

**Taxers.** The Peoria conference, just referred to, instructed the Committee of Seven to pledge candidates for the legislature to three things, viz.: (a) to "work and vote for an amendment to the constitution providing for the Initiative and Referendum"; (b) to "work and vote for the passage of a corrupt practices act"; and (c) to "work and vote for the passage of a bill providing for a comprehensive civil service system."

It was the concensus of the reform workers at that conference, after their long and bitter experiences with previous legislatures that it was almost useless to expect reform measures to be passed without the aid of direct legislation. They had found that while the Initiative and Referendum do not constitute a reform in themselves, they are the *key* to all reforms of any value. It was there shown that many hundreds, and in some cases thousands of dollars and much labor and time had been wasted in vain attempts to secure desired and important legislation. The temperance people of Illinois, for instance, spent in 1904, over \$40,000 in an effort to secure a local option liquor law, and failed through lack of one vote in the legislature.

At all the sessions of the legislature since the Peoria conference, the Initiative and Referendum people of the State have kept paid representatives at Springfield who have given their entire time to the effort to secure the passage through the General Assembly of an amendment to the State constitution establishing direct legislation. After a hard fight the measure passed one house but failed in the other house, lacking nine votes. The opposition to the measure came from the monopoly interests of the State, those interests having learned that "the thing works" when it has a chance. These interests have succeeded in dividing the friends of the measure under various specious pleas—pleas which would not have availed had there been a better understanding of the case, and in some instances, the possession of an altruistic spirit.

It is plain to me that the Initiative and Referendum amendment of Illinois has the right of way over the tax reform amend-

ment even were the latter to favor the Single Tax, which, I understand, it does not. The opinion of Governor E. F. Dunne on political matters is entitled to great weight. I was living in Illinois while he was Mayor of Chicago, and well remember the many important reforms which he advocated and some of which he inaugurated, and believe that he was an able and upright official. If now Governor Dunne, as you say, "condemns the tax reformers as 'hypocritical' and 'pharasaical'" I must believe that he is not too harsh in his judgment.—JAMES P. CADMAN, San Diego, Cal.

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#### CAN A SINGLE TAXER ENDORSE MALTHUS?

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EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I have read most of the papers entitled, "On the Good Ship Earth," by Herbert Quick, which are, as you say, "intensely interesting," but I cannot help inquiring: Can the Single Taxer indorse Malthus? We agree on conservation of nitrates, potash, sulphur, phosphorus, etc., but can we agree that

"Just now it is well to remember that increase of population is the greatest evil the world is threatened by." (Paper XVI.)

Does this not conflict with another statement in No. 19:

"There must be no poverty. Some way must be found to eliminate the injustices which make the inequalities that doom so many millions even in our sparsely-peopled land, to lives of simple, stark, dead struggle for existence. Such a state of freedom from poverty is possible in the western world for ages to come."

If so, then the greatest evil must be the thing that causes poverty in a sparsely peopled land, where the evils of overpopulation are not yet a danger. Mr. Quick cites China as showing the evils of population pushing against the capacity of land to produce. There may be in China a struggle for existence; but there is no such struggle in the United States, where statistics show that every adult man produces about \$2,500 annually, and receives but \$500. If I had to hoe corn

with a landlord on my back, I could not produce much; I might be struggling for existence, but not in the Darwin sense. If I discovered I could throw the landlord off, and begin to produce and hold \$2,500 each year, and thereby support all the children I wished for, I would conclude the landlord was the evil, not the children, (another word for "increase").

Continuing the above quotation: "And if attained before the people are ground down into 'the simple life,' will save us forever from a swarming existence of poverty from which we shall have no way of escaping—fulfilling the sordid law of Malthus," etc.

Here is acceptance of the law of Malthus, which Single Taxers utterly reject, being forced by logic to follow Henry George in his analysis of that law. But how does Mr. Quick state that law? In No. 15 he refers to it as:

"The tendency of human beings to multiply beyond the resources of the earth to afford them means of living."

These resources must include all the land and all the elements from which men make food, by labor. As man never has multiplied to within anywhere near the limit of such resources, poverty never has been the result of pressure upon that limit, except, perhaps, as to China and like countries, though some doubt that it is true there. But Malthus wanted to account for poverty existing where land was plenty, and did not do so by pointing to the pressure of population upon the ultimate "resources of the earth." He did it (or tried to) on the theories of "niggardliness of nature" and "the law of diminishing returns." J. S. Mill no doubt stated the law correctly, as quoted by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty," Book II., chap. IV. Malthus may have tried to frighten us with pictures of the world holding twice the people that could find standing room, but only the unthinking can admit a logical connection between that picture and the actual relation of increase of people to that of food even at a time when there is a hundred times more natural resources lying idle than the amount needed.

Mr. Quick, therefore, does not state the

law of Malthus correctly; nor does he state accurately Henry George's attitude to that law:

"Men of the George school have made the strongest case which has been made against the argument that man, an animal, like all other living beings tends to multiply, if given a chance, to the limits of subsistence."

Now George never denied that IF population continued to increase until the "limits of subsistence" were reached or passed, men would starve. He merely denied that population could increase faster than man can produce food; he denied the "law of diminishing returns," and proved that a greater population can produce relatively more food, not less, than a sparser population. It is absurd, moreover, to say that a "tendency" to multiply beyond the resources of the earth could ever cause poverty. If people tend to increase this alone proves that they cannot continue to increase beyond the capacity of the earth to support them; but if a greater population can create relatively more food, not less, than a smaller population, such "tendency" can never cause poverty, though it be the cause of the final catastrophe.

Mr. Quick is somewhat mixed even on his own data. He thinks that as the food elements are exhausted, men have shifted their habitations, encroaching on other peoples, causing war.

"Under the beating of such waves, Greece was submerged, and the Roman empire went down in ruins. The passengers were seeking new quarters, that's all."

Those peoples were not moved by love of power and conquest, glory, etc., as we supposed. They were seeking new food elements, potash, sulphur, nitrogen and phosphorus. Then later he says:

"Gibbon calculates the population of the Roman Empire at its height at 120,000,000. The regions then included in the Roman Empire are now more than twice as populous. Five hundred years ago Europe had probably about 50,000,000 people. She now has 380,000,000."

The conclusion is obvious: a land exhausted by 120,000,000 people could not later support twice that number. The

tribes north of Rome left good rich land, to subdue the Romans for revenge, conquest, or other such motive. Their lands never were exhausted, and are not today. Neither Malthus nor Quick can cite war as a weapon of Demon Nature, used to postpone the final starvation of the whole race, any more than the socialist can logically cite "capitalism" as a natural phase of evolution, the miseries of which it is as impossible to escape as it is impossible for a boy to avoid being fifteen years old if he lives long enough. Just observe that even on this theory, Nature does a foolish thing in employing war. Without war people could eat, drink and be merry, and never want, as long as the potash holds out; for George proved increasing, not diminishing returns. When the potash, etc., runs out, then all would die together, their joy and misery ended; but war merely postpones the final starvation and makes miserable the whole journey which otherwise might be pleasant. It kills off a few, produces monopoly, which starves more, and causes all kinds of unnecessary terror. Evidently the world does not need war, disease and famine, any more than a child needs chicken pox for its development. They are avoidable evils, like poverty, and all may be cured by free land.

The wastes going on continually are surprising. Coal is wasted in smoke; yet some people tell us the air carries it back to feed vegetation. 610,000,000 cubic yards of soil are "wasting off into the oceans" each year, says Mr. Quick, which if dumped from wagons would make a string of teams 76 times around the earth. Maybe it is not wasted. Mr. Quick tells of a sea plant from which potash can be extracted. He mentions a bacteria which puts nitrogen in the soil. Fishes collect phosphorus and the birds give it back in the shape of guano. Perhaps we can devise a way to catch fish and use them for fertilizers. Perhaps the elements washed into the sea ferment somehow, or feed vegetation and animals, and are not lost at all. When we worry about the future we assume that man in the future can learn no more about these elements than is now known. Let us leave something for posterity to discover.

Then there are various perils: The Yellow peril, the Black peril, the Mahometan peril, etc. If we are the superior race, we must increase in numbers, by making land free, then those "perils" will keep away. We learned from Henry George that war, famine, and all the evils of poverty, are not natural factors of evolution, but that they can be avoided by making land free to labor.—C. F. HUNT, Chicago, Ill.

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### PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND.

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#### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In your last issue Mr. C. B. Fillebrown, of Boston, writing as one claiming to speak with authority, and, may I presume, as a Single Taxer, expresses his views on the above question. As one who has worked almost incessantly for Single Tax during the past twenty-eight years, and who has not "long since outgrown the error" (if it be an error) to which he refers, I should like to say a few words in reply. Henry George's position on the question of private property in land is sufficiently revealed in the two quotations which follow from his "Progress and Poverty,"\* and the position there taken is, I believe, still adhered to by the majority of his followers, at all events by all those with whom I have had the privilege of becoming acquainted. Mr. George never said and never claimed that his remedy was the "sole" remedy; what he claimed and what we, his followers still claim is that it is the most simple, most effective, and most constitutional remedy—the remedy most in accord with "the axiom of statesmanship" that "great changes can best be brought about under old forms." True it is, as Mr. Fillebrown points out, that "a great reform should rest upon good morals and good economics." And if it be admitted that private ownership of land as we know it today, with its claim to the private appropriation, or confiscation, of its rental value, is just and

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\* Further light on the evolution of Henry George's views on this question may be gained from "The Life of Henry George," Memorial Edition, Pp. 232-233.