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EDITORIAL

THE SAME OLD SINGLE TAX.

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IN a conspicuous place, with type to match, in its issue of the 2nd of this month, the *Seattle Star* publishes an article entitled “Progress of the Single Tax—How the Movement Stands To-day” by Louis F. Post, Editor of *The Public*.

“The reform it [the Single Tax] proposes,” the article sets forth, “is in practical operation in New Zealand”; also “in most of the principal cities of Australia”; also in the German “colony at Kiaouchou, China”; also in “the city of Vancouver” where it proved “so satisfactory that Victoria, New Westminster, Edmonton and several other Canadian cities have followed Vancouver’s example,” etc., etc.

We hold no brief for the Single Tax, nor would we accept any seeing that we hold the Single Tax theory to be from bottom up unsound. Nevertheless, in honor to a theory which, like the Single Tax, is clear and plain, we protest against the claim that it is in operation, practically or otherwise, anywhere. We wish it were. It would then furnish an object lesson for giving it a wide berth, and would no longer be the mental tangle-foot that it is.

The Single Tax theory does not step upon the stage simply as a theory of national taxation, least of all as a theory of incidental, or a theory of municipal, or a theory of State, taxation. The Single Tax theory steps forth as a theory that looks to a specific social order, a social order in which *involuntary poverty is impossible*; and the means it advances to that end is *the abolition of all taxes except a tax upon land value*.

If New Zealand, or the principal cities of Australia, or Kiaouchou, or Vancouver, or Victoria, or New Westminster, or Edmonton, etc., etc., were now actually under the Single Tax then the Single Taxer should be the last person to call attention to the fact. Notorious is the rampantness of involuntary poverty among the working

class in all those localities, New Zealand, with its tell-tale unemployed and paternal charities, included. Fact is that in none of those places, or anywhere else, is the Single Tax in force. In not one of them is the only tax borne by the people a tax upon land value only.

The sight of Louis F. Post fleeing to Kiaouchou in support of the Single Tax is a sorrowful illustration of the psychology that attends upon an exploded economic theory transformed into piety for a deceased founder. Though cruelly sarcastic, yet graphically, did John Swinton illumine the point with the story he told upon his return from a visit in Great Britain and Ireland in 1892. In New York Single Taxers had confided to him that tho' there was no Single Tax movement here, in England there was a powerful one. Arrived in England, and inquiring about the Single Tax, he was told by Single Taxers: "None here, but in Scotland the movement is strong." Arrived in Scotland he was informed: "No Single Tax here, but in Ireland!" Arrived in Ireland the experience was similar: "No Single Tax here, but in Brooklyn—there the movement is powerful." And Swinton closed the narrative telling how the first thing he did, when back in New York, was to rush over to Brooklyn to contemplate the powerful Single Tax movement said to be there, only to be there also met with the confidential information that there was no Single Tax movement in Brooklyn, but that in Australia the Single Tax was carrying everything before it.

It is the same old Single Tax as it came staggering out of the campaign of 1887 in this State.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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