

HISTORICAL—FOREIGN

CANADA—ONTARIO

The Single Tax movement in Ontario dates from the formation of an Anti-Poverty Society in Toronto in 1887. The membership of this early society deserves more than passing notice, for many arose to distinction in later years. They were Lieutenant Robert Cartwright, son of Sir Richard Cartwright, formerly Finance Minister of the Dominion of Canada, Mr. McNab, former police magistrate of Toronto, assistant manager in a financial institution, R. W. Doan, the head master of one of the public schools, Stewart Lyon, subsequently editor-in-chief of the *Toronto Globe*, Samuel T. Wood, who for years has contributed, as one of the editors, the special articles on natural history in the *Toronto Globe*, Alfred Jury, who for some years has been Emigration Agent for Canada at Liverpool, England. There were others who have since become known for indefatigable work in the movement, among whom was W. A. Douglass.

A declaration of principles was issued and distributed announcing to the world what they believed. It stated that the land was not a product of labor, but furnished by the Creator for the use of mankind; that the value of the land which becomes so manifest in the large cities is due, not to anything the land owner does, but to the presence of population, and that land is an indispensable condition of existence. After pointing out the defects of the present method of land holding, it winds up with recommending such a change in the terms of all further sales of public lands, that any value that accrues to such land, over and above the value of the improvements, shall be reserved for public purposes.

The latter clause was less than what was aimed at, but it was framed in that tentative manner, so as to appear to the public

very fair so far as it went, and not likely to arouse prejudice in the beginning.

The Single Taxers of Ontario continued their propaganda for many years, but it was not until January, 1905, that an opportunity was offered to test the effect of these long years of preaching and teaching. In the Toronto election that year this question was submitted: "Are you in favor of an amendment to the Assessment Act, so as to remove \$700 from the assessment of every dwelling?" The vote in that case was 15,897 yea, 8,219 nay, a majority of 7,687, nearly two to one. Now, it was thought the Council will place a bill before the Legislature to give effect to this vote.

But when the necessary resolution was brought before the Council, one of the members, Alderman Frank S. Spence, the foremost temperance advocate in the country, and a very able public speaker, made it his special business to fight this resolution and it was defeated.

When the next election came on, Controller Spence was one of the candidates for the mayoralty. The Tax Reformers, principally through the efforts of Mr. Alan C. Thompson, arranged for a special edition of the *Single Taxer*, of which they distributed 40,000 copies each week for three weeks preceding the election. The result was that Mr. Spence was invited to stay at home. He subsequently stated in public that his defeat was largely owing to the aggressive activity of a comparatively small organization.

Other campaigns for individual members of the local parliament have been fought by Single Taxers. Arthur H. Roebuck came dangerously near being elected in one of these contests. In July, 1914, Mr. A. B. Farmer was a nominee for the provincial parliament, and while failing of election, received a much larger vote than the former Liberal candidate, though Mr. Farmer's campaign was made on a straight-out Single Tax issue.

Numerous deputations from Single Tax bodies have waited upon the late Sir James Whitney, the late Premier of Ontario Province. Sir James stood as a stone wall against any suggestions of tax reform, and his administration continued hostile.

Ontario and Toronto have active Single Tax organizations and a monthly organ, the *Square Deal*. The *Toronto Globe* is friendly to the movement as is the *Ottawa Citizen*, whose proprietors, W. M. Southam and brother, are strong supporters of the Single Tax.