

AT SAGAMORE BEACH.

CHURCHMEN AND LAYMEN DISCUSS SOCIAL REFORM—A REMARKABLE GATHERING—UNANIMOUS FOR THE RECLAMATION OF THE UNEARNED INCREMENT ATTACHING TO LAND.

The third Sociological Conference at Sagamore Beach, Mass., has attracted more widespread attention than either of its predecessors. The scene of these gatherings is a charming coast resort on the Cape Cod peninsula, a few miles from Buzzard's Bay. Much of the property in the vicinity is controlled by officers and members of the Society of Christian Endeavor; and various religious conventions meet there during the summer months.

The Sagamore Sociological Conference apparently had its genesis in a realization on the part of many of the more progressive religious workers that the church as a whole is far from being in touch with the social needs of the world, and is thus neglecting the greater half of its mission, and losing the confidence of many of the most earnest workers for humanity. Its aim is to bring together the different schools of thought, and thus contribute toward a unity of action for the common purpose.

About a hundred and fifty persons attended the Conference, forty of whom were members of the clergy. Among these, were the editors of the *Congregationalist* and the *Watchman*, the publisher of the *Christian Endeavor World*, one of the editors of the *Sacred Heart Review*, and other clergymen and laymen of denominational importance. Robert Hunter, J. Phelps Stokes and Rose Pastor Stokes, Franklin Wentworth and other active Socialists took part; while the Single Tax principle was represented by Professor Lewis J. Johnson, of Harvard, Anita Truman Picket, the writer and others.

The subjects discussed included "The Social Unrest of the Whole World," by William T. Ellis, of Philadelphia; "The Social Progress of the Past Year," by Paul U. Kellogg, of *The Survey*; "The Negro in America," by Ray Stannard Baker; "The Cost of Overcrowding Women Workers," by Mrs. Margaret Dreier Robins; "The

Social Message of the Hebrew Prophets," by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise; "Industrial Education," by Robert Woods, of the Andover House, Boston; and "The Transition to a Co-operative Society," by Professor Walter Rauschenbusch, of Rochester Theological Seminary. Each subject was open to free and thorough discussion. Especially interesting was the story of the Illinois eight-hour fight, which closed with a partial victory, as rehearsed by Miss Agnes Nestor, one of the foremost participants.

At the closing session, a platform was adopted, expressive of the general point of view of the members of the Conference. Among other planks was an unequivocal advocacy of the right and duty of the community to reclaim for social purposes the unearned increment from the land. *Not a negative vote was recorded.*

The entire spirit of the Conference was one of the greatest earnestness, and a broad minded desire to learn the whole truth, whatever reconstruction of previously accepted formulas it might involve. This demonstration, in the very heart of orthodox conservatism, is one of the most encouraging signs in recent years; and the writer, as an uncompromising Freethinker, takes great pleasure in accepting the hand of fellowship extended by these Christian reformers. There is hope that the day may be near at hand, when sincere thinkers and social workers shall break entirely through the religious and other barriers of misunderstanding and unite in vigorous action for the common good. The Sagamore Conference is doing much to point the way.

JAMES F. MORTON, JR.

IN commenting upon Mr. Taft's proposed 2 per cent. corporation tax, Lawson Purdy points out that the opportunity to incorporate is open to all on a small fee, that it is in no sense a special privilege, and that it provides conveniently for the co-operation of many people in an enterprise. There therefore seems no good reason for imposing any taxes on business corporations in excess of the taxes imposed on individuals doing the same class of business.