

BELFAST

Mr. Arthur W. Metcalfe, on 9th December, delivered the third of the series of lectures in the Y.M.C.A. Minor Hall, which have been organized by the Literary and Educational Section of the Belfast and District Public Officers' Association. Mr. S. B. Quinn presided.

Mr. Metcalfe's address, which was entitled "A Solution of the Housing Problem by a new Source of Local Revenue," was reported in the BELFAST NEWS LETTER, the BELFAST TELEGRAPH, and the NORTHERN WHIG. He said:—

People were at present being herded together for want of housing accommodation, and some way out of the difficulty must be found as soon as possible. The Belfast rates were staggering now, but they were going to be even more staggering in the future. Unsatisfactory and insufficient housing was bad for the health and morals of the people. He saw a pamphlet the other day in which there was a sentence, "Ask for houses, and see that you get them." They might as well call spirits from the vasty deep. The strange thing about the Government's schemes was that the more they got of them the fewer was the number of houses that were built. It seemed to him that those schemes were simply making jobs for people, and that if they were passed into law the country

would be overrun by inspectors and other officials. Personally, he did not believe that Government interference in the building of houses was helpful. The fact was the housing question was a business question first and last. House-building employed nearly every trade and profession in the country, and if they could get a proper scheme started they would stop the stagnation in trade which was now being experienced. The whole trouble at the present time, he submitted, arose from the fact that unoccupied land was immune from rates. Several cases were quoted to show the incidence of rating on buildings in comparison with the land forming the sites, and said the blame for the anomaly did not rest on the landowners, but on the system, which punished industry and encouraged idleness. Lawyers and economists were agreed that the land should bear its fair share of taxation, and in many places effect had been given to that principle. In Sydney, where the taxation of land values had been in operation since 1916, there had, as a result, been a phenomenal development in the building industry, and the same thing had happened in Vancouver. Many municipalities in England and Scotland had passed resolutions in favour of the system he advocated, and the Belfast Corporation should come into line with them.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL NEWS

CALIFORNIA

Defeat of the Anti-Single Taxers

Mr. William L. Ross, President of the Great Adventure League, has issued a statement, from which we quote:—

The big wave of reaction that has swept across the country has given us a shock, but it has not overwhelmed us. We have some things to be thankful for. The Anti-Single Tax measure has been beaten by over 100,000 majority. Besides, our vote has nearly doubled over that of two years ago. Our measure then received about 118,000 votes. Incomplete returns now indicate that we shall get over 200,000 votes and also an increase, in the percentage of the total vote, over that of the last election.

Mrs. Lona Ingham Robinson, 332 N. Maryland Ave., Glendale Calif, has been elected secretary.

What shall be done in the future? Shall we give up or shall we go ahead with our work?

If our workers and contributors say the word I shall continue on with the work. The leaders here want to forge right ahead with the same amendment except to change the dates to fit the next election. What we need in this State more than anything else is organization. It's a big state, nine hundred miles long.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee arrangements have been made to have the GREAT ADVENTURE published monthly in San Francisco, with Mrs. Zoe D. Hoffman as editor. The Committee has decided also to move the State headquarters there when re-organizing next spring.

Already George A. Briggs, who has done such splendid work here during this campaign is arranging to start out and organize Southern California. A number of our friends here in Los Angeles have agreed to contribute the funds necessary for this work. After a trip East for a few months I expect to do the same kind of work in Northern California. We must organize. Who will help make this work possible? I wish to thank all our good friends for their splendid support during this campaign.

Mrs. Anna George de Mille (daughter of Henry George), Hollywood, Cal., in a recent letter, refers to a social gathering, "a Single Tax dinner, held to celebrate the defeat at the polls of a measure that would practically have prohibited any future initiative and referendum on taxation matters, and to rejoice over the vote we polled on our

Single Tax amendment. We did not win, of course, but we gained nearly 100,000 votes over our last election, and in face of a very concerted and powerful campaign against us. We are very much encouraged and have already started plans for the new campaign."

The Treasurer's statement shows income \$21,889; expenditure \$21,694.

The campaign literature was enlivened by a pamphlet by Mr. de Mille, consisting mainly of advertisements the writer had placed in the local daily papers, and a searching criticism, in the form of a letter, by Mr. John Moody, expert on finance and business, New York, of a pamphlet issued by the People's Anti-Single Tax League of California—a district band of hope similar in composition to our Land Union.

Wm. C. de Mille to the Land Owners of California

Greetings—

I have just bought three acres of ground in Hollywood, and it is my intention to do nothing whatever to improve this property, but to wait quietly until the industry of the thousands of Hollywood rent-payers, whose growth in numbers alone makes my land valuable, has added so much value to my property that I can sell this added value for enough to support me without my having to work.

That is right—

Why should I work when I can cash in the value put into my property by those who do work?

Furthermore, if I started to be a "useful citizen" and improve my property, the taxes on the improvements would cut into my profits from the increasing land value.

No, sir; I can make more by doing no work and letting the industry of the community put thousands of dollars into my pocket.

But now comes this iniquitous Single Tax Amendment, No. 20, which would deprive me and you, brother landowners, of our God-given right to take for our own private use that value which the common people have put into our land.

Are we going to permit such an outrageous doctrine to gain strength? A doctrine which dares say openly that a man is not entitled to values which he doesn't create,

and that whoever does produce wealth is entitled to all the wealth he produces ?

Perish the thought—

The right of our Minority, who own nature, to collect the full value of this privilege from the Majority, who have to use the nature which we own—is one which has resulted in us landowners being the class which really controls public thought, politics and education.

Shall we permit an unorganized mob of mere rent-payers to take this from us ?

Shall we establish a system which will lower ground rents and, in effect, give the benefits of a healthy growth of population to the whole population instead of to us landlords alone ?

Not while we have sense enough to fight for our vested rights.

Therefore I appeal to you to support the Anti-Single Tax Movement, which is wisely arranging to deprive the people of their initiative by putting forth Amendment No. 4.

Once we can pass good old Amendment No. 4, the rent-payer may howl, but he is powerless to do anything to lower rents. And his howls have never kept a single dollar of exorbitant rent out of our pockets.

And unless we can deprive the unthinking mob of their initiative rights, we may soon have to work for all the money we get, instead of holding land out of use until someone needs it so badly that he must pay us the profit which belongs to us as the trustees for whomever made Nature.

We must have a large campaign fund to keep up our propaganda.

We must persuade the people to believe everything their bankers tell them, so that there may be no poverty among bankers.

Besides, why should the people have the initiative ?

It is much safer for us landowners—"property owners," as we call ourselves—it is far safer for us to control the public thought—and by carefully choosing such measures as can do no harm to our vested interests let the other voters initiate all the laws they want to, except laws on taxation.

So remember, brother landlords—we own California, simply by owning its ground rents, and we must support the organization which is fighting for our rights.

We must get together with our voices and our money and help the Anti-Single Tax League.

It takes lots of money to convince a man that when he is born he inherits the right to pay someone else before he can use any part of Nature.

So, Mothers and Fathers, give to the Anti-Single Tax League, or we landlords will be no better off than the common people, who are born into a world which they have no legal right to use until they have paid to us the price of their licence to use Nature.

The Land Profiteer

By WM. C. DE MILLE

If a man buys more food than he can use and holds it until the public need of it is so great that he can make a huge, unearned profit, we call him a Profiteer and hate him accordingly.

Now the greatest necessity of human life is Land, from which all food must come—from which comes everything we need—all wealth, in fact.

But if a man buys more land than he can use and holds it until the public need of it is so great that he can make a huge unearned profit, we call him a far-sighted business man; we honour him, protect him and vote ourselves black in the face to preserve the system by which he is able to profiteer in this greatest of all human necessities.

This seems hardly fair—

We should either honour the food profiteer or dishonour the land profiteer.

The man who lives by holding land from those who need it is no worthier than the man who lives by holding food from those who need it.

And the man who profiteers in land has an advantage over his fellowman which makes all the other profiteers look like pikers.

"But," you say, "anyone can profiteer in land. It is an opportunity open to all."

So can anyone profiteer in food or any other necessity. But that is no reason for encouraging it and protecting the system which makes it possible. The fact that anyone can commit murder does not justify murder.

Chattel Slavery was the law of the land, and was considered right until the development of public morality began to consider it wrong.

Should we have continued slavery because many honest men owned slaves ? And should we now continue economic slavery because many honest men have not yet seen that land profiteering does produce economic slavery ?

The Barons of antiquity owned their serfs simply because they owned the land which the serfs had to use in order to live.

The Landlords of to-day really own the landless people because they own all available nature, which the landless ones must use.

The Single Tax is the only method by which this injustice can be righted. It is an enactment into law of a great principle of fundamental justice. The Single Tax is the only system which protects rich and poor alike, preventing either "class" from taking an unfair advantage of the other.

It guarantees to every man the whole value of his labour product. It prevents any man from taking value which he does not create. For it is simply the taking by the State of the profits of land profiteering without touching the profits that any man actually himself creates.

The Single Tax will actually stop profiteering in land and check all the evils which result from this profiteering. It will make food cheaper and lower rents.

All other taxes except the tax on land values are added to the product and passed on to the ultimate consumer.

That is why the people who profiteer are howling to heaven to leave the taxes on those things from which they can be passed on and praying the voters not to tax the one thing from which the tax cannot be passed on—that is, land values.

That is why the great corporations which hold hundreds of thousands of acres of idle land are trying to persuade the people to tax everything they own except their land values.

"Don't untax our buildings," they cry. "It wouldn't be fair, and it would hurt our feelings horribly to know that we were not paying our full share of taxes."

Isn't that just like the noble, self-sacrificing attitude for which big corporations are noted ?

And yet you believe them when they say that the Single Tax will leave them untaxed.

The tax on land values cannot be added to rent, because an increased tax on land forces more land into use. Untaxing buildings causes more buildings, and this combination makes lower rents.

And remember—The Single Tax is not a tax on land in proportion to its quantity, but in proportion to its value. One city lot may have more land value than a large ranch.

The Single Tax is legislation in favour of the user of land and against those who hold land idle for profiteering.

The present system makes you pay more for your land if you use it than if you hold it idle. This is what breeds profiteers by the thousand. It rewards the profiteer and penalizes the producer.