

THE PROPOSED OREGON AMENDMENT.

Following is the proposed amendment to be submitted by initiative petition to the voters of Oregon in November, by the Central Labor Committee of Portland and vicinity. This will be submitted unless something better is offered. Criticisms and suggestions are asked for and should be addressed to the Secretary, E. J. Stack, Labor Temple, Portland, Oregon.

We print the proposed measure in full. It is the broadest Single Tax proposal ever offered to the voter, and marks a tremendous step in advance.

Section 1 of Article I of the Constitution of Oregon, being the Bill of Rights, shall be and hereby is amended to read as follows:

BILL OF RIGHTS.**ARTICLE I.****PEOPLE'S POWER AND RIGHTS.**

We declare that all men, when they form a social compact, are equal in rights; that all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness; and they have at all times a right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper.

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO USE LAND.

We reaffirm our faith in the self evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In pursuance of these rights all citizens of Oregon are equally entitled to the exclusive possession, for their personal use, of as much land as may be necessary for their homes, and from which to produce a living by their individual labor, without paying any person for leave to live and labor on the land.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF GROUND RENT.

Public ownership of all ground rent is right, because such rent is created by the presence, industry and productive power of the whole people as a social organism, and not by those individuals only who own or hold title to land. Private ownership of ground rent is the chief cause of land monopoly and land speculation. It is therefore right and necessary, in order to promote the general welfare, that all ground rent shall be collected by public taxation, and equally, whether the land is actually rented or used or not.

PUBLIC POLICY.

It is the public policy of Oregon to abolish all forms of land monopoly and leave no chance for any person to get a profit by owning land without using it; to begin the abolition of involuntary unemployment and poverty

in this State by enacting such laws as shall insure opportunity to all citizens for the exclusive possession and use of enough land to employ themselves and make their home, so long as there is idle land; to protect all persons in the absolute ownership of the value of their land improvements and the rents or other payments for the use of such land improvements.

DEFINITION OF THE WORD "LAND."

For purposes of taxation, assessment and appraisal, the word "land" means the earth, including soil, water, water powers, minerals, stone, natural oils, gases, timber of natural growth, and all other natural resources before being severed, removed, or withdrawn from their natural position.

DEFINITION OF THE WORDS "GROUND RENT."

The words "ground rent" as used in this section mean the highest price that is or can be obtained in the open market for the use of any lot, tract or parcel of land, for a definite time, exclusive of improvements, plus the total tax on the ground rent and plus the tax on the lease.

DEFINITION OF "LAND IMPROVEMENTS."

The words "land improvements" mean valuable and useful changes, growths or additions made by labor in or to any natural resources, or on, in or under any portion, parcel or tract of land.

LEVY OF PERMANENT GROUND RENT TAX.

A continuing annual tax is hereby levied of 90 cents in each dollar of ground rent on land in Oregon not now exempt by law from taxation. The ground rent tax shall be collected in like manner as taxes on land are now collected until otherwise provided by law, or by the rules made by the State Land Board; but no other tax shall be levied on ground rent, land, or land value. An additional one-tenth of this ground rent tax may be levied, either by general law or by local taxing authorities.

BASIS OF VALUATION FOR ASSESSMENT.

The value of any tract, lot or parcel of land, for assessment is the amount for which, if it were by law forever free and exempt from all taxes and public charges, it would sell, at a voluntary sale, made in the ordinary course of business, and in which the value of the improvements, if any, would be appraised and stated separately from the value of the land. On that valuation of the land the yearly ground rent tax shall be levied, in all cases where the land is not actually rented. If the land is rented, the amount of yearly ground rent agreed upon shall be taken into consideration, but the assessed value shall in every such case be at least twenty times the amount of the ground rent for the year of assessment. No land shall be valued hereafter for assessment at less than the amount for which it was assessed for the tax year beginning on the first day of March, 1915.

MINIMUM ANNUAL AMOUNT OF GROUND RENT.

For the purpose of this section the minimum annual "Ground Rent" of every lot, parcel or tract of land is hereby conclusively presumed and declared to be not less than an amount equal to five per cent. of the assessed value of the land for that year, exclusive of improvements. This conclusive presumption of the minimum amount of ground rent applies equally to all land not now exempt by law from taxes, whether said land be held in idleness or actually used by the owner or tenants.

WHEN GROUND RENT TAX SHALL BE PAID.

Any person whose tax on ground rent in one county in any year is greater than \$100. and not more than \$300. shall pay such tax in two equal semi-annual installments; if more than \$300. and not more than \$600. he shall pay such ground rent in four equal quarterly installments; if more than \$600. he shall pay such ground rent tax in equal monthly installments. Failure to pay any installment of ground rent tax when due shall render such tax delinquent liable and immediately subject to such penalties and process for collection as may be provided by law or by the rules of the State Land Board. Any tax collector who shall permit any such tax or installment thereof to stand delinquent for more than thirty days without legal action to enforce its collection, shall thereby forfeit his office. He shall be summarily removed from his office by the governor, and the unexpired term of said officer shall be filled in the manner required by law.

ADDITIONAL PENALTY ON DELINQUENT GROUND RENT TAX.

If any person shall fail or refuse, for a period of thirty days after the same is due, to pay any installment of ground rent tax due from him, he shall thereby deprive himself of all right to bring any suit or action in any court to collect his rent or any part thereof, or to enforce any provision of his lease against his tenant or landlord, as the case may be, and all other persons.

While such failure or refusal continues, no court or judge shall entertain or permit to be filed, received or heard in his court any action or suit by such delinquent taxpayer, or his assigns, to enforce any provision of the title, deed, lease, contract or agreement concerning which any installment of ground rent tax is unpaid. If any such suit or action shall be filed, it shall be stricken from the docket upon proof that any such tax is delinquent and unpaid as aforesaid, and for that purpose this defence may be offered by the tenant and shall be offered by the District Attorney on behalf of the State. During all the time that such taxpayer is delinquent, the tax collector shall collect the remaining installments of ground rent directly from the tenant and sub-tenants under such lease.

RIGHTS OF PRIVATE PROPERTY MAINTAINED.

This section does not limit, change or abolish any person's rights of private property or of private ownership and exclusive possession of his land and land leases, so long as he pays the ground rent tax.

SEPARATE ASSESSMENT OF LAND.

The assessed value of every tract, lot and parcel of land, and of every lease, and the amount of ground rent thereon, and the tax thereon, shall be listed in the assessment and tax rolls separately from other taxes and from the assessed value of any personal property, and of any improvements on, in or under such land.

STANDING TIMBER.

Standing timber of natural growth shall be assessed and taxed as a part of the land on which it grows.

ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF TAX.

The laws in operation for assessing property and levying and collecting taxes and delinquent taxes when this section is adopted shall continue in force, and shall be applied to the collection of the tax hereby levied on ground rent and leases of land, except as herein provided, and as such laws may be changed by amendments and rules made hereafter in accordance with this section.

DUTY OF GOVERNOR. POWER OF STATE LAND BOARD.

It is the duty of the governor to enforce all the provisions of this section. The State Land Board, by a majority vote of the members, is hereby authorized to prescribe all forms and blanks, and all conditions of contracts, and to make and promulgate all rules, expedient to aid in the enforcement and application of this section. Every such rule shall have the force and effect of law until it is changed or repealed by the legislative assembly or by the people. The governor, secretary of State and State treasurer constitute the State Land Board.

HOME RULE IN TAX ON LAND IMPROVEMENTS AND PERSONAL PROPERTY.

The officers of every county, municipality and taxing district having authority to levy taxes, may continue to levy taxes annually on land improvements and personal property, but the referendum powers are hereby reserved to the voters of every such county, municipality and taxing district against every such tax levy and every part and percentage thereof. Said officers may also submit such levy to the people by referendum order. If the tax is levied by a town, referendum is to the people of that town; if by county, then to the people of that county, and in like manner to the people of other taxing districts. Any tax levy on personal property and land improvements shall be made on or before the first day of September for collection the next year, and the referendum petitions may be filed not later than the 25th day of October next for submission of all or any percentage of such levy to a vote of the people of the taxing district. Five days after the expiration of the time for filing such referendum petitions with the clerk, auditor or recorder of the taxing district or board, he shall order a special election to be held throughout the taxing district on or before the last day of November next

after the filing of such petition, for approval or rejection by the people of the demands of such referendum petition or petitions.

DISTRIBUTION OF REVENUE FROM GROUND RENT TAX.

Two-thirds of the revenue obtained in each county from the ground rent tax levied in that county shall be divided among the different towns, cities, ports and other municipalities in the county, and between that county and the State, by allowing and paying to each the same amount that each received from the general tax levy of 1915, if said portion shall be sufficient for such allowance and payment. If said two-thirds of the ground rent tax shall not be sufficient in any county for such division and payment, then each of said different municipal corporations shall receive the same proportion of said two-thirds of the ground rent tax that it received of the revenue from the general tax levy of 1915. If this two-thirds of the ground rent tax does not supply sufficient revenue, additional taxes may be levied as provided in the preceding paragraph. The above distribution of two-thirds of the revenue from said ground rent tax may be changed from time to time by law.

HOME MAKER'S LOAN FUND.

An account is hereby ordered to be opened by the State Treasurer which shall be entered as the "Home Maker's Loan Fund." One-third of all the revenue obtained in the State from said ground rent tax, and all revenue hereafter obtained from the present inheritance tax rate, shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the "Home Maker's Loan Fund Account." The amount of this fund may be increased in any manner and from any source that may be now or hereafter provided by law. This fund shall be administered by the State Land Board. The Board shall lend the money from this fund to home makers, in its discretion, both in the town and country, in amounts not exceeding two-thirds of the actual value of the improvements they may make or have already made, on any tract or lot of land. Payment to the borrower of portions of such loan may be made at definite periods to be fixed by the Board, as such improvements may be completed. The Board shall so provide that every such loan shall be the first lien on the land and improvements, except taxes, and every such home and improvements shall be exempt from execution except only for State loans and interest, taxes and the purchase price.

One purpose of this section is to help persons with no capital but their labor and character to make homes and farms, but not more than \$1,500. shall be loaned for the making of one such home or farm. This fund is for loan to those who are now trying to make homes and farms as well as to persons who begin hereafter.

COST, INTEREST AND TIME OF REPAYMENT.

The average actual cost of making, securing and administering said loans shall be estimated by the State Land Board, and a percentage sufficient to

cover the same shall be deducted from every loan as the same is advanced to the borrower. The loans shall be secured by first mortgage on the improvements and the land. There shall be no interest on any such loan for the first five years, and thereafter the rate of interest shall not be greater than six per cent. per annum. Every such loan may be made repayable by installments, but the final payment shall not in any case be more than twenty years from the date of the loan.

FORM AND PAYMENT OF STATE WARRANTS ON HOME MAKER'S LOAN FUND.

The warrants drawn on the State Treasury for said Home Maker's Loan Fund shall be designated as such; they shall be payable on demand in lawful money of the United States of America, shall not bear interest, and shall be at all times receivable by all tax collectors at their face value for one-third of all ground rent taxes, and shall at all times be received by the State Treasurer in payment of all amounts due the State for such Loan Fund Account. Said warrants shall be issued in denominations of one dollar, two dollars, five dollars, ten dollars and twenty dollars each. Every such warrant, when received by the State Treasurer, shall be cancelled and shall not be reissued. The total amount of such Loan Fund warrants outstanding at one time shall never exceed two years income of said Loan Account as estimated by the State Land Board.

SELF-EXECUTING.

This section is self-executing and shall take effect and be in operation as to all assessments and taxes made or levied on or after the first day of March next after its approval and adoption by the people of Oregon. The provisions of this section do not apply to any assessments or taxes made or levied before the first day of March next after its approval by the people. All provisions of this section relating to the Home Maker's Loan Fund become operative and effective on the first day of December next after the approval of this section by the people. The Legislative Assembly is hereby instructed to enact laws to aid the enforcement, application and execution of this section and the public policy declared herein, but no law shall lessen its force and intent.

All provisions of the Constitution and laws of Oregon in conflict with this section or any part hereof, are hereby repealed in so far as they conflict herewith. Any paragraph of this section may be amended without resubmitting the entire section.

"WE would simply take for the community what belongs to the community, the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community, leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—HENRY GEORGE.

THE heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men.—Psalms CXV, 16.