

Land is so cheap in this county that a month's work of a common laborer ought to buy a farm, but owing to the fact that the cheap lands are held in large tracts and can only be bought as a whole, the laborer is helpless and if he does buy he often pays fifty times the price at which land can be bought at wholesale.

Land speculation differs only in degree and detail the world over, but I speak from personal knowledge of this county.

A land company purchases in large tracts for two or three dollars per acre, which price is all that the land is worth and is the value at which it is taxed. People who are anxious to get out of the cities are induced to purchase this land at from \$25 to \$100 per acre, frequently buying on the installment plan. Perhaps the victim is induced to purchase the so-called tobacco land, the company agreeing to buy the entire product at a stipulated price. A certain selected acre can always be pointed out that has produced a certain amount and the crop is represented as a "sure thing." But the season may be unpropitious, or the victim may be short of capital, or he may be inexperienced, or all these conditions and others may intervene, and the man who with five acres and no debts might get an excellent living for his family with little labor, becomes bankrupt and goes back to the struggling mob.

Or it may be oranges. A certain orange tree, (I will vouch for the truth of this story,) bore over 2,000 oranges. A land agent came by and bought the entire yield of the tree at two cents each, total over \$40.00. We cannot all have a block in Standard Oil, but we can own an orange grove, for we can buy twenty acres of \$2. orange sand for \$50 per acre, and it is plain to anyone who has been to school that—

1 orange tree—\$40—100 orange trees = \$4,000.

I do not wish to discourage any man from setting out fruit trees or from raising any crop that he has no use for, but it is not good policy to "put all your eggs in one basket."

It was said that a "Land Congress" that was recently held in Mobile, added a

million dollars to the wealth, (prices,) of lands in Alabama. I wish to call attention to the fact that our landed wealth of which we boast is not wealth at all, but merely the prices that are asked because of the monopolization of land.

Accessibility to land is the key to our social welfare. There are millions of acres of land in the United States as good as the best that can be bought for less than \$5 per acre. These lands can be purchased, subdivided and sold in small tracts at a good profit at \$10 per acre. If this work were undertaken by a responsible company, if these lands were sold in five and ten acre lots to all who desired, the retail price of farm lands in this country could not go above \$10 per acre. Owners of wild land who did not care to sell at this price could keep them until they were worth less. The literature of this company would increase farm values, (prices,) in the United States by many billions.

I do not wish to discourage any reform work, but the work that is being done in our cities toward exemption of improvements, etc., is merely whittling a shaving from the apex of the pyramid. High values, (prices) of our agricultural lands are the base of the great pyramid of speculative values in which are entombed the ideals of our latter day civilization. If we destroy the base, the superstructure will fall of its own weight.—PRESCOTT A. PARKER, Volanta, Ala.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A. D. CRIDGE DEFENDS THE OREGON CAMPAIGN.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

William Ryan in your January-February number explains at length that some progressive tax measures proposed by the Oregon Tax Commissioners and a legislative committee were opposed by the Single Taxers. He is correct, and so am I. Had it not been for the campaign of the Single Taxers these measures would not have been proposed. At the meeting of worthy gentlemen who submitted the official tax measures to the electorate of

Oregon last year the question was not what was right, but what would head off the Single Taxers.

I stated that the poll tax had been abolished by the efforts of Single Taxers. It undoubtedly was abolished in 1910 by their amendment, and has stayed so.

While the measure exempting household furniture from taxation was a fake, and so intended by the Tax Commissioners who proposed it, and known by them to be unconstitutional even if all their other measures had carried, nevertheless the assessor of Portland, Oregon (Multnomah County) is not assessing household furniture this year. Perhaps he will be made to do so. But as the only difference was that the measure did not contain a clause making it a constitutional amendment (which it could just as easily have done) it is held by some lawyers, and even by the plunderbund *Oregonian*, that the supreme court could sustain it because it was passed by the people, and will be passed again as an amendment. Strange as it may seem to William Ryan, something along this line has been dug up as precedent, and courts and lawyers are great on precedent.

It is true that these various measures to head off the Single Tax were exposed and opposed by the Single Taxers in the State pamphlet, but the arguments thereon were mostly in regard to the Graduated Single Tax measure. In that way every tax measure before the people had an argument on Single Tax published in the pamphlet that went to every registered voter.

At the time of writing the measure allowing different classes of property to be taxed at different rates by the Legislature (which would include the people acting directly through the Initiative) was reported to have passed, and I allowed that it was in doubt. The present Oregon Legislature has submitted it to the people again because it simply must be there to permit of certain changes that may be imperative in case Washington or California offers better inducements to manufacturing industries. The general opinion is that it will pass. It would never have been submitted but to head off the Single

Tax. It was opposed bitterly in the Legislature this time because it was alleged to be a Single Tax measure. It passed however by a strong vote.

The people of Oregon were frightened in 1912. They cannot be kept frightened.

For eight years the people of Oregon were taxed by tax laws passed with the "emergency clause" whereby the referendum was shut off. That has been done away with, thanks to the Single Taxers. A pretended repeal of the poll tax in 1907 by the Legislature was a fake, abolishing a state poll tax of one dollar but not abolishing the County road poll taxes. The latter were immediately raised to take up that dollar. They were collected in every county in the State except one, and but for the sweeping repeal would have been re-imposed in that one.

While it is true that the expenditure of the contributions of the Fels Fund in Oregon did not produce the immediate results that Single Taxers had some justification to expect, the final returns are not all in yet. There was lots of money wasted in the John Brown raid into Virginia, but the returns did not come in for several years. Wait until the farmers of Oregon get their eyes open one-half as far as the farmers of Alberta and British Columbia.

The mistake made in Oregon, as in other States, is in proceeding on a theory that an election is a final point instead of a mark in the road on the way to the goal.

With a carefully planned, thoroughly organized, local as well as general, educational campaign, Oregon can be carried for some step so definite toward the Single Tax as to justify the expenditure of 100 times the money so far invested. The knowledge of how not to do a thing is worth a great deal at times. There are a lot of us who have learned some important lessons in this line.

All honor to the men of Oregon who did their best!

Had they won out we would have forgotten—or forgiven—their mistakes. Let us do so now in so far as laying blame. Let their epitaph be that of a cowboy buried on the lonely plains of Montana: