

23 per cent of the soil." Mr. Hicks quotes him literally as saying that "there is more land now in the hands of big proprietors than before the Revolution, and very few Frenchmen know this."

At the close of the session "the vice presidents and secretaries were constituted a permanent committee on time and place, and Henry George was chosen president."

Before adjourning, the conference adopted the following resolutions:

Whereas, land is not the product of labor but is the raw material or source from which all that is necessary for existence is drawn.

Whereas, labor is the only rational basis of property.

Whereas, the private ownership of land results in the enslavement or exploitation of labor.

Whereas, finally, this social condition begets dangers which, if neglected, will end in making all order impossible.

Therefore, this assembly declares that all private ownership of land should cease and give place to collective ownership for the common weal.

At the banquet, the following toasts were responded to: "Our Foreign Guests," by Charles Longuet, president of the conference, and a member of the Paris City Council. "The London City Council," by Mr. Furth. "Henry George," by Mr. Millerand, member of the Chamber of Deputies for the Seine—"a fine specimen of French eloquence, clear, musical and passionate," writes Mr. Hicks; followed by a response in which "Mr. George was equally warm, and his compliments to the French for their assistance to America in the past were eminently agreeable to the French representatives."

Continuing his Standard report of the banquet, Mr. Hicks wrote that—

M. Daumas, municipal Councilor, toasted Mr. Fürsheim, who, in his response, called on William Saunders of London. Mr. Torr of the London City Council, at the request of Mr. George, gave a brief review of the tax revision now going on in London. The final toasts were by M. Desmoulins on the "Knights of Labor" and M. Delaporte on the "Social Revolution."

The four column report by Mr. Hicks, in Henry George's "Standard"—much appreciated and doubtless well remembered by the American single taxers of that day,—from which our extracts and quotations are made, also mentions among the Americans at the conference, besides himself, John J. Hopper, representative of the Harlem (N. Y.) single tax club, and among those

at the banquet Mary P. Cranford. He closed his report with this paragraph:

After the banquet the delegates were introduced to the members of the Paris City Council present, and about midnight the last single tax man had passed out into the Rue de Rivoli to find his lodgings, near or far, and dream about the first International Congress of the Single Taxites.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

OREGON TAX AMENDMENTS.

Portland, Ore., Sept. 22.

History has no record of any horse-using people that "distributed" a 200-pound burden on a horse by putting 20 pounds on the horse's back, attaching 40 pounds to each leg, and hanging 20 pounds to the nose. How much wiser we are in the matter of taxation, for that's the way we "distribute and equalize" our tax burden. We put a few pounds on the horse's back, not as a burden, but to help the nose and legs carry their troubles; and in cases of emergency, we hang upon the nose an extra burden as a license to breathe, and tie an "occupation" burden to each leg. The Mad Hatter in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" could think of nothing more absurd than that, so he said nothing about taxation; civilized man had beat him to the North Pole of absurdity.

Oregon voters have three tax amendments to the Constitution to vote on this year. At the request of the legislative committee of the State Grange, the legislature of 1909 submitted these two amendments:

No tax or duty shall be imposed without the consent of the people or their representatives in the Legislative Assembly. Taxes shall be levied and collected for public purposes only, and the power of taxation shall never be surrendered, suspended, or contracted away.

The Legislative Assembly shall, and the people through the Initiative may, provide by law a uniform rule of taxation, except on property specifically taxed. Taxes shall be levied on such property as shall be prescribed by law. The Legislature, or the people through the Initiative, may provide for the levy and collection of taxes for State purposes, and for county, and for other municipal purposes, upon different classes of property, and may provide for ascertainment, determination, and application of an average rate of levy and taxation upon property taxed for State purposes.

As is evident, those amendments do not go to the heart of the tax question, and therefore the following amendment was proposed through Initiative petition by the State Federation of Labor and the Central Labor Council of Portland and Vicinity:

No poll or head tax shall be levied or collected in Oregon; no bill regulating taxation or exemption throughout the State shall become a law until approved by the people of the State at a regular general election; none of the restrictions of the Constitution shall apply to measures approved by the people declaring what shall be subject to taxation or exemption and how it shall be taxed or exempted whether proposed by the Legislative Assembly or by Initiative petition; but the people of the several counties are hereby empowered and authorized to regulate taxation and exemptions within their several counties.

subject to any general law which may be hereafter enacted.

The first two amendments give the people no specific power to take the burdens from the horse's nose and legs and put them where they will be carried with least exertion and least interference with freedom of movement; but the third amendment gives that specific power to the voters of each county, without automatically making a change in the existing tax laws.

No change is made except by the action of the voters of a county, and county voters are not restricted to any particular change or plan of taxation, but are free to make experiments; and having adopted one plan, they will be free to abandon that plan and try another at the next general election. In other words, the adoption of these amendments will enlarge the "People's Power" by giving them Constitutional authority to change the laws regulating taxation and exemptions.

At present they have no such direct power except by initiating an amendment to the Constitution; and while enlarging the People's Power in that respect, they restrict the power of the Legislature to make changes in the tax and exemption laws.

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The "People's Power and Public Taxation" pamphlet of Oregon* advocates precisely that increase of People's Power by advocating the adoption of these amendments.

This is worth mentioning, because some of the friends of the land value tax system have thus far failed to see the connection between People's Power and a just system of taxation, and the relation between direct legislation and the adoption of the land value system of taxation.

This is doubtless due to the fact that they have had no experience with legislatures and legislative committees.

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Embezzlement of a red hot stove is an easy job compared with persuading a legislature to submit a tax amendment that the corporations don't want submitted. And where a State constitution lays down hard and fast regulations in regard to taxation and exemptions, the voters are powerless unless the legislature consents to submit the proposition to be voted upon. If a legislature adjourns without submitting an amendment demanded by the voters, all they can do is to wait two years and make the demand upon the next legislature.

Even in Oregon, where the people have the Initiative and Referendum, the best Direct Primary law and the power of Recall, the legislature has not yet learned to trust the people; and instead of submitting needed Constitutional amendments, it busies itself in large part with unimportant matters so as to arrive at the end of the session without offending the corporations. The Oregon legislature did submit the two tax amendments offered by the State Grange, but those amendments do not give the people power to regulate taxation and exemptions; those amendments, without the one initiated by the State Federation of Labor and the Central Labor Council of Port-

land and Vicinity, merely place restrictions upon the legislature. They give no positive power to the people.

It is the third amendment that threatens Special Privilege, and that is the one to which the corporation lawyers and agents of Oregon are opposed. It gives the people power to change their system of taxation without asking the consent of the legislature. That power means People's Power to untax industry, to put upon Privilege the burden it should bear.

What, then, is land value taxation except a phase of People's Power? What is the mass of taxation upon industry except a monument to the taxing power of Special Privilege? And why seek to make a distinction between People's Power and just taxation when the former really includes the latter?

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Benevolent despotism, in the shape of an individual or a mob, might graciously confer land value taxation upon us; but what would the gift be worth when the benevolent despot might withdraw the grant or appoint a successor who would take it away through the medium of a packed court?

In short, the People's Power movement—of which the Initiative and Referendum is an expression and the chief instrument—is the march of Man to democracy and away from delegated government. Men who obstruct the movement to People's Power obstruct the road to democracy; and what is land value taxation but democracy's method or tool for raising revenue and at the same time opening opportunity?

It is merely a democratic tool. If it be the end of human endeavor, the Ultima Thule of democracy, then Henry George did a great deal of unnecessary dreaming.

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After opportunity is opened, we shall need People's Power to keep it open; we shall need that power to enable us and our children's children to continue, unhindered, their upward march toward the full development; we shall need it to "burbank" the selfishness out of our acts, for it is by People's Power for the common good that we shall finally grow away from delegated power for private gain.

Ten thousand atoms of conflicting self-interests will fuse into the common good where the people have legislative power, while with the people ruled by delegated power ten atoms of self-interest will be welded for private profit.

W. G. EGGLESTON.

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THE CANADIAN RUSH.

Winnipeg, Sept. 20.

A pertinent commentary on the much vaunted influx of capital into Western Canada, which is to give an impetus to the "development of the country," is furnished by the conjunction of three news items in the Manitoba Free Press of the 17th inst. Here are extracts from them:

(1) During the past four days, five pieces of central (Winnipeg) property were sold for amounts aggregating half a million dollars, and it is known that several deals of equal importance are pending which will make a total well up to the million mark.

*See current volume of The Public, pages 746, 761, 843.