

invested beyond recall with powers transcending those of an English king.

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The British Land Question.

Although British thought is centered now upon the Lords' veto question, the policy of "the land for the people" has not been forgotten by the people. This was shown very clearly at the by-election in West Ham (North) on the 8th of July. Baron de Forest, who was defeated in a hopeless contest at Southport in 1910,* represented the Liberal interest; and as at Southport, the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values were in the thick of the fight, and the candidate made what we are advised was "a splendid land reform campaign." He was elected by a larger majority than any since 1906, the Liberal landslide year. In 1904 the district seated a Tory by an overwhelming majority. After the election, Baron de Forest attributed his victory to the veto, to the advanced radical platform on which he stood, and to his advocacy of land reform.

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Capitalistic Pretenses.

A pretty good retort is that of the New York Nation which notes the capitalistic pretenses that the Lloyd George budget was driving capital by millions from London to New York. "It would make a pretty race," says the Nation, "if one could only actually see it, the millions sent out of New York State on account of the inheritance tax laws, and the millions rushing in to escape Lloyd George."

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CONSTITUTION - MAKING IN OHIO.

I.

In anticipation of the Constitutional convention for Ohio,† to be held next year, the delegates to which are to be elected in the fall upon nominations by petition only, an active campaign is now setting in.

As the present Constitution is antique and antiquated, it is likely to get a thorough overhauling. Therefore the Interests, the System, the Trusts, Big Business, or whatever other name you choose for designating business combinations that prey upon public rights, are scheming for a free hand under the new Constitution.

To that end their agents are making the strong-

*See volume xiii of The Public, page 128. Congressman Henry George, Jr., campaigned for Baron de Forest in the Southport election.

†See The Public, current volume, page 632.

est kind of effort to discourage public pledging of delegates on any question in advance. This would make private pledging easier, of course, both in advance and during the sessions of the convention, and must therefore be attractive to the Interests. But the idea can hardly appeal to good citizenship in Ohio any more than elsewhere. Be it never so handsomely garnished with the names of men who stand for "the good, the true, and the beautiful" in business and politics, still it must be distasteful to American democracy.

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On the side of the Interests in this Ohio campaign, the Ohio State Board of Commerce is at once most prominent and most modest. Notwithstanding its prominence along the surface, its modesty with reference to the "deeper depths" of business in politics is phenomenal. Indeed, its modesty in these connections comes near to that of the curious 'Cajan family of Louisiana whom one of Cable's characters describes as being "so modest a'most shy!" This Ohio State Board of Commerce could not but be modest almost to shyness, with such a nurse as Allen Ripley Foote* of Columbus, erstwhile of Chicago, and so discreet a godfather as Samuel Scovil of Cleveland. Mr. Scovil may be described, without offense we trust either to himself or to Samuel Insull of Chicago, as an Ohio understudy of Mr. Insull in the electric-power world.

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One phase of the Constitutional convention campaign in Ohio to which the Foote and Scovil group are devoted will be especially interesting to Singletaxers and People's Power advocates everywhere.

Under the leadership of Herbert S. Bigelow, and pursuant to Tom L. Johnson's policy in Ohio, the Singletaxers of that State, all of whom are People's Power advocates so far as we know them or of them, are uniting with People's Power advocates regardless of whether Singletaxers or not, to secure in the new Constitution a clause providing for the Initiative and Referendum.

As this is the particular electoral reform the Interests fear most, because it loosens their secret grip upon legislative bodies, they are opposed to it everywhere and in all their affiliations. And it is a special function of the Ohio Board of Commerce in Ohio, and of Mr. Foote throughout the United States, to baffle the movement for that reform to the best of Mr. Foote's ability—and his ability is by no means to be despised.

Singletaxers, on the other hand, realize that it

*See The Public, current volume, footnote at page 632.

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is by means of the Initiative and Referendum, and only so, that the work of Henry George can be consummated, even when a majority of the people are converted to it; and they have frankly declared this to be one of their motives in working for the Initiative and Referendum. It is upon the basis of such declarations that the Ohio State Board of Commerce is making its campaign against the Initiative and Referendum directly and against the Singletax incidentally.

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An interesting circumstance relative to this feature of the campaign may be found in an issue of The Ohio Journal of Commerce, the organ of the Ohio State Board of Commerce. Our allusion is to an address made by F. A. Derthick before the Portage County Horticultural Society, at Kent, Ohio, May 17, 1911, and published in the issue of that paper of June 3rd. To appreciate its significance fully, the fact should be known that Mr. Derthick, formerly an official of the farmers' Grange of Ohio, has for a considerable time been an associate or assistant of Mr. Foote's in the work of the Ohio State Board of Commerce.

Readers of the paper mentioned above—and copies can be easily obtained by writing to the publishers at Columbus—will observe that it deals principally with two subjects, taxation and direct legislation.

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On taxation, its proposals are as follows:

First, Taxes shall be levied for public purposes only.

Second, The power of taxation shall never be surrendered.

Third, Taxes shall be uniform upon subjects of the same class, and be just.

There are no such designs here in the direction of the Singletax as the final words, "and be just," might imply. In his summary, Mr Derthick insists that "all private property should be taxed once." A Constitution with that provision in it wouldn't leave any leeway for exempting improvements, nor for exempting any kind of personal property except bonds, mortgages and other paper evidences of title to property. But these could be exempted on the ground that the property itself had been "taxed once," and that taxing the evidence of its title would tax it again.

That is precisely Mr. Foote's plan. It is the plan of the Interests in every State. Such a constitutional provision, while preventing exemptions of the personal property as well as of the improvements of farms and factories and stores and homes, would allow exemptions of the peculiar personal property of Big Business—that kind of personal

property in law, the value of which is in *economics* loaded with land value. It would close the doors tight and fast against every other exemption that the Singletax contemplates, and in practical effect would make progress even more difficult than now.

Yet Mr. Foote, so efficient is he in the service of the Interests, has actually secured the co-operation in good faith of some Singletaxers, though not of any in Ohio so far as we have learned.

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But this Derthick-Foote assault upon the Singletax is much more elaborate than as indicated above. It consists also in opposing the Initiative and Referendum in Ohio, on the distinct ground that the Initiative and Referendum are intended by Singletaxers to make opportunity for the adoption of the Singletax by the people of Ohio.

We haven't the space to reproduce in full this double assault upon the Singletax and direct legislation. If we had we should nevertheless prefer that persons interested read all that Mr. Derthick says, and therefore that they send to Columbus for copies of the organ of the Ohio State Board of Commerce itself. But we suggest present consideration of the following extracts from his address:

A few years since I was one in a Columbus audience 2,000 strong when Henry George, the foremost Singletaxer in the world, declared that "private property in land is a crime—but the application of the principle of the Singletax would finally diffuse the ownership of land." He says the same thing in his famous book, "Progress and Poverty." History will record Mr. George as an honest and sincere man; and his goal, "the common ownership of land," is being sought by increasing thousands. I hold in my hand a copy of the journal of proceedings of the national Singletax conference* held in New York City, November 19, 20, 1910, under the auspices of "The Fels Fund Commission," and upon nearly every page is indisputable evidence that the Singletaxers rely upon the I. and R. to accomplish their purpose Can men be trusted to "purify public affairs" who carry on a campaign for the Initiative and Refer-

*Mr. Derthick is in error in calling this conference of contributors to the Fels Fund and their invited guests "a national Singletax conference." The error is unimportant in this connection, but its publication here might be misleading as to the character of that conference. The title of the pamphlet from which Mr. Derthick quoted is as follows: "Single Tax Conference, held in New York City, November 19 and 20, 1910, under the Auspices of the Joseph Fels Fund Commission. Published by the Commission, Cincinnati, 1911." As Mr. Derthick is not a Singletaxer he was perhaps warranted by that title page in characterizing this conference as he did. But the true character of the conference is stated on page 5 of the pamphlet in the first paragraph of its report of the proceedings, as follows: "November 19, 20 and 21, the Joseph Fels Fund Commission held a meeting in New York City in which many interested in the work of the Commission were asked to participate."

endum "in the interests of the people" but expecting to use it as an entering wedge to bring to pass their primary purpose, the Singletax and the common ownership of land? . . . I received through the mail a pamphlet styled, "The Joseph Fels Fund of America." The letter of transmittal explains that the pamphlet is issued "to emphasize again the far-reaching nature of the social and economic changes that would flow from the reform first suggested by Henry George more than a quarter of a century ago." The pamphlet explains that the Joseph Fels Fund now aggregates a total of \$250,000. The pamphlet insists that "the Singletax is least of all a taxing measure. This is but incidental though essential to a larger ideal; an ideal as far-reaching in its consequences as Socialism but far simpler in its application." Again, that "many owners will sell their land to be relieved of the burden of taxation." Again, that "land value taxation would socialize from 50 to 75 per cent of the wealth of America." Yet farmers are expected to support the I. and R. and thus aid in "diffusing the ownership of their farms."

That piece of Constitutional convention campaign-literature, with its false appeal to farmers, marks the character of its origin and the impulse of its promoters. An appeal as demagogic as false, it has long been a favorite of Big Business when beguiling innocent voters into standing between Big Business and political hell-fire "to keep off the heft of the heat." But it has begun to lose its force, and we need give its merits no attention here.

As to the appeal to the people of Ohio to kill the Initiative and Referendum so as to prevent the possibility of their utilizing it to adopt the Singletax, no other reply is necessary than that the people cannot use the Initiative and Referendum for that purpose or any other until they wish to; and when they do wish to, they ought not to be legislatively shackled and politically hamstrung.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

GERMAN LAND REFORMERS.

Dresden, June 8.

The annual meeting of the League of German Bodenreformers took place at Dresden during the Whitsun holidays from 4th to 7th of June. Friends of the Henry George movement gathered, not only from all parts of Germany, north and south, east and west, but also from Austria, from Russia, from Australia, and from Canada. One of the features of the gathering was the presence of Mr. Joseph Fels, who was elected a member of the committee at its first session and who announced his purpose to continue his subscription to the League and to raise it in conformity with the subscriptions raised by the members themselves.

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On June 3, before the actual work of the meeting began, one of the most strenuous supporters of the League, Mr. von Schwerin, arranged a reception at

his house. After a *conversazione*, a kind of prelude to the sittings of the following days, he and his accomplished wife, amongst whose ancestors rank Moses Mendelssohn, the philosopher, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the composer, presided at a dinner of about 80 invited guests, a most representative company of all classes including the Mayor of Dresden and an admiral of the fleet as well as a variety of Singletax men.

Mr. A. Damaschke delivered an address on this occasion on the question: "What are the social duties of our upper classes?" He recalled the times when the courtiers around Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette felt bored by the demands of the Physiocrats, Turgot's "impot unique," and ridiculed their warnings. The evil sores on the public body that originated from misusing land, "the original inheritance of the whole species," they thought to cure by laying on the perfumed rouge of charity. He then dealt with the social abuses in this country in connection with the unjust distribution of wealth. He gave statistics as to the number of married women working in mills and factories, statistics as to human dwellings where one room has to suffice for five—men, women and children,—statistics as to criminal offenses and corporeal diseases. Could these evils be removed by charity? Was there no other way that led out of this misery? Lassalle had not detected it. Quite unjustly he arraigned the employer, and expected everything from advanced wages and pecuniary assistance; he did not recognize the fact that advanced wages will be absorbed by an increase of rent. We had still to learn the truth as proclaimed by Henry George, that Bodenreform is at the bottom of every other reform. Ground rent belongs to the community and should return to it, not to a few speculators nor to those who regard land as something created by men.

After Mr. Damaschke had finished, Mr. von Schwerin while thanking the speaker, added a few instructive remarks on the Physiocrats, Henry George, and the Singletax.

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This annual meeting bore quite a different character from that of the preceding year. While at Gotha the league was in the greatest of suspense and full of excitement, taking on rather an aspect of political demonstration and fighting as it were for a government bill that recognized for the first time (in however small degree) Singletax ideas, at Dresden there was the chance of sowing much new seed that in time will bear fruit. In Gotha nearly all the hours were devoted to addresses and debates; in Dresden social entertainments relieved the work performed at committee and public meetings.

The sittings were held in the public hall of the hygienic exhibition. Besides the public dinners which form a regular part of such meetings a steamboat trip had been arranged by the local committees up the Elbe and no one who spent the afternoon amongst those lovely surroundings will ever forget its glory. On another day experts were invited to show the members around the exhibition; and a morning was devoted to a visit to a garden city near Dresden.

While entertainments formed a prominent part of the meeting, attention was directed to what had been attained by the League during the past and what it

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