

The SINGLE TAX

THE ORGAN OF THE SCOTTISH LAND RESTORATION UNION.

VOL. I.—No. 1.

GLASGOW, JUNE, 1894.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE SINGLE TAX.

Published at the beginning of each Month.
PRICE ONE PENNY. Post Free, 1/6 per annum,
payable in advance.

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"To raise and maintain wages is the great object that all who live by wages ought to seek, and working men are right in supporting any measure that will attain that object. Nor in this are they acting selfishly, for, while the question of wages is the most important of questions to labourers, it is also the most important of questions to society at large. Whatever improves the condition of the lowest and broadest social stratum must promote the true interests of all. Where the wages of common labour are high, and remunerative employment is easy to obtain, prosperity will be general; where wages are highest there will be the largest production and the most equitable distribution of wealth. There will invention be most active, and the brain best guide the hand; there will be the greatest comfort, the widest diffusion of knowledge, the purest morals, and the truest patriotism. If we would have a healthy, a happy, an enlightened, and a virtuous people—if we would have a pure Government, firmly based on the popular will and quickly responsive to it—we must strive to raise wages and keep them high."—Henry George, "Protection or Free Trade."

OUR MISSION.

IN this, our first appearance, we are not very ambitious-looking, but we are nevertheless ambitious to be up and doing in the good cause of Land Restoration. The time, we believe, is opportune for a monthly pronouncement by the Scottish Single Taxmen. In Scotland and England, in America, and in our Australasian Colonies the Single Tax method of Land Restoration is being advocated with genuine healthy persistency, and the agency of the press is everywhere being enlisted an advocate. In America there are now some fifty or more Single Tax Newspapers; and in the Colonies a vigorous propaganda is being well maintained by several prints exclusively devoted to its service. But what is more particularly pleasing, is, that in New Zealand a first instalment—a small tax on land values—has been secured and has worked marvellously well; has realised to the full the expectations of Single Taxers. Referring

to the subject, the Premier of the Colony recently said:—

"The Government said to the struggling settler they would exempt his improvements. To the one above him they said, 'You shall not be touched by the progressive tax,' and to those who held large tracts of country, mostly unimproved, keeping cattle and sheep where there should be smiling homes and happy people, they said, 'Pay a little more to the taxation of the country.' Their opponents said they were going in for confiscation. There was to be a revolution, there would be no money and no employment in New Zealand, it was to go down and down until it was last in the Australasian group. What is the result to-day? New Zealand is at the top and the other colonies down below. . . . Through our progressive tax great improvements are taking place in this part of the colony. I notice paragraphs speaking of the number of ploughmen engaged, steadings going up, and improvements generally being made at a most rapid rate. This is just what we wanted. Ploughmen have work, carpenters have work, and there is an improvement in the social, commercial, and political position of the people."

So that we have commenced in this far away isolated New Zealand our journey through the Single Tax avenue to economic freedom and to industrial emancipation. Encouraging work truly. The first step gained. It may seem a weak and hesitating advance, but it will make the next step forward easier, and it is a finger-post on the way not likely to be ignored. The Single Tax, briefly, is a proposal to take the values of land, apart from improvements, in taxation, for public purposes, and to relieve industry of the burdens of taxation. It is a simple remedy, merely a transferring of taxation from labour and the products of labour to land values. But we claim for it that it will also solve the labour problem, and that this solution of the labour problem is the key to the solution of the wider social problem now confronting civilisation, and which, as John Ruskin says, "Society must settle or it will settle Society." The labour problem has arisen and is with us because of an unjust distribution of wealth. This and other minor tributaries have their source, we believe, in land monopoly. It is easy to see, given this primary monopoly of land, how all other hurtful monopolies are reared. Land monopoly keeps pace with the "slaves of the lamp of knowledge" that invention brings, and but quickens the advance to greater and greater inequalities. Landowners are induced to keep desirable land out of use in anticipation of securing a greater future value. Labour and capital are thrown out of employment. Idle hands and idle lands add greater complica-

tions. But to those who care to examine into these phenomena the labour problem is after all but the land question.

The Single Tax will shatter these expectations of the landowners to get more, as more is produced, by putting a period to their taxing powers, and at the same time open up the land, free from monopoly charges, to all, on terms of perfect equality. Trade depression has become chronic now, and has a wide-world footing. It means to the wage-earners, who suffer by it, poverty of the worst kind—undeserved poverty. "Organisation, by all means," says Ruskin, "but before you have organisation you must have honesty." Just so: and a first step to a fair quantity of this commodity is to abolish this undeserved poverty. We believe land monopoly to be the bottom cause of all the trouble, and we urge the remedy advanced by Henry George, the Single Tax, as the only feasible method for the destruction of land monopoly, and for opening up, at the point of least resistance, the natural and only opportunities to labour—the land. Our work will be to keep our question and what is being done with it the wide world over well to the front, and to guide the loose ideas abroad on the land question generally. We shall endeavour each month to provide a faithful account of the progress of the movement, and to appear every time in an attractive garb. We, therefore, appeal with confidence to our members, to land reformers, and to all sympathetic political and social reformers to spread the *Single Tax* in every direction possible, and so help us to bring to a speedy end this primary inequality—Private Property in Land.

MICHAEL DAVITT ON THE LAND QUESTION.

LANDLORDISM THE ROOT EVIL.

LOWER WAGES, STRIKES, AND SOCIAL MISERY ALL TRACEABLE TO A SINGLE SOURCE.

A POWERFUL INDICTMENT.

The following is an excerpt from a letter by Mr. Michael Davitt to the *Daily Chronicle*:—

No intelligent working man can give a moment's rational study to the Labour problem of these countries without discovering where

THE ROOT EVIL OF OUR INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM lies. Underpaid toil, the social wretchedness associated with the labouring poor, the misery of the unemployed, and the shame and suffering of the pauperised workers of the community