

subsidy must come out of taxes, which are passed on to those who at that particular time can be forced to pay the increased taxes. Increased taxes on those whose earnings are higher will eventually reduce their purchasing power, for taxes take part of their earnings. This will bring us into the vicious circle of reducing purchasing power all around. A lack of customers is what causes business depressions. Customers only buy in accordance with the amount they have to spend. If it is taken from them in taxes, they must take it out of shelter, food and clothing.

Some day, somehow, labor may realize who is doing the pinching. They can no longer blame it on capital. Factories are closed down, mills and mines are being abandoned and the banks are loaded down with money which they are unable to lend. The fear of investing has reached a point where business men will not take a chance, since all they produce is taken from them in taxes. Clean up the tax situation, take the burden off industry and labor and the machine will begin to work.

Pro Bono Publico.

Single Tax Bill Passes the New Jersey Assembly

THE Sanford Bill 160 has been passed by the New Jersey State Assembly, after several years' effort by the Progressive League, and is now before the Senate, which will shortly adjourn.

This bill would permit any municipality to gradually, over a period of five years, reduce, and finally repeal at the end of the fifth year, taxes on machinery, merchandise, inventory and improvements, by collecting more of the public revenue from *all* land value now taxable.

The vote in the Assembly was 31 to 23 with a good prospect of its being approved by the Senate and signed by the Governor. In next issue we will give a review of the long campaign and the results.

LAND and FREEDOM, in reprinting the following editorial, takes this occasion to thank the *Newark Evening News* for its fair treatment of the subject, and especially for its kindness in publishing the many letters it receives from the advocates of land value taxation.

Newark Evening News, Newark, N. J. Saturday, May 14, 1938

APPROACH TO SINGLE TAX

There could be no better time than the present for serious and comprehensive study in New Jersey of methods of taxation. That is because governmental costs have mounted so rapidly that the tax burden has become almost unbearable in many municipalities. There has long been a considerable body of opinion, though it is not generally held, that taxing improvements as heavily as the land upon which they stand checks the stimulus to building on unimproved land or to demolishing outworn structures and replacing them with new.

This idea of making the land pay a greater part ranges among its advocates all the way from the Pittsburgh plan, under which land is

assessed at twice the rate levied upon improvements, to the Single Tax theory of Henry George, by which the land would bear all the burden. The New Jersey Assembly has just passed the bill of Mrs. Sanford, by which, in municipalities that adopted the plan after a referendum, taxes on buildings would be stepped down 20 per cent a year for five years. At the end, those communities would be taxing land alone. This is a graduated approach to an out and out Single Tax on realty.

The Senate may not pass the bill this year, but the mere fact that it has been passed by the Assembly cannot fail to direct public attention to the advisability, or no, on the part of individual municipalities of reconstructing the basis for tax levies. Particularly might this be the case with communities where land, assessed at a low rate because unimproved, is being held off the market for a future high price, whereas there is need for building either for business or residential purposes. Obviously, the same sort of reasoning would not apply to an overbuilt community where houses, factories, lofts and stores go begging for occupants.

The present basis of real estate taxation, however, does penalize the individual who makes investments to keep his property up to a point where it is really contributing to the well being of the community. On the other hand it lets off easily the individual who does not improve his property or lets the structures on it deteriorate.

In any general modification of the basis for levies, of course, one town's meat could be another town's poison. But when the application is made only to communities that vote for it, that objection is met. Whether there are New Jersey municipalities that would look with favor on taxing unimproved land as highly as that upon which revenue-producing structures stand is another question.

The California Campaign

SINCE last writing you, the campaign in California has been crowded with events, some apparently minor in nature, but possessing elements of great importance. Let me begin with one of the most striking.

By one of the flukes which so frequently happen, there fell into our possession three significant letters, which I can only briefly outline. The first was from the secretary of the San Francisco Real Estate Board, and which evidently went to all the real estate boards of the State. After pointing out that "the advocates of the Single Tax" were circulating an initiative petition to repeal the sales tax and substitute the "Single Tax" in its place, and would seek to obtain names in cities other than San Francisco and Los Angeles where their time had expired, the secretary says that, "This Board, together with certain other organizations, is making a strenuous fight to prevent the Single Taxers from qualifying. If we can prevent their securing the necessary number of names it will save a long and expensive campaign prior to the November election."

The next letter in date was from Robinson & Co., advertising agents of San Francisco. This refers to the letter just described, and gives in detail the process to be pursued to keep us from the ballot. After discussing methods of watching and influencing the movements of our agents, the letter continues: "We would also thank you to check with the various newspapers and ascertain if an ad. is placed for petition circulators. If so, please

telegraph us immediately and we will *send our wrecking crew, and move them out of town.*" (Italics mine.) He adds: "Our plan of operations is to stop them from getting any signatures in your city and county on this particular petition."

In another letter, four days later, Robinson spoke of the necessity of getting from every notary and county clerk the names of all solicitors so that they could be communicated with and promised other work for the surrender of work in our interest. Robinson concludes, "We can stop the proponents from qualifying this petition if every county will be on the lookout and advise us immediately an attempt is made to procure signatures."

All the methods outlined and more have been followed, but we had hardly expected such frank acknowledgment. Some of the papers in the State have commented on the letters as an effort to nullify the initiative and referendum, but the majority have remained silent. Of such is the "freedom of the press."

Meanwhile it was reported to me that three persons whom we had employed as solicitors had been paid \$2 apiece for the petitions and had surrendered them to an agent of the opposition. In short, as result of this we made a demand upon the man charged with the payment and without much demur and under legal notice he returned to us the identical petitions.

In Oakland we have affidavits showing that offers of appreciable sums for petitions with and without names had been made to our workers, and the statement made that hundreds of our names on petitions had been bought. There is enough to convince us that possibly several hundred solicitors had been bought off. As a result of all this, damage suits will be shortly commenced against the principals in San Francisco and elsewhere, and one woman lawyer is in serious danger of disbarment proceedings.

But what of progress? Last reporting to you I said that we were around 15,000 names short. When the count of the clerks of Sacramento and San Joaquin counties shall be complete, we will lack "on the face of the record" as the lawyers say, about 6,000—perhaps less, and off the record and under way, is a very large share of the lacking names. We have no cause for anxiety on that score. We will be on the ballot, unless the State Supreme Court takes us off, and this we do not expect. The law was strained to the last point two years ago and no court would like to be asked to go further, as it would be compelled to do to prevent the people from voting on our proposition.

Is our proposition important enough to justify sacrifice in its interest on the part of believers in industrial freedom? If the desperate struggle to keep the people from voting on it means anything, you may so believe. If you pay any attention to the statements made by the research division of the State Chamber of Commerce,

one will still strongly so conclude. That division reports that the amendment will on the average take three-fourths of the land rental-value, and in some instances 100 per cent. I think this an excessive estimate, because it is apparently based upon the idea that the assessed value of land is its full value, though this is generally put at 50 per cent of the true worth. Of course, there are unknown elements entering into the calculation. Speculative values will take an undoubted slump, and on the other hand there will be a renewed demand of land for actual and beneficial use. However, the Chamber of Commerce estimate shows the fundamental nature of our proposition and how deeply it cuts.

It is time for those who want to do more than lip-service to the cause to which they profess devotion to wake up to the great meanings of the conflict in California. If they want to fight on the side of the Lord at a real Armageddon, now is the time to do so. If they are interested in the rapid education of the masses, and this must come if the Republic is to continue, let them gaze on the field here, where thousands are undergoing the throes of a real enlightenment. Let them no longer feel that what is so often called the "Single Tax" is an esoteric doctrine, only to be understood by the initiates. It is a simple, straight-forward living thing, capable of statement in a very few sentences and appealing to what we call the "common man." That is what we find out about it in California.

I cannot close without a brief tribute to those associated with me in the fight and particularly to Noah D. Alper of San Francisco and Harry H. Ferrell of Los Angeles. Without their self-sacrificing aid, I do not see how the fight could have been carried on.

Palo Alto, Calif.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

Activities of The Manhattan Single Tax Club

MR. INGERSOLL'S visit to Fall River was very interesting. He addressed 100 members of the combined Lions and Kiwanis Clubs in a straight talk to the business men, which was very well received. Dr. F. M. Padelford, who secured this appointment for Mr. Ingersoll, was chairman of the meeting, which was followed by a long period of questions. In the evening, Dr. Padelford marshalled a meeting of his personal and economic friends and gave the guest speaker a fine reception.

Mr. Ingersoll's current radio schedule is as follows: Mon., WCNW, 2:30 p. m.; WWRL, 11:15 p. m. Tues., WFAS, 10:45 p. m. (Romance of Time). Wed., WCNW, 3:45 p. m. (Time: the stuff life is made of). Thur., WLTH, 8:15 a. m. Fri., WPEN, 9:45 a. m. (Phila.); WDAS, 12:45 p. m. (Phila.); WSNJ, 2:45 p. m. (Bridge-