

be used as an endowment of the Baptist Social Union for the purpose of healing the breach he saw widening between the "House of Want" and the "House of Have," or, in the words of the testator, to "soften the inevitable conflict." Mr. Ford builded better than he knew. There is no forum in America where social and economic questions are more intelligently, fundamentally and fearlessly discussed than from this rostrum. All shades of economic and religious thought are welcomed to this platform.

These meetings, established three years ago, are typical in their development of the movement of thought throughout the world. The first season there was a course of six lectures, five of them delivered by clergymen of national reputation but to meager audiences. Last season there were twenty lectures, and among those who occupied the platform were Keir Hardie of Great Britain, Rabbi Wise, Professor Joshi, of India; Prof. Zueblin, the late Charles Sprague Smith and Prof. Rauschenbush. The present season was opened by Henry George, Jr., and among the other speakers so far have been Bishop Chas. D. Williams, of Michigan; the Rev. Dr. George D. Lunn, of Schenectady, N. Y., and the Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow, of Cincinnati.

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Mr. Bigelow occupied the platform January 29. Notwithstanding the weather was most inclement, two lines formed, extending nearly a block, a half hour before the doors were opened; and before 8 o'clock the doors were closed, as even standing room both down stairs and in the gallery was all taken. Mr. Bigelow's subject was "Stealing as a Fine Art," and from start to finish he had the sympathy of the entire audience.

At the conclusion of the prayer the audience applauded spontaneously and vigorously. When the applause had ceased the chairman said: "It is perhaps quite unusual for a prayer to be applauded, but I see no reason why we should not express our appreciation of a prayer in that way as well as in the good old Methodist fashion of saying 'Amen!' We do not have to follow any precedent here at Ford Hall, but can make our own precedents; and if that is your way of expressing your interest in a prayer you are perfectly welcome to use it." Here is the prayer:

Oh Thou Creator of all things and of all life, teach us we pray thee to recognize the real nature of property and its relation to human life. As property would have no value without men, forbid that we should be continually mistaking the shadow for the substance. Since property is created and made available by the labor of human beings, help us to strive mightily against that materialism which makes wealth of more account than men. Save the creators of wealth from being dominated by what they themselves have created; save the masters from idolatry and the workers from slavery. Cleanse our souls from the love of getting something for nothing. Help us to abominate misappropriation under every form and in every guise. Amen.

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These lectures are followed by questions from the audience for a half hour. The meetings open with a concert, and hymns are sung by the audience. Prayer is offered before the speaker is introduced, but no collection is taken, the expense of conducting

the meetings being defrayed entirely from the Ford endowment fund.

The originator and director of these meetings, George W. Coleman, was for many years publisher of *The Christian Endeavor World*. For several years he was president of the Boston Baptist Social Union and noted for his zealous activity in church affairs. He is the dominant factor in popularizing the Ford Hall meetings.

D. S. LUTHER.

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PROGRESSIVE CANADIAN FARMERS.

Winnipeg, Jan. 30.

Events democracy-ward in these western Provinces are moving with a rapidity that must be getting on the nerves of the corporations and their obedient servants, the politicians. The Manitoba Grain Growers, at their annual convention a year ago, endorsed the Initiative and Referendum. At this year's convention, held at Brandon on the 24th and 25th, they followed up that endorsement with a resolution demanding direct legislation of the Provincial legislature at the forthcoming session. The emphatic feature of their deliberations was the determined brushing aside of party lines.

The unanimity displayed by the Manitoba farmers on this question, the unanimous endorsement of it by the United Farmers of Alberta at their convention a week previously, the assurance by delegates at both conventions that the Saskatchewan farmers are not a whit behind their neighbors of the sister Provinces, and the certainty that they will endorse the principle at their convention, all give promise of the early establishment of People's Power in the Canadian West.

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F. J. Dixon of Winnipeg addressed the Brandon convention on the single tax. He was closely followed and well received. A large number of our farmers are convinced single taxers. There were others at the convention who were afraid the principle would adversely affect them because they were large land-users. Some of them told Mr. Dixon afterwards that he had cleared away their doubts. There was considerable demand for literature on the subject, and also a number of requests for addresses to be delivered at meetings of local organizations.

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The farmers are determined that the proposed railroad to Hudson's Bay shall be built, owned and operated by the people. They declared themselves unalterably opposed to the government's building the railway and then handing it over to one of the existing companies to operate. A scheme is on foot to form a farmers' joint stock company to build and operate the road rather than allow either of the existing grab-everything-in-sight corporations to get the franchise.

A conference is to take place early in February between the representatives of the organized farmers and the different labor bodies. It is confidently expected that a common platform will be formulated for combined political action, particularly in the matter of direct legislation.

Selkirk, a town about 25 miles north of Winnipeg, with a population of 3,200, and the oldest town in the Province, will apply to the legislature for power to raise its revenue by means of land value taxation. The decision to do so was reached at a recent joint meeting of the Town Council and the Board of Trade.

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The result of the reciprocity negotiations with the United States is received with mixed feelings. Any step, however faltering, in the direction of free trade is a welcome one; but the farmers had demanded free admission of agricultural implements, and the reduction is only from 17½ to 15 per cent. The free admission of vegetables and fruit will be very welcome in Winnipeg and the other mid-west cities and towns.

SEYMOUR J. FARMER.

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THE COMMON LIFE IN SWITZERLAND.*

Switzerland.

In my old home in Switzerland, where I have had time and opportunity to investigate land ownership, I found laws and customs practically the same as they were over fifty years ago when I left there and as they had been centuries before.

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In the Gemeinde Buchs, with over 4,000 inhabitants, there are 600 Vollburgers who own collectively the community land—1,227 acres of valley land, 490 acres of timber land and 4,290 acres of Alp land. The Alp land is pasture land high on the mountain above timber line.

Vollburger or full citizenship is inherited, belongs to married men or their widows, and entitles them to a share of the community land. Single men obtain one-fourth portion after the age of 24. As soon as a man marries he obtains a full portion.

There are many citizens who enjoy political rights since there are no difficulties in obtaining political citizenship, but this does not entitle them to communal property rights.

The management of communal land and property is conducted by a council of five members elected by male Vollburgers. The political or civil affairs and school management are also controlled each by a council of five members elected by direct vote of all citizens. Church affairs are conducted by the members of the respective churches, who pay their share of church tax according to the amount of taxable property they own.

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High up in the Alps where the most nutritious grasses grow cows are sent for summer pasture. The entire business of milking, making butter and cheese, taking care of the cattle and keeping buildings in repair has been conducted on the co-operative plan for centuries.

The timber lands are mostly on very steep slopes and gullies, so steep that without the utmost

*The writer of this letter from the country of his birth is a Kansas farmer, a disciple of Henry George, who has served repeatedly in the legislature of Kansas, part of the time as a Senator.

care in cutting and replanting the small amount of soil with a large portion of rocks would be washed down the valley leaving the bare mountain sides, and destroying valley land by covering it with gravel. Since 1897 the supervision of forest land has become national, and no timber can be cut, without consent of the federal authorities, and must be replanted again according to regulations. Even private forests are under the same regulations, and no reduction of forest area is allowed.

The valley land is mostly under cultivation except a portion which is too low; this is planted to timber (Erlen), which grows very fast and makes a fair fuel. When the water is high gates can be opened to let the muddy water flow in, and sediment is deposited so the land will gradually become very good agricultural land. In the meantime it brings a fair income through the growing of timber.

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To accommodate the growing population many building lots have been sold from the communal land. They are sold at auction to the highest bidder. From the proceeds of these the Gemeinde has a fund of over 200,000 francs, from which the interest is used for the public good.

Agriculture and dairying could not support the present population. Embroidery brings in more money than agriculture. Nearly every family has an embroidery machine. The work is usually done in the home, and the majority still work their portion of the communal land. Most people own their own homes with a small garden. No one is very rich according to American ideas, and scarcely any entirely destitute.

While in St. Gallen, the capital of my old Kanton, our consul told me that on the embroidery exported last year from there to the United States, duty to the amount of \$11,000,000 was paid. The tariff is 60 per cent. How would it affect the mass of the people in the United States and the embroidery workers in Switzerland if we changed our method of raising federal taxes from indirect to direct?

M. SENN.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF PROTECTION.

Thomson, Ga., Jan. 25.

Let me call your attention to the fact that we have at last ample evidence to overthrow the infernal tariff system by assailing it on Constitutional grounds.

In his official message to Congress, President Taft has confessed that the true purpose of the new law was to enable manufacturers to "pay high wages," and to "reap reasonable profit" on the capital invested in this branch of industry.

Without entering into the question of alleged high wages and alleged reasonable profits, let me call your attention to the legal effect of his amazing admission—an admission never before made in this official, Constitutional way.