

The California Campaign

THE campaign to free the State of California from the sales tax and all county and city taxation on improvements and transfer their burdens to land values is proceeding with rapidity and, on the part of its opponents, with increasing ferocity. On our side the weight of the struggle is being borne by Noah D. Alper of San Francisco, and Ralph E. Chadwick, of Los Angeles; and George W. Patterson as treasurer, who carry on under the name of the "Sales Tax Repeal Association." These gentlemen have most active and efficient associates, whose numbers are increasing and whose work is excellent and effective in speaking, writing and distribution of documents. The field, however, is so large that we should have at least twice as many associated in the campaign to cover it in proper detail.

I speak of the "ferocity" of our opponents. The leader among them is the California Association of Real Estate Boards, with its subordinate bodies, from Eureka at the extreme north, to San Diego in the south. This organization is powerful with the State Chamber of Commerce, and has enlisted its more or less active aid, that body having circulated statements to its 7,000 members which are, to say the least, largely lacking in truth.

With these bodies as a nucleus, their influence is exercised upon a number of organizations which should know better, but which are under control in various ways either by them or by State officials.

They have enlisted the State Board of Equalization with its employees, whose principal business in life is to collect the sales tax, and who fear loss of employment in the event of our success. In addition, the State Board of Education, openly, and sometimes surreptitiously, is endeavoring as far as it can to control the action of school teachers, a number of local superintendents of schools having, among other things, urged the teachers to oppose us, on the false theory that their salaries will be in danger if the sales tax is repealed.

The Parent-Teachers Association is in the hands of reactionaries, and refused even to give us a hearing at its recent convention at San Jose.

I have enumerated the principal bodies against us, and now come to the other side of the picture. As you know, the labor organizations, representing some 200,000 members, are with us apparently to a man. The *Labor Press* is doing splendid work for us, practically every issue devoting considerable attention to our measure. The Epic movement earlier in the campaign gave us unanimous endorsement, and while this movement is today apparently relatively weak, its influence permeates a tremendous body of liberal thought. Certain of the business organizations are falling in line with us. It is too early yet to give their names.

Withall there is a thorough disgust with and absence of any affirmative defense of the sales tax. It is excused

—rarely defended. In addition, our fundamental ideas as to the necessity of freedom of industry, which are represented by houses and other improvements or by the manufacture and transfer of tangible objects, is being met with general favor. This issue seems only to need to be stated clearly to receive acceptance.

Our opponents are fairly losing their heads in the extraordinary campaign they are making, hardly six months before the election. We quote some headlines appearing on almost every page of a recent issue of the *California Realty News*: "Kill that 'Single Tax' or Starve!" "If we don't Fight that 'Single Tax' every Broker will Starve." "Join the Army against the 'Single Tax,' and Beat that Wicked Measure at the Polls!" "Every Voter you know must Join with us to Beat that 'Single Tax' scheme." "We must Beat that devilish 'Single Tax' Idea." "In Five Years the State will Own every Piece of Property for Delinquent Taxes." "If 'Single Tax' Wins at the Polls, no Broker will be in Business in Five Years." "It seems to be just a Repeal of Sales Tax, but it loads taxes on to Real Estate."

Their flaming editorial says that, "Under the misleading attempt to make you think it is merely repealing the sales tax, a wicked and vicious measure is to be voted on, which will, if adopted, saddle *against real estate* an enormous share of the expense of running California, including relief. . . . This wicked, hypocritical and damnable Single Tax scheme must be killed, or every realtor will starve to death. . . . It is not a matter of 'giving until it hurts,' but of giving so you *won't* be hurt."

A favorite "racket" in Los Angeles at the present time is to seek to frighten holders of real estate into giving sums of money to the racketeers who represent imaginatively the dangers to which they are exposed. The circulation, however, of wild literature is not confined to Los Angeles, and the State Board of Equalization offers the people choice specimens of literature created, to a considerable degree, by writers with imagination and without conscience. The country papers particularly are flooded with all sorts of misstatements, which they publish with an innocence which seems almost pathetic in a day when people are supposed to be taught to reason. A beautiful example I cannot forbear from giving. For the purpose of illustrating the evils to result from freeing the people from paying the sales tax, several papers publish the following:

"An interesting study was made by a tax assessor in a middlewest city of 70,000 population (afterwards stated as 68,784). He discovered that of the 54,242 tax assessments taken by him there were only 17,494 on which tax could be collected." We will not follow this further, and stop only a moment to call attention to the fact that 68,000 people could by no possibility have made more than a fraction of the alleged number of tax statements, unless women and children of the cradle had been called upon to state the value of their possessions.

circular letter and advertisement was sent to 6,000 book-dealers may mean but little, until we come upon a letter such as this:

"I had studied Political Economy for ten years, and was typing the manuscripts for my first book before I ever heard of the great Henry George. I saw 'Progress and Poverty' in a window as I passed a bookstore. I bought it, and have only had time to read it over once. But I can truly say that if I had discovered this bountiful store of knowledge many years ago, and could have been inspired by the logic, reasoning, frank honesty, universal justice and divine faith of Henry George, my book would have been a much greater book. 'Progress and Poverty' ranks next to the Holy Bible."

J. LUTHER REED.

We can then see that the constant effort to keep "Progress and Poverty" and other Henry George books in the windows of bookstores is indeed worth while.

Let us consider now what our most recent mailing may mean. We are sending out a new book catalogue which displays all of our books, including some new titles, and 10,000 are being sent into the mails with a letter that contains on its reverse side a reproduction of the splendid message that Prof. Broadus Mitchell wrote a few years ago, as an appreciation of the writings of Henry George. Already a flood of answers are coming in. Some are in the form of book-orders, others are chatty letters asking for special bits of information or some special service that will take time and care to fulfill.

The Up-to-Date Primer seems to have met the needs of many Henry George Extension Class teachers. We sent a sample copy to each leader, and a few have responded by ordering ten or more for class use. Copies have been sent to the California headquarters, at the expense of the Canadian Single Tax League. Fifty copies were sent to the Canadian Single Tax League. We find that there are only one hundred copies left, and if there are those who desire copies, it might be well to send in for them while the supply is still available. (25c post-paid.)

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Polak have spent much time in preparing a picture of Henry George beneath which is the illuminated text of Henry George's most inspiring paragraph from his Fourth of July Oration, 1877. Beautifully mounted and framed in gold, the picture and quotation were presented with impressive ceremony to the Library of New York University at University Heights. In addition to the gift of the picture by the Polaks, the Foundation at their suggestion, presented for the use of students, the following books:

"The Land Question," "Progress and Poverty," "Significant Paragraphs from Progress and Poverty," "Protection or Free Trade," "The Science of Political Economy," "Social Problems," "The Life of Henry George," "The Philosophy of Henry George," and "What is the Single Tax?"

The Director of the Library sent the Foundation this letter:

"Edward Polak and Mrs. Polak visited this library this afternoon and presented to us the books enumerated, informing me that he was giving them with the authority of your Foundation as one of its trustees. Permit me to offer the kindest thanks of this library for your generous and interesting gift. We already have considerable material about Henry George, but these books will be a valuable addition."

ANTOINETTE KAUFMAN, Executive Secretary.

Cincinnati to Entertain Annual Henry George Congress

THE Eleventh Annual Henry George Congress will meet in Cincinnati, a city which for many years was a great center of Single Tax activity, especially in the days when the Joseph Fels Fund Commission had its headquarters there, and which again is coming to the front, both in the way of education and in influence in the local political situation.

After a careful canvass of the matter, the executive committee of the Henry George Foundation has unanimously decided that Cincinnati is the logical place for the next annual gathering and no effort will be spared to make it a profitable and interesting occasion.

Cincinnati is the largest city near the United States center of population and is a very popular convention city—half of the nation's population can reach Cincinnati by an overnight railroad trip. It is right in the center of America's Single Tax belt and delegates attending can do so with the minimum expenditure of time, money and effort. For this and other good reasons a very representative attendance is anticipated.

Cincinnati Single Taxers, led by the aggressive Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn, brought strong pressure to bear on behalf of their city and are looking forward with enthusiasm to the privilege of entertaining the Georgeists from all parts of the country, who will assemble there to report progress, exchange ideas and derive new inspiration and courage.

It was first planned to hold the convention in September, but at the suggestion of the Cincinnati Single Tax group, it is now proposed that the Henry George Congress shall assemble November 12 to 14. While this is somewhat at variance with the usual custom, Rabbi Aaronsohn and his associates felt that the prospects for obtaining public attention and publicity would be much better in November and that by meeting at that time there would be no possible conflict with the International Conference at London in September (which several prominent American Single Taxers are already planning to attend), nor with the Presidential election campaign which always tends to divert public attention to a greater or lesser extent.