

the absurdity of the thing seemed to strike them. The city officials compromised, and thus prevented the defacement of the block; but not before the lesson had come home to thousands who would otherwise never have had any doubts that our present method of taxation was the best that could be devised.

Then came the Street Railway affair, the end of which is not yet. To show how the principles, or want of principles, upon which franchises of this nature rest, work for their own destruction, and at the same time to explain the matter more fully, it is necessary to refer back a few years to the lighting franchise.

Four or five years ago the street lighting franchise expired. Our Association contended that the municipality should own its own plant, and we brought on some of our Single Tax orators from the United States to explain our ideas in a public meeting. The public seemed to take very little interest in the matter. A consolidation of several lighting companies had recently taken place, but there were still several independent ones, competition among which the people thought would safeguard their interests. The consolidated interest eventually was awarded the contract at rates pretty favorable to the city. Shortly afterwards amalgamations began to take place, and about six months ago the most powerful competitor was brought into the fold, so that to-day there is but one company in the city. Then the cost of gas and electricity for private use began to advance, and there is no reason to suppose that further advances will not be made in the near future. This naturally aroused the public.

Some months ago it began to appear that the Street Railway, whose franchise had still about twenty years to run, was going to move to have it extended. The Single Tax Association was again to the front, and soon had published and distributed thousands of pamphlets dealing with the subject in a sufficiently exhaustive manner to show what the public was sacrificing in granting an extension. These pamphlets have been the hand-book of those who have done the most effective work against the railway. In fact it was stated by one of the Aldermen that had it not been for the Association the railway would have won almost in the first round. As it is, the railway has been defeated in every round fought before the Council. The connection between the lighting franchise referred to, and that of the Street Railway, becomes more apparent when it is remembered that the two interests are so closely in touch with each other that an amalgamation between them was common gossip for a time. Many believe it will yet take place. It will, therefore, not be surprising to hear that the feeling against extending the privileges of such a powerful interest is very strong.

In all this work, of course, our Association loses no opportunity of bringing for-

ward the Single Tax argument that the public is the rightful owner of the values which it creates. The fight will doubtless develop many interesting phases, and an account of these will be forwarded to the *Review* from time to time.

T. C. ALLUM, Secy.

ENGLAND.

A conference on the taxation of land value was held in London, on December 9th. John Ferguson of Glasgow, presided. The conference adopted two bills for the taxation of land values in the boroughs of England, Wales and Ireland. These bills will be presented to Parliament.

The London Daily News, which is more than friendly to the movement in Great Britain, in its issue of December 10th, thus explains the objects of these bills:

"The seed sown by the Corporation of Glasgow last year in calling a conference on the subject of the taxation of land values has brought forth fruit in the shape of two Bills adapted respectively to English and Scottish needs. They are constructed on modest lines; but they embody the great principle the recognition of which is one of the most urgent needs of the day, whether from the point of view of land reform, housing reform, or the reform of taxation. In attacking the question the executive have deemed it wise to deal with the future rather than with the past. This is certainly pursuing the line of least resistance, and we do not think land reformers will complain. On the other hand they will rejoice to see the subject pressed upon Parliament by the great rating authorities themselves. There can be no reasonable opposition to proposals backed by the great municipalities of the country which have to face in the public interests the problems of rating and which feel the pinch of the present intolerable system at every point—in the insufficiency of rating resources, in the burden which falls upon the commercial community, and in the restriction of the building area and the consequent congestion of the people. It is proposed to bring unoccupied land on to the rate book, the suggested ratable value of such land being three per cent. on the price at which it would sell as between a willing buyer and a willing seller. This will not only mean revenue, but it will cut at the pernicious practice of holding land back from the public use until it has reached a fancy price. It will stop the conspiracy of the landowner against the expansion of the town, which is the prolific source of slums and urban misery. When the owner has either to pay rates or sell, he will not stand in the way of the community. "Don't shoot; I will come down," will be his formula. The two other points covered by the Bill are the differentiating between land and buildings for rating purposes, and a

stipulation for securing to the tenant the deduction from his rent of the amount due in respect of the rating of the land. We agree with Councillor Kirtley, of Sunderland, that the Bill will be "a stepping stone to a great national reform." It is in these matters of household reform that the true function of Liberalism consists. We have wandered over the face of the earth in search of adventure long enough."

The movement is rapidly forcing its way into politics. In a recent answer to an inquiring of the London Daily News requesting an expression of opinion on the situation, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman thus replied:

"Is it not the fact that the land system as it operates in our great towns and centres is a heavier drain upon industry and the well-being of the people than any consequences that can follow from the operation of foreign tariffs? Sir R. Giffen has told us that in the last twenty years house rent has doubled. I should prefer to see steps taken to relieve the homes of the people of this excessive pressure instead of adding to it by taxing food and manufactures."

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION.

(For the Review.)

BY EDWARD T. WEEKS.

Availing myself of your permission to discuss still further the question of independent political action for Single Taxers, it is scarcely necessary to do more than reiterate the argument already advanced, that it is our duty to be guided by principle rather than by seeming expediency. And that therefore in every community in which we are sufficiently strong to maintain even a very small Single Tax party, it is our duty to organize and maintain such a party. For in those communities, at least, Single Taxers are free to vote for what is right. And for them to assert that every political wrong involves a moral wrong, and yet vote with parties pledged to what we condemn, certainly renders them guilty of the wrong; they are, to this extent, at least, responsible for the poverty, suffering and vice which these wrongs produce, to say nothing of the inconsistency involved, nor of the betrayal of right principle.

To assert that voting for the old parties and their fallacies is the quickest way to get the Single Tax is to assert what cannot be proven. Besides, it is merely to prefer seeming expediency to principle; is to follow error rather than truth. It is simply the old argument that the end justifies the means. It is a mere excuse offered in palliation of our short-comings. And more than this, it is a cowardly plea: one that confesses ourselves afraid to proclaim the naked truth, but prefers to ease conscience by seeking to discover some approach to right

principle among the quantities of known errors for which the parties stand. Our whole duty is to act honestly, and to vote for what is right. This done, it is not our duty to worry about results. These rest with a higher power. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized for it seems to have been forgotten. It is not our duty to succeed, but only to so act that we should deserve success.

We have followed seeming expediency in our methods for many years and we can now see some of the results. We have shouted and voted for tariff reform, free silver, local option in taxation, three cent fares and for all sorts of things, except what we believe in, until we find that the Single Taxers are now habitually evading any direct enunciation of Single Tax principles as though these were monstrous; and actually doing their best to inculcate doctrines which are either absolutely wrong or which confuse the people and lead them to seek for remedies elsewhere than in the Single Tax. This may seem to be a strange assertion. Yet in proof of it, let us frankly, but without wishing to wound, consider the attitudes of the leading exponents of the movement, and of those whom they influence. Thus, we find Mr. Fillebrown threatening to sever connection with the Massachusetts Single Taxers unless they resolve that they are not opposing the private ownership of land. And this though they know that whoever rightfully owns the land rightfully owns the rents it produces; and that if this rightful owner be a private person, then for the State to take these rents, in taxation, is robbery. Again, Mr. Johnson and nearly all other Single Taxers are advocating home rule in taxation, which asserts that every county or city should be permitted to impose such taxes as it pleases, while, in truth, it is the duty of the State to secure the citizen in the equal enjoyment of his rights, his labor and the fruits thereof, both as against individuals and communities. In California, Mr. James G. Maguire runs for Governor and is allowed to discuss every issue whatsoever excepting only the Single Tax. So Mr. Post runs almost the entire gamut of the so-called reforms, yet leads the majority of the Single Taxers of Chicago in bitterly opposing the efforts of a handful of men to bring the Single Tax to the attention of the voters of that city. Mr. N. O. Nelson thinks any attempt to get the Single Tax is ill-considered, because the American people love their homes too much to adopt such a system! Mr. Garrison is much more convinced of the necessity of bringing about an unnatural social intermingling among the races than of the need for securing primary justice to all men. Thus, our best men, those who have sacrificed most for the cause; those whom we most highly esteem, those as to whose intentions there can be no question, have gone off on side issues; and