

## Extracts From Contemporaries

### ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Germany's desire to regain her colonies is one of the problems perplexing the League of Nations. It is not seen that the need of nations for colonies is but a reflex of the world's need for commercial freedom, which would open to all nations the resources of the earth through the channels of mutually profitable trade. Europe is threatened with a coal shortage because of the British strike. Her shackled and feeble markets cannot pay living wages for the mining of British coal, hence the strike. The efficiency of American industrial methods is held up for European emulation in vain while Europe cuts up her "home market" into about 30 compartments. Economic barriers account for France's restless quest for security, Italy's aims at expansion, and a possible coalition between them to further the desires of both.

—*Commerce and Finance.*

### SINGLE TAXERS WHO ARE SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS MEN

Because I have known many of the kind, I find H. L. Mencken very much at fault when he sweeps all Single Taxers into the discard, condemning them as fanatics who have a side line of vagrant fancies. I think of Tom L. Johnson, surely an executive if ever there was one; masterful, holding true to his polaris, doing things for Cleveland and for Ohio which have stood. I think of Joseph Fels, manufacturer, master of men, man of definite procedure. Of William Feather who has built up a business, who is efficient, who has no nonsense about him, about whose book another executive said: "It is the sanest thing by the sanest mind of which I know. I want all my hands to read it." I remember half a dozen expert accountants who examined the theory of the Single Tax to pronounce it sound. I think of that man of systematic personal effort who has built up a great business, Otto Cullman, of the Cullman Works. I remember Fenton Lawson of the company of that name, whose successful guidance has brought his Cincinnati firm to a high pitch of efficiency. I think of one of the DuPonts I met in a business way, also an adherent of the Single Tax theory. Then there is Harry H. Willock, vice-president of the Waverly Oil Works; and McGill, of Valparaiso, Indiana; and J. A. Whitfield, the president of the Old Dutch Market in Washington. Not one of them has ulterior motive easily discoverable, unless you choose to call that an ulterior motive which is furtherance of business. And it is a furtherance of business to relieve production from taxation, as an application of a tax on land values would seem to do.

So, I set my experience against Mr. Mencken's, having found the advocates of the Single Tax among my acquaintances to be men of efficiency in business, men not holding the requirements of logic too cheap, men not of lax mental habit, and men who seem to aim at shaping their intellectual activities into a consistent whole. And it is significant that so many expert accountants are Henry George men—significant because they are exactly the men to whom I would go for sane advice on a fiscal or an economic problem. Not all of them are of that economic faith, but all of them I have approached admit the practicability of it.

—CHARLES J. FINGER in *All's Well.*

### DECEIVING THE PEOPLE

What observer of representative government in action expects a tax law to bear no marks of politics? Everybody concerned in the making of such laws plays politics. In the income tax law politics accounts for the exemptions, most of which are plain bids for political support. Politics accounts for the whole scheme of indirect taxation, which is successfully designed to tax the people, more heavily than is necessary, in such a way that they will not know it or at least not fully realize it. Our tariff laws are framed in the interest of the big campaign contributors, who collect, with interest, from the unconscious consumer. Our gasoline tax is a sop to the rural vote, which deceives itself into thinking that it falls chiefly on other classes, though it raises the cost of living for everybody. Politics is the father of our whole tax system. If it were not so, the system would be vastly simplified, all taxes would be direct and the citizen's annual tax bill would amount to half, perhaps, of what it is now. But, as Barnum said, the people love to be humbugged and the politicians know it.

—*Ohio State Journal.*

### ADVICE TO RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

Our institutions of learning teach the doctrine that surplus men and women are brought into the world; people for whom nature makes no provision; that poverty vice and crime are the necessary outcome of the operations of a natural law. This theory, popularly known as Malthusian because it was first stated in somewhat scientific form by a clergyman named Malthus, makes it seem foolish to suppose that there is beneficence in nature. It weakens the idea of immortality, and raises a presumption against it, for it degrades mankind and renders the