

Two States Where We Fight for Amendments

California

SINCE reaching the ballot campaign work is being carried on in earnest in California, and members of both organizations—the Single Tax League and the Great Adventure League, are doing their utmost to induce people to “Secure low rents and food a-plenty by voting ‘Yes’ on number twenty.” Publicity work is conducted by Gerrit J. Johnson and the above slogan, together with other advertisements, appear regularly in over two hundred California papers.

George A. Briggs is superintending home meetings in Los Angeles and vicinity. Meetings are being held every night where speakers instruct small groups in an informal way and much valuable work is done in this way as many are enlightened who would probably never hear of the message which Henry George gave the world.

Wm. C. deMille instructs a class in Progress and Poverty every Thursday evening at his home and refuses to let anything interfere with this work.

Mrs. Anna George deMille and W. L. Ross were instructed by the Lieutenant-Governor of the State to write the argument for the Single Tax which will appear in a pamphlet containing arguments for and against the various amendments to be voted upon at the coming election. As this pamphlet is sent to every voter in the State it is in itself excellent propaganda.

Over one hundred thousand pieces of literature have been distributed throughout the State during the past month and work in this direction will be carried on until the end of the campaign.

Mrs. Lona Ingram Robinson is devoting much of her time to doing hand-to-hand work, interesting people in the amendment and distributing literature. Mrs. Robinson gets our message to many persons in the course of a day. Mr. Robinson is also one of our faithful workers, and attends to the most important work of looking after the funds, which, however, do not long remain in his keeping as the avenues through which they slip are so many that they are disbursed almost as soon as received.

W. L. Ross is spending a few weeks in San Francisco and is speaking to two and three large meetings every evening. He is speaking mostly to labor organizations and his addresses are being received with enthusiasm.

A dinner was given September 17th at the Hotel Ramona by friends of the Single Tax movement. The dinner is the opening of the campaign for Amendment No. 20, which appears on the November ballot. This campaign is in charge of William L. Ross, of Los Angeles, who is here for a few weeks.

Joseph S. Thompson, of the Pacific Electric Manufacturing Company, will preside at the banquet and the speakers will include Professor Arthur Brodeur of the University of California and Dr. Mary Hussey, of New Jersey.

In these days of unrest caused by high prices, scarcity of houses, etc., people are eager for a change—people who have heretofore been satisfied with things as they are.

Oregon

J. R. HERMANN is making an active campaign among the labor elements in behalf of the Single Tax amendment. In this he has the active co-operation of Arthur Brock, of the Typographical Union, who was a recent visitor to the East at the Typographical Convention in Albany.

The Portland *Journal* continues to print letters from J. R. Hermann. Just how long that paper will be permitted to do so is problematical, for the advertisers are threatening to withdraw their patronage and are even now doing so.

Mr. Hermann has announced that the headquarters at Portland will be maintained whether the Single Tax forces win or lose. If they win, they will keep open for the purposes of glorifying the victory, and if they lose they will re-submit the measure the same day—so the unconquerable leader of the Oregon forces announces.

The measure on which Oregon voters will vote in November provides that after 1925 “the full rental value of land, irrespective of all improvements, shall be taken in lieu of all other taxes for the maintenance of government, and for such other purposes as the people may direct.”

Copies of the proposed constitutional amendment, with arguments pro and con, have been mailed to the number of 339,750 to all the voters in the State. The argument opposing is furnished by the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce, in which they say: “Land is the one imperishable property,” and “as such lends itself to being bought and held until the owner is able to use it productively.” To this Mr. Herman replies in the columns of the *Portland Journal*:

We deny that statement. Land never was and never can be made property by nature. Man may make artificial laws governing its tenantry. But property originates in the effort of man himself. Labor applied to land is the only source of property. Whatever labor fashions from land that will conduce to human desire alone is the origin of property. Since the possession of some locations gives an advantage over others, the Single Tax would equalize this advantage by charging the individuals who enjoyed the special advantage the difference in the value of their location for the general welfare, in which all share equally. The Chamber of Commerce assumes that capital and labor would not improve land unless they paid first the price the forestaller exacted. The entire West was built up on free land. Free land and free land alone is the cornerstone of American democracy. It was the one inducement that caused the oppressed of Europe to break away from their rulers and brave the struggles of a strange land. Free land means free men, and it was free men that in turn overthrew the autocracies of Europe.

The one single fortification the forestallers entrench behind is fear, born of ignorance. Their sole reliance is that they may bluff the people into believing that if they dis-

continue to rob the people, the social order will fly into space, and there will be no security anywhere. That if this awful Single Tax should carry, Oregon will become a hole in the earth and a kindly sea will fill the gap and the inhabitants will be engulfed under a tidal wave or be seen racing naked and hungry across the mountains to safe shelter.

A debate has been arranged by the Pine Grove Grange between C. C. Chapman, editor of the *Oregon Voter*, and J. R. Hermann. The State Chamber of Commerce supplies the opposing speaker.

It is significant that in this campaign the Chamber of Commerce represents the opposition. Never before have the forces favoring and opposing our reform been so clearly lined up.

To the printed arguments against the measure put out by the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Cridge has replied through the labor papers, and Messrs. Bowerman and Hermann through the Portland press.

James Richmond, of Coquell, is stumping the Coast on his own initiative.

The *Oregonian* remains strangely silent on the issue, and the Portland *Telegram* has printed only one editorial against it. Several bets are offered at even money that the measure will pass, with no takers.

Gerrit Johnson has thrown himself into the campaign with all his old-time enthusiasm.

Maryland

THE most important political movement in Maryland this Fall is the attempt in Baltimore County (the largest county in the State, which does not include Baltimore), to adopt a Home Rule Charter, which will give it a County Council, who will have power to pass local legislation and who will appoint a County Manager to conduct the affairs of the county in place of the County Commissioners.

A Constitutional Amendment adopted in 1915 provided that the legislature of 1916 should make a grant of express powers under which any county could elect a Charter Board and adopt a Charter giving it a certain measure of Home Rule. Twenty per cent. of the voters of the county had to nominate the Board, and, if the Charter is adopted, amendments thereto may be proposed by 20% of the voters, and adopted by popular vote.

The Charter Board was elected last Fall and has submitted a Charter providing a County Manager form of government, as above outlined.

The politicians of both parties are making desperate efforts to defeat the Charter at the polls. Ex-Judge Burke, who recently resigned from the Maryland Court of Appeals, has declared that it would legalize the Single Tax, and is leading the opposition, speaking in all parts of the county and making all sorts of wild statements regarding it. One of his assertions is that the County Commissioners being Constitutional Officers, cannot be abolished, so that the

adoption of the Charter will create a dual government and all kinds of chaos. Only extreme judicial bias could uphold a view of this kind.

The Taxpayers League of Baltimore County, who were instrumental in electing the Charter Board, are making a gallant fight, which if successful will be one of the few bright spots in this Fall's rather gloomy election.

James R. Brown of New York is booked to speak at the City Club here on October 9th on the "Problem of Municipal Revenues," and a meeting at which the Mayor will preside has been arranged for him in Annapolis the night before.

CHARLES J. OGLE.

Texas

MAYOR FRANK W. WOZENCRAFT, of Dallas, the youngest chief magistrate in the Union, speaking recently to a reporter of the *Houston Post* said:

"The amount of land between Houston and Dallas that is not cultivated nor even cleared of timber is very noticeable and covers practically half of the distance. From my position in the airplane I could distinctly see the outlines of timbered areas below. There is enough uncultivated land between here and Dallas to furnish homes and farms for twice as many people as are now living in that area."

That the big landowners of Texas are fearful of the agitation now proceeding to make land pay more of the burdens of taxation is shown by a letter which recently appeared in the newspapers from one of the largest landholders, calling Mr. Neff a "Socialist." The latter is the Democratic candidate for the nomination of Governor. Mr. Neff has declared in favor of a graduated tax on land.

The *Wichita Falls Labor Journal* comments on Sir Auckland Geddes statement that the crop shortage of 1914 caused the great war, that the usual surplus was lacking in that year, and that the ruling powers of Germany, looking about for new sources of supply, brought on the war. The *Labor Journal* says that if the war was caused by land monopoly then other and future wars are possible and should be averted, and points to the Single Tax as the measure that could have averted that war and will prevent another.

Wm. A. Black is now a member of the House of Representatives.

James A. Robinson, National Organizer of the Single Tax Party, who visited Texas with a view of getting the Party on the ballot in that State, found Texas a peculiarly fertile field for Single Tax agitation, offering an unrivalled opportunity for Party activity. He arrived too late to secure the Single Tax a place on the ballot for this presidential election, but the Party will go ahead to make the Single Tax a political issue as soon after the November elections as possible. Mr. Robinson believes that two years of Single Tax Party activity in Texas, with its great numbers of tenant farmers, would produce a revolution.