

to all these questions. Then in view of the fact that every ant actually does get along prosperously—has a sufficiency of food, adequate shelter, and still abundant leisure to devote to the cultivation of its higher nature (if so be that it has a higher nature) whereas in human society we find comparatively few who are thus prosperous; many being short of food, shelter and clothing all the time; many more part of the time; many having no leisure for any cultivation of mind or heart because it takes so much of their energy to secure bodily necessities; others having limitless wealth who never do any useful work at all; I say in view of this remarkable difference between the outcome of Ant and Human civilization, the inference must be clearly that the latter is inferior. If I am answered that ants live in accordance with mere instinct; whereas men are endowed with reason, then I must conclude that instinct is superior to reason, but this nobody will really believe. Perhaps, however, the reply is that ants, endowed only with instinct, blindly obey a mechanical law of their being, whereas men—here the replier stops, suddenly seeing the unpalatable thing that was at his tongue's end. That unpalatable thing, however, is, I fear, the truth, so let us out with it—finish the sentence: Whereas men, endowed with reason, by which they should be able to discern the law of their being as well as the ants do by instinct, either do not see that law, or seeing, do not obey it, but perversely thrust it aside, ignore it, defy it, and take the consequences. In very truth the replier has hit the nail on the head. The ants fulfill their function perfectly; we, the superior beings, the lords of creation, have made a muddle of ours.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS THE SINGLE TAX?

Speech of EDMUND NORTON at the Jefferson Club, Los Angeles.

The Single Tax is the popular name of the great fiscal reform and social philosophy most powerfully promulgated by our great American, Henry George, sometimes called "the prophet of San Francisco." Its advocates are almost universally known as Single Taxers or Georgeans.

WHAT IT PROPOSES TO DO.

Its purpose is to increase wages to the full returns or earnings of labor; to shorten the hours necessary to earn a living; to leave to capital, which is secondary labor, its full returns, which are secondary wages; to abolish monopoly, which is the thief that is robbing both labor and capital, and thereby prove the unity and remove the apparent antagonisms which have no place in a natural order where monopoly does not exist. It will free production, including all trade, barter and exchange, which are but processes of production, and will equalize the distribution of wealth into the possession only of those who can earn it. It will destroy privilege by substituting equal

natural rights, remove the dead hand from the control of living men; throw open the limitless natural resources of the planet to willing labor, and, by taking all social creations of value into the social treasury, will conserve all natural resources forever to the people and make private appropriation of public values impossible. This condition will start a boom that will never stop till every human want is satisfied.

It will make internecine and international wars impossible by destroying all trade and monopoly privileges which alone are the causes tempting the crafty, cunning and unscrupulous to create or encourage these sum totals of all vices, crimes and horrors against humanity for personal power and profit.

THE METHOD OF ATTAINMENT.

The Single Tax does not intend to add to or multiply the already almost infinite statutory enactments now confusing and befuddling the social state, but rather means to abolish, one after the other, every law on the statute books granting a special privilege to any one man or body of men that is at the expense of the unprivileged mass of society. This will destroy the petty and grand larceny now preying upon the social body.

Aside from the million of petty privileges granted by municipalities, states and the nation to individuals, the great and glorious pillage shows itself in privileges and monopoly in labor saving inventions, trade restrictions and the private ownership of natural resources, the major part of which is a matter of taxation; therefore, the Single Tax would abolish all taxes on barter, trade, exchange, personal property and improvements, commensurately raising all taxes from the value of land alone, till there was in existence but one single tax upon the value of bare land exclusive of improvements. This would be a single tax on land value—not on land, for some land would pay no tax while other land would pay much tax.

For instance, one acre of land worth a million dollars would pay as much tax as a million acres worth only one dollar per acre.

THIS WOULD SQUARE WITH THE MORAL LAW

for the simple reason that all labor-created wealth is the result of individual effort and leaving that wealth untaxed would be leaving to the individual only that which belonged to him by his right to himself and to that which he himself creates; while taking into the public treasury only those values which society creates in its collective capacity would be leaving to society only that which belongs to it, for no individual on earth, by himself, can create land values.

At present we compound injustice by permitting private individuals to appropriate what society creates and then society turns about and deprives the individual of his private creation to support the governments whose existence makes possible the public values privately appropriated.

This basic injustice is a fundamental disturbance of the equilibrium of

society, showing itself in numberless evils—economic, social, political, physical, mental and moral.

Mistaking symptoms for disease, effects for causes, we have numerous social quacks pressing forward with innumerable nostrums—palliative, ¹alleviative, suppressive or curative of the particular symptoms they have noted—each claiming he has found a remedy and each ready to cure the world with a salve, bandage, pill or liniment.

The diseased social body can be cured only by removing the cause and restoring it to a normal condition. Monopoly and special privilege is all that the social body suffers from today, and destruction of monopoly and special privilege will cure it. Equal rights to all and special privilege to none is the only magic remedy. Apply this, make man free and equal before the law and the Divine Mind operating through nature will do the rest.

JEFFERSON'S FORMULA.

Thomas Jefferson's was probably the greatest democratic mind of his age and the equal of any age. If we examine the Jeffersonian formula we will find it the square, level and compass, without which no nation can ever be permanently founded. The natural rights of man, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," we must take for granted, and the right of revolution—also put forth in the immortal document—"the Right of the People to alter or to abolish and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness," we must also take for granted.

The constitution—itself a reactionary document, taking away from the people perhaps 75 per cent. of the liberties gained in the war of 1776—still leaves us the power to apply the golden rule of democratic thought to our government without violence—for which we may be thankful.

EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL; SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO NONE.

If we view the recent, present and past history of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Colorado, Springfield, New York, Albany, Pittsburgh, and the nation at large, we will have to confess that now and for fifty years past, at least, municipality, state and nation have been passing through a Saturnalia of public pillage by special privileges working through varying forms of oligarchic, partisan and political contract. The government has been wrested from the hand of Democracy by Plutocratic privileges.

Applying the rule of equal rights to all, we clearly see that while these rights exist, the power to exercise them has been nullified; therefore, all of those reforms such as the Initiative, Referendum, Recall, Commission Government for cities, Direct Primaries and popular senatorial elections, are democratic efforts for the restoration of the mechanics of Government into the hands of Equal Citizens.

I say the mechanics of government, for in no sense will the people be at

all benefitted permanently, even by the perfection of these reforms unless they grasp these truths and change or readjust economic conditions. Indeed they might be worse off, for having captured these means completely, they might mistake them for ends, and believing their victory full, might slumber while being worse pillaged.

I wish to inject here one pertinent suggestion—cities, within themselves, should have absolute right to exert self-government in all things within their borders that do not infringe upon the equal freedom of other cities, the state or nation, especially in matters of taxation.

Having eliminated, then, the mechanics of government, suppose we apply our rule to the fiscal and economic conditions existing in our city of Los Angeles, and nearly every other city.

During the last fiscal year we raised about \$5,000,000. in taxes imposed on land values, improvements, personal property and license—fines, which amounted to some \$650,000. Now, there is no civic, fiscal or economic excuse for license, business and occupation fines other than police regulation or revenue raising.

Police regulations have no reason for existence except to protect the citizen from infringement on his equal rights, and to grant a special privilege under any name whatever for some persons to possess to the exclusion of other persons, is a wrong that breaks our golden rule of Democracy and should be abolished on that ground alone.

For Government to grant these powers of wrong doing on receipt of a stipulated share of the profits of the wrong, is to participate in, sanction and legalize the wrong and thereby corrupt society at its fountain head.

Again, varying the cost of these granted privileges from \$1.00 to \$200.00 per month is absurdly unjust, unequal and discriminative for or against certain businesses, making another breach of the rule calling for their abolition.

The effect of these fines is to act as trade restrictions, as interference with production, and to centralize business in the hands of a dominant privileged class. They are national protective tariff superstitions localized for the benefit of civic plunder.

Here I wish to call your attention to a vital, absolute, commercial and economic law: "All taxes on things produced by human exertion enter into the cost of production and are paid by the ultimate consumer."

If we grasp this fact in its fullness we will see that these fines and taxes affect not so much the middlemen who are compelled by the inexorable law to add them to the price, as it does the ultimate consumer, who is the whole body of society. Thus we do not hit the one we imagine, but simply strike ourselves.

To abolish them would be to free trade, diffuse business, accelerate its activity and lower prices to the ultimate consumer, permitting him to retain a greater amount of his earned wealth.

If we could so emphasize this one law as to make all see it, the ideals of democracy would be here.

I have laid particular stress on this all important law because, it applies not only to license fines but to all personal property and improvements—to everything made by man. Therefore, in all forms of wealth in course of production there are no real tax payers but the ultimate consumers—the intermediary is only a tax shifter. This is vital.

The Single Tax would abolish all these taxes; so would the Jeffersonian formula. In both we have a principle and a method for its practical application.

To extend this practical application of the Democratic principle to all things—including the international tariff—would immediately destroy the nightmare of high prices and flood the world with limitless possibilities of trade.

Then comes the question: Where would you get the money to run the government? Of course. Why, there would be no place to get it except from land values. Here is something fastened to the world—possibly by the "Big nail" of the North Pole—anyway it is where it can be seen; it can't run away, hide in a hole nor be loaned to a convenient friend in an adjoining county when the assessor comes around. The millions of varieties and values of other forms of property being eliminated, scientific simplicity would be possible in taxation. Taking into the public treasury publicly created values in the form of a tax and leaving in the possession of private individuals their private creations, by tax exemptions, would square with the moral law. Incidentally, "Conservation of natural resources" would become an accomplished fact in city, state and nation; for the taxing power involved in the private possession of the "unearned increment," "land values," "economic rent," or "ground rent," is a governmental power now privately possessed; obtained by grant, theft or tax evasion. It is a special privilege held only by land owners—the abolition of which is necessary to the restoration of equal rights to all.

This private possession of a governmental privilege is, moreover, the prime motive—the chief incentive—to all the speculative holdings of idle city lots, agricultural, mining, timber, coal, and oil lands, and all other natural resources. It is responsible for 90% of the speculative gambling that is prostituting city councils, state legislatures, the national government and even threatening the judiciary itself.

In fact this basic injustice is at the bottom of 90 per cent. of all the vice, crime and graft—public and private—from which society is now suffering. The removal of the cause by the socialization of land-values through the application of the Single Tax, would destroy the incentive, divert the evil tendencies to the best instead of the worst in society, displace an abnormal condition by a normal one, and cut out, eventually, the 90 per cent. of evil which we now deplore. The victories opening to us under these possible conditions are only pictureable by the poet or the seer.

THE LOCAL AND CALIFORNIA'S CONDITION.

If we examine our local condition we find a twenty mile city scattered over a 61 mile territory, interspersed with miles of vacant land held for specu-

lative gambling. In one annual report the Water Commission naively remark that, they "did not have enough water that year to supply the orchards and alfalfa fields within the city limits."

(There is no evidence that this board ever read Mark Twain or the *Pickwick Papers*).

Within this area it is a safe estimate to say that the assessors books show an under assessment of 200 to 300 millions of dollars on land values alone.

Within a cannon shot of this city are about 140 square miles of land held by six estates in the San Fernando valley—enough land to supply nearly all the population of the city with three (3) acres for every five persons. Then there is the Lajuna, Bixby, Maliber, Baldwin and other holdings immediately around the city containing hundreds of square miles of land comparatively uninhabited, also held for speculative gambling.

Here, with room for millions near the city, we have seen the remarkable sight of hundreds of men and women camping for nights and days on the curbs and gutters of the city, weeks before the hour, waiting for a national governmental lottery to open up a chance for them to mortgage themselves to that government for small patches of desert hundreds of miles away from anywhere. Literally driven into the desert by the high prices of the local land gamblers, who are maintained in their gambling power by our system of taxation. This in the presence of another startling fact: that the small home owner, the real city builders, are, in many cases, taxed from 60 to 800 times more for the area of their land-holdings than the big gamblers.

Bearing directly on this subject, let me quote from a recent eastern newspaper: "An extraordinary disclosure of land monopoly in California, was made by the Los Angeles *Examiner*, in its issue of March 27, last. Only thirty-five owners, it appears, held one-seventh of the area of that great state. Their holdings ranging from 20,000 acres to 14,500,000 each. Holdings of 100,000, 200,000 and 400,000 acres, appear in the list between these extremes. This disclosure is only a sample of the land monopoly that prevails, not only in California, but throughout the West and also in the East.

Will the contented apologist for things as they are, kindly reflect upon this condition? Let him ask himself what his disinherited posterity will think of him for silently permitting their inheritance to slip away from them before they were born; let him ask himself, too, what they ought to think of him for this."

This condition is not just, and viewed dispassionately we may well see that the Los Angeles, California and American Dukes of privilege are none the less dangerous to our social well-being when disguised as proletarian butchers than is the English duke wearing a titled coronet.

The possible difference might show in a still hunt for an American Duchess of privilege, however.

The Single Tax will remove these unjust conditions by a rational, expedient process of readjustment. It will restore to the individual his freedom and to the state its own values.

The right to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," "Equality of Opportunity," "Equality of Rights," and destruction of special privilege, all demand its enactment as the only natural and perfectly sane method of squaring these demands.

The equal right to life can never be guaranteed until equal right to the natural opportunities upon which that life depends is also guaranteed. A denial of one is the denial of the other.

The opening up of the limitless storehouse of nature on this continent alone, by the destruction of its monopoly, would be equivalent to discovering a new continent.

Labor and capital, unrestricted, would flow to these opportunities as the sparks fly upward. Relieved of pressure at the bottom and congestion of trade restriction removed from the top, who can tell the wonderful possibilities of America?

Here, toward the last, we come in contact with another vital related problem: that of the functions and ownership of highways—national, state, county and municipal.

These highways are, in organ and function, to the social body; what veins, arteries and nerves are to the human body. They are the channels of communication and transportation for persons, property and intelligence. Interference, restriction, congestion—all tend to varying disorders in the social body. Perfect freedom to normal action is the solvent. Private control of a public function is privileged ownership of a governmental power which should never be tolerated in a state of equal freedom. In fact equal freedom is impossible where special privileges of government are farmed out to private individuals.

It will be noted that practically every private possession of land on the continent, except those facing free water-ways, are criss-crossed, intersected and separated by these highways. Theoretically we can easily see that, should we grant absolute ownership of highways to one individual—even were every other adjustment on earth perfected—that one individual would be master of the continent, for no possible inter-communication of persons, property, or intelligence could take place on, by, through or across these arteries and nerves without his consent, which condition, if submitted to, would make him sole arbiter of our world.

What is true of the whole is fractionally true of any part. We can never establish equality of right till absolute freedom of highway is guaranteed. Private possession of highways is no more necessary to private possession of property than is private possession of the ocean necessary to private ownership of ships.

In fact, the rights of private property are abrogated when governmental power to exact tribute from private property is granted to a privileged few; therefore, "Equal Rights to All and Special Privilege to None," demand the application of the Georgian philosophy to highway function as a democratic and not a socialistic measure.

When we remember that this privilege, now controlled by the national steam railways alone is capitalized at eighty hundred million dollars in excess of the fifty hundred millions of actual cost, we can see the enormity of one form of special privilege and the corresponding abrogation of natural and property rights.

In passing, I will say that there are three (3) practical methods in which these rights may be restored:

- (a) Government control, ownership and operation of entire systems;
- (b) Government control, ownership and operation of road-beds only through official control of despatching service—leaving free operation of untaxed capital in all else, or:
- (c) Public taxation of all incomes and values in excess of current rate of interest on actual capital—said capital otherwise untaxed.

The practical application of these principles are mere matters of detail, expediency and policy. The brains that organize and manipulate these gigantic social plunders in all their minutia, can just as well work out the details of public restitution when deprived of activity in private depredations—and would be glad of the job.

Applied, this would mean the destruction of special privilege in national railways, telegraph, telephone, street railways, water, light, heat, power and all other monopolies of highway function.

This, with absolute free trade and the taxation of land-values through all other things being exempt, would mean the complete abolition of "Special privilege" in all things; the institution of "Equal Rights," the "Conservation of Natural Resources," and the restoration of "Equal Opportunity to all." When all this is done—and never until it is done—there will be left nothing but the individual problem for man to solve.

Again let me interject a vital suggestion: Had we absolute free-trade—international, state and local—including absolute freedom of highways, which is but an extension of freedom of trade—in truth, had we reached perfection in production—for this all means freedom in production—had we all these things while still leaving the "Unearned Increment, or Economic Rent," in the hands of the land owner—there would be no permanent benefit to society except that incident to the transitional period of re-adjustment. Eventually all these wonderful benefits would clearly raise nothing but land-values and make the plunderbund richer and mightier than ever. The rise and fall of land values measure all the advances of civilization and their private appropriators are the "Masters, lords and rulers in all lands" of whom the poet spoke.

Never, while the world lasts, will mankind become "Masters, lords and rulers" of themselves till these public values are publicly absorbed in taxation. The Single Tax is the most feasible, practical, expedient, simple, natural and just way of making the necessary rational change without the violence of revolution. It stands "four square to all the winds that blow"—in economics, and politics; in ethics, morals and religion; in principle, science and

philosophy; it is the practical application of Christianity to social affairs. "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none" is the translation of the Golden Rule of the Nazarine to an economic and political formula. Therefore, fulfilled democracy is applied Christianity to governmental affairs.

"Do to others as ye would that they should do to you;" "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none;" the Single Tax: these are synonymous.

Here we have the great Eleventh commandment of the Master of Nazareth—the sum total of all the Law and all the prophets"—we have its Jeffersonian formulation into a politico-social maxim of "Equal rights to all," and its scientific practical application in the Single Tax of Henry George. This is Christianity; this is democracy; this is Georgean philosophy; this is the Single Tax: different expressions of the one Unity.

PLATFORM OF THE LAND VALUE TAX PARTY.

Adopted at the First Convention of the Land Value Tax Party held in New York City, on May 21, 1910.

GENERAL DECLARATION AS TO BASIC PRINCIPLE.

Confronted in the early years of the Twentieth Century by abhorrent conditions, we who join in organizing the LAND VALUE TAX party invite all citizens to unite with us to secure such conditions as will promote prosperity and happiness among the people, and be worthy of the civilization that should be ours. We are glad to know that a goodly proportion of our number are descendants of those who took part in the American Revolution, and anxious as the forefathers to keep burning the fires of liberty.

In this land of abounding sources of wealth many there are who cannot obtain the ordinary necessities of life and who suffer from want and starvation; millions of growing children, who ought to be in school and playground, are forced into mines and factories; although pauperism is widespread, we are compelled to support the idle rich as well as the idle or unfortunate poor who cannot find work in a land where nature furnishes boundless opportunity; a privileged few have immense unearned fortunes while millions are to a like extent deprived of their earnings, thus causing untold and undeserved poverty; unwholesome conditions and deprivations prevent the development of healthy and vigorous manhood and womanhood.

All of this is intolerable in a land having an aggregate wealth of nearly \$1,400 per capita, where all industrious people should be prosperous, or at least free from poverty. These conditions reveal monstrous injustice in our laws and institutions. As no organized party gives us a chance to vote against this injustice, the freeman's right to vote out a great wrong cannot be exercised without the aid of a party organized for that purpose.