

of value, marginal land, as it produces no rent and therefore has no investment value, will not be affected. If, therefore, landlords, seeking to recover from tenants the amount of the tax, increase their rental charges, tenants may abandon if they choose, the rent-producing land and cultivate for themselves the free land at the margin. Here they will be as well off as before; their net returns will be the same. Being left without tenants landlords may pay their own taxes, or dispose of their holdings—or reduce their rental charges and again find tenants.

On marginal land wheat, in the illustration which we use, is produced at \$1.25 per bushel. Those who have wheat to sell must therefore meet this price. Consequently those having to sell wheat that is grown on taxed land cannot, by adding the tax to the selling price of this commodity, reimburse themselves for what they have been required to pay.

We would have the principle of property rights rigidly applied. We recognize fully the validity of the theory that "to the producer belongs the things produced." We would abolish all taxes with the exception of one that is to be levied upon land in accordance with its fair value, the rate of taxation to be such as to turn into the public purse the entire community-created increment. Such a tax on land values will make free marginal land; it will, in effect, create a public domain. In a public domain lies man's only way of escape from the house of bondage.

When marginal land is free it will be available for use without payment of purchase price or tax. When this condition applies, what men can earn for themselves upon land which costs them nothing will constitute *natural wages*. Upon natural wages the entire wage system should rest.

Where land is free there can be no exploitation of labor. The competition of free land, the fact that the free land always beckons to every worker, will compel those who would induce others to enter their employ to raise to the maximum the wages that they offer.

If nothing were accomplished by the reform which we advocate beyond creating a public domain much would yet be gained. Economic liberty would be established and wages would be much increased. But we shall accomplish even more: The untaxing of private property will indirectly still further increase real wages; this increase being proportionate to the taxes that are removed.

We desire and expect the government to make secure our possession of our private property. But except we insist that the government exercise its own property rights in community-created wealth we cannot expect that our private property rights will be preserved.

It should be superfluous to state that the law of rent, which we have sought to make clear, explains the origin of value not only of agricultural land but of all land, wherever situated and however used. Land values, of course, are greatest where population is most dense—in cities.

The natural order is not at fault. It is our failure to apprehend the natural order and our folly in ignoring the

ethical dictate in public affairs that has led us into the slough of despond in which we find ourselves.

Instead of trying to regulate by statute all the affairs of men, their comings and their goings, we should strive to discover the laws of life and to live in accordance with them. It is only by obeying such laws, it is only by adjusting ourselves to the natural order, that we can hope ever to see established upon the earth a peaceful human society.

Ground-rent is community created. This being the case, to whom does it belong? This question we must answer, and answer in accordance with justice or step aside and leave to another people with truer vision the task of carrying on to higher levels the civilization which we have been found unworthy further to develop.

In the genesis of ground rent lies the solution of the social problem which has so long vexed the hearts of men.

F. M. PADEFORD, M. D.

Ignorance or Cowardice

THE most sinister feature of the "tax revision" campaign to secure the repeal of the surtax on incomes and the excess profits tax is the way in which it has been dealt with by the press. Backed up by the great bankers, financiers, advertising manufacturers and the National Retail Dry Goods Association, representing the leading department stores, it has been able to induce the newspapers liberally to give space to the one-sided and unfair statements that constitute the case for tax "revision" that means tax "shifting." It is possible that many editors who favor real tax reduction have been misled by the pretense that this is the object of the "revisers," but there is no such excuse for the editors of our great city dailies. They all know perfectly well that "tax revision" is a mask for "tax evasion," and that if the alleged "painless" sales tax is adopted, and the surtax on incomes and excess profits tax abolished, there will be no further propaganda for lighter tax burdens. On the contrary, as admitted by the advocates of the sales tax, the burden of that tax will be so cleverly covered up that it will not easily be felt, and Congress will go on in its big appropriation way with little effective public sentiment to check it.

I have read daily for the past year eight or nine New York newspapers, and frequently see those of Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and other cities. While filling their columns with canned arguments sent out by the tax revisers, they have practically, with a very few exceptions, given nothing on the anti-tax-sales side. When at a Tax Conference at the Hotel Astor in this city a representative of 1,500,000 organized farmers denounced the sales tax as an iniquitous scheme for untaxing the rich, not one paper that I saw published anything material of his remarks, and most of them ignored them.

While the hearings on revision of the Internal Revenue laws were being held a few months ago by the Senate Committee on Finance, the newspapers of the country gave, as a rule, from three to seven times as much space to those

witnesses favoring repeal of the taxes on wealth, as to those speaking for millions of farmers and workers. The latter do not advertise.

The chairman of the Legislative Committee of the National Grange, the oldest and strongest farm organization of the country, submitted a vigorous protest against the sales tax. I was unable to find in the public library a single newspaper that published extracts from this statement, and most of the papers did not even refer to it as an item of news. The American Federation of Labor, on behalf of 4,000,000 workers, denounced the sales tax, and was accorded by most of the papers a three or four line notice. When Mr. Otto H. Kahn rehashed his taxation platitudes at Plattsburgh, the New York Times gave them more than a column.

I am not a man with a grievance, but perhaps you will allow a brief reference to my personal experience. I have been a writer on economic questions for more than thirty years, and have had many letters published in the various New York newspapers during that period. Several of the leading morning journals and one evening paper which have frequently published my letters, have refused to publish brief criticisms of the sales tax. They have printed my letters against prohibition, against a return to a high protective tariff, and on various other subjects, but have uniformly turned down all letters pointing out the real nature of the movement for tax revision that is being conducted by the so-called "tax reformers," who are willing that somebody else should pay their taxes. This is not merely a coincidence. My letters were brief and to the point. They were suppressed because they exposed the ignorance of some of our alleged banker-economists, and showed the absurdity of trying to remedy conditions of decreased buying capacity due to high taxes, by putting a new tax on all articles of general consumption.

This is merely another illustration of the fact that either consciously or unconsciously the press is controlled by what it thinks is the desire of the business, financial and real estate interests. The pretension of a "free press," is, as shown by William Marion Reedy a few years ago, wholly a myth. The newspapers publish what is pleasing to the advertisers, and suppress what is likely to offend the privileged interests. There are a few honorable exceptions, but the great majority of the eleven thousand or more publications issued throughout the country are too cowardly to publish facts or arguments that tend to interfere with the present monopolistic, profiteering regime. The most urgent need of the time is a press published in the interest of all the people that will fearlessly print the truth.

WHIDDEN GRAHAM.

UNLIKE *Cleveland Press*, we don't know what the world will be in 3,000 A. D., but land speculators are eager to take a chance on what it will be 99 years hence.—H. M. H., in *Cleveland Citizen*.

WHEN government fails in regulating railroads, we are skeptical of its ability to regulate babies.—H. M. H.

NEWS—DOMESTIC

California—San Francisco

THE interest shown in the meetings celebrating the birthday of Henry George in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, make it plain that the movement in California is taking on new life.

Cary Richard Colburn, secretary of the Single Tax Society of San Diego, writes that a larger crowd than usual met at a dinner to honor the memory of our great leader and thinker. Mr. Colburn informs us with much enthusiasm that the best of feeling prevailed at the dinner and that arrangements have been made to have a dinner every month hereafter.

The Los Angeles Single Tax League also had a dinner attended by a hundred and fifty and presided over by William C. DeMille. Stoughton Cooley, former editor of the *Public*, spoke, and plans were made for organizing Southern California.

The San Francisco dinner received fine reports from the papers of that city. Among the speakers were Mr. Older and John D. Barry, of the *San Francisco Call*. Mr. Barry wrote three days in succession on the speech of Lincoln Steffens made at the dinner, and described the occasion in his usual interesting style.

As a result of the dinner much new strength developed. Dr. H. Wahle, of Oakland, has enlisted for public speaking and has already begun the making of engagements. During the past two months Mr. E. Backus has distributed over 5,000 pieces of literature. The distribution of advertising matter is Mr. Backus' business but he did our work without charge.

Dr. Ethel Lynn spoke to about fifty members of the Women's Business Club of San Francisco. I answered questions when Dr. Lynn finished. The questions showed that those present were thinking.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has issued a warning not to allow pupils to compete for prizes offered by the Great Adventure League for the best essays on the Single Tax on the ground that the question is a partisan one. Essays may be written for prizes offered on questions more academic. Today's papers offered cash prizes for essays written by school children on the question of who was responsible for the ideas of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. The statement did not say that Jefferson cribbed his ideas from French radicals and presented it in plain English terms, but this is what seems implied.

The revised edition of Harry Willock's "Unused Democracy" is an excellent presentation of the Single Tax. The Great Adventure League is having a large quantity printed for the campaign. The Single Tax Amendment will be printed in the booklet. The prospect for a successful campaign continues to be more and more hopeful.

WILL L. ROSS.