

THE inhabitants of Porto Rico are agitated, according to Senator Iglesias, over "an economic financial organization imposed by an illegal system of land ownership and by absent resident corporations and individuals combined." Porto Rico is suffering from a more efficient civilization. Under Spanish rule, which suppressed political agitations as they arose, Spain's lack of energy gave to Porto Rico the enjoyment of comparative immunity from the keener economic pressure exerted by people more genuinely alive to the possibilities of exploitation. The people of the island now enjoy greater political freedom, but they are paying dearly for it. Perhaps they would prefer the more leisurely and tolerant economic rule of Spain.

WE READ that the Danish cabinet has embarked upon a drastic reform of the land laws. A bill presented to the Riksdag provides that tenants-for-life of entailed estates can acquire these estates in fee, being free to do with them as they like on condition that they pay 20 to 25 per cent. of the value to the State. With the money received a fund will be set aside for the creation of small farms.

THE new Czecho-Slovakia government has also taken over 3,250,000 acres of cultivated land and 7,500,000 acres of woodland. It is estimated that the land thus at the disposal of the State will furnish opportunities for employment for 430,000 families. Many of the countries of the world are recognizing the importance of the land question and are taking drastic means to solve it. In the United States alone there seems to be no land question. And this is the country where Henry George was born and wrote his immortal book to prove that the land question was the fundamental question.

MAYOR Baker, of Portland, Oregon, who being present at the meeting of Mayors and Governors in Washington, voted for the Creamer Resolution recommending to the governors of States the taxation of idle lands and other natural resources, now asserts that it was in no sense a Single Tax resolution. The *Portland News* prints the account of the meeting from the SINGLE TAX REVIEW and wants to know who is right.

PERHAPS it will be best to let Mr. Baker speak for himself. He is quoted as saying: "I am not for the Single Tax on idle land, and the resolution drafted by Mayor Creamer was in no sense a Single Tax project. It applies to holders of coal lands, water-power, and other natural resources, and not to land. The object was to discourage speculation in natural resources, as this contributes to the unemployment problem." Mayor Baker's discovery that natural resources are not land reminds us irresistibly of the little girl who was surprised to learn that the back yard of her father's house was the surface of the earth.

The Coming Convention

ON Saturday, June 28, there will be held in the City of New York the first annual convention to perfect the organization of a national Single Tax Party.

This marks the beginning of a new era in the movement. Whatever the outcome, those who have put their hand to the wheel will not relax. The issue of the Single Tax will be definitely launched on the political seas. For good or ill, the die is cast.

Accomplished facts are not matters for argument. The time has gone by when the proposal to commit the great issue of industrial emancipation to the higher court by whose jurisdiction alone can be determined the validity and permanence of its enactment into legislation is a matter to be argued about. Time is wasted now in meeting the reasons, however plausibly urged, that would turn from their purpose the earnest minded men and women who, taking counsel of their faith in the one fundamental remedy for the ills of a suffering humanity, will go as Luther went from the ecclesiastical body that had summoned him: "God help us; we can do naught else."

With malice toward none, and with charity to all those who will differ with us a little while, the new movement has now begun.

The Government's Theory and Practice of Revolution

REVOLUTIONS come from great landholdings," says our egregious Secretary of the Interior; and again we must ask: Does he really mean it? To judge by his land-settlement proposal, he sees red revolution in the prospect of our soldiers acquiring any large holdings. After dispersing them along our barren economic frontiers, he proposes settling them on small patches of reclaimed land, shrewdly providing:

"The acreage should be limited to that which will be sufficient to reasonably support a family. . . . These farms should not only be so small that they would not be speculative ventures in unearned increment, but they should be non-transferable to anyone holding any equally large tract of land in the same State. This will prevent their being aggregated in the course of years into great estates. . . . Enough land for a family, but not enough to make a new draft on the labor supply." His measure of what will suffice to support a family may be gathered from the following statement:

"In almost every southern State, instances can be cited where white men, under the wise direction of the Department of Agriculture, support their families and make an excellent living upon small farms of from 10 to 30 acres."

Mr. Lane's solicitude about the labor market suffering from a draft to the farm would seem to indicate no desire to mitigate the severity of that competition which makes of labor the helpless, servile tool of capital, and the master

of both, the landed interest. Nowhere in Mr. Lane's scheme do we find the slightest perception of the wrong done to labor by the foreclosing of its free access to the source of production.

That the Secretary of the Interior does not seriously believe that large holdings in themselves are dangerous to society, might fairly be inferred from his spontaneous offer of a huge block of Indian lands to Wall St. But there is further proof. As is known, there exist vast holdings of oil, mining and agricultural land in all parts of the country. If land-holding on a large scale is a menace of revolution, then there is an imperative prior duty to perform. To raise such a fuss over the small as yet unreclaimed farms of the returned soldiers, while vast and valuable areas are in the hands of syndicates and corporations and held out of use, to the prejudice and peril of our whole economic and social structure, is an opera bouffe performance in execrably bad taste. To point to our soldier lads as a possible source of revolution, through an eventual development of large landholdings in their hands out of their petty allotments of swamp, jungle and desert, while covering with fiscal privileges and other benevolent consideration, the existing monopoly of our country's most valued natural resources, is more than opera bouffe; it is more dangerous to the welfare of the country than could possibly be any passionate uprising of social discontent. The statesman who points out a danger, and then persists in ignoring its most glaring manifestations, reveals the very qualities of indecision and lack of perspective that invariably are responsible for revolutions *de facto*.

Gerrit Johnson's Letter

WE ARE glad to be able to print the letter of Mr. Gerrit Johnson, which appears on another page despite its apparent confusions and some contradictions.

While believing, as Henry George did, that our appeals should be made to the conscience and emotions of men rather than primarily or exclusively to their intellects, Mr. Johnson evidences a curious distrust of his own theory, for he says that Single Taxers, even though they are right, can go on appealing forever in the hope that the truth they hold will prevail.

There is so much that is true and beautiful in Mr. Johnson's letter that it is an ungrateful task to indicate what seems to us the practical imperfections of his philosophy and the untenable character of both his diagnosis and remedy for the California trouble.

The bill which Mr. Johnson favors for California would carry an exemption clause of \$5,000, and he states that ninety per cent. of the homes of that State are probably below that figure. He would tax all franchises, corporations, stocks, bonds, incomes and inheritances. He would at the same time abolish all taxes on personal property. That is, he would exempt all personalty and tax the evidences or shadows of the thing itself. It is curious that Mr. Johnson, who is a moral enthusiast and a believer in

going after what we want, should seek to couple his proposal with appeals that we tax franchises and corporations, apparently oblivious to the fact that such taxes are paid by patrons and consumers, and are burdens on industry that tend to defeat the very object we set out to accomplish. It is clear that Mr. Johnson has not yet mastered the practical aspects of the questions with which the Single Tax deals. He is moved too exclusively by his emotions.

Out of the fund derived from land values he would provide for mothers' pensions, old age pensions, women and children's pensions, and out-of-work benefits. He seems to think that this would help to carry the measure of justice for which we are striving. What we have still to learn is this: If men and women are not prepared to accept the Single Tax it is useless to try to persuade them by promises of legislative and governmental favors. Mr. Johnson is trying to associate his proposal with such promises in order to induce them to accept the reform which Single Taxers insist is vital and fundamental. The hope is vain.

Mr. Johnson quotes Henry George, "I am for men," and then defends his proposal as favoring a class, the class that never yet, he assures us, has enjoyed class legislation. He has forgotten Luke North's division of society into "those who care and those who don't," in the light of which illuminating phrase the talk of class distinctions dissolves into thin air.

He is quite certain that there are not more than a hundred men in California who comprehend the philosophy of Henry George. May we not, without offence, say that Mr. Johnson is estopped from pronouncing such an opinion, for he tells us that he has probably read less of Henry George than any other Single Taxer? His numerical classification of the Single Taxers of California is thus deprived of all color of "expert testimony."

Yet we are glad to have Mr. Johnson's contribution. There is much in it to commend. One statement is that the crowd is ahead of us, and that we take ourselves too seriously. Another is that the Henry George doctrine is the most radical ever presented by man. His idea that not ten per cent. of the "professional" Single Taxers, by which he perhaps means professed Single Taxers, realize how dangerous it is, may take its place with other speculations in his letter, rendered dubious by his confession of unfamiliarity with Henry George's writings.

One point in conclusion. Mr. Johnson need not wonder why Single Tax clubs do not grow—they die aborning, rather. It is because a Single Tax club that does not have for its purpose the putting of Single Tax into politics is an anomaly. The Single Tax is primarily a political issue, not merely an educational problem. Its identification with a club spells inevitable degeneracy. Clubs are all right for cults; literary and social and debating clubs will flourish till the end of time. But we soon get tired of talking Single Tax to one another.

Had there been a political organization in California there might have been differences, but there would not have been permanent differences, nor would such tempo-