

Where Were the Single Taxers?

FOR the past six months the great national issue has been that of "tax reduction" by the Congress, and the country has been deluged with appeals by the great financial, industrial, and commercial interests for the Mellon "gold brick" plan of reducing the surtax on incomes of a small number of persons receiving great incomes. In support of this flagrant attempt to reduce the taxes on the wealthy few, while leaving the oppressive burden of tariff taxation on the 110,000,000 American consumers untouched, there have been arrayed all the forces of the privileged interests, allied with a corrupt press that has surpassed all previous records of subserviency to financial influences. That the conspiracy to revise the tax laws for the benefit of a wealthy few failed ignominiously, shows how little weight have the ponderous editorials and cooked-up news articles with which a degraded press undertakes to promote its master's interests.

While the tax reduction bill was pending in the Congress would seem to have been an excellent opportunity for the Single Taxers to show the absurdity of taxing capital—wealth devoted to production,—and at the same time to point out the true sources from which public revenues should be derived. So far as an examination of newspapers published in all regions of the country have shown, there is no evidence that they took advantage of their opportunity, nor do the pages of the *Congressional Record* devoted to petitions and memorials for or against pending legislation show that there was any concerted movement by representative Single Taxers to enlighten their Senators and Representatives as to the correct principles of taxation.

There is something radically wrong when forty-five years after the publication of *Progress and Poverty*, there is so little evidence of a militant movement for the adoption of the great truths laid down in that book. Neither in all the newspaper discussion of the tax question, nor in the debates in Congress on the subject, has there been any indication that public sentiment is more enlightened than it was thirty years ago, when half-a-dozen Representatives in Congress voted for Single Tax amendment to the Wilson tariff law.

The defeat of the Mellon tax swindle was chiefly due to the protests of the farmers, and in particular to the opposition of the leading farm organization, the National Grange. It should also be stated that the American Federation of Labor, and various state and labor bodies, did good work against the Administration scheme. This was, however, purely negative work, as neither the farmers nor labor had any better method of taxation to propose as a substitute for the Mellon plan.

The shouting and the tumult over the efforts of a few rich men to escape paying taxes will now subside. When the tax question again becomes a burning issue in the Con-

gress will the Single Taxers be any better prepared to put forward their reasons why they are opposed to both income and tariff taxes, and favor the one equitable tax that will establish justice and industrial freedom?

Overheard at the Moron Club

"WHAT'S this levy on capital that these labor fellows over in England are talking about?"

"Outrageous Bolshevist-Communist scheme for taxing the rich to pay off 25 per cent. of the British war debt. Just plain robbery of the few for the benefit of the taxpayers."

"The scoundrels! Why don't they adopt the 100 per cent. American plan of a high protective tariff that taxes the consumers 50 per cent. for the benefit of the manufacturers?"

"They tried that idea at the last election, but the English are a stupid people, and couldn't see how raising prices was going to help them sell more goods. Takes Yankee gumption to work out the right kind of a tax system."

That Alleged Scarcity of Capital

FLOODS of crocodile tears have recently inundated the country because of the pitiful plea of the privileged interests that industry and trade are languishing because of a scarcity of capital. This lack of capital is, of course, due to the fact that recipients of great incomes are heavily taxed, and so there is no increase of capital to further industrial development. According to the self-constituted promoters of prosperity the country's supply of capital is being injuriously checked by the high surtax on incomes, and if the taxes were only put on the consuming masses in the shape of a sales tax we should escape the industrial depression that is looming up in the not distant future.

The funny part of this solemn nonsense about more capital being needed for production is that most of our great productive industries are running at only a part of their capacity because of diminished demand for goods. Steel and textile mills, and factories of all kinds, are reported as running on part time, workers are being discharged, and wage reductions are being made, because of decreased sales. The professional tipsters to the Wall Street gamblers are predicting a general decline in demand for all kinds of goods; the export trade in many lines is falling off, and the captains of industry and their masters, the financiers and bankers who control them, are wondering how they can increase consumption. With these conditions of apparent overproduction (of course the real trouble is underconsumption) the utter nonsense of all this talk of "capital scarcity" can readily be seen. There is not now, nor has there been at any time during the past decade, any scar-