

REPORT FROM CALIFORNIA

Realizing that differences concerning tactics and policy among Single Taxers had tended to divide our forces and weaken our efforts, the California League for Home Rule in Taxation decided to call a second Conference for the purpose of resolving, if possible, those differences and uniting on a programme.

Such a Conference was called for Dec. 18, at Los Angeles, and the call was sent to all the groups in the State representing the various viewpoints.

The Los Angeles Single Tax League, that is, the Great Adventure group, at first in a letter signed by the Secretary, Mr. James, expressed their willingness to enter into the Conference. But on reaching Los Angeles, in a personal interview, they (Messrs. North (Griffes), James and Kuehn) refused to come to the Conference on account of the wording and substance of our call—inasmuch as the call proposed the writing of two amendments—one for pure Single Tax, and one for a co-ordinate Home Rule measure.

The undersigned (acting-President) took it upon himself to waive the particularity of the call, and requested them to come to the Conference and consider any matters pertaining to our common object. To this they finally consented.

The Conference was called to order, representative delegates being present from all the various groups representing the different policies held in the State, the California League for Home Rule in Taxation; San Diego Single Tax Society, No. 1; the California Single Tax League, Incorporated; the Southern California League for Home Rule in Taxation; the Los Angeles Single Tax League, (Great Adventure); Pomona and Santa Ana Single Taxers; Socialist Party represented by T. W. Williams, Secretary; and others.

On opening the Conference, the Great Adventure group declared that they refused to "confer" on the technical sense of the term, with any persons who did not support No. 5 in 1916, and they demanded that no action of any kind be taken if any individual present objected, requiring unanimous consent.

The Chairman (J. Stitt Wilson) asked the Conference to concur in his having waived the particularity of the call. This was done. After considerable strained discussion on some method of procedure, a round table was decided upon—each person present giving his or her views, without offering or speaking to any motion. This continued for two hours or more.

At the close of this round table Mr. Griffes (Luke North) said that having heard the differences expressed he would be willing to have a State referendum to a proper constituency to be decided upon, submitting two or more measures to our sympathizers for their choice. The Conference unanimously agreed on such a Referendum and a Committee was appointed (consisting of Mr. Griffes, Mr. Woodhead, the Secretary, Mr. Edwards and the Chairman, J. Stitt Wilson) to draw up preliminary resolutions providing for such a Referendum.

This committee brought in the following report as a tentative basis of procedure by the Conference: (Tho' Mr. Griffes did not bring in a minority report, he reserved the right to disagree with its provisions in conference).

RESOLUTION OF REFERENDUM COMMITTEE OF SINGLE TAX CONFERENCE, Los Angeles, Dec. 18, 1916. Committee: Messrs. Griffes, Edwards, Wilson and Woodhead:

(1) That this Conference, through a Committee hereinafter to be constituted, shall submit for referendum vote to a constituency hereinafter to be determined, two or more measures, representing the different policies aiming at the restoration of the land to the people.

(2) That the measures and the arguments therefor shall be printed in an authorized Land Tax Ballot Bulletin specially published for this particular purpose.

(3) That the Referendum Ballot Bulletin shall contain explicit directions as to the purpose of the Referendum, and the manner of voting, and how the result shall be determined, and that the voters shall be required to give their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of measure.

(4) That the Ballot Bulletin shall be

printed and distributed as widely as possible through all possible agencies to reach the largest possible number of persons interested in Land Reform, Tax Reform and the Single Tax.

(5) That two or more measures shall be drawn up and each supported by an argument of not to exceed 200 words by its sponsors, and a reply not to exceed 200 words. That each of the groups represented on the Committee shall be entitled to a measure on the ballot or any two or more groups may unite on one measure.

(6) That the Referendum Committee to conduct the balloting, to publish the Bulletin and to tabulate the result shall consist as follows:

One member from the Single Tax League of Los Angeles, one member from the Single Tax Society No. 1 of San Diego, one member from the California Home Rule in Taxation League, one member from the Southern California Home Rule in Taxation League of Los Angeles, one member from the Socialists, and one member from the State Federation of Labor.

(7) That the qualifications of the constituency for voting on this Referendum shall be as follows:

That the voter shall declare that he wished to break up Land Monopoly and restore land to a just and equitable use by the people. That he has been hitherto in favor of either the Home Rule measure of 1912 or 1914, or the Great Adventure (No. 5) of 1916. His name and address shall be plainly written on the ballot.

(8) That the Representative from each group to the Referendum Committee shall be elected by each group not later than January 10, 1917.

(9) That the delegates to this Committee shall meet in the city of Los Angeles at Hotel Rosslyn on January 20th and there organize, electing a chairman, secretary-treasurer, and such other officers and committees as they deem expedient for the efficient administration of the ballot.

(10) That the Referendum Committee shall establish their own neutral headquarters and there conduct the Referendum and

tabulate the result. The Referendum to close on March 1, 1917.

(11) That the Committee be authorized to raise money to pay the expenses of the Referendum.

(12) That each of the groups represented be requested to contribute their due proportion of the balance of the expense involved.

At 9.30 p.m. the Conference resumed. San Diego moved that the clause naming the method of constituting the Committee to be in charge of the Referendum be taken up first.

It was at this point that the Conference broke down in utter failure, unable to act or to go farther. The report proposed a Committee of six as follows: One member from the Single Tax League of Los Angeles, one member from the Single Tax Society No. 1 of San Diego, one member from the California League for Home Rule in Taxation, of Los Angeles, one member from the Socialists, one member from the State Federation of Labor.

The contention was acute as to how this committee should be constituted. The Great Adventure group demanded only four or at most possibly five members, (if San Diego wished representation), but positively refused the sixth—representing the Los Angeles Single Taxers outside of their group. The rest of the Conference demanded six.

As chairman of the meeting called over my name, for the express purpose of composing the differences, and having personally in committee placed representation for the Los Angeles Single Taxers on the proposed Referendum Committee, I could not consent to refusing their representation. That was to make division into a wholesale breach. The Great Adventure obstinately refused further concession. The Los Angeles group and the others as determinedly demanded the full representation.

As the Great Adventure group refused to consider motions in parliamentary form, the chair proposed "Unanimous consent" to a Committee of six. The Great Adventure group objected. He then proposed "Unanimous Consent" for a "Committee of Four," and the others objected.

Considering that the Conference had wrangled for three hours more until midnight, and had ended in this fiasco, the Chair declared that he would entertain a motion to organize the Conference on a parliamentary and democratic basis for doing business. The Great Adventure refused to concur, and withdrew.

The remainder of the delegates organized for balloting on the Report of the Committee, and after a few minor changes it was carried.

Since its adoption, the groups represented have written stating that since one of the main groups had withdrawn from the Conference and from any consideration of the Referendum, the purpose of the Referendum is void.

Having failed this second time in two years to unite the forces the California League for Home Rule in Taxation has called another Conference of all the forces in the State with whom we have hitherto worked, and all allied forces including the Socialists, trade-unionists, and Farmers' Union and Co-operation and Land Taxation Advocates, to consider our next move in the coming legislature and the proposed new Taxation Amendments, and the Land and Taxation question in general. The Conference will be held in San Francisco on Saturday and Sunday, January 13th and 14th, 1917.

This brief report of our activities is sent out with the hope that Single Taxers outside of the State, as well as inside, may have an intelligent comprehension of the difficulties we are involved in in seeking to accomplish our object.—J. STITT WILSON.

ONE of our best little papers is *The Single Taxer*, of Winnipeg. Its contents from month to month keep its readers informed of western Canadian progress, doing in the same efficient way what the *Square Deal* does for Eastern Canada.

The Peoples' Press, published by Carl Brannin, of Cleveland, Ohio, for the Peoples Power League contains an Appeal to the Negro by Albert Henderson to consider that political "liberty" without economic liberty is a mockery.

CORRESPONDENCE

 AN INVOLUNTARY SINGLE TAX COLONY

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Allow me to apprise you of the discovery of a Single Tax Colony, situated very near the heart of conservative old New England, that has been in existence for a good many years.

The unconscious perpetrator of this Single Tax illustration is none other than one of the largest railroad corporations in the eastern United States.

The community of which I speak is a summer colony known as "The Hummocks," situated in Tiverton, R. I., and the land is owned by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company. Situated on the shore of the Sakonnet River, the land is admirably located for summer homes, and even a few of the inhabitants make it their yearly residence. Part of the land has been set aside, by the railroad company, to supply the demand for summer home sites, but, inasmuch as the railroad corporation desires to retain title to the property, home sites are never sold outright, being rented for twelve-month periods.

Previous to a year or two ago, the annual ground rent, for each site, amounted to \$10.00, but, with the increased cost of living, the yearly rent has now been raised to \$15.00. The colonists are permitted to build any type of house that suits their means and tastes, and no additional tax is imposed for any improvements.

About two years ago, I leased one of the home sites, as I was then contemplating a summer home for myself and family. For one year I held the privilege of using a site selected by myself. During this time, although my location was vacant, my yearly tax was no less, nor more, than the annual tax of my neighbors who had homes, private piers and other improvements.

It is strange, yet amusing, that while the other colonists agree to the justice of my paying the same yearly tax for a vacant site, which it was my privilege to use, or hold out of use if I was so disposed, these same people do not, I believe, see the justice of applying