reduced the idle people to the normal.

The new labor temple in Vancouver was built, in my opinion, partly as a result of the exemption of improvements. A dilapidated old church stood on the ground. The labor men bitterly pointed out to me that they were made to pay as much taxes on that old church as a man with a good building near by. So they borrowed \$100,000 at 5½ per cent and built a magnificent structure. Some of them innocently assured me, however, that the Singletax had nothing to do with it!



I found that money at reasonable rates was easily obtained in Vancouver at the banks for *improvements of a stable nature*. They said in Seattle that the application of the Singletax had driven capital away from Vancouver.

One very striking thing in Vancouver is the compactly built city. No empty lots except where the old buildings have been torn away to make room for new ones to be built. I found one billboarded lot in the heart of the city, and asked a man why it stood there in that shape. "Oh, that belongs to

the Hudson Bay people, and they will run up a ten-story steel building on it right away. Materials ordered, contract let. Costs them just as much to hold it idle as to use it." "Can they rent it?" I asked. "They have already rented it," was the reply. "See that big building over there?" "Yes." "Well, that is the new Burns building, 18 stories; won't be finished for three months. Every room rented in it now. People will move in as soon as they are allowed to get in."



The passage by the last Parliament of British Columbia of a bill exempting improvements from taxation in unorganized districts is very significant, yet it seems to have been overlooked by Singletax news gatherers.

ALFRED D. CRIDGE.



TAX REFORM IN ONTARIO.

Toronto, March 4.

A few weeks ago the Labor party waited on Sir James Whitney, Provincial premier, to ask for certain amendments in the law. Among these was a request for local option in taxation so as to allow a lower rate on improvements and then to place a higher rate on land values.

When this request was made, Sir James informed the delegation that this demand is made by only a very insignificant number of citizens. His reply aroused the Labor men, and they determined to organize a deputation which in numbers and influence would prove the Premier to be mistaken.



Accordingly on the 2d inst. a deputation of upwards of 200 representatives from municipal councils, labor unions, tax reform associations and other bodies waited on the Government. The delegation was introduced by Mr. Stewart T. Lyon, editor of the Globe, our largest paper in Ontario. In the audience were not merely the leaders in the Labor party but also many of our leading citizens, among whom were Professor Farmer (of McMaster University), Mr. McKay (manager of the Globe), Mr. W. J. Southam (proprietor of the Ottawa Citizen), Mr. Allan Studholm (member of Parliament for the city of Hamilton) and Mr. Gregg (architect).

Mr. Hopewell of Ottawa, the first to address the Premier, urged that the municipalities be granted home rule in taxation, and pointed out with force and clearness that there are two distinct values, one caused by the individual, the other by the presence of the community. "A man," said he, "may own land here and live on the other side of the world, yet his land grows in value just as surely as if he were here. This is no new principle that we request, for the municipalities have had for many years the power of granting exemptions from taxation to manufacturers, subject to the approval of the people."

The representatives of the City Council of Toronto—Controller Church and Controller Hocken—followed. The former brought with him the report on the subject of the taxation of land values com-

piled a few years ago by the British government, and urged that a committee be appointed to investigate and report on this subject. Controller Hocken stated that the members of the Council were agreed in the belief that in assessing for taxation there should be a distinction between the value of buildings and the value of land. He called attention to the enormous increase in the value of the land of this city during the last few years, and they all felt that more of this value should reach the public treasury, instead of the coffers of the speculators.

The two representatives of the Labor party spoke effectively. One encouraging feature of their deputation was its general character and the interest manifested in this subject. First came the president of the Hamilton Trade & Labor Council, who pointed out how beneficial it would be to the laboring classes if the land were put to its best use. The next speaker, James Simpson, perhaps the ablest speaker in the ranks of Labor and for years one of the foremost Socialists, pointed to several instances of the rapid advance in the value of the land until it is producing all the evil effects of overcrowding. "Let us have local option in taxation," he remarked, "then men will have to investigate; and this will be one of the best educational forces in the community." In addition he pointed out several instances of enormous profits made by speculators. "When men get wealth thus, without producing wealth, where does it come from? Must it not come out of the workers? Must it not reduce wages?"



In reply to all this Sir James reiterated what he has so often stated before, that very few of the people take any interest in this question. But he said nothing of measures of the utmost importance that Parliament has enacted without any request from the people.

While some of our friends felt discouraged at the result of this interview, I must confess that to me it was very encouraging. It showed a vast change in public sentiment: politicians, now actively assisting, who stood aside a few years ago; Tories attacking their own leader; Councils unanimously sending representatives to the Government to ask for a change in taxation which, I can remember, was not many years ago, lampooned as the visions of a few featherheaded agitators.

W. A. DOUGLASS.



She mends his clothes and cooks his meals,
From her child has learned his prayers;
She gives him courage when he feels
The heavy burden of his cares.

She makes his little income serve
To keep their home a cheerful place;
When fear deprives him of his nerve
He finds that hope still lights her face.

He soon would fail, without her aid,
To keep their little bark afloat,
But he is very much afraid
To have her trusted with a vote.
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, March 12, 1912.

South Pole Reached.

Several expeditions aimed for the South Pole have been recently in Antarctic waters. A Japanese expedition left Japan November 28, 1910, but abandoned the quest in April, 1911, for lack of proper equipment. A British expedition under the leadership of Captain Robert F. Scott sailed from London June 1, 1910. Captain Scott announced December, 1911, as the date for their hoped for attainment of the South Pole. In February, 1909, it was reported that Captain Roald Amundsen, discoverer of the Northwest Passage, had been financed by a subsidy from the Norwegian Storting for an expedition for the exploration of the North Polar basin. In October, 1910, it was suddenly reported that Captain Amundsen, who was at Madeira on the *Fram*, instead of proceeding north was on his way to the Antarctic. [See vol. ix, p. 753; vol. xii, pp. 157, 872; vol. xiii, pp. 543, 949, 1163; vol. xiv, pp. 301, 418.]



On the 7th of the present month, Leon Amundsen, brother of the explorer, received at Christiania, Norway, the following cablegram from Hobart, Tasmania:

Pole attained fourteenth-seventeenth December, 1911. All well.

ROALD AMUNDSEN.

The form of date was understood to signify that Amundsen staid at the Pole from the 14th to the 17th of December. Later cables confirm Captain Amundsen's claim of discovery. He had no knowledge as to whether Captain Scott may not also have attained the same goal, either before or after him. The South Pole is located on land, as previously surmised. Captain Amundsen named the plateau region of the Pole after King Haakon of Norway, and a range of mountains of the region after Queen Maud of Norway. He was accompanied to the Pole by four members of his expedition.



The British Miners' Strike.

After separate conferences with committees on both sides of the miners' strike, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, on the 8th invited each to send representatives to a joint conference for a free