

all the machinery and tools that now exist, from the land.

The Socialist replied that while land was once the most important factor in production it has ceased to be so, that by the ownership of machinery the capitalist has control of the means of livelihood, and that machinery was displacing labor.

To prove his argument he said "Look at that piece of machinery there" (pointing to the motor), "where would we be now if not for that? We would not be sitting here enjoying ourselves but might be miles up the river pulling and sweating at our oars."

The Single Taxer had no reply to make and sat thinking. He seemed to be stumped, when suddenly there was a zip-bing-bang! and before the friends realized it they were floundering in the water.

The Single Taxer eager to save the boat to whose side he clung, cried to his Socialist companion to help him save the machinery. But that individual was making rapid strokes for the shore, and he sang back over the waters, "Oh, dang the machinery! Back to the Land for mine."

WILLIAM RYAN.

THE PRACTICABILITY OF THE SINGLE TAX DEMONSTRATED BY EVEN A PARTIAL APPLICATION.

It has been a favorite expedient of the opponents of the Single Tax to ask: "Has this system ever been tried? Can you show us any practical demonstration that it will work as represented?" Of course, so long as any tax, municipal, county, State or national, besides the tax on land values, is imposed, it cannot be said that the Single Tax plan is in operation, and this has with many been considered sufficient to justify them in classing this reform with theoretical and speculative propositions that may have some merit but are unworthy of immediate consideration. It ought to be sufficient reply to this to note that the tax on land values has always been successful, and that all other taxes have proved harmful and have hindered progress and prosperity. That should be demonstration enough, and the fact is

within the observation of every person who has an ounce of brains.

How would you like to live in a town where you don't have to pay any taxes, where in fact if you tried to pay any taxes you would be sternly refused?

On the eastern shore of Mobile Bay there is a town which for fourteen years has been giving, so far as existing laws will permit, a practical demonstration of Henry George's theory. It was established for that purpose. It was built on practically uninhabited ground, and in the years of its existence it has grown from nothing into a thriving, prosperous and happy community. Its inhabitants pay no taxes and get along in fine style without them.

Henry George's theory is commonly known as "the Single Tax," a term coined by the late Thomas G. Shearman (the authority of his time on taxation and author of "National Taxation"), not because of its accuracy, but because a short name was needed. Actually the George theory does not contemplate the paying of any taxes at all. It contemplates the wiping out of all taxation and the support of the community by the payment of ground rent into the treasury. In form, of course, that payment would be made a tax, but not a tax in the sense that a levy made upon one's personal belongings would be.

It is impossible completely to demonstrate the efficacy of the George doctrine in any community where personal property taxation and taxation of improvements, to say nothing of the many methods of indirect taxation, exists; but at Fairhope, Ala., they have got as near to demonstrating it as can ever be done under present day tax laws.

Fairhope was started in January, 1895, by four Single Taxers from Iowa. It is now a thriving town, with a city charter, three schools, a hotel, two newspapers, a wharf, a steamboat, several stores, a number of clubs and a free library. It has a water works system but no water rates. It has a telephone service which is free. It doesn't cost anybody in Fairhope a cent to go into his telephone room and call up anybody in Baldwin county.

How in a State which levies taxes after the good old fashioned way it could be

possible for a community to exist without taxation of individuals might puzzle the huskiest intellects. However, E. B. Gaston, J. Bellangee and other Iowa Single Taxers discovered that where there's a will there's a way. Their scheme is simply to found a community wherein all land should be owned by the community, that is, by a corporation representing the community; to let out the land on long term leases to individuals; to take from the lessees the full amount of the ground rent; to support the community out of the ground rent, and to pay the taxes levied by the State and county out of the same fund.

Fairhope's exemplification of the Single Tax theory must necessarily be halting and incomplete, but as far as it has been able to go it has made such a demonstration as must challenge the attention of the students of economics.

In a far broader sphere the George theory has been tested in New Zealand and New South Wales, and with satisfactory results. This theory has taken quite a foothold in Alberta, Canada, and from a report read by John Perrie, Commissioner of Taxation of that province, at the National Tax Conference held in Toronto, Canada, last year it is working admirably. Several towns in Germany have applied this principle to a certain extent, with the consequences that a few years ago one town had raised so much revenue that the surplus in the public treasury was divided among the families—\$25 to each family—at Christmas time. To-day the question of the taxation of land values is challenging the attention of the best and brightest thinkers of this age in Great Britain.

Fairhope is the only example of an attempt to demonstrate the Single Tax in the face of adverse laws. The fact that this experiment has been successful in spite of the levying of taxes by the State and county is a striking bit of evidence for those who think there may have been something in George's doctrine.

The Fairhope plan is not what is proposed by Single Taxers. There is no need of a colony or any of the labor and risk attending the establishment of a new town or city. If the people of New York desire to establish the Single Tax, all that it would

be necessary to do is to remove one or two restrictions of local self-government and let them regulate their own taxation. Then the Single Tax could be put in full operation in a week's time, and all of the benefits which it promises would be enjoyed in a very short time; and all this without the possible injury to the rights of any human being. The people would not know when the change took place, except from the increased prosperity of the city and everybody in it, which would be gradually noted. This can be absolutely demonstrated to any one who will take the time to read carefully Henry George's "Progress and Poverty."

New York may enjoy all of the good things that Fairhope has—and more, since these would be added to all she now possesses by virtue of being an old established city possessing an unusual situation of remarkable advantage.

CHARLES D. RYAN in *N. Y. Sun*.

MOVEMENT OF BOSTON MERCHANTS.

The merchants and business men of Massachusetts are coming to see the need of radical changes in the tax laws of the State. At a hearing held April 8th by the Legislative Committee on Taxation an amendment to the Constitution was urged. Many members of the Merchants' Association of Boston appeared in favor of the amendment; also members of the Forestry Association. Prof. Bullock, of Harvard, who was chairman of a Special Committee on Taxation appointed by Governor Guild in 1907, appeared in advocacy of the amendment.

The purpose of such amendment would permit of the passage of a bill giving local option in taxation. It is doubtful whether such a bill would be constitutional at present.

A pamphlet issued by the Boston Merchants' Association is before us. It is a vigorous and concise arraignment of the present system. It states that the system of taxation in Massachusetts is not satisfactory to any one. It shows how the city of Boston has suffered by the