

ings to those with whom I have so much in common and to express the hope that the congress will be a great success.

At this time we have the extraordinary spectacle of a great government which is responsible for a most iniquitous system of taxation and which has ventured to extend its functions beyond the limits of democracy into the realm of state socialism, assuming to possess greater wisdom than the business men of the country and which, therefore, has dictated to these men what to do with regard to the wages, hours of labor and prices. This brings to mind the brilliant characterization by Henry George of the fatal weakness of state socialism which consists in assuming to "rule the wonderful complex and delicate relations of their frames by conscious will." The time has indeed arrived for urging with renewed vigor the philosophy of Henry George.

HENRY WARE ALLEN, Wichita, Kas.

I am greatly disappointed that I will miss seeing so many of the leading Single Taxers at this Congress and of hearing the only gospel of salvation that can save the world from even greater chaos and poverty than we have yet seen. What an opportunity the Washington administration is missing! Its NRA Will'o' the Wisp, with its upside-down economics, will be, in future histories, classed as the most gigantic delusion of a century.

Of course this foolish experiment will soon collapse. Will it be followed by another piece of tom-foolery or by something half rational? It is too much to hope that Washington will discover, in the taxation of land values, the plain, simple and easy road to national recovery and to fuller and more permanent prosperity than we have had in fifty years—technocracy to the contrary, notwithstanding.

BYRON W. HOLT, N. Y. City.

Having just returned from Mexico, I find my first opportunity to reply to your letter of August 26, and to assure you it was with the sincerest regret that I gave up the hope of attending the Conference of Georgists at Chicago this month. But it has my most earnest convictions and if the prayers of this unrighteous one are of avail it must be fruitful of good things.

May I tell of a happy experience recently in the city of Mexico, while studying the murals of Rivera in the three-storied courtyard of the fine building of the Federal Ministry of Education? These give a colorful and vivid presentment of Mexican history, depicting realistically the sufferings of the natives: first, under the exploitation of the Conquistadores, and second, under that of their modern equivalents, the international concessionaires—coupled with the exactions of the Church throughout both tragic periods. Between them these three forces have mulcted the people of their rights in their own land. Imagine, then the delight of a Georgist to find, at the end of the court, the whole series summed up, as it were, in a legend which is roughly translated as follows:

The land is for all, like the air, the water and the light and heat of the sun.

The true civilization will be the harmony of men with the earth and of men among themselves.

To find such a challenge, "plain for all men to see," in a government building of one of the so-called somewhat backward nations, just emerging from over twenty years odd of revolution, may well hearten all land emancipators. Can anything more inspiring be invoked for the Conference?

EMILY E. F. SKEEL, Pasadena, Calif.

Letters of regret were also received from Grace Isabel Colbron, S. A. Stockwell, Lewis Jerome Johnson, Francis Neilson, A. C. Campbell, and others.

"DON'T scab" says the labor leader as he gives his support to economic measures which create unemployment and leave scabbing as the only opportunity open to millions.

## Reply to Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown's Paper Read at the Henry George Congress

ARE Single Taxers Fundamentalists? Do they regard "Progress and Poverty" as an economical bible? Are they a "bunch of nuts, wholly impervious to the dictates of common sense?" Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown of Missouri State University thinks so, at least in regard to a large body of Single Taxers, if not all. I have quoted expressions from a paper by the professor read at the Henry George Congress at Chicago. The professor says that our economic reading is limited, confined almost entirely to the writings of one man, and that we consider it rank heresy to suggest any other tax than a tax on land values. He says we believe any other tax is "essentially wicked," and that, "if a millionaire dies with no near kin and intestate, we would prefer that his entire fortune should go to some worthless seventh cousin," for if the state should take any of the fortune, taxation has not been confined to its only just and natural source, the economic rent of land.

### DON'T ALL THINK ALIKE

In several years of rather intimate association with Single Taxers both here and in Europe, I have failed to notice any such criticisms of them as Prof. Brown mentions nor any such unanimity of views among them as he implies. Besides at the Copenhagen International Conference, at the Edinburgh International Conference, and at minor gatherings in London I have heard spirited debates regarding many economic problems treated by Henry George, but not considered by Single Taxers as forever settled by him.

As to our considering any other tax, save one on land values as "essentially wicked," I know of many Single Taxers who in spite of the apparent contradiction in terms have been earnest advocates of income taxes, particularly on the big incomes, or higher brackets. Such income taxes are held to be justifiable because by such taxation we are taking a portion of economic rent, as many large fortunes are due to land monopoly.

### OBJECTS TO SINGLE TAX

Prof. Brown objects to the term Single Tax, and my observation is that a large majority of Single Taxers also object to it. Mr. Miller's journal formerly known as the *Single Tax Review* is now known as LAND AND FREEDOM. In California the words Single Tax are seldom heard in connection with the advocacy of land value taxation. In the Ingram Institute the words were particularly taboo by Mr. Ingram. Stoughton Cooley never uses them in his paper called *Tax Facts*. L. D. Beckwith of Stockton, Calif., calls his journal *No Taxes*, but he swears by Henry George economics. J. W. Graham Peace, an enthusiastic

disciple of George, in London, never advocates a Single Tax on land values but always the taking of ground rent for public purposes. His journal is called *The Commonwealth*.

Prof. Brown accuses us of being inconsistent, sometimes holding that a tax on land values would provide for all expenses of government as now conducted and leave a big surplus, so that riding on the cars would be as free as riding in the elevator of big buildings; and yet at other times he says that we hold that farm lands apart from improvements have little value. Well, this shows that Prof. Brown has noticed that sometimes we do *not* always agree, although we may be, what he says some folks call us, "a fanatical religious cult with fixed dogmas to which we adhere regardless of logical cost, and with whom it is useless to reason."

#### WRONG THEORY OF INTEREST

Prof. Brown says that Henry George's theory of interest is wrong, so also says Joseph Dana Miller, certainly one of our leading Single Taxers and the publisher of our leading journal. This question of interest I have heard debated in a spirited manner at a number of Single Tax conventions.

Then Prof. Brown says we consider it heresy to suggest that business depression can be due in any significant degree to the mismanagement of our money and credit system, or that a fluctuating price level, (for example, the rapidly falling prices of 1930-33) is of itself a serious evil independently of land speculation.

Had Prof. Brown been present at the Chicago convention, he would have learned from the address of Western Starr that the evil of an unstable monetary unit, and of the monopolization of credit, is keenly appreciated by some of us, if not by all of us. So I think Prof. Brown utterly mistaken when he says that we insist that fluctuations in the measure of value are of *no importance*, or have no relation to the evils from which we have recently suffered. I have never known a Single Taxer who contended that if we had the Single Tax fluctuations of money value could not occur.

Prof. Brown believes that we make rather too much of our free trade doctrine. He says "in my opinion, a land tax advocate may properly support both free trade, *and* a stable dollar as reforms of importance."

#### EXPURGATE "PROGRESS AND POVERTY"

Prof. Brown would like to see an edition of "Progress and Poverty" with all the discussion as to the definition of terms relegated to an "appendix" at the end of the volume.

In spite of all these mistakes, (and others) to which Prof. Brown alludes, I believe some of his criticisms may prove most wholesome. He reveals that he thinks we make too much of the theory that there are certain natural laws, sacred because really of divine origin. Consequently it is said we are always seeking natural laws

of economics, and then trying to conform to them. I know that a large school of Single Taxers hold this view. Mr. Beckwith of *No Taxes* says in a recent article: "When Edison invented the electric lamp he had only to adapt his work to natural laws, already planned and in operation, and ready to serve him, and he asks, Do you believe there are natural laws of economics already planned and in operation and ready to serve us? If so, our *first* task should be to discover and to understand those laws rather than to plan our machinery."

#### TWO SCHOOLS OF SINGLE TAXERS

There is another large school of Single Taxers who while acknowledging that Mr. Beckwith's views are entirely in harmony with Henry George economics, yet hold that they are out of harmony with economics as taught in some of our leading schools and universities, and are in fact entirely inconsistent with modern evolutionary philosophy.

They argue that there is *nothing sacred* about natural laws. That in the course of natural law men are subject to attack from all kinds of diseases, that in earlier stages of their life history they were continually subject to attack from hostile animals as they now are from hostile bacteria. They argue that hurricanes and earthquakes come in conformity to natural law, and in short that natural laws work malevolently as often as they work benevolently. Consequently we *can learn nothing* from them as to what men should do.

So this school does not at all regard with repugnance "*managed economics*." It believes that managed economics are better than unmanaged ones, as natural law by no means always works for the advantage and blessing of mankind. I am not saying to which of these schools of economics Prof. Brown belongs, but I *surmise* that he may be most properly classified with the believers in managed economics.

#### STRATEGY

Prof. Brown in his paper read at the Congress gives some good ideas as to strategy of Single Tax advocates. He warns us against our becoming too "respectable," or too ready to preen ourselves on the midly favorable comments which our respectables sometimes vouchsafe to us.

"For example" he says, "some of our numbers have seemed to be unduly elated because Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler in a recent address referred with apparent respect to Henry George and to Henry George's great book."

As Dr. Butler carefully refrains from saying that he thought Henry George's proposal for the remedy of poverty was a right proposal he can not see that Single Taxers gain much if any thing from quoting him.

Prof. Brown calls our attention to the more or less successful campaigns in recent years to take *off* of land rather than to put more taxes on land values. He points out that:

"Private property in land is familiar to the ordinary

man. He does not see that it is essentially different from property in any other kind of goods. He hopes to own some land, if, indeed, he does not already own some. He sees nothing wrong with holding title to his home or farm, and when we tell him that private property in land is unjust he is likely to feel that in some manner we are attacking him, and putting discredit on him for such ownership. The feeling of offence and anger so aroused stirs frantic opposition and is a severe handicap to our cause. Must we follow Henry George precisely in all particulars even if to do so means that we give up all hope of achieving the end he taught us to desire?

#### HOW TO PUT IT

"But suppose that instead of protesting against private property and land we protest instead against the fact that nearly all of us have to pay billions of dollars to a few of us for the privilege of living and working on those parts of the earth where life is reasonably possible and labor reasonably productive. Suppose that, instead of demanding "common ownership of land" and so letting our antagonists frighten the public by quoting from us a phrase which, until men understand its connotations for us, is altogether misleading,—suppose that instead of this we protest against *allowing a few of us to draw every year billions of dollars a year from the rest of us, for permission to enjoy situation advantages produced not by these few but by all of us.* If we put our case this way, most men will instinctively react in our favor at the start and the way will then be open to present our argument more fully. When we put our case the other way, we needlessly oppose current modes of thought and speech and the first reaction of most men whose minds are habituated to existing institutions is against us.

#### DARROW AND McNAIR

If Prof. Brown had attended the Henry George Congress at Chicago, he would have had a striking demonstration of the fact that Single Taxers do not all think alike. Clarence Darrow made an address the whole tenor of which was dead against the Roosevelt N. R. A. policy, while another and popular speaker William N. McNair defended the N. R. A. policies and told us that he was a candidate for office of mayor in Pittsburgh, running he said as a candidate of what is known as the Roosevelt Democracy, which he said helped to nominate Roosevelt in Chicago, and he says the same forces fought at Harrisburgh for the same kind of progressive social legislation that Roosevelt sponsored in Congress.

CHESTER C. PLATT.

PEOPLE do not agree with the teaching of George; they simply do not know it. And it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree. The land is common to all; all have the same right to it.—LEO TOLSTOY.

## Report of the Work of the Schalkenbach Foundation

THE following list of colleges and other institutions that have sent to the Foundation for books and information, but especially for books, during October and November may be of interest:

#### COLLEGES

Antioch, College, Ohio.  
 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
 Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.  
 Athens College, Athens, Georgia.  
 North-western University, Evanston, Ill.  
 University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.  
 University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.  
 University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan.  
 University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore.  
 Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology.  
 Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.  
 University of California, Dept. of Economics.  
 American University at Cairo, Egypt.  
 St. Benedict's College, Kansas.  
 Teachers College, Columbia University.

#### HIGH SCHOOLS, ETC.

Supt. of Schools, Waupun, Wisconsin.  
 Supt. of Schools, Hudson, New Hampshire.  
 Board of Education, Milburn, N. J.  
 Supt. of Schools, Watts, Oklahoma.  
 Dover New Jersey Public Schools.  
 Reno High School, Reno, Nevada.  
 Supervisor, Hayward High School, Wis.  
 State Teachers College, Lock Haven, Pa.  
 Senior High School, Mansfield, Ohio.  
 Stevenson Public School Supt., Washington.  
 Alhambra City High School, Alhambra, Calif.  
 Belleville Township High School, Illinois.  
 Union Free High School, Frederic, Wisconsin.  
 Fordson Board of Education, Dearborn, Michigan.  
 Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado.  
 Braintree High School, Braintree, Massachusetts.

Forty or more letters were received during October asking for information on taxation, on "Henry George," the Single Tax, etc., and each inquirer received personal answer, literature, and an explanation of our aims and ideals.

A memorial advertisement was placed in the *New York Times* on Oct. 30, to commemorate the life and writings of Henry George. As is always the case when the Foundation places an advertisement of this kind, interesting new contacts are made, some of which prove later to be invaluable to the work of promoting an *understanding* of the Georgist idea. The president of one of the largest steel companies in the country sent in for "Progress