

FREE LAND MEANS FREE MEN

Clarence Darrow's Ringing Address at Los Angeles.

"I don't look to see the single tax idea incorporated into our economic system for some time to come—it is too simple, too sane, too direct, too easy of application, too fundamental, and the world does not want fundamental reform."

Thus spoke Clarence Darrow at the dinner given by the Los Angeles Single Tax Club. His address fairly sparkled with epigrams and statements of facts set forth in a most fascinating way.

He began by declaring that the single tax is at once the sanest, most sensible, practical and thoroughly fundamental plan for economic reform that he knew anything about, and for that reason he was not so hopeful of its early adoption as he would otherwise be.

"Every sin is a product of law as witness the franchises, the wicked land laws, the sin and crime growing out of the private monopoly of land, mines, railroads and the products of nature. Nature toils a billion years to make a coal mine for the use of the people of the earth—no, for the profit of some thief who has grabbed the mine and holds it under our iniquitous laws."

WHAT PRIVATE OWNERSHIP MEANS.

"Private ownership of land means increasing wealth for the few and increasing poverty for the masses.

Workingmen take no account of fundamentals, any more than other folks. Millions of workingmen have organized themselves into unions to attempt the well-nigh impossible task of controlling the labor market instead of doing the fundamental thing, namely, changing the conditions under which they live. If a small fraction of the millions that have been spent on labor unions had been spent on fundamentals there would be no need of labor unions today.

"I am a single taxer unlimited. I don't want merely a new fiscal system, a new system of taxation. I want the earth for all the people—all the earth for all men. That is the doctrine of Henry George before it became too respectable. The dead have no right to legislate for the living. When one generation is dead it ought to stay dead and not reach out its dead hand and tell us who are alive how much of the earth we have a right to.

THE WORKER'S CONDITION.

"The working man goes out to where the car service is poor and living conditions undesirable and pays \$10 a month rent for a cottage in which to live—and work. He is poor because he is a workingman. If he wasn't poor he wouldn't be a workingman, and if he wasn't a workingman he wouldn't be poor. Every one who works is poor; and all, or nearly all, poor persons work, and usually the harder one works the poorer he is. You can't get rich by working for it. I never tried it, but I've seen persons who did. Well, this poor workingman goes out in the suburbs and rents his cottage and along comes a bunch of practical re-

formers who lay out a park, improve the car service, and the rent goes up to \$20 a month, and the workingman goes still farther out where the car service is poor for the right to live and keep on working.

TAXES A CURSE.

"All taxes are a curse excepting the land value tax. That is a positive blessing, because the more you tax land the more it increases. It is the only thing that grows by taxation. You want a city of a million. Who will be benefited? Not the workingman. He will be far worse off than at present because the greater the city the greater the poverty. No, the only person benefited will be the man who owns the land.

"When we learn that the land belongs to all of us and to each only so much as he can use, then we will be free men—no need for labor unions then; no need to legislate to keep men and women from working themselves to death; no need to legislate against the white slave traffic. When it pays to behave, men will behave. They'll do it because they want to. There will be no class distinctions in that time, no awful poverty, and no awful wealth."

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