

In addition to the acts above referred to, the courts have been twice asked to forbid the certification by the registrars of voters of San Francisco and Alameda counties of our lists to the Secretary of State. In each instance the court has refused to so act, and the reports have gone forward. Probably no further action in this regard will be taken, and we know as well as may be that any further like attempt would fail.

Why this determined fight to prevent the people from voting? One can only regard it as the outcome of a certain fear of the result. While chanting loudly that it is too bad that the repose of the people should be disturbed when they have six times overwhelmingly rejected the Single Tax they seem pallid with fear lest the history of the past would not be that of the future. For instance, in a circular letter addressed by a committee of the San Jose chamber of commerce to follow members through Santa Clara county, calling for individual contributions of \$50, the committee says:

"This is one of the most dangerous and misleading measurers ever presented to voters. Its innocent looking phrases, repealing sales taxes and exempting homes and improvements, appeal to the immediate self-interest of great masses of people. Wording of the measure gives no warning that the old Single Tax panacea of taxing land out of private ownership is the real objective. . . . Appeal to voters will be to repeal the Sales Tax and to exempt their homes or personal property from taxation. Anyone can understand that. That is why our fight is going to be so difficult. . . . The very foundations of our state and local governments are in jeopardy. The threat is real. . . . We find it will take many thousands of dollars to do the work."

The sincerest and best help we are receiving is from the labor organizations. The American Federation of Labor has in convention five times endorsed the plan. Only last week at Santa Barbara the Executive Council of the State A. F. of L. instructed its officers to throw their whole weight into the fight. The best part of this is that the officers and council know perfectly well the importance to labor of the proposition and are determined that the rank and file shall as well understand the situation. In addition the State Railway Brotherhoods are endorsing the amendment and there is no reason to doubt that the C. I. O. will be of the same mind. These constitute a potential force of probably not less than 400,000 voters.

Those who should be our friends and supporters throughout the Union are strangely silent, while the few of us, with Labor's assistance, are carrying on a gigantic fight with very strong chances of success. As you have seen our opponents attest this by their actions and utterances.

I remarked a few days ago to a friend that the forces we are contending with were so strong and their resources so vast that it seemed like the old fight of David against Goliath. "Yes," he replied, "but you remember what happened to Goliath."—JACKSON H. RALSTON.

The Natural Law of Rent

LAND is sometimes classified into marginal, super-marginal and submarginal. These terms are self-defining when it is understood that marginal land is such as will produce common wages; that is, a common or average living, and nothing more, to the occupant, upon the application of the average amount of labor and capital.

Ricardo's Law of Rent may be stated thus: Rent is the excess value or product of any land above the poorest grade of land in common use, or marginal land. It may be illustrated as follows:

If marginal land will produce 25 bushels of corn per acre with the average application of labor and capital, its product constitutes common wages only. It has no rental value.

If other land will produce 50 bushels of corn per acre with the same application of labor and capital, the excess 25 bushels, constitutes ground rent, and is attributable to the quality or location of the land itself, rather than to the labor and capital employed. The excess is a gift of nature. It belongs equally to all men; and since it cannot be apportioned, it belongs to society.

As between landlord and tenant, this excess, or ground rent, is taken by the landlord, since the tenant is entitled only to common or average wages.

Super-marginal land will yield not only wages (and interest) on the labor and capital applied, but ground rent in addition, which is the share taken by the landlord and for which he makes no return. It is a monopoly income; and gives such land commercial value.

It is this that makes land so desirable an investment for those who want an income without effort. Such income is at the expense of the public.

Ricardo's Law of Rent is a natural law. It cannot be outmoded, as some say, nor repealed. As well try to repeal the law of gravitation.

Ground rent cannot be added to the price of corn, for the excess corn is itself the ground rent, and has cost nothing. The price of corn is fixed by the cost of producing it on marginal land.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

I ASK in behalf of the poor nothing whatever that properly belongs to the rich. Instead of weakening and confusing the idea of property, I would surround it with stronger sanctions. Instead of lessening the incentive to the production of wealth, I would make it more powerful by making the reward more certain.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS, BY HENRY GEORGE.

I AM a Single Taxer! The Single Tax would be the means of bringing about the sanitary reforms which I so much desire.

Surgeon-General WILLIAM C. GORGAS, U. S. Army.