

What Is News?

THE following from the Portland *Oregonian* is of interest:

Single Tax advocates are complaining at the New York press. The first meeting of the International Conference of Single Taxers opened recently at Oxford, England. The next day there was no account of the affair in any of the New York newspapers.

Thereupon a group of New York Single Taxers sent the following cablegram to Robert Macauley, former reporter, delegate to the convention and candidate for president on the Single Tax ticket in 1920:

"No news of conference here. Get arrested at once."

And the day following, with general irony, one of the group wrote plaintively to the New York *World* that he was afraid the cablegram miscarried and was delivered to Mr. DeValera by mistake.

It might seem a somewhat sad commentary on our modern newspapers that a man must be arrested before he can get his name in print. The answer lies in the fact that the logic of the complaint is mixed.

News is that which is new or interesting, that which is of greatest interest to the greatest number.

There would not be many thrills in a lengthy report of the doings of an international Single Tax convention.

On the other hand, if a man once candidate for the presidency of the United States should heave a well-aimed brick at the person of the premier of Great Britain and should get himself arrested thereby, then it would be of interest to a large number of readers, and automatically it would become news, worthy of the cable and the front page.

That is to say, if a dog bites a man it is not news. But if a man bites a dog, that's news.

The complaint we make is not that the papers in the United States did not give lengthy reports of the International Single Tax Conference at Oxford, but that they gave no reports at all.

The question therefore arises, when is news news? It is certain that a conference of philologists, for example, taking place in London and to which half a hundred delegates from the United States were in attendance, would have been thought of sufficient importance to have found mention in every paper in this country. Yet here is a movement which is of interest to thousands, which in the State of California alone received the endorsement of a quarter of a million voters. Is it not pertinent to inquire why an international conference representing perhaps the aspirations of a million people received not a line in the news columns of the American press, nor a single editorial comment, favorable or adverse?

Somewhere tonight they are making up the pages of a metropolitan newspaper. Let us travel in fancy to the spot where amid the sound of the moving presses on another floor we may listen to the following conversation:

"Here's a story of a nasty scandal in high society."
"Good. Run it in the first column." "Cable saying that Wiffinton Smythe knocked a rubber ball around a field with fewer strokes than five competitors." "Great.

That will interest all our readers." "A husky loafer with no visible means of support is going to have a fist fight with another slugger." "Fine. Make it two columns, with photos." "Bandit robs Broadway jewelry store." "Give it an inch. These holdups happen every day." "Senator Frump emits an interview on the Balkan situation." "If he agrees with us on foreign policies run it all. If he's against us, four lines will do." "Associated Press dispatch about the International Single Tax Conference." "Kill it. Our readers are not interested in better methods of taxation, nor in the land question. None of 'em are farmers."

The Review in Public Libraries

WE cannot too often urge upon our friends the value to the movement of placing the REVIEW in Public Libraries. These institutions, some of which subscribe directly for the REVIEW, are nearly all glad to have it, and most of them report that it is frequently consulted.

Mr. George H. Sinton, of Pasadena, California, for many years has subscribed for nearly two score public libraries in different parts of the country. One librarian writes, "Shall be pleased to have you continue sending us the REVIEW." Another, "The REVIEW is placed in our reading room and I am sure some patrons of the library are interested in the articles." A college librarian writes, "We bind it with other magazines and it is put with the bound volumes where it is available to our college world." Another, "Very glad to have the REVIEW for another year and will see that it is made available to our readers."

Many other similar communications from librarians have been received, all confirmatory of the value to the movement of the widest library circulation for its representative periodical.

Will not our readers emulate Mr. Sinton's example?

Investing Investment in the People's Heritage

THE Lincoln, Nebraska, Joint Stock Land Bank issue a circular inviting investment. We quote:

Land continually increases in value with the increase in population. Census figures covering seventy years of American experience demonstrate this beyond dispute. In older countries the records of centuries show the same tendency. A chart prepared by one of the economists in the United States Department of Agriculture shows that the tendency has been for land values to increase in an almost parallel line with the increase in population. Every other physical property against which bonds may be issued is subject to depreciation, and the protection of the bondholder requires the maintenance of a sinking fund to take care of the decrease in value. In the case of land bank bonds, the bondholder is protected by a gradual payment of the mortgages and a gradual increase in the value of the property securing the mortgages.