

Independence, like the Sermon on the Mount, has never been tried.

HERBERT S. BIGELOW.

† † †

LAND CONSERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

We must turn to the British administration of Northern Nigeria for an example of systematic conservation of all natural resources by government; but popular impulses in the direction of this policy may be observed almost everywhere if we do not allow mere form to hide the substance from us. Although the policy assumes different forms in different localities, everywhere there is evidence of a growing appreciation of the substantial truth that "God made the land for the people."

Long lived and almost universal as the notion has been that monopolies of natural resources, whether by landlords under feudalistic survivals or by capitalists under perverted capitalism, are both useful and just and must be perpetuated, that notion is rapidly losing ground. In Northern Nigeria (p. 580) it is struck down quite candidly. In Great Britain (p. 507) it is the central issue of politics, as it is coming also to be in Denmark (p. 586). And both in Northern Nigeria and Great Britain, as well as in Germany (pp. 486, 497), Australia (pp. 411, 535), and Canada (p. 540), there is a distinct recognition of city sites as being among the natural resources to be conserved for the people, a recognition which is not less emphatic—even more so, we should say—than the recognition, as in that category, of forests, mines and soils. So also with methods of correction. The Canadian city of Vancouver, for instance (pp. 243, 252, 434, 444), by exempting improvements from taxation in order to encourage improvement, and taxing building sites *ad valorem* to the full (whether used or not), in order to weaken land monopoly, is conserving her natural resources.

In the United States but little progress has been made governmentally for the conservation of natural resources in any form. The Iawson Purdy tax regime in New York City (p. 34) has done something toward it by making the difference between site values and improvement values stand out so distinctly that one must be somewhat more stupid than a wayfaring fool if he does not see for himself that the latter represent commodities produced by workers, and the former privileges conferred by government. Cleveland also has made that difference distinct (pp. 604, 608) through the new tax board of Cuyahoga county,

of which four out of the five members were Tom L. Johnson men at their election and three of the four are disciples of Henry George. Other communities in the United States have also in one form or another, officially recognized the importance of conserving their natural resources for the common welfare and in the common right. But on the whole it is true that all forms of conservation in the United States are still in the agitational stage.

One of the conservation agencies in this country, however, impresses us as having exceptionally large possibilities. We refer to the National Conservation Association (p. 83), of which Gifford Pinchot is the president.

†

This Association makes no extreme demands. It is very conservative in management, very superficial in its proposals. Any single tax convert, though newly made, could point out errors in its political economy and expose the insufficiency of its program. Any socialist could do the same from the socialist point of view, though in a way the program is rather socialistic than otherwise in its modes. But superficial as that program may be, it seems to us to give fair promise of soon becoming, with reference to progressive politics in the United States, what the Lloyd-George Budget has been to progressive politics in Great Britain.

The Budget was superficial in its proposals. It could not stand in the face of radical criticism. There wasn't a single taxer nor a socialist in the United Kingdom who didn't know how flimsy it was. The less wise among them were therefore only lukewarm supporters of the Budget; the lesser wise refused to take any part, and the least wise were inclined to fight it. But that superficial measure, besides securing an official valuation of all the land of Great Britain, now in progress, and laying the basis for a permanent policy of progressive land value taxation, tending toward the abolition of land monopoly, has turned all Great Britain into a debating society on the subject of the relations of the people of a country to the land of their country.

The Budget was more effective than a perfect measure might have been, because the perfect measure could hardly have secured a favorable hearing, whereas the imperfect one has secured a favorable hearing, and not only for its superficial proposals but in even greater degree for the fundamental principles which those proposals involve.

It is in some such way that the work of the National Conservation Association gives promise, in our view, of a great crusade for justice with

reference to land in the United States. It may not unlikely turn the United States into a debating society on the question of the relation of the people of these States to the land where they live—whether it be forest or water course or soil or mineral land, which the Association specifies, or city sites, also, which it does not mention but which are none the less involved in the principles it declares.

The National Conservation Association of the United States was organized at Cambridge, Mass., July 20, 1909 (vol. xii, p. 922), on the basis of declarations of a conference of the Governors of States held under call of President Roosevelt at the White House, Washington, on the 13th, 14th and 15th of May, 1908 (vol. xi, pp. 174, 179). It succeeded the Conservation League, of which the active president was Walter L. Fisher of Chicago, with President Roosevelt as honorary president and Mr. Taft and Mr. Bryan as honorary vice presidents (vol. xi, p. 579; vol. xii, p. 105). Originally its president was Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University; but upon the dismissal of Gifford Pinchot as chief forester in the Federal service (pp. 50, 51, 60) for insubordination in frustrating the efforts of the Taft administration to give away public lands to powerful land-grabbing interests (vol. xiii, p. 460), Dr. Eliot resigned as president of the Association and nominated Mr. Pinchot in his place. Mr. Pinchot, soon after his dismissal from the government service, appeared at the meeting of the Civic Federation at Washington to keep a speaking engagement on its program which had been made with him while he was still in the office he had for many years managed with intelligence and fidelity. He was received (vol. xiii, p. 60) with tumultuous and unexpectedly unanimous applause. It was the first pronounced indication of public sentiment regarding his dismissal. Immediately thereafter Dr. Eliot's suggestion was adopted by the Conservation Association. His resignation was accepted, he was made honorary president (an office created especially for him), and Mr. Pinchot was elected president (vol. xiii, p. 83). At the present time, consequently, the officers of the Association (with headquarters at Washington, D. C., in Colorado Building), are as follows:

Honorary President, Charles W. Eliot.
 President, Gifford Pinchot.
 Vice president, Walter L. Fisher.
 Treasurer, Overton W. Price.
 Secretary, Thomas R. Shipp.
 Assistant secretary, James C. Gipe.
 Counsel, Philip P. Wells.

The progressive possibilities of this Association are obvious in its statement of principles, which we quote:

Believing it to be of the utmost importance that the natural resources of the Nation shall be comprehensively and vigorously developed and utilized for the promotion of the public welfare, without waste, destruction or needless impairment, and subject always to their intelligent conservation and the effective preservation of the rights and interests of the future generations of our people;

And in order to secure the recognition and support of these principles by the people and by their representatives, we hereby unite in the National Conservation Association, and adopt for ourselves the following, taken directly from the Declaration unanimously adopted by the Conference of Governors, convened by the President of the United States, in the White House, at Washington, on May 13, 14 and 15, 1908:

"We do hereby declare the conviction that the great prosperity of our country rests upon the abundant resources of the land chosen by our forefathers for their homes, and where they laid the foundation of this great Nation.

"We look upon these resources as a heritage to be made use of in establishing and promoting the comfort, prosperity and happiness of the American People, but not to be wasted, deteriorated, or needlessly destroyed.

"We agree that our country's future is involved in this; that the great natural resources supply the material basis on which our civilization must continue to depend, and on which the perpetuity of the Nation itself rests.

"We agree that this material basis is threatened with exhaustion.

"We agree that the land should be so used that erosion and soil-wash shall cease; that there should be reclamation of arid and semi-arid regions by means of irrigation, and of swamp and overflowed regions by means of drainage, that the waters should be so conserved and used as to promote navigation, to enable the arid regions to be reclaimed by irrigation, and to develop power in the interests of the People; that the forests which regulate our rivers, support our industries, and promote the fertility and productiveness of the soil should be preserved and perpetuated; that the minerals found so abundantly beneath the surface should be so used as to prolong their utility; that the beauty, healthfulness and habitability of our country should be preserved and increased; that the sources of national wealth exist for the benefit of the People, and that monopoly thereof should not be tolerated.

"We declare our firm conviction that this conservation of our natural resources is a subject of transcendent importance, which should engage unremittingly the attention of the Nation, the States, and the People in earnest co-operation.

"We agree that this co-operation should find expression in suitable action by the Congress and by the Legislatures of the several States.

"Let us conserve the foundations of our prosperity."

We, therefore, form this Association to advocate and support the adoption by the people themselves

and by their representatives of definite and practical measures to carry the foregoing principles into effect, and to oppose in all appropriate ways all action which is in conflict with these principles, whether such action is attempted by individual citizens or by legislative or administrative officials.

Following these general declarations with the declaration that "among such measures are the following," the Association's statement formulates for immediate purposes a specific program with reference to forests, waters, soils and minerals, to which it adds that—

the foregoing enumeration is intended to indicate the general character of some of the measures which this organization believes should be adopted to carry the principles of Conservation into practical effect. It will, however, co-operate in every appropriate way with other organizations and with the State and national officials to cover the entire field of the conservation and development of our natural resources, and to bring to this co-operation the vigorous support of an intelligent and disinterested citizenship.

In addition to its statement of principles the Association makes these further explanations of its purpose:

The Association urges the protection of the source waters of navigable streams through the purchase or control by the nation of the necessary land within their drainage basins; . . . the separation for purposes of taxation of the timber from the land on which it grows; . . . the incorporation in all future water-power grants by State or nation, of adequate provision for prompt development on pain of forfeiture, payment of reasonable compensation periodically readjusted, the limitation of the grant to fifty years, and recognition of the rights of the appropriate public authorities to regulate rates of service; . . . legislation whereby the title to the surface of public lands and to the minerals therein shall be granted separately; . . . the retention by the Government of the title to all public lands still publicly owned, which contain phosphate rock, coal, oil or natural gas, and their development by private enterprise under terms that will prevent extortion or waste.

Most important of all, however, is the purpose which the Association declares in this clause of one of its explanatory pamphlets:

"That conservation means the use of our natural resources for the benefit of us all and not merely for the profit of a few is already household knowledge. The task which the National Conservation Association has set itself is to get this principle put into practical effect. The question is not simply whether our natural resources shall be conserved or whether they shall be destroyed. The ultimate question is this—For whom shall the natural resources be conserved and who shall reap the benefit? On one side are the highly organized forces which have fattened upon un-

regulated monopoly and which are striving for government by money for profit. On the other side are the plain American citizens who are striving for government by men for human welfare. The real reason why conservation has the support of all the people is that it is a moral issue."

+

This Association, which we unreservedly commend as a powerful instrument in this country for furthering here the world-wide movement for fair adjustments of the relations of mankind to the planet upon which and from which in successive generations they must live, admits both men and women to all its forms of membership. Its central idea is proclaimed to be the furnishing of a medium through which the individual citizen can express himself on conservation. It has members in every State, and is working toward a membership of 100,000 as the minimum. The terms of membership range from \$2 a year for Members, through \$5 and \$25 a year for Active Members and Contributing Members, respectively, to \$100 a year for Patrons, and \$1,000 in all for Life Members.

+

The advantages of membership as stated by the Association suggest all the progressive possibilities to which we have alluded. "To every man or woman who stands for conservation," the invitation reads, "membership in the Association means the best and nearest opportunity for united and effective work. Acting individually, American citizens cannot get good conservation laws passed and keep bad laws from passing. Acting together, they can conserve the foundations of our prosperity. They can see to it that the resources of the public domain, of which every American citizen is part owner, are used and held for the permanent benefit of the whole people. They can stop unregulated monopoly of our natural resources. They can insure that resources already privately owned but essential to the public welfare are held not merely for personal gain, but as a public trust."

We heartily agree with Gifford Pinchot when, in his public letter on the subject, he says that "our waters, forests, lands and minerals" "should be developed and used wisely in the interest of all the people and for the welfare of those who come after us. The American people are agreed on that. The line is clearly drawn. It falls between the privileges of the few and the rights of the many. On the one side is the united and organized strength of all the forces that stand

behind politics for profit. On the other side is the plain citizen who is striving for a fair chance for comfort, decency and right living. Conservation is a moral issue. The National Conservation Association offers to every patriotic citizen an immediate opportunity to unite with the other men and women who stand for its principles. I believe no other one organization has a larger opportunity for service to the nation, or greater possibilities for effective work. The Association is on the firing line in a great fight. Will you give it your membership and individual help?"

Not only do we believe with Mr. Pinchot that this organization "is on the firing line in a great fight," but we also believe that victory there will be followed by victory after victory on firing lines farther advanced in the direction of the total abrogation of privilege; not only do we believe with him that the National Conservation Association has "a larger opportunity for service to the nation" and "greater possibilities for effective work" than any "one other organization," but we venture the hope that all persons who, realizing the deadly power of land monopoly over industry, are eager for opportunity to serve in abolishing that monopoly, will recognize those possibilities and avail themselves of that opportunity.

✦

This organization seems to us, let us repeat, as offering to progressives in the United States very much the same opportunity that the Lloyd-George Budget furnished to the progressives of Great Britain.

If we felt the slightest doubt, we should be reassured by Mr. Pinchot's letter to Frederick C. Leubuscher as president of the Manhattan Single Tax Club (p. 201), in which he acknowledged the club's words of encouragement and said: "Now that the lines are being drawn between the special interests and the rest of us in the fight for conservation and the square deal, we shall win, for the people are on our side."

If we had doubts after that reassurance, we should cast them aside upon recalling a significant quotation from Mr. Pinchot's carefully prepared speech at the New York University Club last January (pp. 10, 11), in which he said: "We must face the truth that monopoly of the sources of production makes it impossible for vast numbers of men and women to earn a fair living. Right here the conservation question touches the daily life of the great body of our people who pay the cost of special privilege."

If doubts arose again they would be completely allayed by Mr. Pinchot's St. Paul speech (pp. 553,

560), in which he said that "all monopoly rests on the unregulated control of natural resources and natural advantages."

In those last words Mr. Pinchot sounded the economic depths of the social question. By that sign shall the conservation movement progress sanely, and the people win over land monopoly a perfect and lasting triumph for equal opportunity.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

TWO ARENAS.

Boston, Mass., July 9.

I was present at the great meeting in the Harvard Stadium on the afternoon of the Fourth of July, addressed by the President of the United States. It was the public opening of the convention of the National Educational Association, for which so great a multitude of the teachers of the United States have come to Boston.

Fifteen thousand teachers were present at this memorable meeting, one of the most impressive and inspiring occasions in our whole educational history. Three-fourths of all those present there on that beautiful afternoon to listen to those noble utterances were women; and no one forgot that the proportion of women in the great body of the teachers of our American public schools is larger still. If I were to name any group of our people as in my judgment pre-eminent among the real defenders of the Republic and its high interests, it would be this great body of the teachers of our schools.

Yet, with but the slightest exceptions to prove the rule, no one of these thoughtful, noble women can express by her vote her judgment as to who shall administer public affairs in her town or city, or what the policies of the city of the State shall be. In that impressive presence in the Harvard Stadium, the thought of the waste and the wrong of it—waste and wrong to the Republic—was a startling thought.

✦

In another American arena, on that afternoon of the Fourth of July, were gathered fifteen thousand men and more. It was at Reno in Nevada.

They, too, had come together from all parts of the Republic. The character of those who came and the purpose for which they came have been only too well made known by the public press. The publicity and the event are alike the country's shame today.

Almost every person present in that horrible arena was a man—we shudder as we read that there were a few women. And these men all belong by our law to our kingly class, to the rulers and voters of America. This is what the patriot remembers.

✦

There may be rational grounds of discrimination between classes fit to vote and classes unfit; but as one contemplates the assembly at Harvard and the assembly at Reno, it is with a solemn sense that the ground which we have hit upon is not the rational one.

No argument can prove the Reno ruffians the better qualified for control of our American political