

made a record which should commend him to the confidence, both for fidelity to democratic principle and for ability in representing it, to the genuine democrats of all parties. Should the Democratic Party have a clear majority, the Speakership question will be decided in the Democratic caucus, by whose fruits in such matters the Party will be known and judged among progressives of every party affiliation, including the Democratic. But if, as now seems probable, all parties fall short of a majority in the legislature, no better candidate for Speaker than Mr. Karch could be united upon by the progressive members of all parties.



ESSENCE OF THE SINGLETAX.

Essentially, the Singletax is a social reform.

As such it is radical. That is to say, it is the opposite of superficial; it goes to the roots of social questions.

In so far as "reform" has come to mean only superficial change, the Singletax is less a *reform* than a *revolution*. It aims at so revolutionizing industrial conditions, speedily and peaceably, as to divert the perennial flow of wealth from appropriators and squanderers to producers and conservers,—from idle and useless classes to the working and productive masses.

Only as a *method* of approach is the Singletax a reform in the superficial sense. Its *objective* is revolution in the best sense.



Our processes of taxation, by paralyzing productive industry, check production. Opportunities for labor in production are thereby narrowed, the labor supply is thus increased beyond effective demand, and labor exploitation is consequently possible. Social injustice in much variety results.

The Singletax would therefore abolish taxes on productive industry.

But as this is no boy's job, the Singletax would begin by reducing such taxes—according to the fluctuating opportunities afforded by time, place and circumstances. It would then push on toward further and further reductions, until all taxation of productive industry was at an end.

By "productive industry" is meant, of course, not only the *growing and shaping* of products but also the *storing, transporting and trading* of products.

Abolition of taxes on productive industry therefore includes abolition of all such taxes on trade as custom house tariffs and excessive railroad rates. In other words, the utmost possible freedom of

trade, between nations and States, and over public highways, is contemplated by the Singletax—all for the same peaceably revolutionary purpose of lessening social injustice by checking exploitation of labor through multiplying opportunities for production.



But taxation of productive industry is not the only fiscal device that checks production and thereby promotes exploitation of labor. It is akin to another. Exemption of land values, as in Great Britain, or low taxation of land values, as in the United States, is part of the same system and has the same deplorable effect.

Indeed, if taxes on industry were wholly abolished, but land values exempt, the financial benefits of untaxed production would soon go to land monopolists. For low taxes on land values make it easy to hold land out of use; and often profitable; and as this lessens opportunities for productive labor, it promotes labor exploitation and thereby fosters social injustice in abundant variety.

So the Singletax, while reducing taxes on productive industry, would increase taxes on the value of monopolized land. Just as it aims at ultimate abolition of taxes on productive industry, so it aims at the highest possible tax on land monopoly. It would make the tax on land values so high as to leave to individuals no unearned profit.

Since this also is no boy's job, the Singletax would begin by increasing taxes on land values as it reduces taxes on industry.



Upon reflection it will be seen that in its reform *method*, the Singletax strikes at the point of least resistance in the direction of its peaceably revolutionary *purpose*.

Taxation is inevitable. There is no escaping it. Organized society must have common revenues for common purposes.

Where, then, can those revenues be obtained with less effective resistance than from monopolizers of the communal values that attach to land? At what other point could a blow so deadly be struck at land monopoly, and, through this foster-mother of other monopolies, at the whole monopoly system?

To all those who seek social justice, whatever be their label, the Singletax says: "Relieve industry from taxation, and the necessity for public revenue will automatically relieve it from land monopoly; whereupon a whole people, freed from that

elemental maladjustment, will release themselves speedily from every other monopoly."



Whether anything more than the Singletax would be necessary, is not the important question now.

Other monopolies than land monopoly there doubtless are, and other social injustices than those that spring from land monopoly there well may be. Though many monopolies supposed to be unrelated to land monopoly have in fact no power over legitimate industry except such as is derived directly or indirectly from land monopoly, this may not be true of others. Rid us of land monopoly and we shall quickly see. Meanwhile, however, these words of Henry George in chapter xvii of his "Social Problems" are of highest practical importance: "The first step toward a natural and healthy organization of society is to secure to all men their natural, equal and inalienable rights in the material universe; to do this is not to do everything that may be necessary, but it is to make all else easier; and unless we do this, nothing else will avail."



Probably the clearest and best—as it certainly is the most authentic—declaration in small compass of the method and purpose of the Singletax with special reference to the United States, is the platform of the Singletax Conference of 1890, which was held at New York in Cooper Union.

This platform is from the pen of Henry George himself. He wrote it in consultation with some of the most representative men of the Singletax movement, all of them being under the particular responsibility, as members of the platform committee,* of speaking officially for that movement in this country. It was adopted, without substantial dissent and after full discussion and deliberation, by the first and most representative national American gathering Singletaxers have held. The text of the platform will be found in full in the Related Things department of this issue of The Public.

Declaring as the *fundamental principle* of the Singletax "the self-evident truth enunciated in the Declaration of American Independence, that all men are created equal," this platform asserts as

*The committee consisted of Henry George of New York (chairman), James G. Maguire of California, L. A. Russell of Ohio, Warren Worth Bailey of Illinois (now a Congressman-elect from Pennsylvania), H. Martin Williams of Missouri, Bolton Smith of Tennessee, Carl J. Buell of Minnesota and Edward Osgood Brown of Illinois (now a judge of the Appellate Court of Illinois).

resulting *Singletax principles*, (1) that "all men are equally entitled to the use and enjoyment of what God has created;" (2) that all men are equally entitled to "what is gained by the general growth and improvement of the community of which they are a part;" and (3) that "each man is entitled to all that his labor produces."

The same platform proposes, as the *Singletax method* of realizing those principles, that all public revenues be raised by a single tax upon land values, irrespective of improvements, and that all other forms of revenue taxation be abolished.

For a practical *Singletax policy* in the direction of that method of realizing Singletax principles, the platform proposes (1) abolition, one after another, of all existing taxes other than those on land values; and (2) increase of present taxes on land values until all public revenues are drawn from that source.

In its *explanation* of the Singletax principles, method and policy, the platform to which we refer speaks plainly for itself. It may be summarized, however, as arguing that (1) the Singletax is *not* a tax on land; that (2) it is a tax on the value of land—on "the premium which the user of land must pay to the owner, either in purchase money or rent, for permission to use valuable land;" that (3) the only value taken into consideration by the Singletax would be "the value attaching to the bare land by reason of neighborhood, etc., to be determined by impartial periodical assessments;" and (4) that the Singletax would therefore (a) "take the weight of taxation off of the agricultural districts and put it on towns and cities," (b) dispense with a multiplicity of taxes and (c) a horde of tax-gatherers, (d) simplify government, (e) do away with fiscal inequalities which favor the rich, (f) "give us with all the world as perfect freedom of trade as now exists between the States of our Union," (g) destroy trusts, (h) abolish penalties upon enterprise and industry, (i) make land-holding unprofitable to forestallers but profitable to users, (j) thereby abolish land monopoly and "throw open to labor the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man," and consequently (k) "do away with involuntary poverty," (l) "raise wages in all occupations to the full earnings of labor," (m) "make overproduction impossible until all wants are satisfied," (n) "render labor-saving inventions a blessing to all" and (o) "cause such an enormous production and such an equitable distribution of wealth as would give to all comfort, leisure and participation in the advantages of an advancing civilization."

Recognizing the fact that there are *other monop-*

olies than land monopoly, the Singletax platform finally lays down the general principle that government management becomes necessary where free competition is impossible.



The Singletax has the essentials of universality.

Possibly not, as some of its advocates present it; but supremely so as it was presented by Henry George.

Resting upon the solid foundation of equal rights to land, the Singletax applies, in its justice and in its wisdom, to all times and all places. This fundamental *principle* is the keystone principle of social justice, whether in the most primitive stages of communism, the highest conceivable civilization, or any stage between. It appeals to the elemental sense of right among all men always and everywhere.

Recognizing differences of time, place and circumstances in *method* of application, the essential universality of the Singletax is further manifest. While the Singletax method in an era of communism would be common ownership of land, its method as Henry George applied it to our own civilization unites *private ownership of land* with the proviso of *public ownership of rent*. For rent—the differential values of land—is the peculiar phenomenon of our civilization with reference to private ownership of land. If private ownership of land be a necessity of civilization, so is public ownership of rent a necessity of social justice and therefore of civilization. Who can doubt this if he will but consider the primary injustice of making private property of values that are so manifestly social earnings as is land rent, or but reflect upon the multiplex social injustices that flow from this primary injustice?

Once more does the Singletax manifest the essentials of universality. Adapting its *policy* for realization to time, place and circumstances, it selects for our time the universal necessity for taxation as the line of approach to its goal. Since taxation now takes some land-rent, which is common property, let it abandon the private exactions it also imposes and take all of land-rent. But as this cannot be done at once, let a beginning be made at the most promising point along the line of approach, according to the opportunity afforded by time, place and circumstances. In backward places, abolition or even modification of personal property taxes would be along that line. In places more advanced, the \$3,000 exemption of buildings, proposed in New York City, would be in the direction of the Singletax; so would the graduated

land value tax recently rejected by the Oregon electorate. In places or times still farther advanced along the Singletax line, the entire tax on personal property and improvements might be abolished, as has been done in Australasia and in Canadian cities.

Not until by progressive activities such as these, together with all other educational influences in support of the Singletax, may there come to be such a general appreciation of the justice and wisdom of the Singletax principle and policy, that the public use of approximately all land values everywhere can be hoped for. Meanwhile, however, the adaptability of the Singletax policy and method to the realization in effect of its fundamental principle, emphasizes its essential universality of character.



That the Singletax program is not a mere superficial reform is evident from the opposition it encounters. However superficial any move in the direction of shifting taxes from industry to land values, wide awake beneficiaries and representatives of privilege are unanimous and vigorous as well as demagogic in opposing it. Henry George was profoundly right when in "Progress and Poverty" he said: "The truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance; if that could be, it would have been accepted long ago; if that could be, it would never have been obscured."

The Singletax cuts deep. Even its method of approach, which, seeking the line of least resistance, begins with surface reforms in taxation—even this cuts so deep at the very outset as to scare and anger those privileged ones, big and little, who are selfish above all things and desperately on the defensive.

Not because it is an easy path, is the line the Singletax method and policy pursue, the line of least resistance. It is the line of least resistance because every stage gained in its progress is self-secured against diversion or reaction. Land monopoly draws strength to itself from the success of secondary reforms; but it cannot draw strength to itself from its own progressive exhaustion.



There is no need for opposing or discouraging other movements of like objective, in order to promote the Singletax movement. Nor is there any need for opposition from them to the Singletax. The Singletax is essentially no more hostile to such movements than a good guide is hostile to the tourists who trust him.

If other proposals for the abolition of labor exploitation and the establishment of social justice are futile, that will become evident as they are tried. If they contemplate an over-doing or an under-doing, progress in the general social movement will slough off the non-essentials and develop the essentials. The Singletax *principle*, the Singletax *method* and the Singletax *policy* commend themselves as guides to all who in good faith and with good vision are looking for that labor state in which those who earn shall have and social justice reign. Be their labels of any denomination in religion, of any party in politics, of any cult in philanthropy, of any sect in anything, they will find the Singletax their best asset for the realization of their own ideals, if their purpose coincides with its objective, which is *industrial democracy*.

CONDENSED EDITORIALS

SINGLETAX SEED TIME AND HARVEST.

Herbert Quick, in a Private Letter.

There was a time when truth seemed to me so plainly true, that I thought all it needed was bold and wide proclamation and everybody must be converted. That was a long time ago. I know now that the Kingdom of God is not to be set up in our day in Jerusalem. A few may be healed. Some dead may be raised, some blind eyes may be opened, crowds may follow a teacher, and it may look to the Sanhedrin and the Synagogue as if things are going to be overturned. But they are not overturned. The teacher still must be lifted up in crucifixion in order that all men may be drawn to him. There are numerous Gethsemanes and Calvaries along the road yet. Missouri and Oregon are not lost, nor is the cause. It has only been a skirmish. Long after this election has been forgotten, the truth sown in those States will be found growing. This is seed-time. Nobody knows when the harvest time shall be. But it will come. Probably we shall have to suffer a great deal more. Quite probably the chance of loot through unearned increment will have to become more distant from the average man's mind before he will enlist to abolish loot. Remember how corrupted we are as a people by and through this loot. Bedouins would doubtless be better off were the robbery of caravans abolished; but the robbery of caravans is too much a thing bred in the bone to be unpopular in Bedouin camps. Southern mountaineers are prone to feuds. The feuds are bad for the feudists, but more than one campaign is called for before this type of murder will be given up. Monopoly of land is ingrained in our people's minds as a part of the eternal scheme of things. It is not to be shaken in one or two campaigns.

Some speak in terms of bitter disappointment over the failure of the Initiative to get results in Singletax legislation. There is no reason to blame the Initiative. The people voted as they believe. They may not have been well informed, and they may have

followed blind guides; but that is neither here nor there. What they wanted to do in those elections they have done. Singletaxers failed to convince them. Very well—then Singletaxers ought to have failed in the election. No good can be accomplished by any possible rushing of legislation in advance of public sentiment. You can't sneak up on God's blind side in that way. Only one victory is worth while, and that is a victory through the sober, enlightened judgment of the voters. It is better not to win, until we can win through that. I would not enact a Singletax law in Missouri or Oregon if I could. We have demonstrated that these States are not yet ready for it. We have had a good, democratic licking. It will be good for us, if we are the right sort of democratic soldiers.

The Clackamas County tax roll and the township rolls made in Missouri are the really big things we have done. Now let's use them. Let's go about it to show people where their material interests lie. Let us appeal to class consciousness a little more. After all, in the main men vote in their own interests if they know what they are. We ought to have the people listed according to the way they would be affected by Singletax—laboring men, home-owners, mortgaged people, speculators, farm-owners, farmers, tenants, hired-men and the like. We must eventually win by appealing to the victims of monopoly, rather than to its beneficiaries—or to victims and beneficiaries alike. Perhaps, after all, the best course is the thorough one. "Private ownership of land must be abolished," could not fail as a slogan much more completely than the softer speech has failed.

All this is a plea for democracy first, and then education. The Initiative as a means of getting Singletax may not be a swift means, but it is the best means, for all that. Or, if not the best, it is better than any means by which the Kingdom of God might be thought capable of being slipped over while the people aren't looking. That can't be done. Education is the only thing worth while. I am disposed to believe that the appeal to reason which has been made in Missouri and Oregon is worth a great deal more than it has cost.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE LABOR WAR AT LITTLE FALLS, N.Y.

A Clergyman's Report.

Schenectady, N. Y. November 19.

Wednesday morning, October 30, about half-past six, 250 or 300 strikers started on their daily parade around the mills. They had a permit from the Mayor for these parades that had never been revoked. The marchers seemed unusually happy and joked with those on the sidewalk as they passed along. Every block or two spontaneously would burst forth the Marseillaise—in five different tongues—the only song that all the nationalities knew. The line swung down past one of the mills and doubled back. Suddenly a confusion was noticed, and then a muffled shot down the front half of the line!

The lines broke. The middle of the street was