

that disclosed any such benefits. It is true that there is the suggestion of speculator's function in opening up wild land for use. But, after all, is not the very criticism of land booms—a criticism which this reviewer certainly has found outlined even with some bitterness in the book—the argument that speculation throws marginal land into use sooner than necessary, forces unneeded improvements and resulting lavish borrowing on the part of local governments, and results finally in a collapse as population refuses or is unable to sustain these artificially swollen land values? Is that not the reason why land speculation is indeed a bubble? Normal demand will throw land into use; ballyhoo is not required. The press of population directs the use of land; not the hoop-la of the land speculator.

Prof. Sakolski also states that had Henry George lived during some of the fiascos of land speculation, such as in the post-Revolutionary days or in the town-jobbing prior to 1837, and had he witnessed the loss of great fortunes instead of seeing the California land boom, his economic philosophy might have been quite different. It is obviously idle to speculate on what George's work might have been had he been a different man. But it does not seem that Dr. Sakolski had seriously underestimated George's contribution by such a remark. He has apparently not permitted himself to regard George's fundamental concepts as anything more than a parochial by-product of a land boom.

But to get back to the book and away from such digressions. "The Great American Land Bubble" is a psychological volume as well as an historical and economic one. It deals with the American spirit as much as with the American speculator. It gives exposition to that perennial urge for gambling which is hardly indigenous to these shores. The Colonials, for example, had little else to gamble with except land. Unfortunately they did not have stock markets. And so they bought land merely to re-sell. Prof. Sakolski's book is thus a picture of American culture and it will certainly take a place in the bibliography of American cultural history. It is none the less a portrait of personalities. Colorful rogues and profound patriots, fools and philosophers—all present themselves here as bubble-blowers.

The work is an excellent piece of historical research. It is diverting, instructive, disillusioning. It is not, and does not pretend to be, a work in economic theory or in economic reform.

GEORGE RAYMOND GEIGER.

UPTON SINCLAIR PRESENTS WILLIAM FOX*

In legal circles the story is told of a Wisconsin murder trial where, after the opening address of the District Attorney, one of the jurymen suddenly arose, put on his hat, and started to depart. When the court interrupted him and sternly demanded a reason for his extraordinary action the Teutonic juror replied: "I want to get away from here quick, before the murderer's lawyer starts to change my mind"

I am reminded of this story on finishing this book. Not that I was convinced of the truth of its charges. On the contrary, I am satisfied that the downfall of the vast chain of movie houses assembled by Mr. Fox cannot be attributed solely to the extravagance and dishonesty of his successors. Generally bad business conditions, I suspect, had much to do with the debacle. It could hardly be expected that a depression which could wreck a two billion dollar Insull public utility, or the Bank of the United States with nearly 400,000 depositors in New York City, or the Chicago-Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad with a capital structure of over 400 million dollars, would leave the amusement field untouched. In short, this is an ex parte, or one sided statement, and must be taken "cum grano salis."

Not that "Big Business," as it is conducted in this year of grace, 1933, in the United States, is incapable of such scoundrelly actions as are here described. I, for one, would like to hear the defense, however, before drawing conclusions.

The accused, among whom is the Chase National Bank of New York City deign, however, not to reply. Certainly they have instituted

no libel action against our author, evidently feeling it the part of wisdom to ignore his book.

Upton Sinclair, as usual, is highly irritating. He repeats his charges ad nauseam; he calls the victim, "The Fox" which I, submit, is in poor taste.

Sinclair's remedy, as usual, is Socialism. Fox on the other hand proposes to abolish "short selling" in the stock market and to forbid national banks to have affiliates and security companies. As to the first of these remedies, it may be said that the better opinion of experts is that it would be ineffectual as well as inadvisable to forbid "short selling;" as to the second remedy, that is now well on the way to accomplishment.—B. W. BURGER.

Correspondence

ASKS FOR A SPECIAL PROGRAMME

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

This summer there will be a notable gathering of Single Taxers in Chicago. There will be a speaking programme that will express the best thought on the World's Economic ills. They will adjourn with a feeling of having a successful session. But until these conferences result in a plan that will get all of us working together in an effective way to attain the Single Tax, a plan that all can work for, the conference will have been little more than a gathering of friends in the cause.

The purpose of this letter is to reach those that see the need of concerted action. A combined force in one locality through the initiative to do what we are trying to do by scattered effort.

What we can accomplish all depends on how the Single Taxers respond to a campaign in a state with the initiative. Our campaign in Missouri got us 48,000 votes here in St. Louis. This was our pioneer work with very limited funds at a time when the people were not asking for a change. With the world in a state of collapse, with no guide out of the plight, we have a great opportunity to unite our force in one state. There is nothing that can stop the initiative petitions and it will make its own publicity. Every signer is a potential voter for it and when we are getting the signers we are campaigning or votes. There is a noticeable desire among us to find some effective plan of team work.

The depression has crippled our resources. To make the load equal to our ability, we could centralize on making a Single Tax city out of St. Louis, Denver, Pueblo, Los Angeles, or Stockton. Colorado has local option in taxation so it would not need a state wide amendment. As all amendments are constitutional, the measure can be made applicable to state taxes as well as local taxes. The slogan should be "A Single Tax City" and make the amendment strong enough so it will be a Single Tax City. We should not fool ourselves, for whatever kind of measure we have, it will be known as the Single Tax.

St. Louis, Mo.

E. H. BOECK.

AGREES WITH BROTHER BOECK

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I wish to commend you most highly for your intelligent review of Prof. Tugwell's book. Personally, I am not at all surprised at the silly mouthings of the average "professor of economics." I honor the notable exceptions, such as Harry Gunnison Brown, John Dewey, etc. I recall one of them—Prof. LeRosignol, hoping that is the correct spelling—of Nebraska University, who, once at the University Club of Omaha, in an address, stated, "Perhaps you will call it pharisaical, but Henry George will never be recognized as an authority on economics for the reason that he was not one of us—meaning he was not a college bred man." At the close, I told him that he had used the correct word—"pharisaical."

Since that day I have often wondered if that is not the idea that slumbers in the back of the heads of most "professors of economics." Yet there is a basic reason why such professors are so numerous. If

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