

fact that the organization last formed was permitted to die is no reason why another should not be formed as soon as possible. In a great national emergency, such as the coal famine, through which we have passed, what an important work might be done by such an organization, speaking for, say, half a million men. Backed with their credentials, Mayor Johnson, or Judge Maguire, could have appeared before Congress, and thus armed have recommended a policy that because of the votes back of their plea would have commanded a respectful hearing. This is but one of the purposes to which a great national organization might efficiently lend itself.—The Editor.

NEWARK, N. J.

Editor *Review*:

In the last number the question is asked, "Please describe fully the proposed method of assessing land values."

Your answer is, of course, to me perfectly familiar, and I thought fully covered the ground, until about two years ago, when I was asked this question: When selling price is entirely eliminated from large sections of land now of only speculative value, and is enormously reduced on even city land, what basis will the assessor have for making his assessments? Speculative values will be eliminated before you take half the ground rent. Where will be his means of comparison when sales become infrequent, as they must when the speculative element is squeezed out? In England, where vacant land is not taxed at all, and other land only nominally on a valuation made in Queen Elizabeth's time, on what basis would assessments be made under the single tax?

F. J. WERNER.

Ans.—The condition which Mr. Werner assumes will not arise for a long time to come. Until then no change in the law of assessment as it generally exists will be necessary. When the time arrives, however, that the speculative value of land is wiped out, that sales are infrequent, and further that practically all the annual ground rent is taken in taxation, a change in methods of assessment will be desirable if not necessary.

There are two methods commonly advocated to meet these conditions; one is to adopt the English system and assess the annual value instead of the capitalized value, and the other, proposed by Mr. Fillebrown of Boston, is to capitalize the annual ground value and assess the capital sum so obtained. The later method, perhaps, involves less change in our existing law and custom, but either of them is perfectly simple, and the requisite amendment could be made in any assessment law without difficulty.

When speculative values are eliminated the work of assessment will be much easier than it is at present. In assessing many parcels of property at the present time the

assessor has to take into account the present rental value and present actual selling value as well. The latter can only be determined by comparison of actual sales, and the process is sometimes difficult. When the assessor shall base his assessment on present annual rental value he will deal with that which is easily ascertainable, and his work will be more accurate than at present.—The Editor.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Editor *Single Tax Review*:

Single tax activity in this city, since the last number of the *Review*, has principally taken the form of communications to the newspapers—some lectures on the subject of the late street car strike, delivered at Tulane University by its president, a prominent bishop of this city and one of the professors of the college, and which included the usual lamentations on the sinfulness of any interference on the part of strikers with the right to work, afforded us an opportunity of getting in some good work—a communication from one of us calling attention to the full meaning of the right to work, and treating these questions at some length and on straight out single tax lines, was published by the *Times-Democrat* and given prominent place. The editorial dissent, which, of course, was no great surprise, was followed by rejoinders from several single taxers besides the writer of the first communication. The discussion lasted over two weeks and was not confined to one paper.

As a means of propaganda communications to newspapers have at least the advantage of cheapness, for, by scarcely any other means, even such as involve considerable cost, can these ideas be presented to as many people at once. And even if the letters are read by only a fraction of the paper's constituency, it is something, at any rate, that the headlines should set them to wondering at the meaning of the strange device we call the single tax. Unfortunately, there are yet legions of people of fairly good information otherwise to whom the words have a strange sound, or who have but a vague idea of their meaning. The great masses get their information almost entirely from the newspapers, and, the opposition knowing this, has cunningly determined upon the settled policy of silence for the suppression of enlightenment. What the cause needs is publicity. From hostile criticism there is little to fear, for not only is it true that all the people can't be fooled all the time, but the number of people who can be fooled at any time is getting less every day.

Some missionary work has been done among the editorial writers on the various journals in this city, a form of propaganda which, together with the method employed, is commended to the consideration of single taxers in other places. The *Public* of Chicago was sent to the private addresses of about a dozen editorial writers on different

local papers, accompanied in some cases with other literature. The high quality of Mr. Post's paper must compel the favorable attention of any intelligent person, and editorial writers, especially hampered, as they are by the censorship of the counting room, are bound to appreciate its courage, honesty and intelligence. It is not to be supposed that this procedure can at once effect a transformation in the average conservative newspaper over whose policy its editorial writers exercise little or no control, but it can develop whatever latent sympathy with single tax aims may exist among these gentlemen and enlist their support when we apply for leave to print. *The Public* was several times quoted from in editorials in the local press. One of its articles was reprinted, and better results could have been obtained by supplementing the subscription with copies of some book like George's *The Condition of Labor*, and perhaps a number or two of the *Review*. It should not be taken for granted that editorial writers are already informed on the single tax; aside from knowing in a general way perhaps that it is a subject which they are called upon to ignore, their lack of information on the subject is in some cases surprising; nor is it assumed, as might be supposed, for in their attempts to refute the single tax doctrine where some knowledge would enable them to oppose it with more plausibility, their comments show an ignorance that is genuine and complete.

Henry George, Jr.'s, admirable syndicate articles are regularly published in the Sunday morning edition of the *City Item*, an afternoon paper of large circulation, and are attracting a lot of attention and doing a great deal of good.

We are somewhat handicapped by the lack of cheap literature. It is unfortunate that such pamphlets as *The Shortest Road to the Single Tax* should be out of print, or no longer obtainable at the old price, and there is difficulty in inducing booksellers to handle the Henry George books at the increased price made by the publishers.

JOSEPH FAIDY.

To the last point raised by Mr. Faidy, we wish to announce that we are considering plans for publishing *The Shortest Road*.—The Editor.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

Editor *Review*:

I would like you to take up the subject of an international single tax conference, to be held in St. Louis during the World's Fair. I would suggest that it be called for the sixty-fourth anniversary of Mr. George's birthday, September 2, 1904. I understand facilities in the way of hall room, etc., are going to be supplied by the Exposition company, and as the fair is going to be more splendid in every way than anything previously undertaken, I think the occasion

will be opportune for the holding of a successful conference. L. P. CUSTER.

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA.

Editor *Review*:

After almost going out of active service for some three or four years, owing to federation, the tariff struggle and other causes, we resumed active work some six months ago, and I think did good service during the recent state parliament elections, when we made effective distribution of some 70,000 leaflets. Our president, Mr. Max Hirsch, was returned as member of Mandurang, supporting the government, and there are other good men who support the taxation of land values, for which also the labor party, some fifteen, and constituting about half the opposition, are also strong. I think, owing to the state of our finances, there is a good prospect of a tax upon land values being passed by the present parliament. A. C. NICHOLS,

Hon. Sec. Single Tax League.

Mr. Carroll D. Wright is reported as having delivered himself of the following: "The solution of the labor problem is an impossibility—a conclusion I have reached after many years of careful consideration of the question; and I base this assertion upon the fact that in order to solve satisfactorily this difficult problem, the problem of life itself must at the same time be solved."

This is cheering, for if the labor problem is never to be solved Mr. Wright will hold his office forever. One of the most desirable results that will follow the solution of the labor problem will be the final riddance of the country of many useless offices of which that of labor commissioner is not the least superogatory.

A large part of this magazine is made up of the report of the Massachusetts League's dinner to the professors of political economy. We think that these dinners, marking as they do a very distinct advance in the campaign of education, are as important as anything that is being done anywhere, and are worthy of all the space that can be given them. Nevertheless, we have made extra provision in this magazine so that nothing of importance should be omitted. This number of the *Review* comprises therefore seventy-two pages instead of the usual sixty-four.

Our Houston friends have not been idle during the last few months. They got out a special edition of the *Houston Daily Tribune*, devoted almost entirely to the question of taxation, and bearing a display heading, "Tax Reformers of the State of Texas send Greeting to their Colorado brethren and Encouragement in their Efforts to secure Just Taxation." This issue was filled