

The Labor Question

By HENRY GEORGE

ALL OVER the civilized world, as here, the labor question becomes more and more pressing. All over the civilized world today, in the newest countries as in the oldest, in Australia as in Great Britain, the feeling is deepening. The present constitution of society is unjust, and it is becoming more and more unsupportable. The only thing that can remedy that injustice; the only thing that can settle the labor question, is the thing we propose. Labor combinations won't do it; strikes won't do it; profit sharing won't do it; co-operation won't do it; the dealing of cold victuals to the masses won't do it. The only thing that will do it is justice. The only thing that will do it is to carry into effect the gospel of every people; to give to every man that which belongs to him as a man; to leave to every man that which his own energy, his own skill, his own industry added to the sum of wealth. That is simply "single-tax."

Our aim, and it is the same everywhere, is not merely to banish animosities, to still prejudice, to unite the nations; it is to abolish poverty; it is to take away forever that unnatural thing, undeserved poverty. And that, too, not by protecting men, not by coddling men, not by condescendingly attempting to do something for any class, but by the simple means of assuring to all men equal rights, by the simple means of opening to all men those opportunities for the employment of their powers that the Creator of this world has given to them.

What we propose is no nostrum; what we propose is simply the taking for the community that value which

belongs to the community, because created by the community; and leaving to the individual, be he capitalist or be he laborer, be he rich or be he poor, fully and unimpaired, the entire reward for his labors.

All over the world men are, as it were, crowded together—to take up and carry on the similitude suggested by our chairman—crowded together, pressed together; wanting order, wanting light; under conditions which make it impossible that they should develop their faculties. They are crowded and pressed together so close that other men walk on their heads. The way of combinations, the way of trust unionism, the way of banding together in little organizations and fighting the pressing up army will do a little for the men who are in the ring with the forces; but it cannot do anything for the whole body. The way of "single-tax" is that of striking down all barriers that crowd men together; the casting down the fences and letting them out on God's soil, in God's fresh air, and under God's sunshine.

You may see from the changing of the names of the League from (Australian) "Land Nationalization League" to the "Single-Tax League" (that) under that simple but expressive name the Single-Tax men of Australia, the men who hold our principles and stand for our purposes, are bonded together to fight all forms of monopoly and wherever they can protection, and through that to lead to the striking down of the last robber, the robber who takes all that is left, the monopolist of the soil. — (Extracts from the speech delivered at Cooper Union, N. Y. City, Monday evening, September 1, 1898, during the first national conference of the Single-Tax Clubs of the United States.)

In the year 1860 there were 4,000,000 negro slaves in the United States. The number of industrial slaves were, then, too few to attract attention. Now there are no negro slaves! But only a century after the Declaration of Independence there are 30,000,000 industrial slaves. A civil war abolished negro slavery! Shall a civil war abolish industrial slavery? We hope not, and for that reason we are resolved to preach, to work and vote for justice to all mankind. — Dr. Chase of St. Louis, or familiarly "Pa" Chase, at above conference.