

of the educated classes and the opposition of the monied men.

For the first time in entering upon any radical reform we have the countenance and nominal support of manufacturers, merchants and other employers of labor. What we are lacking in is a popular understanding of the immense social advantages sure to result from the removal of local taxes from industry. This calls for the education of the people, which is the duty of the hour.

I believe that it is possible, indeed probable, that our people can be made to understand this vital question between now and November, when all State, all legislative and excepting Newport, all city officials are chosen for the ensuing year. My opinion is that if Mr. John Z. White could spend the coming year in Rhode Island, as he devoted last year to Missouri, that his success there in securing the Initiative and Referendum might easily be duplicated here in the exemption by some municipalities of personal property and improvements from taxation. His work should begin here the first of July and would need to continue for nearly a year.

I advise special effort in Rhode Island, because it is considered to be the best field east of the Mississippi river, and because an object lesson here would be worth so much more than in an agricultural State. The work here should proceed at once because of our annual elections, because it has already been begun effectively, and because in Oregon, another hopeful field, Mr. U'Ren informs us, the Single Tax will not be a direct issue before 1912.

LUCIUS F. C. GARVIN.

LONSDALE, R. I.

PHILADELPHIA.

NOT IDLE HERE—A NEW GROUP OF SINGLE TAXERS OF THE MILITANT SORT—OPEN AIR MEETING AT THE CITY HALL.

There has come of late so little news from Philadelphia that perhaps our readers have begun to wonder what has become of the Old Guard in that city. They have neither

died nor surrendered—but they are more than usually quiet these days. They will come out and speak when requested to do so, but they have no organization, and they are content for the most part to let the active work devolve upon the group who make their headquarters in a dingy printing office at Ninth and Spring Garden streets. Thither one Friday evening in company with Charles Ryan, the editor of the REVIEW directed his steps. After mounting several pairs of stairs and making our way through a number of dark hallways, we reached the office of *The Only Way*.

In some such surroundings as these in the days preceding '93, in the city of Paris, similar choice spirits must have gathered. Victor Hugo has given us glimpses of them. In the old abolition days there were no doubt many little printing offices just as dusty and uninviting as this—and domiciled by young men in whom burned the fire of the same noble enthusiasm.

They were few then as they are now. "We always were few," said Robinson, who is in a way the leader of this group of enthusiasts. But they have the faith that moves mountains.

Mr. Robinson places little reliance on some of the methods of advocacy ordinarily pursued. Local option in taxation and tax reform—these may be good things, but our objective point is the land. The Single Tax is merely a method of getting at it—perhaps not the best method, but at least the best so far proposed. "Teach people what it is that oppresses them," he says. Perhaps he would rather prefer to say *who* it is—for he likes to strike out at men who by upholding the system are responsible for its continuance. "If you are hit in the head with an axe," he told his listeners in the public square, "somebody hit you." And again: "The people who loll in the Belvidere Stratford are responsible for the condition of the men and women who dwell in the slums. This is the only question you have to ask yourselves: why are there so many on the bleachers and so few in the boxes!" And then in homely but racy idiom, and with occasional touches of real elegance, he tells them why.

This Sunday night meeting at the City Hall Square was a large one. Between three and four hundred persons gathered. Mr. Robinson and Mr. Chas. Ryan were the only speakers, the latter having greatly improved since we heard him at the Single Tax conference in the Fall of 1907. Forty copies of *The Only Way*, a bright little monthly paper, with short, crisp editorials and contributed articles were sold at this meeting. Thomas Kavanagh is the editor and Peter Winslow the business manager. Its spirit is that of Brother Robinson. In its salutatory it says that the Single Tax movement has "several capable publications which fill the field of propaganda and keep the believers in touch with one another. Our reason for existence is more than that. The time has come when some voice must be raised to tell the public what the institution is that is strangling progress and holding back local industry, and WHO THE MEN AND WOMEN ARE who profit by it."

This group will not permit the excuse to be offered by those who profit by the crimes of the present system that these wrongs are "institutional." To them they are individual in whoever helps to sustain them, in whoever blinks at their existence. They use strong terms and speak boldly. And they are winning converts.

Elsewhere the Single Taxers of Philadelphia are not idle. In a different way the Tax Reform Association is at work, and we heard some significant stories of a growth in public sentiment in our direction in quarters where one would hardly look for it. Messrs Albright and Milliken are helping along this work. James W. Dix is pushing the work of Vacant Lot Cultivation and doing it in the spirit of a Single Taxer. And so in a variety of ways the great truth makes progress.

J. D. M.

A pamphlet on Direct Nominations, with special reference to the Governor's Bill now defunct, written by John J. Hopper, was the occasion of editorial comment by the *N. Y. Times* of recent date. Mr. Hopper took the position that the bill was neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.

MASSACHUSETTS.

THE LOCAL OPTION BILL—THE CONSTITUTION A BAR TO TAX REFORM—W. S. U'REN AND JOHN Z. WHITE IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Last January the following bill was introduced in the State Legislature and referred to the committee on taxation:

"Every city by ordinance, and every town by by-law, may from time to time determine and provide that all taxes required to be levied or assessed by the board of assessors other than for State taxes and county taxes shall be assessed upon the value of land only, excluding buildings and other improvements, or upon real estate only, or in addition to either such value of land or real estate, upon any one or more class or classes of personal property, instead of by the method required by law at the time of assessment."

Some weeks later a hearing was given by the committee. James R. Carret, President of the Massachusetts Single Tax League, conducted the hearing, and after the opening speech by himself, introduced the following Single Taxers: Prof. Lewis J. Johnson, Rev. John Gregson, S. H. Howes, Walter J. Isidor, M. C. O'Neill, and W. L. Crosman.

Instead of a discussion of local option in taxation the hearing developed into a discussion of Single Tax principles, which so much interested the committee that the members listened to our arguments for some minutes after the usual time for closing the committee session, and that necessitated a postponed hearing on two other taxation bills. The chairman of the committee on taxation informed the Single Taxers that the State constitution declared for taxation of all property, and the Supreme Court had so ruled. While progress has been made in all professions and industries, progress in taxation is prohibited so long as an antiquated constitution interferes.

Hon. W. S. U'Ren, of Oregon, was tendered a reception and luncheon by the Single Tax and Direct Legislation League at the Twentieth Century Club on April 19. About 150 persons were present. Mr. U'Ren delivered an interesting speech.