

A Useful Pamphlet

ALABOR of Hercules is the title of a 16 page pamphlet by George A. Briggs, in which the cleaning of the Augean stables is likened to the task that is presented to us for the solution of the economic problem. The taxing power is the economic force—the river—which we must utilize to clean our economic stables.

Perhaps the analogy is not a perfect one, but the same criticism cannot be found with the reasoning of the pamphlet, which is admirably put.

On page 12 the author says:

"Agricultural lands are valued at thirty-eight billions of dollars. Much of this is held out of use speculatively. The demand has overrun the supply of good land. Because of this, much land of very poor quality has been forced into use. This is an intolerable economic waste. Adequate taxation of land values would force the best land into use. Poor lands would be brought under cultivation only as the growing needs of society made such cultivation desirable. In the meantime the stimulation to agriculture and to business generally, by freeing business and labor from taxation, would increase enormously the consumption of agricultural products and of everything else produced by labor."

And this deserves to be considered by every working farmer:

"It is a demonstrable fact, too, that the majority of folks who use land must also use in connection therewith improvements and other labor products whose value as assessed for taxation is as great as the value of their land. The increase in the tax on their land values, then, would be offset by the exemption of their labor products. Such land owners would pay no more in taxes than they do now."

But by the exemption of business from taxation, the farmer would be benefited perhaps more than any other business man. It would not affect his selling price, because he is always at the beginning of the chain of specialized industries through which all finished products must pass. The farmer would get as much, if not more, for his product than he does under the present system. His purchases, however, practically all, are finished products which have passed through the chain of specialized industries. These coming to him tax free would give his income an increased purchasing power of at least thirty per cent. This gain would be a real tangible gain, which would make of farming one of our most profitable businesses.

Even though the tax on land values took from land much of its speculative value, yet the farmer would be better off. *That speculative profit comes to him now only when he sells his farm; that is, when he ceases to be a farmer."*

ALEXANDER DUMAS, FILS, said that every human advance was, at its outset, opposed by ninety-nine per cent. of the people.

The following headlines appear in the *Cleveland* (Ohio) *Press* followed by a list of the penalties imposed by that state on all those engaged in any activity of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness or wealth:

96! COUNT 'EM

THAT'S THE NUMBER OF TAXES COLLECTED BY STATE

AND MORE ARE TO COME

FEEES FOR SPORT SFORT, WORK, BUSINESS AND EVERYTHING

CORRESPONDENCE

WHAT SAY OUR READERS TO THIS?

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In the issue for January—February, you print the new platform of the Committee of 48 and express the opinion that "the platform of the Single Tax Party is more explicit and more acceptable to those who want the Single Tax."

You will pardon me, I hope, for holding a different view. If the Forty-eighters stick to this new platform, then they are the Single Tax Party, and we had better recognize the fact and join them, for then the battle line is forming and the fight coming on along the whole front.

This platform of theirs is one on which many can join, and at that is good Single Tax all over. It seems to me as explicit as anything well can be, and in line with the current of the times—two great merits—and is all harmonious with the Single Tax in the broad sense of the word. It calls for not only the "public control of natural resources by taxation of all land values," but also for "public ownership of railroads, canals and pipe lines, necessary distributing and terminal facilities and means of communication," all of which is sound Political Economy. Civilized society is a cooperative institution in which these public utilities are appurtenances to the land. When they are left in private control and capitalized, their values are subtracted parts of the value of the land, and I fancy that if they were all left to unrestricted monopolistic exploitation without any government interference there would be precious little land value left for the government to tax. Even with the restrictions and regulations that they are subjected to, they absorb a large proportion of that value and prevent and repress and the development of more.

The demand for "equal rights, economic, legal and political, for all civil rights including free speech, free press and peaceable assembly is good Single Tax doctrine, too, and a necessary condition for the preservation of liberty.

I think the Committee of 48 have done exceedingly well this time. They must have consulted good counsel. I could almost have suspected you or Mr. Post. I think they should have our congratulations and unanimous support.

Chicago, Ill.

S. TIDEMAN.

A CORRECTION

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I think that an impression our friends may have received from reading various articles signed by our good friend, Mr. W. L. Ross, ought to be corrected. I know that Mr. Ross would not be guilty of deliberate misrepresentation, but in his recent communication he has overlooked the fact that the Los Angeles Single Tax League worked shoulder to shoulder with the Great Adventure League in the last California campaign, and that the Los Angeles League raised and spent nearly \$6,000 for the campaign. We were also responsible very largely for the initiative measure which resulted in the union of otherwise warring elements.