

proposal is just or not, but rather what scientific truth there is in the foundation of the demand for a change. On this point economic professors should not try to dodge, and should not be allowed to dodge if they do try. On this point economic professors should not fall down because of want of understanding. The case should be made so plain to them that they can not any longer fail to understand. Where a scientific basis can be shown to exist for the claim that certain economic results, immensely important to the community, are produced by natural law, and that law is not disputed, it should be possible to get from economic professors either a full and frank acknowledgement of the existence of the results or a clear statement as to how and where reform reasoning has gone astray.

A plain deduction from the orthodox statement of the law of economic rent is that, at any given time and place, there is an inevitable tendency, even under free conditions, for rent to absorb all the results of labor and the use of capital except what labor and capital are able to gain on the best locations to be had for nothing or for a nominal price.

Another deduction is that speculative withholding of land from use and speculative demanding of abnormally high prices for available locations must lead to an abnormal lowering of the margin of cultivation and a consequent automatic reduction of the net return to all producers. Those located above the normal margin, as well as those forced to poorer locations than would otherwise be the case, have their possible income reduced by every cause for inadequate use of natural opportunities.

A third claim for which there is scientific foundation is that economic rent can be appropriated by taxation and such taxation must be considered as direct and unshiftable.

Here are three scientific claims the full and frank consideration of which does not involve any question of ethics. If they are sound claims professors of economics can fulfill their responsibility by candidly acknowledging them. If they are not

sound claims economic teachers can point out the reasons.

It is safe to say, however, that if economic professors will in no uncertain way teach that all the prosperity labor and capital can expect is only as much as they would gain on the best locations that have no value at all; that labor and capital would both gain by the abolition of speculation in land; that speculation in land would be practically impossible if economic rent should even approximately be appropriated by taxation; and that land value taxation would take economic rent and economic rent only for public use—if these things should be impressed upon students of economics the question of ethics would not long bar the way for radical changes in our system of taxation.—GEORGE WHITE.

PILING UP DOLLARS WHILE THEY SLEEP

"Iowa lands have now reached a value where they cannot be made to pay more than three per cent on the investment unless robbery is practiced. Iowa lands are about fifty dollars higher in price than average good farm lands in England, and in England the roads are all made and the great markets are close at hand, and the improvements on the farms are of a permanent character.

"So far as rural Iowa is concerned, there are no hard roads. Our limestone is no good for roadbeds. It was not until 1904 that we were able to popularize the road drag and make any real progress in the improvement of our highways. Up to that time Iowa farmers had not developed sufficient pride to impel them to drag the roads in front of their own homes. And with all our untold squadrons of automobiles we have not yet succeeded in passing a law that will enable the counties to vote bonds for road building.

"We have some gravel roads in the narrow confines of the Wisconsin glaciation, where gravel is available, and there are some hard roads near the cities and between the larger cities.

"When the war is over and our land values attain a fairly stable level I hope to see the land speculator eliminated, and I hope to see our farmers take hold and do some real thinking. War prices have given them a second wind, but when the war is over they have got to do a whole lot better farming than they have ever done before. There will be no piling up of dollars while they sleep.—HENRY WALLACE, of Des Moines, in interview in *Country Gentleman*.

FROM THE FIELD

The report for the vacation months of the year will naturally not be a long one. The month of July was spent in New England, a single lecture on the Single Tax before the Green Acre Assembly at Eliot, Me., being the only public propaganda appearance. This met with a very cordial reception from the extremely fine body of men and women who meet annually in this unique forum of broad and helpful thinking.

In August, came the trip to the Fels Fund Conference at Niagara Falls. This remarkable gathering, fraught with the highest benefits to our cause, is described in detail elsewhere in this issue. My own work there was confined to a brief presentation of the work of the New York State Single Tax League and to participation in the business affairs of the Conference.

Through the intervention of Miss L. E. Northrup of Ellicottville, I was invited to address a large outing in the grove at Maples, in Cattaraugus County. The gathering was under the auspices of the Order of Maccabees, and was composed largely of farmers from the neighboring villages. Some 400 or 500 listened with close attention to a presentation of the Single Tax, with special application to the needs of the rural districts.

On a short visit to Jamestown and Chautauqua, I was somewhat unexpectedly invited to speak before the Chautauqua Assembly, my presence there falling on the last week day of the session. My lecture,

which was on "The Justice and Reason of the Single Tax," was, curiously enough, the closing Chautauqua lecture of the present season. Under the conditions, and at the short notice given, not much of an attendance was expected; but the Hall of Philosophy was well filled, and the most intense interest was exhibited, being manifested by careful attention, generous applause, and the remaining of the audience to a late hour to ask many pertinent questions. The occasion was of special significance as a practical test of the interest of Chautauqua attendants in the presentation of the subject of taxation; and the unexpected demonstration of general eagerness to listen to the topic is liable to prove a factor in convincing the Chautauqua management of the desirability of carrying out the proposition to devote a week next summer to the subject.

At the suggestion of the editor of the *REVIEW*, I spent a couple of days in Milton, in the attractive farm house where he rests from his arduous editorial labors. Some good work was accomplished by our joint labors with the other summer boarders; and a meeting was arranged in the public square of the neighboring town of Marlborough, where from 50 to 75 men and women gave rather better than the usual attention of an outdoor audience.

The fall season has now opened. I shall spend much of September and October in central New York, many dates having already been made in different places. From the middle of October until Election Day, Nov. 7, I shall be in or near New York City, and shall be glad to accept invitations to speak at nearby points. After the Syracuse Conference of Nov. 11, at which I hope to meet all the New York readers of the *REVIEW*, I shall remain on the road until Christmas, probably spending most of my time in eastern New York. As always, I shall welcome correspondence from all parts of the State with reference to future engagements. My address is 68 William St., New York City, from which letters are promptly forwarded.—JAMES F. MORTON, Jr.