

of Fairhope; and no execution of the popular will that does not fully and completely keep faith in its professions will either answer the claims of justice or promote the public harmony.

We must provide the means of giving the people all they want and what they want, and are willing and able to pay for in ground rents, simply because it is their right. We need no change in the constitution to keep us up to our highest ideals in this matter if we live up to them voluntarily.

The Fairhope Single Tax Corporation must recognize fully the right of the people to rule, and the public must realize fully their responsibility in expressing their wishes. I believe that some such method of mutual confidence and of mutual sharing of responsibility and co-operation would make the administration of Fairhope's affairs almost ideal.

We may safely trust that the mental process of observing the effect of our fundamental provisions and realizing the certainty in their experience that its action will equalize the opportunities of all our people in the use of land, will give to them also a stronger grip on the spiritual truth, that justice is above expediency and is its highest form.

Then our Colony could give answer to the inquiry of the world; We are not our brother's keepers, We are his brothers.

**ADDRESS OF CORNELIUS DONOVAN, PRESIDENT OF
TENANTS' UNION, OF NEW YORK, AT DINNER
OF TENANTS' UNION, MAY 3, 1913.**

With the tickets announcing this dinner you received a circular which briefly stated some of the objects and aims of our Union, and asserted that Tenants' Rights has been our platform from the beginning. What are tenants' rights? What do we want? In a word, the rights of life, liberty and personal dignity—the rights symbolized by this banner of freedom, for it is, historically at least, the flag of our Declaration of Independence more than it is that of the constitution, which sometimes halts behind it. In the very language of Jefferson, these fundamental rights are inalienable. We could not if we wanted to grant to our agents or representatives the right to sell them or give them away. If they have made statutes or enacted laws, which in effect give fundamental rights away, such laws are as unconstitutional as though all the courts had passed upon them and so decided. And they are unconstitutional regardless of the number or power of the courts that may have sustained statutes that seek to abrogate human rights.

Of course, the rights of which I speak are not exclusively tenants' rights, but they are our rights, and inalienable, and therefore the tribute that most of us pay to some of us is in our opinion unconstitutional. We demand of our own public servants the right to life, which means the access to the only

means of life, the earth. We demand the annihilation of the statutes, bought stealthily and secretly from our legislators, without referendum or knowledge of us, the powers to forestall our opportunities, and divide our earnings in values of our own creation.

We demand the restoration of our rights to nominate, that have been filched from us by a pretense of reform of our ballot system. We have been reduced to the defenseless condition of choosing between copyrighted emblems, both owned by the same group of plutocrats, who carry on an opera bouffe, Punch and Judy warfare between the parties and within the parties.

None but the very well-to-do can be nominated. The Mutt Families are as completely bereft of their political powers as if they had all moved south and turned black. The privilege of suffrage we still have, the methods to use it intelligently and effectively have been withdrawn or superseded. As a consequence this government is not of our choosing, and it does not pretend to be, except in fervid orations in conventions and at Fourth of July celebrations.

If any of you think that this is still the people's government, go to some legislative hearing to advocate some reform of abuses, or to oppose some great public plunder, and notice the treatment you receive.

Today we witnessed the splendid pageant of our earnest, lovely women, spending their energies, wearying and making themselves a motley to the view, selling cheap what is most dear, and all for what? To decide which agents of the exploiting interests they would prefer to be robbed by. Their favorite journals will graciously help them as they do their innocent brothers in making their selections.

Unless they are looking forward to something more in the voting power than the tenants now know we can assure them that it is hardly worth while. If they were to get immediately from the powers that be the degree of suffrage males have, they might say without injustice to the bosses, "Thank you for nothing."

But if it is their ambition, as I think it likely to be, to not only vote but nominate, elect and govern, if only out of impatience to show how much better they can do it than it is done now, let it be soon granted to them. They will start with a freedom from foolish habits that have made the votes of men more injurious than beneficial. They will bring their intuition and intelligence into the source of all authority at this time of growing discontent and dissatisfaction with existing arrangements.

It is not in the nature of women, the creators of our race, to knowingly interfere or forestall or forbid the right of access to the only means of life, our common mother earth.

It is not in the nature of the mothers of girls to consent to the protracted dangers of maidenhood, that flow from the embargo on homes and early marriages, caused by the preemption of homesites. There is nothing about which they are more solicitous than the health of their children. The paper titles that our government gives to a monopoly of the fresh air, sunshine and

good food, that are the great preventives of diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, etc., would soon be invalidated by the votes of loving mothers.

Is it not curious that a seemingly most scrupulous people, who would not think of robbing a bank or joining a band of burglars, picking pockets or short-changing any neighbor or stranger, will be guilty of an act more malignant than any of these. They will blackmail the young family and prevent or stunt its growth by forestalling vacant lots. These covetous persons are the real cause of the unspeakable congestion that gives us our high death rate. These are the modern Herods that massacre the innocents. "All that live must die passing through nature to eternity." But all that die of preventable diseases have their lives shortened. They that die of the great white plague (and 600,000 now alive in this City will die of that dread disease) will be murdered by the speculators in homesites. To stay the hand of this greatest of death's agents is the great desire of this Union.

BI-MONTHLY NEWS LETTER.

By **THE EDITOR.**

The New York City Charter has been amended by a law just enacted (Chapter 324) and which adds this provision:

"A building in course of construction commenced since the preceding first day of October and not ready for occupancy, shall not be assessed."

Assessment day in the City of New York is the first day of October, so that the practical effect of this provision is to exempt the building during the first year it is in course of construction, which will cover the great majority of cases; the limitation confining the exemption to one assessment day, being intended to prevent the somewhat remote possibility of evasion by deliberately keeping a building uncompleted.

This bill, being a local measure, went first to Mayor Gaynor for his approval before reaching the Governor.

At a hearing before the Mayor the bill was vigorously opposed by Dr. Abr. Korn, on behalf of the "United Real Estate Owners Ass'n." Still more curiously, the bill was opposed also by the "Allied Realty Interests," of which Allan Robinson is president. This organization is supposed to represent the owners of the valuable business properties, and a large part of the financial and commercial district is still occupied by old buildings that are no longer profitable and must be rebuilt soon. One would imagine that even the vacant lot owners in that organization would realize the benefit of offering builders an exemption from taxes during the period when they are laying out money on construction and are not yet able to get any income from the property.

The Mayor, however, not only approved the bill but wrote to the governor urging the merits of the measure and asking that it receive his approval.