

is of special concern to single taxers. It consists in a resolution purporting to come from the "Pennsylvania State Single Tax League," but without other authentication than the signature of Walter Evans Smith, a name which single taxers generally will not readily recognize. The resolution proposes Governor Johnson for President, because, as stated in the preamble, he "has declared that it may be that some of the principles of the single tax on land values could be adapted to work out a satisfactory system of taxation," and William H. Berry for Vice-President, because he "has frequently stated that the land question is a fundamental question and that the single tax is an equitable and practicable solution of the question." These gentlemen are therefore recommended "to the suffrage of a quarter-million (as estimated by the secretary of the American Single Tax League) single taxers of the United States." It is interesting to observe the avidity with which the Big Interest newspapers have seized upon this resolution for publication, and regrettable that others, notably the Springfield Republican, have been misled by it.

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If the resolution were an expression of single tax sentiment at all general, it would exhibit some indications that are significantly absent. It would, for instance, bear signatures more familiar to single taxers, coming as it does from Philadelphia where single taxers of national reputation abound. And whatever the signatures, if the resolution were intelligent as well as genuine, it would hardly relegate to second place a straightforward single tax man like Mr. Berry, while naming for first place a man who, if he may not indeed be called a pronounced opponent of the single tax, would certainly be the last to acknowledge that he accepts it. Another consideration is the fact that Mr. Berry is a Bryan leader in Pennsylvania—the Bryan leader there, it is perhaps safe to say—and a man whose high sense of honor would not under existing circumstances permit him to consent to this use of his name. Those single taxers of Pennsylvania who, under the signature of Walter Evans Smith, if there be any such in addition to Mr. Smith himself, may honestly enough suppose that Mr. James J. Hill's choice for the Democratic nomination for President may also be a good single tax choice, or they may have acted without knowledge and impulsively. They are entitled at any rate to all possible credit for good intentions. But we have more confidence in the judgment on this point of the single taxers of Minnesota, who know Governor Johnson and his affiliations, than in that

of the best of our single tax men in places as far distant as Philadelphia. The single taxers of Minnesota, inclusive of some of the ablest and truest democratic Democrats of the whole country, are, without dissent so far as we have been able to learn, opposed to the Presidential candidacy of Governor Johnson.

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For the benefit of non-single-taxers, it should be explained in this connection that no organization does or can represent the single tax movement politically. If there are a quarter of a million single taxers in the United States, as there probably are, and more—at any rate we hope so,—they are not organized and cannot yet be organized for political action. Some are Democrats and some are Republicans; some are wealthy, and of these some are perhaps aristocratic; many are poor, and many are of the middle class. Some believe in promoting the single tax idea by local, and some by national agitation; some through the Democratic party, some through the Republican party, some through third parties, and some outside of all parties. All are doing work for the single tax in their own way and none without good effect. Some of those in the Democratic party believe that a popular leadership like Bryan's, though the single tax issue be not yet specifically raised, and measures not strictly in line with single tax dogmas must be sometimes tolerated, will best promote progress toward single tax issues, and most certainly secure the ultimate triumph of single tax measures. Others in the Democratic party cling tenaciously to academic principles, regardless of political exigencies and regardless of the side of a dominant issue in Presidential politics which this fidelity to doctrine may compel them to take. And then there are many believers in single tax ideas in a general way, who are nevertheless not thorough-going single taxers. Their tendencies are toward it, but its label is not upon them. Yet they are a highly important factor. For these reasons among others the strength of the single tax movement does not lie at this period of its development in political organization. No organization, no organ, no person, can speak for single taxers politically.

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### The Single Tax in Oregon.

Under the initiative and referendum clause of the Constitution of Oregon (vol. x, pp. 827, 1229) a fiscal amendment of the Constitution is to be voted upon in that State at the election in June. It is in these terms:

All dwelling houses, barns, sheds, outhouses, and

all other appurtenances thereto, all machinery and buildings used exclusively for manufacturing purposes, and the appurtenances thereto, all fences, farm machinery and appliances used as such, all fruit trees, vines, shrubs and all other improvements on farms, all live stock, all household furniture in use, and all tools owned by workmen and in use, shall be exempt from taxation.

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This is not a single tax measure in any comprehensive sense, for the single tax would exempt all products of labor from taxation. But it goes so far in the direction of exempting labor products that it has drawn the fire of the monopolists of Oregon land, resident and non-resident, and a single tax campaign is consequently fully under way. Not only do its opponents call it "the single tax amendment," but they frequently characterize it with profane expletives. On the other hand, its advocates acknowledge freely that it is in line with the single tax, and support it with single tax arguments.

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The friends of the measure have done this in their official argument. By official argument we allude to the clause of the initiative and referendum provision of the Constitution, which allows both the advocates and the adversaries of a proposed amendment to deliver through official channels at nominal expense a copy of their argument, reasonably limited in length, to every registered voter. Under this clause all Oregon voters will receive from the Secretary of State a single tax argument of 2,500 words, in consequence of which an extended discussion of the subject is expected throughout the State. In addition, the merits of the question are being presented orally at meetings by volunteer speakers.

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As usual in such contests, the supply of money is very meager. The demand for speakers and literature far exceeds the financial ability of the committee to supply them. Money is needed to pay the expenses of speakers to stump the State, for literature by the thousands of pieces, for a house to house canvass, especially in Portland, and for headquarter necessities. It is predicted by the promoters of the amendment that with \$3,000 they could probably carry it, and that with \$10,000 it would be a certainty. Wherever speakers for the amendment go, it is reported that opposition melts away. As one of them writes, "The State could be set aflame for the amendment if we had a little kindling."

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Without any hesitation we commend this Ore-

gon campaign, not only to single taxers everywhere but also to every one who believes in removing the burdens of taxation from industry and thrift. The men who are leading it are able, enthusiastic and honest. Some of them are brilliant speakers, and all are tireless workers. The amendment proposed is a vital one. It is in the interest of farmers, mechanics and business men. It would promote the progress of the State of Oregon, and make that commonwealth serve as an object lesson for other States. And whether it wins or loses, the campaign for it will educate a multitude of voters in the fundamental principles of sound economics and just taxation.

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**Steel Trust Property.**

The newspaper item quoted in a recent issue of The Public (vol. x, p. 1227) which put the net earnings of the steel trust at \$757,014,768, confused net earnings with sales. The former are reported by the trust itself at \$160,964,673.72. The figures would look quite as big, no doubt, to the 300 hungry men who fought for jobs at the Cleveland plant of the trust.

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**INSTITUTIONAL CAUSES OF CRIME.**

I.

Isn't it true that crime springs from poverty? Not from poverty when and where all are poor, to be sure; nor in every instance from poverty of the individual offender; but from social poverty—that is, the social condition of abject and hopeless want, in the midst of plenty to the point even of luxury.

Each of us naturally tries to escape this social condition. Each may indeed be generous enough to desire that all shall escape. But if one cannot escape the slough of poverty without thrusting others in, who is there that won't sacrifice his neighbor? And he who makes that selfish sacrifice, he who thrusts others into poverty in order to escape it himself, isn't it he that is labeled "criminal"?—provided, of course, that he resorts to methods that are under social condemnation, and gets found out.

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Of predatory crime, at any rate, there seems little room for any other explanation than poverty in social conditions where plenty abounds. Were this social condition unknown and unfeared, what motive would there be for theft of any species? And how could there be predatory crime if there were no motive for theft?