

The Single Tax, May, 1902

LETTER FROM TOM L. JOHNSON.

IN a letter to the Secretary of the Scottish Single Tax, dated April 5th, the Mayor of Cleveland says:

"I often compare the movement for the single tax in Great Britain with what is going on here. In Ohio and Colorado we are making more headway than elsewhere, but we are not yet presenting the question so baldly and forcibly to our people as you are. This is due primarily to the fact that land values here bear a heavier charge than they do with you, and, therefore, the evil is not so great. Then, again, land values are not quite so much monopolised.

"I think our valuable franchise rights—which is land value in another form —has progressed beyond anything in Great Britain. That is to say, steam railroads, with their own privileges parcelled out to so many favourites in the way of unequal charges, telegraph companies, express companies, sleeping car companies, fast freight lines, etc., form relatively a larger percentage of our total monopoly value than in your case.

"We are hampered by constitutions that give to supreme courts, made up of retired railroad attorneys and other men trained on the monopoly side of questions, the opportunity to declare unconstitutional the measures intended for relief. In England your higher courts have no such power.

"The principal advantage that we have is the willingness to take hold of a new thought and a broader franchise to the voters. Your disfranchised class would, almost to a man, be in favour of taxation of land values.

"Weighing all these advantages and disadvantages, I cannot say who is leading in the race, but the interesting fact is that both sides are making progress.

"I congratulate you on the subject of the Bazaar and was delighted to read the enclosures in your letter.

"If by any good fortune I should find myself a traveller this summer I intend to drop in on you if it is only for an hour, but have little hope of leaving the United States for some time to come. One political campaign here seems to crowd on the heels of the last, and we are hardly through speaking in the fall before we commence our preparations for the spring, having two distinctively political campaigns each year."