

### The Single Tax War.

BY HENRY GEORGE, JR.

The year 1898 is drawing to a close, and with it the 19th century. The year has been full of great events, and the century of greater. To many in the single tax movement the year has brought keen disappointments, but they should reflect on the century and observe that great events require great periods. They should observe that if the seed were limited in quantity and were all sown upon a single piece of ground that was overtaken by a drought, all might be lost; but the seed is plentiful and is scattered over many lands, and a drought in one place is accompanied by fair conditions in other places, so that somehow and somewhere there is always a good harvest.

Many of our people seem dejected over the defeat of Judge Maguire in his fight for the Governorship of California, though the Judge himself regards it merely as an incident in the great war for which many years ago, when he was an Assemblyman in the California Legislature, he enlisted. In this particular fight he was caught in a position where he could not strike to the best advantage, being open to all the wild charges that an unscrupulous opposing party could devise without having a party behind him that would itself meet the charges or allow him to do so, except indirectly. The result was that he was put into a defensive position, instead of being permitted to take the offensive—always a disadvantage, and particularly so in a struggle with principles like ours at issue, for ideas of such radical and startling nature must be presented with bold confidence.

But as it is, Judge Maguire's gubernatorial campaign has pushed along single tax discussion in California as little else could do. The Republicans in the delight of victory and the Democrats in the bitterness of defeat cannot let it alone, and now that the latter have nothing to defend they, or at least the small country party papers, take a more aggressive position and give and take in the discussion. As Joseph Leggett, of San Francisco, has said, Judge Maguire's campaign was for the single tax cause in California very much what Henry George's 1896 mayoralty campaign was for the cause in New York. The single tax there is now more than a newspaper, or magazine, or debating club, or lecture lyceum question. It is a question in practical politics upon which one party was victorious and another defeated. Victory has been with the opposing party, just as for long years victory—overwhelming victory, even in the Northern States—was with the pro-

slavery party; but the tide of battle is as sure to turn in the single tax war as it turned in the war against slavery. All we who see have to do is to hold to the truth and do all that is within our power, and leave the rest to time. We of all people can trust to the "cussed unanimity" of the thousands upon thousands who have enlisted all over the world for our wars, and upon the "cussed rationality" of our cause to make recruits wherever it can get a hearing. As Sir Wilfred Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada, has said, the single tax is "the policy of the future."

To show the kind of encouraging news that comes from one source or another, I offer extracts from two private letters of recent date. One is from Crawford Vaughan, Secretary of the Single Tax League of South Australia, with headquarters in Adelaide. Writing in September, Mr. Vaughan said:

"We are fighting here in good earnest. In the city, in the country townships, and right in the interior are bands of earnest men and women who, having seen the truth revealed in 'Progress and Poverty,' have pledged their whole lives to bring about justice and more God-like conditions; and they don't know how to spell 'failure.' We must and will win. Only last week the Adelaide Town Hall was filled to overflowing by an enthusiastic audience of over one thousand persons. The meeting was a public one called to consider the question of concentrating taxation upon land values for municipal purposes, and resolutions in favor of the reform were declared by the chairman (the Mayor of Adelaide) to be carried unanimously. The Premier of the Colony (Right Hon. C. C. Kingston) was on the platform, and stated that the Ministry would do their level best to carry the measure into effect. Members of Parliament (ten or twelve) followed, whilst the single tax members (Messrs. C. Prond and Henry Taylor) were received with ringing cheers. So you see we are not exactly a 'Sleepy Hollow' in reform ways."

As an instance of the kind of circular matter that the South Australian League is putting out, the following is presented:

#### A GOOD ILLUSTRATION OF A BAD SYSTEM.

(From "The Weekly Herald.")

King William street, Adelaide, just now offers an excellent illustration of how private landownership enriches the individual and robs the community. A block of land adjoining the Bank of Ade-

laide has recently been sold for £625 per foot, or at the rate of about £130,000 per acre. Ten feet frontage has therefore been sold for more than the Government received for the site of the whole City of Adelaide. The Government got £5 for this acre; the private landowner gets at the rate of £130,000 for the same acre. This added "land value" was not made by the individual landowner, but by the presence and work and expenditure of the

whole community. Yet the landowner gets the "increment" while the community pays the interest on the public debt, and also rent to the private landowner. This is what John Morley calls "throttling towns," and Lord Rosebery says is "sacrificing the nation to the interests of a class." How long is it to be tolerated in South Australia, when we have adult suffrage and the ballot?

#### THE REMEDY—TAX LAND VALUES.

From the other side of the world comes news of a similar encouraging nature. That indefatigable single tax member of the Imperial Parliament, Richard McGhee, writing under date of November 24th:

"I am writing this in Keighley, Yorkshire, where I have been since the 17th inst. addressing meetings with that good single tax member of the London School Board, Leslie Johnson, every day and every night. Our campaign concludes here next Monday, and then I open a fortnight in Lancashire. . . . We are making glorious progress here. It is amazing how quickly our great question has leaped into politics. The great Liberal party see now that it is only in our lines that progress of a substantial kind can be made. They feel it incumbent to put our demand in their election addresses, in their programmes and in their speeches. Since last Thursday I spoke in the West Riding of Yorkshire to nine great meetings and have been surprised at the readiness with which the audience punctuated our best points by their applause. Our Liberal party are now, like Thomas G. Shearman, single taxers limited. They will soon be single taxers unlimited. Socialism is disappearing."

Who would not be in such a war? and being in it, who would be a laggard?