

WORK OF THE HENRY GEORGE  
ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO.

Accompanying the unrest evident in every station of life, in every line of the activities of human-kind—an unrest infecting worker and idler with a common suifing and fevered emotional state of more or less restrained and pent up excitement—there may be observed the intensest interest in the study of economic problems.

Foremost in the minds of the many rises the labor question, furnishing a large portion of the world's news items for the press, marking its influence upon the literature of the day in verse and fiction, occupying the thoughts of scholars and speakers, invading the pulpits and magazines, and taxing to the utmost every source of information which bears vitally upon social conditions. And the world is sorely perplexed.

Perplexity generally implies a receptive state of mind. Recognizing this, the Henry George Association of Chicago has ventured to institute the most active educational propaganda of the Single Tax, that has been put on foot since the death of Henry George.

Chicago Single Taxers have been organized for twelve years, but the Henry George Association was formed four years ago, after the old Single Tax Club was disrupted by the action of some of its members, who wished to organize on party lines and put a political ticket of their own in the field. Many of the members not countenancing such a move, withdrew, and later organized the present Association. During the continued presidency of Frederick H. Monroe, the Association has been steadily advancing its work and preparing for the aggressive move which is now under way. The Association has engaged John Z. White of Chicago, one of the ablest and most forcible expounders of Single Tax principles, to deliver a course of one hundred lectures extending over a period of four months. At the conclusion of this course he is to be sent through the State for the following four months, later possibly undertaking a tour of the country.

Mr. White speaks on current events, analyzing the doings of the day from a Single Tax standpoint, each Sunday afternoon at Handel Hall. His other lectures are delivered during the week at other centers in various parts of the city, and before business men's organizations, labor unions, and in churches.

Meetings are being held under the auspices of the association, at the Woodlawn Universalist Church on Kimbark Avenue and Sixty-fourth Street, every Sunday evening. Mr. White has been speaking here. Mrs. Jane Addams and others are to speak there later.

A center has also been established at the "People's Institute," corner Van Buren

Street and Hoyne Avenue, on the West Side; another at Milwaukee and Division Streets; a fourth on North Clark Street, near the Moody Institute, and other halls will soon be secured and meetings held at each center weekly.

A course of lectures is being delivered at Handel Hall Thursday evenings, making two meetings each week at this hall. Those on the programme for this course are not exclusively Single Taxers, but are selected from among Chicago's best known and ablest radical speakers as Miss Margaret A. Haley, Louis F. Post, Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Wallace Rice, Western Starr, Hon. F. W. Parker, Edw. M. Winston, and Miss Jane Addams.

Among others to take part in the work as speakers are: Judge William Prentiss, Judge E. O. Brown, Judge E. F. Dunne, Leon Hornstein, Jacob LeBosky, Professor George C. Griffiths, Dr. H. B. Loomis, and Raymond Robins.

After the propaganda in the city is well organized neighboring cities will be invaded and branches of the central body will be formed. This movement will then be extended throughout the State. Mr. White has already spoken in Peoria, and will visit Rockford, Freeport, Elgin, Aurora, Joliet, and other cities after completing the course he is now engaged in delivering.

It is the purpose of Mr. Monroe to interest the Single Tax organizations of the other large cities of the United States and cooperate with movements from each of these.

Steps are being taken to place the Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow, of Cincinnati, actively in the field; first in Chicago, and later through the State of Illinois.

A press bureau for the dissemination of matter bearing upon public questions and the Single Tax is in the charge of George V. Wells, who is to supply the editors and publishers of papers and magazines with articles.

A legislative committee is to be another feature of the plans of the local association. The duties of this committee will be to inquire into the present statutes governing taxation in Illinois and other States, and to ascertain in what respects they are faulty and how desired changes may be brought about.

The propaganda, and this work of the legislative committee, are confidently expected to lead to a material betterment of conditions, one specific object being the attainment of home rule in taxation in the State of Illinois. It is hoped to make this movement so strong that the passage of a constitutional amendment permitting local option in taxation may be secured. This would be followed by an attempt to secure, in one county, the exemption of industry from taxation.

The Henry George Association is strictly an educational and non-partisan organiza-

tion. Therefore, the present campaign is one of education, seeking to interest the progressive minds of all parties, and relying upon the vitality of the principles taught, to direct men in social affairs regardless of their party affiliations. The attitude of the members are well voiced by President Monroe in an interview published in one of the Chicago papers: "The Henry George Association is strictly a non-partisan organization and the work we have planned will not be carried on for the purpose of furthering the interests of any political organization, but for educating the people in the fundamental principles of economics, and in an effort to show the trade unions and capitalists that their interests are identical in the conflict against the monopolists and the beneficiaries of special privileges—their common enemy."

#### CONGRESSMAN BAKER'S COAL ARTICLE.

##### A CRITICISM.

##### Editor *Singls Tax Review* :

Referring to Hon. Robert Baker's article on coal published in your last number, the problem to be solved is, I take it, how to secure anthracite coal at a fair price; such a price as would obtain under "free competition."

Mr. Baker offers us as the only solution of this problem, "Federal Taxation."

The main premise upon which Mr. Baker bases his arguments for federal taxation, is, that anthracite coal is unique, being found, only in the State of Pennsylvania, and that it is indispensable to the public welfare. He describes it as "an absolute necessity of life; \* \* \* being as truly a necessity in large cities as bathtubs." "In fact," he says, "the general use of bituminous coal in our large cities is more unsanitary than would be the abolition or non-use of bathtubs by their inhabitants. For not merely would outward cleanliness of the individual—especially the toilers—be made impossible, but the very atmosphere we breathe would be polluted, our buildings, public and private, would soon become begrimed, our parks would suffer in loss of beauty and attractiveness; while the little that is artistically pleasing in our architecture and statuary would be well nigh obliterated."

This is indeed a gloomy and depressing picture that Mr. Baker has drawn; and while it admittedly contains much truth it is nevertheless extravagant in the extreme.

Should anthracite cease to be obtainable—should the supply become exhausted and the City of New York, for instance, be compelled to use bituminous coal, its inhabitants would surely suffer many discomforts and inconveniences, and as a consequence would become a far less agreeable place of residence; as indeed would all other com-

munities under similar conditions become in greater or less degree. But there are large communities in the United States, Chicago, Pittsburg, St. Louis, Cleveland and others, where bituminous coal is, if not exclusively, very generally used. The dire consequences Mr. Baker prophesies as happening from such use have not as yet been fulfilled in these places. And I am quite sure that the inhabitants of these grimy and gloomy places would feel greatly insulted at the mere suggestion, that they are less cleanly in their habits than the inhabitants of the City of New York or any other city where anthracite is the main article of fuel. And in spite of the atmospheric conditions that prevail in these states and the attendant discomforts, their inhabitants seem to prefer them. In Great Britain too, where bituminous coal is exclusively used, there are large cities, London, for instance, the most populous city in the world, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester and others of lesser size, where the conditions are very much as Mr. Baker describes, whose inhabitants, even the toilers, do manage to keep tolerably clean. Anthracite coal, however much more desirable it may be than bituminous nevertheless is not an "absolute necessity," it is not in any sense indispensable to the welfare of the people of this or any other country. The wheels of industry would continue to revolve after the supply of anthracite had become exhausted. Arguments founded on the indispensability of anthracite coal do not rest on a very sure foundation.

Mr. Baker points out, that the Coal Trust is the offspring of our wrong method of taxation which taxes things that ought not to be taxed, and leaves untaxed things that ought to be taxed. He very properly suggests that. "Free Coal" (that is coal exempt from tariff tax) may be the first step towards the solution of the coal problem." But he fully recognizes that the public appropriation by means of taxation, of the rental value of the anthracite coal deposits will most effectively deprive the "Coal Barons" of their power of extortion. Yet, he raises an objection to the appropriation of these values by the State of Pennsylvania. He claims that under certain circumstances, the State should do so would be levying tribute. Here is what he says on this head: "But if instead of confining land value taxation to anthracite coal deposits, Pennsylvania should extend the system so as to collect from all land having value, its full annual rental, what would then be its relation (so far as these unique coal deposits are concerned,) to the rest of the people of the United States? Is it not clear, that so long as any large part of the anthracite production was shipped without the State, that the State of Pennsylvania would be levying tribute on the people of other States. There are two points in the above statement that I want