

We Review The California Situation

WE are in receipt of a lengthy communication from Mr. Stoughton Cooley relating to California. Before discussing it, we summarize briefly recent events in that State.

After the election of 1920, when a Single Tax amendment received 196,694 votes, Mr. W. L. Ross, who had taken charge of the campaign following the death of Luke North, decided to move to San Francisco; it being understood that he would look after the northern section of the State, and the Los Angeles Single Tax League with others would take care of the southern end.

A campaign was conducted and money solicited and sent from the east, with a view to having an amendment on the ballot this year. In February the Los Angeles League, through Mr. Cooley, announced that it would not help put a measure on the ballot this year. Mr. Ross shortly afterwards, sent out word that because of this refusal to help, and lack of funds, he would have to abandon work in the northern end. Thereupon a group of Single Taxers in the east, raised sufficient money to send Mr. James A. Robinson, National Organizer, to California, and enabled him to have a Single Tax amendment placed on the ballot, almost at the last moment. There was little time for further work or organization, and the Los Angeles group gave no active help.

That amendment, with practically no campaigning in its behalf, receives, according to latest advices, 160,000 affirmative votes.

To the REVIEW this vote of more than 150,000, is in itself ample justification—if giving people an opportunity to vote for the straight Single Tax ever needs justification—for putting an amendment on the ballot.

Now comes Mr. Cooley, complaining of the action of eastern Single Taxers in contributing the funds that enabled this amendment to go before the voters.

We do not intend to publish his letter. There is nothing new in it, except the statement that, as had been threatened, some "withheld their votes" from the Single Tax amendment for fear of prejudicing the electorate against the Initiative and Referendum. The rest is a repetition of his arguments for doing nothing, that have already been given quite enough space in the REVIEW.

We shall welcome any constructive suggestions as to methods of advancing the great cause of equal rights to the use of the earth. That is the main purpose for which the REVIEW is maintained, under considerable difficulty. We may also give some space, as a basis for argument or illustration, to criticisms or hostile denunciations of the Single Tax. But we do not propose to give further space in the REVIEW to this endless criticism of those who are doing something, by those who advocate doing nothing.

A member of this Los Angeles group, whom we prefer to consider misled rather than a misleader, recently said to

us, "Why did not you people in the east send us that money early in the year; then we would have been able to run a campaign ourselves."

"But," we replied, "your League sent out a long statement giving a number of reasons why you opposed putting any amendment at all on the ballot this year; why should we have sent you money?" And to this there was no answer.

We recapitulate: The Los Angeles League opposed any immediate action; apparently no funds could be collected in California to put an amendment on the ballot. The money was sent chiefly from outside on a hurry call, still against the local protest; an amendment was put on the ballot; it gets over 150,000 votes. It looks from this distance of course, like a dispute between a few hundred or less organized Single Taxers who do not want to try for the Single Tax, and over one hundred thousand unorganized voters who actually want to get it. To say the least, this situation seems to show considerable ineptitude among those who hold themselves out to be leaders in California. Perhaps it is time in California, as elsewhere, for a housecleaning.