

Missouri

ACCORDING to present indications Missouri will take place with California as a State in which the voters will be given the opportunity at the coming November election to write the Single Tax into the fundamental law of the community. The work of securing the requisite number of signatures to petitions is going forward and the leaders declare that given the proper financial support from Single Taxers throughout the nation their programme will go on the ballot in good time.

Quite a number of reports have come in from those who were active in 1912 as to the more cordial reception they are receiving now in securing names. A Single Taxer in Gasconade County writes that he has filled five petitions (200 names) in his spare time and will soon have his sixth completed. Many who would not sign in 1912 are glad to do so now. Another in Camden County has secured practically every voter in his town (about 500) on the blanks. In one of the southeastern counties the farmer who was the secretary of the county anti-Single Tax League in 1912 has read "Progress and Poverty" in the meantime and has become a convert. Barney Haughey and G. H. Cox, two of the men who are devoting all of their time to securing signers, are finding that with the distribution of literature and the personal touch they are able to do a vast amount of very effective propaganda. Thousands of citizens are being reached and interested in the philosophy of Henry George who under any other circumstances would not be likely to pay attention to the idea.

As a basis for the favorable attention of the voter our measure has the endorsement of the State Federation of Labor at its last two conventions and the endorsement of every central labor union in the State and many of the local unions. There is a very encouraging disposition on the part of the newspapers over the State to give space to news articles concerning the programme and this will be increased to some extent as time goes on. Whenever the petitions are filed and a letter sent out to all the papers in the State announcing this fact and giving a short succinct argument for the measures, a volume of discussion will be started which will be of immense importance. Every cross-roads store and country home will buzz with talk about the "Homes for the Homeless" programme. Then the voters who have signed and the active spirits in each community will have their opportunity with literature and argument to mold an intelligent public opinion. Of course, the opposition will make every possible appeal to prejudice and blind selfishness and ignorance, but it will find it increasingly hard to stampede the voters into voting against their own interests and that of the community.

The situation created by the world war has opened the minds of thousands of people in Missouri for our propaganda. Everywhere the cry is "Produce more food, save, conserve," and the cost of the necessities of life has mounted skyward with little corresponding increase in wages for the great mass of the workers. Many are thinking: "Why should

there be a shortage of food in this great land of vast untilled areas? I would be glad to go on to a small farm and till it myself. I could not make less than I am making now as a wage earner and I would be assured of a livelihood, at least, without the ever recurring thought of what may happen to me and my loved ones if I should be thrown out of my job or be incapacitated by accident or sickness. Even with all the hard work involved in farming successfully, I could feel sure of my economic independence and would insure a chance for my children when they are ready to enter the ranks of the producers." We can show such the connection between idle acres, homeless and jobless men and our present unjust and unscientific system of taxation. Conscription of men has been carried out; the idea of conscription of the socially created land values so as to take the profit out of land speculation and monopoly is logical and appealing. It will find ready response.

Our appeal is being made in the spirit of Henry George and Father McGlynn with no desire to slip something over on the voter. We will distribute thousands of copies of the writings of George himself and emphasize the crying iniquity of any man or group of men being allowed to hold land idle for the profit there is in it while tenancy, unemployment, high prices and poverty mount and flourish. Our cry will be "Justice the end, taxation the means." At the the same time our presentation of the plan for State loans at three per cent. interest to home builders as a separate companion measure will give our programme a balance and a practical application with thousands of citizens who might otherwise be disposed to regard a one plank Single Tax programme as too Utopian and theoretical to merit their serious consideration. The fact that our movement is a direct attempt to put into effect the recommendations of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations that "all unused land should be forced into use by making the tax on non-productive land the same as on productive land of the same kind, and exempting all improvements," and that the Chairman of that Committee, Mr. Frank P. Walsh, of Kansas City, is president of our organization, is of tremendous value in the presentation of our programme.

MISSOURI CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Activity in Texas

TWO years ago today (March 16, 1916), the first Single Tax Conference in Texas was held, and the SINGLE TAX LEAGUE OF TEXAS organized and launched. There had been one year's work done under a volunteer organization, the Texas League for the Taxation of Land Values. The Dallas Conference but confirmed and endorsed the programme started and gave it the endorsement of a more definite and representative organization. Roy Bedichek, of Austin, was made Chairman, J. J. Pastoriza, of Houston, Treasurer, and the writer was made Executive Secretary and given authority to plan and carry on the work of propaganda with such help and advice as could be made available from time to time.