

News From Many States

CALIFORNIA. Conditions in California are such (fifty per cent. of 4,587,581 acres are owned in 250 holdings) that the Immigration Commission of the State urges the adoption of "a graduated land value tax to make large holdings unprofitable." The Commission recommends a formal declaration by the State of a land policy and legislation requiring from county assessors the annual gathering and tabulation of statistics regarding the size of farms, number of land-owners and other data. The report concludes with a strong recommendation for a graduated land tax. A bill on the line of these recommendations laying a surtax on large holdings was badly defeated in the legislature.

As we go to press we are apprised by telegram that a representative convention of the Single Taxers of California was held at Fresno, on May 11. There were representatives from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno, Oceana, Visalia, San Diego, and other parts of the State. The report is that the Convention was harmonious and enthusiastic. Among those present were Messrs. Maguire, Waterbury, Beckwith, Brodeau, Lusk, Lincoln, Chadwick, Dessau, Woodhead, Mrs. Anna George DeMille, and many others.

William L. Ross will leave Philadelphia for Los Angeles some time in June to take nominal charge of the affairs of the Great Adventure. Mr. Ross is an old Single Taxer who has the confidence of the movement, and it is hoped will be able to harmonize all differences that are not differences of principle. He will devote his entire time to the cause.

That the privileged interests of California are thoroughly alarmed is evidenced by the attempt to introduce in the Senate an amendment to the Constitution barring initiatory measures for the Single Tax. This attempt was defeated. Governor Stephens strongly criticized the proposed amendment, and while the support given it was ominously strong, reason triumphed, and twenty-two senators voted against the amendment, which went down to defeat. A senator defending the amendment said:

"The property owners of the State have been compelled to spend more than \$1,000,000 in eight years to conduct campaigns of education against the Single Tax. It looks as though it is a case of perpetual motion. And there is always a danger that the vigilance of the electorate will lapse long enough to let the amendment slip though."

The Constitution of Ohio remains the only State whose constitution contains the inhibition aimed at by the enemies of the Single Tax, and prohibits the use of the initiative and referendum to obtain that desired reform. This stands as a monument to the strange and inconceivable programme of action inaugurated by the political ambitions of Mr. Herbert Bigelow in that State, and slavishly defended by the now defunct Kiefer Commission, aided with money contributed by Single Taxers to further the political interests of a man who said he would "as soon think of advocating polygamy for the State of Ohio as the Single Tax at this time." It is desirable to refer to this incident now as illus-

trating a phase of Single Tax activity (God save the mark) now happily dead or dying in the new spirit that is stirring.

MINNESOTA. A bill to levy a ten per cent. tax on the net or natural value of iron ore mined in the State was introduced in the legislature. This bill would have brought into the State treasury about \$7,000,000. It was lost by two votes in the House. A bill to greatly reduce the tax on small residences and outbuildings attached thereto, farm crops and machinery, and mechanical tools and implements, passed the House by a good majority, but could not reach the Senate because it came so near the close of the session. A bill to increase the gross earnings taxes on telephone companies was killed in the Senate, partly because it would have resulted in higher telephone rates to users. The demand for these measures, it may be said, comes principally from the farmers.

NEW YORK. Single Taxers were represented at a recent meeting at the City Hall called to consider the question of high rents, before Mayor Hylan, by James A. Robinson, of Philadelphia, and George Lloyd, of the Single Tax Party of New York, and M. W. Norwalk. Mr. Robinson announced that he was the organizer of the National Single Tax Party, at which Mayor Hylan evidenced some interest. A resolution recommending that the city erect houses was presented, at which every land speculator present showed his ill-concealed delight, hoping that he might be the fortunate one whose site would be selected for these prospective homes for the homeless.

One incident is worth recording. A young lady recommended that the idle cemeteries of the city be utilized for the building of temporary homes. She said that there were no activities of any kind on these sites, that the people buried there had been a long time dead, and that there appeared to be no available land elsewhere. His Honor seemed to shrink from the suggestion, and assured the lady that there were plenty of vacant lots in the city. This was evidently what she had been waiting for, and she at once asked that if such were the case why His Honor had not recommended that they be taxed into use by taking the annual rental value. The young lady, Miss Simms, a member of the typographical union, has not been hitherto known as a Single Taxer.

A meeting at the Party headquarters on Saturday, May 3, met to consider the practicability of placing in nomination candidates in as many assembly districts as possible with the workers and funds at the Party's disposal. A list of a dozen names were placed in nomination from which the nominating committee was authorized to make their selection. Four names were listed for President of the Board of Aldermen, from which the nominating committee will make its selection for that office.

A resolution was passed authorizing the appointment by the chair of sixteen delegates from New York to the National Convention to be held in this city in June.

On the Sunday following another meeting took place at the headquarters in New York for the purpose of organizing

a provisional National Committee. At the present writing this committee consists of Messrs. Macauley, Cohen, and Dangerfield, representing the three States, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, where party organization has been perfected. It was decided to hold a National Convention in New York City on June 28. Mr. James A. Robinson, organizer of the National Single Tax Party, was authorized to collect pledges for three months' contribution to organize New England, and E. Yancey Cohen was made secretary and treasurer of this provisional committee.

The high rent protest agitation that is seething in New York is not being overlooked as an opportunity by the Single Tax Party of this city. Meetings have been held at headquarters in which the house renters of the neighborhood, all of whom are sufferers from the exactions of landlords, have been invited, and free legal advice is offered by the lawyers of the party to those who may need it.

A meeting of five hundred renters took place on Tuesday, May 13, at the London Casino, Bronx, which was addressed by a number of speakers among whom were N. C. B. Fowles, Mrs. Alma Ford, Robert C. Macauley, and George Lloyd. Arthur Morino presided. The meeting evidenced an enthusiastic response to the Single Tax.

OREGON. The Single Tax measure for Oregon in its amended form follows herewith, and petitions are now on the street for signatures.

Section 1 of Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Oregon shall be and hereby is amended to read as follows:

SECTION 1. From July 1, 1921, to and until July 1, 1925, all revenues necessary for the maintenance of state, county, municipal and district government shall be raised by a tax on the value of land irrespective of improvements in or on it; and thereafter the full rental value of land, irrespective of improvements, shall be taken in lieu of all other taxes for the maintenance of government, and for such other purposes as the people may direct. The intent of this amendment is to forever prevent the exploitation of the individual through the monopoly of natural resources, community made values and opportunities.

Preliminary work for this amendment has started, and an organization has been formed, with J. R. Hermann as campaign manager, and Christina Mock as treasurer. Headquarters have been established at 315 Stock Exchange Building, Portland, to which donations may be sent. Prof. Hart, of Reed College, will take part in the work, and Harry Rice, who is business agent for the machinists' union, one of the most powerful in the State, is taking an active interest in the movement. The SINGLE TAX REVIEW has been recognized as the official Single Tax publication, and a membership in the Oregon League will carry with it a subscription to the REVIEW.

The opponents of the Single Tax are now alive, and the papers of Oregon are beginning to print articles against the principle. The Portland Realty Board have taken alarm and have called for the appointment of a committee to fight the proposed measure. Single Tax communications are beginning to appear in the papers. Soon the whole State will be stirring.

PHILADELPHIA. Single Taxers of this city are not neglecting the great opportunities presented by the anti-rent agitation. At one of the centrally located theaters a tenants' union meeting of over a thousand people cheered Robert C. Macauley's exposition of the Single Tax till the rafters rang.

A meeting of the Tenants' Association in Northwest Philadelphia at 52nd and Girard Ave., where Mr. Macauley and others spoke, aroused great enthusiasm. An interesting incident resulted from this meeting.

Two days later a landlord in the neighborhood who had just raised the rents of his tenants two dollars a month appeared at the door of each of his tenants and explaining that he did not wish to be held up to the scorn and indignation of his fellow citizens as a rent profiteer, returned the two dollars and cancelled the increases.

TEXAS. A recent spirited meeting of the Just Taxation League of Houston discussed the question of making the Single Tax a political issue. Lieut. S. A. Sneedman said it should be the aim of Single Taxers to put the Single Tax over by independent political action, and J. W. Canada, editor of the *Southern Farmer*, urged that the League take steps to inject it into politics. It was pointed out that the State Federation of Labor at its last convention had endorsed the Single Tax.

The officers of the Just Taxation League are C. A. Teagle, president; Mrs. G. A. Young, vice-president; Walter Clay, second vice-president; Lieut. Sneedman, James Charlton, H. W. Steele, and W. F. Lane, head important committees for special work.

The memory of the late J. J. Pastoriza has been honored by the unveiling of a bronze bust in the auditorium at Houston. The bust is the work of a local sculptor, Enrico Cerrachio, who was a close friend of Mr. Pastoriza. The bust will rest in the public library until a permanent place is found.

It was but a few short years ago that Mr. Pastoriza was inaugurated mayor of Houston. The campaign was one of the most exciting in the city's history, and a larger total vote was cast than at any previous election.

At the unveiling of the bust eulogies of the life and work of the noted Single Taxer were delivered by a number of prominent citizens.

Ed Harrell, who presided, paid a beautiful tribute to his friend of many years standing, saying: "I was never associated with a truer man, or one who helped more to fight the battles of those who were not able to fight them for themselves. He had nothing but love for his friends, and in his heart there was no bitterness for anyone."

Judge C. A. Teagle spoke of the late mayor's plan of taxation which met so much favor, and referred to him as a man whose "dream was one of universal brotherhood and peace for all humanity, the poor and the oppressed, and to accomplish something for mankind."

Four Constitutional Amendments are to be voted on May 24th before this issue reaches its readers but not in

time to announce the result, as follows: "Amendment to the State Constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of Intoxicating Liquors," "Providing for and relating to Equal Suffrage," and another raising the Governor's salary from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year. The fourth gives the legislature "Power to give or lend, or authorize the giving or lending, of the Credit of the State for the purpose of Assisting Citizens, Heads of Families, to Acquire or Improve their Homes."

The caption to this last amendment should read, "An Act to Raise the Price of Land and to Provide Relief Out of the State Treasury to Speculators in Land." The State of Texas is following California's lead in "How not to do it."

There were many revenue bills introduced for passage at the Regular Session following conventional methods. Two bills provided for a 2% tax on vendor's lien notes and proposed that the tax had to be paid before the notes were collectable by law. There were several bills proposing "gross receipts" taxes covering such businesses as oil production, coal, sulphur, salt, lignite, etc. Only one of these, that on gross production of oil finally passed. The discussions on the floor of the House were interesting as they disclosed the feeling that a tax on industries would necessarily hamper them and possibly drive them out of the State or else add to the cost to the final consumer.

Two amendments to the Constitution relative to taxation were proposed. The graduated land tax amendment retains all the present Constitutional provisions for the general property tax but adds the following proposition. "The Legislature may impose a graduated tax on all lands owned by natural persons or corporations in excess of homestead exemptions as provided in Article 16, Section 51 of the Constitution." "Said graduations may be upon an acreage basis or upon values or both acreage and values." It will be noted by the thoughtful that this proposed amendment makes no recognition of a principle. It merely leaves to the legislature the power to act and what it proposes may be a matter of expediency. It indirectly recognizes the evils of large acreage holdings and gives the power to punish. There is no recognition of principle of the right of society to land values.

The other proposed amendment to the Constitution reads as follows: "All land in this State, whether owned by natural persons or corporations, other than municipal shall be taxed in proportion to its value, which shall be ascertained as may be provided by law. No tax shall be imposed on improvements in or on land or on personal property. The Legislature may impose an inheritance tax. It may also tax incomes of both natural persons and corporations other than municipal. It may also impose occupation taxes, both upon natural persons and upon corporations, engaged in occupations coming under police powers."

This section as proposed leaves out the phrase "all taxes shall be equal and uniform." It eliminates the word property and puts in its stead the word land. Then it adds a sentence which contains the meat of the whole proposition,

"No tax shall be imposed on improvements in or on land or on personal property."

It leaves to the legislature the power to impose an inheritance tax, income tax on natural persons and corporations other than municipalities, and, also very properly, leaves to the legislature the power to levy occupation taxes upon persons and corporations whose occupations come properly within police powers.

William A. Black has been defeated for Commissioner of Taxation of San Antonio, but leads his ticket.

The National Convention in June

AT a recent conference of delegates representing the Single Tax Party organization in the States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, a resolution was adopted approving the formation of a National Single Tax Party, and the holding of a Convention composed of delegates from States of the Union in which a Single Tax Party organization is in existence, and designating the undersigned as a Provisional National Committee with power to issue a call for a National Convention.

Pursuant to the foregoing authority vested in the undersigned as such committee, it is hereby announced that at 10.30 a.m., on Saturday, June 28th, 1919, at the headquarters of the New York State Single Tax Party, No. 246 West 14th Street, New York, a Convention will be held for the purpose of organizing a Single Tax Party of the United States, of electing a National Committee and of transacting such other business as may be brought before the Convention.

Delegates to the Convention must be chosen by the organized States in the proportion of one delegate to each one hundred votes or major part thereof cast for a Single Tax Party candidate at the last State election.

Provision will be made at the Convention for the representation of such States now organized as have thus far not cast votes for a Single Tax Party candidate.

ROBERT C. MACAULEY,

Chairman, Single Tax Party, Pennsylvania,

JAMES DANGERFIELD,

Chairman, Single Tax Party, New York,

E. YANCEY COHEN,

Chairman, Single Tax Party, New Jersey,

LOUIS KRAMER,

Chairman, Single Tax Party, Delaware,

Provisional National Committee.

Dated, New York, June 1st, 1919.

THE reference department of any public library is incomplete without the Single Tax Five Year Book. Ask your librarian if he has it.

NINETY per cent. of the land of California is owned by less than three per cent. of the people.

CANADIAN soldiers are shying at the trick of "putting them on land" in the wilderness! *Cleveland Citizen.*