

seek to substitute for this ancient principle of rent payment something called the "Single Tax" or the "Taxation of Land Values" is therefore in Britain to throw away a great constitutional asset. It is as well that American taxers should realize this, as it will explain in part why the Commonwealth League is fighting the endeavor of our "taxers" because it confounds the work we are doing in the Labor movement. The Liberals never dared in the past, nor would they now dare, to demand the assertion of the Common Right to the Land, but instead advocated the Taxation of Land Values as a fiscal reform. We seek to secure through the Labor movement an economic revolution by a pacific and constitutional method and one that follows the lines of ancient constitutional principle and practice.

So the issue between the taxers and the Commonwealth League has become a Party issue which will develop as such. Consequently, when American delegates attend the "International Conference on the Taxation of Land Values" convened by our land taxers for August next at Oxford they will be somewhat embarrassed. If the Conference is to be used to strengthen the position of those who stand for the Taxation of Land Values rather than the full application of the principles of Henry George, the Commonwealth League, for reasons indicated in this article, must regard it as detrimental to the propaganda that it is conducting. We know that as we win over the rank and file for our uncompromising demand the politicians hasten to proclaim their adherence to the Taxation of Land Values.

The position is very much like in America when real Free Trade was espoused by the rank and file and the politicians sang

"Tramp, Tramp, Tramp—don't be afraid,
Tariff Reform is not Free Trade."

We know the result in America for Free Trade and fear the same here for the cause of economic emancipation at the hands of the land-taxer.

The Oxford Conference should have been convened to discuss how best to secure the realization of the principle enunciated by Henry George—Liberty through Justice.

With Europe rushing headlong into chaos and dragging Britain down with her, the day has gone by for little men and little measures. With such a storm brewing as that upon the horizon the safety of the ship can best be assured by pulling up the anchor and setting out to meet it on the open sea. Anyhow, it can at least be said that the Commonwealth League is provoking a fight for the Restoration of the Land such as this country has not yet seen. The workers are with us. The machine is against us.

R. L. OUTHWAITE.

PULPIT orator talks of the "Struggle between Capital and Labor," but has in mind only certain employers, some of whom are productive workers, and certain organized employes, many of whom are small capitalists.

PROMINENT Cleveland tariff seeker and philanthropist is advertised to lead a "Great Men's Bible Class."

A Plea For The Single Tax Party—What It Might Mean

MR. GEORGE WHITE, in his article on "Suggestions for Practical Work," which appeared in your Jan.-Feb. issue, says: "The party scheme has a more natural affiliation with the economic and fiscal than with the moral foundations of our proposal," and he adds that "there is an apparent absurdity in the tendency of men who claim to be 'middle-of-the-roaders,' excited and obsessed by the cruelly unjust conditions brought about by our land system, refusing, like William Lloyd Garrison, to compromise, minimize, extenuate or equivocate—and yet who are content to be active in such trifling enterprise as the formation of a party."

This is an old argument—another brief on behalf of the non-partyites in their ever pending case against the party actionists, but there is, inferentially, enough just criticism of the party in it to deserve the consideration of the partyite. Having the anxiety which is natural to Single Taxers as to how they are to achieve an earth free from land monopoly, I have for many years looked upon the party scheme as our best, biggest and only hope. To give up one's dearly cherished and only hope (for this is what it would mean to me to have Mr. White's counsel generally followed) is difficult; and yet, if nothing more is to be derived from the method he recommends and all effort is to produce nothing but apples of Sodom and Barmacidian feasts, what else is a practical and worldly man to do?

The question is gravely important.

But what is the situation? Are we indeed in such bad case as Mr. White's "Suggestions" would lead us to believe; and is he as practical as he seems?

If the party entity, as it has functioned since its organization, is to be taken as constituting the sum total of the party idea it is a mathematical certainty that Mr. White's position is unassailable and the party may as well be abandoned. This much may be admitted, but it is in his failure to note the difference between the party and the party scheme that Mr. White is in error. To him the two things are identical.

I am convinced that mere propaganda, though led by the flaming zeal of a Mohammed, without a political party, could get us nowhere.

The miserable little we have to show for fifty years of this kind of effort should teach us that there is a weakness in it; and, furthermore, that something besides moral verve is missing. Not to appreciate this is to relegate ourselves to the class that learns nothing and forgets nothing.

Even direct legislation (to which so many of us pinned our faith a few years ago) without a political party is not effective, as experience has amply shown. For example, the city of Toronto, Canada, in the last few years has three times adopted a Single Tax measure by direct legislation, but, owing to the lack of enabling laws, which none of the parties in power would introduce, it has remained unenforced, and, by all the signs, will likely remain that way till the crack of doom unless a party is formed to back it up.

But we can never see the imperious necessity for party action until we see the futility of the discussion between the fiscal and moral suasionists. There is no contradiction between the so-called "fiscal" and "moral" phases of our proposal, but a collaboration. Both phases are necessary to a full presentation. Those, like Mr. White, who are enmeshed in the coils of this discussion apparently forget that the first, last and only word of Privilege is power, and that this power, like our own, rests on an ideal—a wrong one, as we think—but, nevertheless, an ideal and that there is no place for our ideal until the other is destroyed.

The trouble with us is we have never gone forth to bloody battle against the thing that we are against, but have confined ourselves to a maudlin pathos over the sorrows of the exploited and disinherited which, as we know, the privileged ones, without ever a thought of relinquishing their unfair advantage, will hear sympathetically enough. We have failed either to realize that the mass, which is the source of all power and which must be won, has taken its ideal from the materialistic-minded beneficiaries of Privilege; or, we have failed to realize the true character of that ideal and the philosophy supporting it, emblazoned and heralded from all the pinnacles of thought and expression in the world as they are.

It is an undoubted fact that the ideal of the man in the mass is to become the possessor of wealth, and, in essence, the philosophy he is fed on is, that the material conditions of men are due exclusively to the difference in individuals, or, as Jim Lindsay of Cleveland delights to put it, to the ability of men to lift themselves above their fellows by their own boot-straps. This is the foundation of Privilege, the primal principle of the system, the sumpter beam of the structure. Have not the Henry Dubbs of the world dim visions of some day becoming Henry Fords? And Why? Is it not because Privilege jealously guards this ideal and this philosophy to the mass mind? How carefully it sees to it that none of the avenues of education—the press, the pulpit, the theatre, in short all forms of literature and art—conveys any idea inimical to its existence, should be patent to the most careless observer. So long, therefore, as all art, all literature and all philosophy pay court to the heroes of the clan and the market the mass will do likewise; and so long as this is true, playing the role of John Baptists, as Mr. White advises us to do, is chimerical and vain. The mass will not hear us; it will not heed us.

Surely, then, it would seem that our immediate task is a little less to teach the beauties of a free earth than to destroy the present mass vision.

Naturally, the question here arises as to how this is to be done? Before seeking the answer, however, we must consider carefully the nature of our mission. Being on our way isn't enough. We must know whither we are going. We all say, of course, that our mission is to abolish Privilege, but do we all know it? To accept a proposition without accepting its implications is nothing less than hypocrisy.

The dream of Henry George was liberty, and not a system of taxation. It was a social order that he opposed; it is, therefore, a social order that we must uproot. Whether we are as big as our cause or not, this is our task; we must change a social order and with it all of the complexes of that order.

When the Single Tax Party was formed I was sanguine enough to believe that we had at last really embarked on the great adventure of our revered leader; but alas, here are three years spent exclusively in a propaganda that may have been almost as well done by the plan suggested by Mr. White. Let us not blink the fact that Henry George was a revolutionist and that we are something else. We have been somehow enchanted in the castle of the ogre—bewitched in the jungle of the beast. If we are to be true followers of Henry George; if we are to be revolutionists instead of insipid doctrinaires or reformers as the Socialists charge; if we are to appeal successfully to the mass; if we are to give mankind a new earth we must disgust the mass mind with its present standards.

The opportunities to do so, now that we have the vehicle in a party, are vast and innumerable. When we take to this course we shall take a definite position on every live political issue (the cat is to be seen in everything). When we take to this course no great rich man will die whose truthful obituary, (so far as his career shall have concerned society as an economic phenomenon) we shall not write, for it will furnish us an opportunity for dramatically showing that such wealth, due to the system and not to the man, is tainted and mean; when we take to this course there will be no literary production which will not receive our unsparing criticism from this angle (what an opportunity in fiction and drama where every hero is someone who is possessed of wealth that others have earned or someone who has served him; in painting and sculpture where poverty is idealized); in brief we must learn to deride, discount, discredit and belittle the successful products (men and ideas) of the present order, because these phenomena cannot be honestly analyzed without exposing the meanness of class reward. By holding the mirror firmly up in this manner before them and permitting them to see their own image we shall break the heart of the privileged. This we must do to disturb the respect of the mass for the exploiter.

The point need not be much further labored. If we are to take our mission in earnest we shall take a leaf from the book of Privilege. Privilege wastes no time. It unflinchingly seeks to destroy the ideal opposed to it either by the persecution and often the actual physical murder of the propagandists of opposing ideals, or ridiculing these ideals until they become obnoxious to the mass. These are the secrets of Privilege, the tricks of its power. This is what it does to us. When it does not murder the man who dares to lift a voice against it, it ruins him economically. To take conspicuous examples, it did not send Tom Johnson or Governor Altgeld to the stake as it did Savanorola, John Huss and myriads of others, but it undermined them finan-

cially. It does not send many Single Taxers to prison because it can "get them" almost as effectually through banks, credit associations, courts, black-lists and newspaper associations.

I do not mean that we should persecute but that we must be determined on making the ideal of privilege hateful. If only half the ink we use in telling a heedless world the glad tidings about our far-off vision were used in pointing out the cheapness of the present going ideal it would destroy the ambition of the Henry Dubbs to become Henry Fords.

"Surely we must fight if we would reign," and all the talk in which we indulge and all the wierd and fantastic zeal we demand as the only quality necessary in this great war, are bunk and infantile babble. No, it is not love for our vision but the lack of it that causes us to avoid this issue. The genuine lovers of men are unrelenting haters of lies. Revolutions are not made of rose water.

The question for us of the party then is: Are we to continue in the same mild propaganda as those from whom we have broken, *i. e.*, are we to continue to meet the merciless onslaughts of Privilege with simple protest and wailing prayer; or, shall we fight? GEORGE EDWARDS.

Not A Tax Reform

TO preach as a positive doctrine that the Single Tax means leaving to landowners one-half the rent so they will be encouraged to put the land to good use, is to lose sight entirely of the aims and teachings of Henry George. The term "Single Tax" applied to his philosophy was not of his coining or seeking. He did not write his book in order to perfect our tax system. He wrote it because the sight of his fellowmen in poverty and degradation would not let him rest until he found the cause and the remedy. What he preached was the abolition of that control over the earth which gives some men the power to enslave others. His philosophy was that of equal freedom extended to all human and social relations, including equal access to the storehouse of nature. He taught that the right of the individual to what he produces is just, and that it is violated when rent is taken by private individuals. He lived and worked and died for the liberty of every man to live his life and employ his labor and enjoy the fruits thereof, subject only to the equal rights of others. Whether the preaching of this gospel shall be ineffective is not for us who have him to thank for teaching it to say. To us, it is true; by us it will be preached. A. C. PLEYDELL.

A CAREFUL study of a large number of advertisements by subdivision dealers shows that the main appeal is to speculative greed rather than to the home-making and productive instincts of man. It does more harm to public morals than the preachers can overcome.

MR. DAUGHERTY thinks it wrong to speculate in sugar, but right to speculate in land on which sugar is produced.

NEWS—DOMESTIC

California

CARY R. COLBURN, Secretary-Treasurer of the San Diego Single Tax Society, was a candidate in the Spring elections for member of the Common Council. He circulated widely an admirable campaign pamphlet entitled, "Home Building versus Land Speculation." In it he said in part:

My platform is short: More and better homes. My method of encouraging the people to build more and better homes is simple! Reduce the tax on homes and increase the tax on land held for speculation.

There is enough land in San Diego to furnish the foundation for a million homes, each with a large back yard and playground and garden, but it has all been monopolized by speculators who find it more profitable to hold it than to use it. While it is true that under our State constitution and city charter the city cannot wholly exempt homes from taxation, still much more can be done in that direction than is done. For example, the holders of land could be required to pay for the extension of water mains, thereby making it possible to reduce the water rate. In the past seven years the water rate has been raised from eight to fifteen cents, because the land speculators have not paid their just share of the cost of extending the water system. No San Diego citizen needs to be told that accessibility to water greatly enhances the value of land. It is unjust that water users should pay for carrying water to land speculators.

This is only one of the many ways in which the municipal administration could encourage the use of and discourage holding out of use valuable land in San Diego and make it easier to build and improve homes. Another, and a very practical method, is to assess the very valuable speculative holdings of land at their full cash value, as the constitution requires, and thus make it possible to reduce the tax on homes to a fraction of what they now have to pay. There are many other practical means of reducing taxes and rent on homes. Wherever there is a will there is a way to approximate justice, even under restrictive constitutions and charters.

Colorado

THE proposed amendment to the city charter of Denver was voted on in May and the result of the balloting is gratifying. The measure, a modified form of Single Tax, was known as the Lower Rent amendment, and was as follows:

"Each year the council shall fix and determine the tax rate to be levied for municipal purposes upon the assessed value of land and franchises in public ways, and shall also fix and determine the tax to be levied for said purposes on personal property and improvements on land.

"Provided, that no tax for municipal purposes shall be levied on the value of any building erected after the adoption of this amendment, if said building is used exclusively for dwelling purposes.

"Provided further, that for the year beginning January 1, 1924, the tax rate for purposes on personal property and improvements on land shall not exceed 90 per centum of