

CLASS LEGISLATION FOR TRADES AND MECHANICS.

Editor Tribune:

Sir,—As one who takes an interest in the problems of improving the workingman's condition, I ask for a little space in your valuable paper, to put forward a suggestion which all mechanics and trades should strive to obtain, if they wish to improve their condition against capital, viz.: Class corporation or legislation for all trades and mechanics. What I mean by this is to put all trades on the standing with the professions. If the workingmen will look at the lawyers, doctors, dentists and druggists, they will see that they are close corporations, legislated for, and protected by the Provincial Governments, under the heading of education. They can regulate their own course and set their fees and the Government protects them by attaching a penalty to those who practice without coming up to their standard.

Where do you see a strike or hear of a "scab" among any of the above classes?

Why should not the mechanics, which produce all the wealth of a nation, have the same opportunity and protection as the above legislated corporations?

Trade unionism and the union label have done much to improve the mechanics' condition, but they are yet far short of what could be done if each trade was legislated for as a corporation and given the Government's protection of a penalty for those who were not properly qualified to work in such a class. Just imagine carpenters and plumbers in a corporation like the Ontario legal or medical societies! This should be the aim of every workingman, to get the Government's aid and protection to himself as a mechanic and his trade as a profession.

I hope I have not trespassed on your space. Yours, etc.,

John Galbraith.

SINGLE TAX PROGRESS IN GERMANY.

From the Passaic (N.J.) Daily Herald of August 4. See The Public of Sept. 3, 1904, p. 346.

Considerable progress is being made in Germany toward the ideal of the land tax. Land value taxation is growing in favor throughout the empire, and 140 communities have resorted to taxing land according to its value for local purposes.

The German communities are better off in this respect than American communities. Whenever a German town makes up its mind to raise its local revenues by means of a tax on land values it has no constitution to amend or to evade. It can simply adopt that idea and go ahead.

Breslau, a city of 250,000 population, was among the very first to adopt the plan, and the results have been salutary in discouraging the vacant lot industry and in promoting all other industries. Formerly Breslau got a revenue from all its vacant building lots of \$2,160. Under the new system its vacant lot pay a tax of \$63,200. The burden on homes has been correspondingly relieved.

Frankford-on-the-Main, like our own Cleveland and Chicago, has a radical mayor, and progress there has been

rapid and thorough. Dantzig, after a bitter fight, was won in June by the land value taxers; and other cities are expected to follow in due course as the agitation continues.

Dortmund has been under the new system for over six years. The Dortmund House and Ground Owners' Society, and house owners in general declare in favor of the new system, and say they would not think of going back to the old. "The ground value tax," writes a member of the society mentioned, "hits mostly the speculators in building sites." And this is what it is designed to do. This is its merit. It kills speculation in land, and tends to free opportunity for the employment of labor and capital in improvements.

The Prussian Minister of the Interior states in response to an inquiry, that "no Prussian community has been reported at this office as having gone back to the former plan." This shows that in at least 140 progressive German towns the land value tax has brought such results as to satisfy the people concerned of its superiority over the old system.—Public, Chicago.

TAX REFORM IN NEW YORK.

Active organization is proceeding in the State of New York to secure a tax exemption of real estate improvement values to the amount of \$3,000. The Evening Telegram of New York City is taking a postal card vote on the question, and building and loan associations especially are being solicited to support the measure. Leagues for the Partial Exemption from Taxation of Improvements have been organized and a convention is to be held at an early day. Edward Polak, Dr. Samuel W. Greenbaum, Thomas A. Hand and Dr. J. L. Stern are among the leaders in the movement.

WHAT FREE LAND DID.

Mr. Peel took with him from England to Swan River, West Australia, means of subsistence and of production to the amount of \$250,000. Mr. Peel had the foresight to bring with him besides, 3,000 persons of the working class, men, women and children. Once arrived at his destination, "Mr. Peel was left without a servant to make his bed or fetch him water from the river." Unhappily Mr. Peel, who provided for everything except the export of English modes of production to Swan River!

But what peculiarity of English modes of production was it that Mr. Peel had not exported to Swan River? He had exported \$250,000 worth of capital, and 3,000 people of the English wage-working class. Why, then, did he not use his capital to exploit the labor of those working people as he might have done in England?

Every intelligent reader must anticipate the answer. There is but one and it is conclusive. It was because those wage-workers were now in the midst of free land. The one feature, the only feature, of "English modes of production" which this Mr. Peel had not exported to Swan River, was land monopoly.

Bakers' strike still on.

IMPERIAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES TO BE HELD.

"One of the great aims of the new labor movement is the establishment of a general bond of peace in Europe." These words were used to one of the representatives of the Standard by Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, secretary of the Labor Representation Committee, when explaining his proposal that a deputation of leading labor representatives should be sent round the world, with a view to holding conferences in the chief British colonies—Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and at other centers, as occasion may warrant.

It was at the meeting of working men at Amsterdam last year, which he attended in company with Mr. Shackleton, M.P., and at which he met the principal Socialists and labor politicians of Europe and America (North and South), that the idea of an Empire Labor policy making for general European peace took possession of Mr. Macdonald's mind. And, perhaps, nothing conduced more to that result than the striking incident he witnessed when the Russian and Japanese representatives—Plekhanoff and Katayama—shook hands and exchanged fraternal greetings.

"That experience was certainly inspiring," said Mr. Macdonald, "and it suggested the extension of friendliness amongst the laboring classes the world over. Our Colonial deputation will be a sort of supplement to our Amsterdam deputation. The success of the Labor party in Germany, France and England, I verily believe, is going to make European war impossible."

The Danger of War.

"This country may become embroiled in war," said Mr. Macdonald, "not because we want it at home, but because some Colonial interest has been threatened. Take, for instance, the Alaska boundary difficulty. That might easily have produced a rupture between ourselves and the United States. Or take the case of the Marshall Islands dispute. The treaty rights of Australia in those regions might easily bring us at loggerheads with Germany. Therefore, before we can feel that our friendship with Continental countries is going to be an effective guarantee for peace, we must have a very strong hold on the political opinions of the Colonial working man, so that in the Colonies there shall also be a peace sentiment."

"I look upon some such conference as that which I have in my mind as the necessary sequel to our present friendly understanding with France (which was consummated so conspicuously the other day) and with Germany, which is about to be consummated (despite the fact that appearances are somewhat against it at the moment). These conferences will fittingly wait upon the entente cordiale."

A second object which Mr. Macdonald and his friends confessedly have in view in arranging for conferences with Colonials is, if possible, "to outwit the attempt the Government are about to make to drag the Colonies into the political field. We must safeguard ourselves against such a contingency," it is declared. Mr. Macdonald has been in communication with Mr. Watson and Senator Stewart—one the leader and the other secretary to the Labor party in Australia—and through them warned

the working classes of the colony against proposed changes in the fiscal policy of Great Britain. As the outcome of the correspondence, a conference had been held in Australia, and it had been decided to await the result of a referendum on the subject.

"The Australian Colonies take different views of the fiscal problem," continued Mr. Macdonald, "but we do not propose to interfere at all in their internal arrangements. They may be for free trade, protection or anything they like. The only thing we are anxious about is that they should not throw their weight into the scale in favor of the movement which the labor party at home are opposing, and to secure this will be the second great object of the proposed conferences. Besides, we have a great deal to learn from the Colonies on labor matters and subjects connected with the land. There is an idea in many quarters that the labor men here do not care a snap of the fingers about their kith and kin across the seas, and it seems to me that it would be valuable for us to meet them, and show them the fallacy of such a suggestion, and to talk things over with them. The time is peculiarly ripe for it. I have been in Canada and South Africa, and my experience has been of enormous value to me in my relations with the Labor party and the institutions of my country."

International Conference.

"We have an International Miners' Conference, an International Textile Workers' Conference, an International Metallurgists' Conference, and an International Conference of Transport Workers. All these gatherings are broadening the views of our working men, and tending to make the labor movement international. The conferences now proposed would tend to the same end."

Mr. Macdonald concluded by asserting that from the point of view of the labor movement it was necessary for those concerned in it to enter boldly the field of modern politics. He holds that the English Labor party is not a class, nor a parochial, nor a trade movement. They proposed to make themselves responsible for all the political interests of the nation. They were not going into the House of Commons to look solely after factory legislation, trade union bills, the unemployed, and so on. They were going to take a full interest in and accept the responsibility for all the affairs of the country, foreign and colonial as well as home.

It's just the proper caper to subscribe to The Tribune in a body.

"Before the advent of Our Lord manual labor was degrading. Our Blessed Saviour came to blot the primeval curse that had been pronounced upon it. Ever since He labored at Nazareth in the carpenter's shop He has put a halo around the brow of the workingman. He has sanctified labor. If the office of a President is ennobled by the example of a Washington and a Lincoln, if the office of a jurist is ennobled by the example of a Marshall and a Taney, if the function of a statesman is ennobled by the example of a Burke and a Webster, surely the calling of a mechanic and a workman is sanctified by the example of Our Lord."—Cardinal Gibbons.