

News from Many States

CALIFORNIA. Following is the amendment finally submitted by the friends of the Great Adventure and concurred in by Johnson, Briggs, Judge Ryckman and Mr. and Mrs. DeMille. The leading Single Taxers in San Diego, San Francisco, and other parts of the State have united in approving it.

WHEREAS, since 1879, Section 2, of Article XVII of the Constitution of the State of California has declared that:

"The holding of large tracts of land, uncultivated and unimproved, by corporations or individuals, is against the public interest, and should be discouraged by all means not inconsistent with the rights of private property." and

WHEREAS, the value attaching to land is created by the people and of right belongs to the people, and should be taken in taxes by the community as needed for public purposes,

THEREFORE, to accomplish that end the people of the State of California do enact as follows:

Article XIII of the Constitution of the State of California is hereby amended by adding to it a new section which shall be numbered Section 15, and shall read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII

SECTION 15. On and after the first day of January, 1921, the following classes of property shall be exempt from taxation:

All machinery, implements, tools, shipping, manufactured articles, merchandise, moneys, credits, stocks, bonds, motor vehicles and other vehicles, furniture and all other personal property; also planted trees, vines, and crops. Provided that nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the taxation now in effect of privately owned utilities for the use of the public highways.

As such exemptions become effective, improvements in, on, or over land shall be assessed on the same basis of valuation and rate as that of the preceding year, and all other revenues for county, municipal and district purposes shall be levied upon and collected from the value of the land.

On and after the first day of January, 1923, all improvements in, on, under, through or over land shall be exempt from taxation.

As such exemptions become effective all revenues for county, municipal and district purposes shall be levied upon and collected from the value of land.

On and after the first day of January, 1924, Section 14 of Article XIII of this Constitution (providing a system of State revenue) shall become inoperative, and all public revenues shall be raised by taxation on the value of land exclusive of improvements thereon or therein.

And the General Assembly is hereby authorized and directed to enact appropriate laws for the apportionment and collection and payment to the State of revenues for State purposes.

Nothing in this Section shall delay or prevent the collection of taxes levied before any respective exemption herein described becomes effective.

And provided further, that war veteran, church and college exemptions are not affected by this section.

And provided also, that charges for and revenues from privately owned public utilities shall not be affected hereby.

All Constitutional provisions and laws of the State of California in conflict with this Section, or any part of it, are hereby repealed.

CONNECTICUT. There will be no State election in this State until 1920, when the Single Tax Party will have a State ticket in the field.

John Cairnes is addressing enthusiastic meetings, and the ground is being prepared for the fight next year.

MARYLAND. A committee of Baltimore Single Taxers filed with the Mayor on September 6th two initiative petitions containing about 42,000 voters' signatures, proposing amendments to the "Home Rule" Charter which the City of Baltimore adopted last year. One of these amendments is to bring some fifty million dollars worth of property in the Old Annex under the full city tax rate. Nearly half of this is undeveloped property which is now paying only one-third of the city rate, and the balance which is classified as suburban is paying two-thirds. The other amendment provides for the complete exemption of merchandise and a 10% annual reduction in the tax rate on buildings down to 50% of the regular city rate.

The movement is quite generally recognized as a first step towards the Single Tax. The head of the Appeal Tax Court, who is a confirmed reactionary, has cried out in alarm, and the Real Estate Exchange, while favoring the first measure, seems inclined to side with the land speculators rather than home owners on the second. But the Single Taxers are preparing to make a vigorous campaign and feel very hopeful about the outcome. At any rate, the November election will show a most interesting test of the growth of Henry George's ideas here.

Two Maryland towns, Capitol Heights and Perryville, have enjoyed complete local Single Tax for two years, and the authorities in both places are vigorous upholders of the system. Hyattsville abolished taxes on personal property and levied an 80 cent rate on buildings and 85 cents on sites last year, and was expected to exempt buildings this year, but the land speculators finally won after a warm three house session of the Council. The Mayor of Laurel attempted to put Single Tax in operation there this Spring, but one of the Council insisted that the measure should first be ratified by the voters at the next town election, which will be held in February or March. Garrett Park and Takoma Park, towns of 1500 and 2500 respectively, are levying lower taxes on buildings than on sites. Considerable Single Tax sentiment has been aroused in other Maryland towns, but no actual steps have yet been taken in those places.

MICHIGAN. F. F. Ingram, well known for his activities in conducting a very successful Free Forum in Detroit each Winter and in connection with which was published during the lecture season a modest little newspaper, called *Forum Folks*, has concluded that the time has come when Michigan will be willing to support a regular weekly newspaper advocating reform ideas. W. J. Black, for a number of years on the editorial staffs of Detroit newspapers, and more recently located in Washington, will be its managing editor. Mr. Ingram, as is well known, is a prosperous Detroit manufacturer, and an outspoken champion of reform. He is one of the vice-presidents of the Michigan Site Value Tax League.

Preliminary steps have been taken to organize a site value tax club in Ann Arbor, in the endeavor to arouse interest in the taxation problem among the 9,000 students who have been flocking to the city the past month to enter the University of Michigan.

President Smith, of the Michigan Site Value Tax League, is seeing what can be done in the way of organizing those in Detroit opposed to the high rent wave which is sweeping unearned increments into landlords' pockets.

Rev. I. Paul Taylor, Single Taxer, is writing a book on "Prosperous Detroit." A chapter or two will be devoted to the increase of land values, and telling who profit by them. Among the illustrations will be half-tones of slum sections, as well as pictures of garages, showing how much better housed are automobiles than human beings.

Prof. R. W. Sellars, of the University of Michigan, is advocating the absorption by society of the "social surplus," and he quotes Prof. L. T. Hobhouse to the effect that unskilled labor "ought not to be denuded of all inherited property. As a citizen he should have a certain share in the social inheritance." Prof. Hobhouse, in his "Liberalism," speaks of land value as "social surplus."

Grand Rapids, which once had a flourishing Single Tax club, is being urged to hold a series of public meetings the coming Winter, for the discussion of the taxation problem.

Chas. H. Ingersoll is expected to address the Detroit Board of Commerce, this Winter, on the housing problem.

NEW YORK. The New York Single Tax Party has filed 10,000 signatures to petitions for the nomination of Joseph Dana Miller for President of the Board of Aldermen, the highest office to be filled in this city at the coming election. This number is 7,000 more than the law requires. The party has also filed nominating petitions for the following candidates for the legislature from Greater New York; Benjamin W. Burger, Henry Donovan, George R. Macey, Alma Ford, Jens Peter Hansen and James Dangerfield. The two last named have been rejected by the Board of Elections on the ground that the signatures to the petitions are "too similar." This arbitrary ruling will be contested in the courts, and the lawyers of the party, Messrs. Loew and Burger, have lost no time in preparing for the legal battle to insure the appearance of all our candidates on the ballot.

It so happens that the names to the petitions for these

two candidates, since they were mostly secured by members of the party, can cause no suspicion as to their genuineness. Mr. Curtis, candidate of the Labor Party, is rejected for the same alleged reason.

This should draw the attention of our citizens to the grave defects of our nominating machinery. Here is a law which prescribes the mode by which groups of citizens may make nominations. The precautions guarding against fraudulent signatures are laid down in the law, together with various details that must be followed in securing notary's witness to their genuineness. In the case of the Single Tax Party these legal requirements were scrupulously met. Yet three gentlemen have it in their power to decide the acceptance or rejection of such nominations on such flimsy ground as that the signatures to nominating petitions "look similar."

Pending the legal battle to get our two rejected nominees on the ballot, the campaign progresses. Open air meetings in various parts of the city are being held. Among the speakers are George Lloyd, James A. Robinson, John Goldsmith, Charles Ryan, Frank Chodorov, Samuel R. Shoup, Jerome C. Reis, Antonio Bastida, and others. We need speakers in Brooklyn, and it is hoped that our friends in that borough will wake to the opportunity that is offered them.

The crowds at these meetings are in all cases receptive and in many instances most enthusiastic. The possible vote for the head of the ticket in this election is not troubling the members of the party. They are building for the future. What they are delighted over is the evidence presented that they are making converts. From six to a dozen applications for membership in the Single Tax Party are secured at every one of these open air meetings. The spirit of '86 is being aroused. We find the name of Henry George is still a name to conjure with.

This is evidenced by ample testimony. An old man who was asked to sign the petition said, sadly, "No, I had a party once, but it went out of existence and since then I have taken no interest in politics." "What party was that?" questioned the canvasser. "It was the party of Henry George." "Good," said the canvasser, "ours is the same party—born again." Then the old man brightened up and hastened to sign the petition.

OHIO. There is declared to be a shortage of 20,000 homes in the city of Cleveland. State Representative, George S. Myers announced his intention to introduce a bill fixing rents at 15 per cent. return. It will be unlawful to exact rents above that amount.

Such measures are worse than useless. Losing sight of the distinction between land values and house values, such laws would only tend to reduce the quality and character of homes and at the same time to secure landlords a return greater than profits of many if not most productive industries.

A special Grand Jury has been investigating the food situation in Cayuga County. It has, apparently, tried to

do its work thoroughly and honestly. On the housing question it makes this recommendation:

"It is our recommendation that there be an amendment to the Constitution of Ohio that will permit a lowering of the tax rate on buildings. This would increase building enterprise and lower rentals."

OKLAHOMA. From the city of Ada comes the news that Mr. M. L. Chambers, a young printer who gained considerable publicity a short time ago by the remarkable run he made as an Independent for the legislature, now announces that he will run for Congress. To a reporter of the *Ada Evening News* Mr. Chambers announces the platform on which he will make his run:

"It is true I intend to make the race for Congress in the Democratic primary next year. It is somewhat early to announce for next year's primary, but I am going to agitate questions never before discussed in Oklahoma, and I want to give the people plenty of time in which to get acquainted with my ideas and I want to put all other candidates on notice that the man who beats me for the great honor is going to have to offer the people something mighty good in the ending of the many ills that beset society at present.

"In the first place, I am one of those men who believe that the land was put here for the benefit of all God's creatures, and that no one man has any more right to live in the world than another. I am opposed to one man paying another man for the use of God's great universe which was put here for the use of all. I am certain that by next year the people will be so pressed down by the heavy cost of living that they will be ready to apply a real cure to this problem and quit listening to the soft soaping of smooth tongued grafters and of piano players in the bawdy houses of plutocracy.

The burden of the high cost of living can never be removed until our tax laws are so changed that the whole rental paid to the landholder by society goes back to society in the shape of taxes.

"A great deal has been said of late about supplying land to returning soldiers. Nothing has come of this agitation and nothing can come out of it, as nothing practical has yet been suggested. There should be something done for the returned soldiers and not only for the returned soldier, but for the fathers of the returned soldiers and their mothers as well as those who stayed at home and supplied the material with which their sons overthrew the damnable Hun. There are 30,000 tenant farmers in this congressional district and in Oklahoma there are more than 100,000 tenants. I propose to do something for all these people in the matter of land ownership, and what I propose is not to send them to the malarial swamps of the South, but to place them on the uncultivated lands of our own fair State. And the way I mean to do it is by the adoption of the straight-out Henry George Single Tax, in which the title will be in the name of the individual, but the land value will belong to us all."

OREGON. Work on the Initiative Petition is proceeding, and much activity is in evidence at the headquarters of the Single Tax League, 316 Stock Exchange Building, Portland.

On Sunday J. R. Hermann addressed the outing of the Teamsters' and Truck Drivers' Union. This was by invitation, which was extended by the union to all admirers of Henry George, on the anniversary of the birthday of the Prophet of San Francisco. The Teamsters' Union organized in 1900, has over nine hundred members. Over five

hundred listened to Mr. Hermann's exposition of the Single Tax.

In the interim of getting signatures to the petitions, Single Taxers of Oregon are writing letters to the press which are printed liberally. Besides, the Oregon papers have printed several articles from the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*, among them the editorial article, "Great Britain's Land Revolution."

Mr. Hermann has extended an invitation to Judge Ben Lindsay to speak for the Single Tax in Portland, and if the Judge's health permits he will doubtless accept. Judge Lindsay is still suffering from the effect of shell shock and gas received in France, but is recovering. Friends of Judge Lindsay here will join the friends in Oregon in wishing him a speedy return to health. Mr. Hermann was one of the original campaign boosters for Judge Lindsay.

PENNSYLVANIA. A complete ticket has been nominated in Philadelphia by the Single Tax Party, with Oliver McKnight for mayor.

The resolution subjoined was passed unanimously at a meeting of 700 residents of the 46th Ward of this city. They had a large number of copies typed. It will be presented officially to Mayor and Council. For this a half dozen Single Taxers deserve credit, among whom are Thomas H. McCaffrey, John H. Dix, J. B. Chamberlain, and Fred E. Mayer. These men deserve great credit for the work they have done in this matter and also for the distribution of thousands of pamphlets. In this work Sam H. Reading, the only colored member of the Philadelphia party, contributed splendid service. The Resolution follows:

"We, the undersigned residents of Philadelphia, victims of profiteering landlords and profiteering land speculators, do hereby call upon his honor the Mayor of Philadelphia, and Councils, to take such action as shall afford immediate relief from an intolerable condition.

We demand that all houses purposely held vacant for 30 days by an owner or his representative, shall be declared a public nuisance, and that the owner of such vacant houses shall be fined for maintaining a public nuisance and that such vacant houses shall be declared eligible for prospective tenants and offered to them at a moderate rental.

As there is an extraordinary need for more dwellings, we demand that all vacant building lots within the limits of Philadelphia, be declared eligible for immediate use, and that, in order to force such building lots into use, the Board of Taxation and Revision be ordered by Mayor and Councils to raise the assessment on such vacant building lots, and levy a tax on same which shall be equal to the full rental value of such vacant lots.

We demand that all unimproved land within the limits of Philadelphia assessed as farm land, shall be immediately re-assessed and that a tax be levied upon such unimproved land equal to the full rental value of same.

We hereby pledge ourselves to support only such candidates for Mayor and Councils, Magistrates and Judges,

as shall openly declare themselves against land speculation and rent profiteering."

The publicity given to the first National Convention of the Single Tax Party by the newspapers of Philadelphia was shared by the *Record*, *Ledger*, *Bulletin*, *Inquirer* and *North American*, all of which gave the new party good notices.

Nearly all of these papers publish letters from time to time from Mr. McKnight and others in which the Single Tax Party is featured.

This year the Delaware County Single Taxers have decided to put a county ticket in the field. The preemption was made Sept. 17, the signers being Henry W. Hetzel, Moylan, secretary of the local committee; Geo. Mayer, Media; Warner T. Lowe, Media; Robert J. Richardson, Clifton Heights; John W. Dix, Ardmore Park. The committee has planned for a real campaign against land speculation and land monopoly by the Single Tax route.

TEXAS. The Just Taxation League of Houston will soon start a campaign for a thousand members. Lieut. C. A. Sneiderman, the secretary, in an announcement issued to the people of the city says: "Pastoriza sowed the seed well here and we ought to have the strongest Single Tax organization in the country to fight for its adoption, because the people of Houston have already had a taste of the beneficent effects of even a modified form of the Single Tax. I believe if Pastoriza were alive today and the Houston plan of taxation were in vogue, more nearly approaching the Single Tax yearly, Houston would be the greatest city in Texas, and our officials would not be wondering where to get revenues for the paying of higher salaries, for better roads or for the establishment of a municipal hospital."

Lieut. Sneiderman has resigned his office as secretary of the Houston Foundation to assume the secretaryship of the Just Taxation League. He will work in conjunction with William A. Black, of San Antonio, and will have an office at 809 Hoffman Building, Houston. The *Post* and other Houston papers have given space to Lieut. Sneiderman's announcement in his letter resigning the secretaryship of the Houston Foundation in which he says: "Realizing as I do that every man should give expression to the best that is within himself, I feel that I can best serve by working for fundamental reform, true democracy, justice and equality of opportunity for all."

Activity in New Jersey

NEW JERSEY Single Taxers are "strong" for the Single Tax Party. This State has in the field a rather full ticket for the assembly, several candidates for State Senators and a candidate for Governor, Mark M. Dintenfuss.

In Hudson County Chas. Goldzier is the candidate for State Senator, and in Bergen County Edward M. Caffal is the candidate for the Senatorship.

The Party has Assembly candidates in seven counties.

Essex County has 12: Harry B. Ackerson, Raynor M. Bedell, William A. Bock, Alfred Bourgeois, Eugene T. Leach, Herman G. Loew, Percy S. Marcellus, Jeremiah V. B. Parkes, Frank L. Pollard, Joseph E. Stegner, William C. Thompson and William J. Wallace.

There are six in Hudson County: Wm. B. DuBois, J. T. R. Proctor, Joseph Larche, Hugh J. Brennan, Samuel R. Shoup and Frederick F. Thoma.

Passaic County has five: Thomas W. Ward, David White, Stephen Grosz, David Fearn and Henry Moore.

Bergen County has three: Orrin S. Breiby, James R. Mount and Mr. Hellier.

Union County has two: Edwin J. Jones and Wm. B. Wakeham.

Monmouth County has one: Frank Ryan.

Morris County has one: Theo. J. Werner.

We have had a gratifying amount of newspaper publicity throughout the State, demonstrating the fact that a political party is news and therefore makes the editor take notice. Not one newspaper has been unkind, but on the contrary a number have had encouraging editorials.

We have begun the holding of open air mass meetings to carry the doctrine of the party to the plain man in the street. The speakers have had the pleasure of addressing large crowds, who gave great evidence of being intensely interested in the organization of this new party. One needs but speak to crowds out in the open to gain the very distinct impression that the voters are more than ripe for the upbuilding of a new American party with American ideals. We have held meetings, thus far, in Newark, Passaic, Hackensack, Westfield, Bayonne, Paterson, Elizabeth and Rahway. As soon as filing of nomination petitions are completed, we will hold mass meetings in the open air every night. A tour in which every county in the State will be visited and practically every town of any size in each county will hear our speakers, will begin about September 20th. We have had considerable literature printed and are distributing an excellent statement on the present day issues by our candidate for Governor. The voters read it with great eagerness. Never have we found one thrown away.

Several of the counties have organized county committees.

That a separate and distinct Single Tax Party is the best method for calling attention to the Single Tax and is the sane method for conserving the results of the work, is amply demonstrated every day in New Jersey.

JEROME C. REIS, State Organizer.

J. R. HERMANN has received the following letter from O. R. Hartwig, president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor:

"In these days of reconstruction movements the Single Tax question should be given the most careful consideration, and I therefore urge upon all members of organized labor an earnest investigation of this most important question."

Mr. Hermann in addressing union meetings makes use of this letter as an introduction.