

## Single Taxers Organize in Los Angeles

**A**LMOST simultaneously with the holding of a National Convention of Single Taxers in New York June 28th comes the news from Los Angeles of the formation in that city of a permanent organization of Single Taxers which will make an appeal to friends and sympathizers all over the world for support. Beginning their platform by quoting the fundamental truth set forth in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;" and "that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," they declare for the doctrine of human rights as superior to property rights, demand the immediate adoption of the Single Tax on land values as advocated by Henry George, the repeal of all other forms of taxation and the abolition of land monopoly in California.

An open meeting held July 1st, in response to a general notice sent to all Single Taxers, was very largely attended and included many of those formerly associated with the late Luke North, whose proposed amendment to the Californian State Constitution received over 135,000 votes at the last general election, and, after passing stirring resolutions condemning as unjust the prevailing systems of taxation which exploit human labor, penalize industry and thrift, cause speculation in the necessities of life and encourage dishonesty, those present authorized the appointment of a committee of seven persons to formulate plans for a permanent organization. It is the purpose to start at once a State-wide campaign to secure the adoption of absolute Single Tax.

Great enthusiasm was manifested when William L. Ross, formerly of Philadelphia, who was the principal speaker, announced that he had taken up his residence in California for the purpose of devoting his entire time to the Single Tax movement. He said that on his trip across the country he had talked with many prominent Single Taxers in various cities, and everywhere there seemed to be a conviction that with the wonderful showing made by the voters in California the time had now come to make a determined and united effort to get the Single Tax adopted and applied to the full rental value of the land.

The committee appointed was composed of the following well known Single Taxers: W. L. Ross, J. H. McEldowney, Lona Ingram Robinson, J. W. Durham, George A. Briggs, J. H. Ryckman and August Gamble.

July 15th a second meeting was held, also largely attended, when the organization committee's report was acted upon, a constitution and by-laws adopted and nearly every one present signing as charter members of the perfected organization, the GREAT ADVENTURE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA.

The platform, if it may be so designated, together with the object of the League, is as follows:

### PRINCIPLE

"God has not put upon man the task of making bricks without straw. With the need for labor and the power to labor He has also given to man the material for labor. This material is land."—HENRY GEORGE.

### AWAKENING

We contend that everywhere the prevailing systems of taxation by exploitation of the products of human labor, direct and indirect, are becoming more and more burdensome; that these intricate systems and devices operate to exact an unjust tribute from those who toil, penalize industry, create and foster private monopoly of natural resources, encourage speculation in the necessities of life and place a premium upon dishonesty; that their continuance in force constitutes a barrier against the enjoyment of the fundamental rights of man, prevents the realization of the highest ideals of civilization, and should now be abolished.

Fixing our gaze, therefore, upon the rising star of economic justice which to all open minds portends the recognition of the doctrine of human rights as superior to property rights, we declare our adherence to the principle of the Single Tax upon the value of the land as advocated by Henry George; our faith in its equity, our confidence in the beneficent results of its unlimited application, and hereby pledge our moral and financial support to all honorable endeavors to secure its immediate adoption.

To this end, believing in the righteousness of this cause, the undersigned hereby associate themselves together and ordain the following

### CONSTITUTION

#### ARTICLE I

##### NAME

The name of this association shall be THE GREAT ADVENTURE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA.

#### ARTICLE II

##### OBJECT

The sole object of the League is to secure by lawful means the immediate enactment of an Amendment to the Constitution of the State of California, providing for "*One Single Tax on the value of land, irrespective of the value of the improvements in or on it;*" the repeal of all other forms of taxation, and the abolition of land monopoly in California.

"What we propose is not a tax on real estate, for real estate includes improvements. Nor is it a tax on land, for we would not tax all land, but only land having a value irrespective of its improvements, and we would tax that in proportion to that value."

Such a law "would impose no burden on industry, no check on commerce, no punishment on thrift; it would secure the largest production and the fairest distribution of wealth, by leaving men free to produce and to exchange as they please, without any artificial enhancement of prices; and by taking for public purposes a value that

cannot be carried off, that of all values is most easily ascertained and most certainly and cheaply collected, it would enormously lessen the number of officials, dispense with oaths, do away with temptations to bribery and evasion, and abolish man-made crimes in themselves innocent."

—HENRY GEORGE.

The Constitution then provides that "any person who is in sympathy with the object of the League is eligible to membership, by signing the regular application blank, paying the annual dues (\$1.00) and "receiving a copy of the Constitution."

The officers elected are W. L. Ross, president; Lona Ingram Robinson, 1st vice-president; Rev. Reynolds Blythe, 2nd vice-president; Diana Griffes, secretary; and T. A. Robinson, treasurer.

An executive committee of nine members was appointed by the president, who will have charge of all district committees and direct the campaign work to be extended throughout the State. A general appeal will be sent to Single Taxers to become members of the League and to aid the fight for the immediate adoption of the complete Single Tax in the State of California.

(Signed) AUGUST GAMBLE

Chairman, Committee on Organization.

## Mexico

**P**ROGRESSIVE liberals the world over will sympathize with the struggle of the Mexican people to attain to a just democratic government and to break the land monopoly which had for so long locked up the natural resources of the country.

Against such a policy, it was to be expected that monopoly interests, entrenched in proprietary titles over vast areas of Mexican soil, would organize in determined defense. This has happened. An international alliance, of formidable dimensions, of corporations interested in Mexican land holdings, has already formulated before the British and American governments its grievances against recent Mexican legislation affecting land and mineral rights. Diplomatic pressure having failed to influence the Mexican government, armed intervention is being freely urged in the British and American press. The disordered political state of parts of Mexico, and the insecurity of life and property consequent thereon, are providing convenient arguments for intervention, while at the same time creating an atmosphere of irritation and distrust, unfavorable to an equitable discussion of differences.

Under these circumstances, it is to be regretted that the Mexican government should distract the debate by introducing irritating and unessential issues. What necessity, for instance, is there for raising at the present moment any question as to the legality of land titles acquired under due process of law? It seems to us the supreme issue before the Mexican government and people is not the ownership of the title, but the use that is made of the land. A title in land no more affects national sovereignty than does

title of ownership of any other class of property. The government of the United States, in order to regulate and even prohibit the manufacture of intoxicating liquors, did not need to acquire title in the breweries and distilleries of the country. For the right use of Mexico's natural resources, whether mineral, agricultural or other, it is also equally unnecessary for the Mexican government to hold title of ownership thereof. Any attempt to confiscate existing titles raises the unpleasant question of compensation. Why not defer the question of nationalization of the land and mineral deposits, at least until a readjustment of the fiscal system has taken from a title in land any advantage accruing to mere speculative holding as contrasted with productive use? As the margin of such advantage decreases with a judicious application of land taxes, absorbing more and more of the purely natural and social values of landed property, the exchange value of the title *per se* diminishes and with it the amount of compensation for dispossession. It is also manifest that, under these circumstances, as the mere title falls in value, the production of the land has been increased and the country and government enriched.

As a precedent for dealing fiscally with land held idle under perfectly legal titles, we may mention the wild lands super-tax of the Province of Saskatchewan. If, in addition to abolishing the tax immunities that idle land at present enjoys in Mexico, the Mexican government were to adopt the Canadian model for dealing with wild lands still kept out of use, there would be very few titles left to interfere with the development of Mexico's rich natural resources. Their market value would be about on a par with our old Confederate currency. If such is their fate under a just and reasonable fiscal system, why let them now serve as pretext or reason for diplomatic or armed intervention? As Henry George long ago pointed out, the title is only the shell, whereas the economic values are the kernel. When these latter are absorbed by a land tax, only the shell is left. The owner will have kept the values of his own creation; the community or State, the values they have created. There remains no other value, and therefore no substantial cause for dispute.

The very last thing desired by the great monopolistic corporations allied against the Mexican government in the present dispute, is the withdrawal of the Mexican government's proposal to confiscate land titles. By so doing, Mexican diplomacy easily wins its case.

OIL wells sunk in the churchyard of the Merriman Baptist Church at Ranger, Texas, have made the church richer by \$1,000,000. At which old-school economists and old-school theologians might conclude that God loves the Baptists of Ranger. But is God really so partial?

THE basis of Bolshevism is Communism. The cardinal principle of Communism is, "from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs." The income tax is frankly founded in Communism. N. C. B. FOWLES.