

titled to receive "a return" for the wealth he has placed at the disposal of the borrower, a proposition that no one, much less any Single Taxer, would be likely to deny. It has not occurred to Mr. Luxton that a lender may obtain "a return" without receiving any interest. Yet, that he may do so is easily demonstrated. If we think in terms of wealth instead of money, the position will be clarified. I contend that the making good of depreciation is "a return," and I believe it is the only return that can be justly claimed. If more is obtained there will always be those who can live on indefinitely in idleness, a condition which all Single Taxers should agree would be one of parasitism, and *ipso facto* contrary to justice which is the foundation of their creed.

If a man, who wears out a suit of clothes a year, makes himself twenty suits, these will not last him twenty years. The first will last a year, the second a little less, and the whole stock will clothe him for (say) nineteen and one-half years only. The odd half year is lost in depreciation. Now if he lends nineteen of the suits conditionally on receiving a *new* suit every year until the loan is repaid, it is clear that the wealth he created in the first instance will clothe him for the full twenty years so, although there is no *interest*, he still gets "a return" for his loan.

Mr. Luxton thinks he clinches the argument with his typewriter illustration, but his is not the last word. Suppose the owner of the machine has no present use for it and by loaning it obtains the return of the machine intact as it was when he lent it, has he not received "a return"? Would not the machine have suffered depreciation even if he had not loaned it? In this case a payment would have to be made to the lender to cover the invisible depreciation which it is impossible to make good by repair, but still there would be no *interest*. Supporters of interest invariably picture the lender as depriving himself of something that is indispensable to himself or his work, but the fact is that loans are usually made out of surplus wealth, represented, of course, by money. The key to the interest question lies, I think, in the system that turns perishable wealth into "imperishable" money, and thus places "capital" on the same permanent basis as land. The enormous wastage resulting from depreciation is thus camouflaged. If a man lends a machine worth £1,000 he gets "a return" until the machine is worn out; after that nothing at all. If he turns the machine into money and lends the £1,000 he gets "a return" for all time, under present conditions. The plain English of this is that after a certain limited period of time he, his heirs and assigns, levy pure tribute on current production, giving nothing in return, and are therefore mere parasites on the community.

Nevertheless I hold that nothing needs to be done about interest, other than the Socialization of Rent. The interest rate depends on supply and demand. George's plan would greatly increase the supply of wealth (and capital), a point I need not stress amongst Single Taxers, while it would, I believe, wholly eliminate the demand for loans. Our philosophy teaches that land-owners appropriate all surplus wealth, thus creating a "corner" in capital or money. The socialization of rent would prevent such appropriation, leaving the whole product of labor in the hands of the laborers. There would then be no need for the producers of wealth (capital and money) to borrow capital; they would use their own. Interest would thus die a natural death.

This is not to say that interest, in the sense of the added production which the use of capital gives, would be eliminated, but merely that the added production would go to labor as wages, instead of to idlers as interest. Interest in its economic sense must persist and grow with the advance of science, invention, organization etc., that is not in question; what is in question is the equitable distribution of what is somewhat loosely called the "national income."

Our case will be much stronger when we discard the defense of mere interest receivers. Socialists cry out against "rent, interest and profits." Profits are merely rent and (or) interest, so that our system, if I am correct, would give them all they ask, without the need of socialistic "planning," regimentation, dictatorship, etc. The

man in the street leans to socialism because he sees no difference between the interest receiver and the rent receiver. If we can convince him that the application of the Henry George plan will give to labor its full product we should get his support. We must fail in this if we sanction the receipt of interest by people who do no work.

I see a change in the attitude of most Single Taxers, and all Single Tax journals, in the direction of putting a question mark against interest, and believe the time will soon come when we will be united on this point, and show that George builded even better than he knew. Auckland, N. Z. C. H. NIGHTINGALE.

SINGLE TAX CONFERENCES

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Your criticism of the Single Tax Congresses has evidently started something. The current issue of LAND AND FREEDOM marks a very necessary manicuring of Single Tax intellects throughout the Georgist movement. It all recalls my early attempts, made many years ago, to have Single Taxers put salesmanship, business methods and organization into the Single Tax programme. It all emphasizes my recent unsuccessful attempt to again organize the Single Taxers of Massachusetts.

Personally I agree with you that a definite, business-like programme be laid down, upon which Single Taxers might well concentrate their time, money and efforts. Unfortunately, we are in the same predicament which came upon the constructors of the tower of Babel. In attempting to erect the Georgist temple of justice we find ourselves defeated by a multiplicity of notions, a great divergence of opinions, a variety of schemes, and an army of self-appointed leaders. Nothing could be sweeter for the vested interests. The monopolists do not need to give us a "licking;" we are defeating ourselves.

It all simmers down to the uncomfortable fact that ninety-five per cent of us are naught but philosophical anarchists. With most of us Single Tax is merely a subject for debate in parlors and other places where the limelight of attention may be played upon our anaemic faces as we harangue a handful of listeners. With some of us Single Tax is an excuse for attending luncheons at which the physical appetite is surreptitiously satisfied under the guise of feeding the mental appetite upon principles of justice. With a few of us Single Tax is a subterfuge for getting away from home and "taking a trip" to a conference, a congress, a "meetin'."

It is my conviction that most Single Taxers are simply lazy when it comes to working any muscles of their anatomy except those of their jaws. Show me any Single Tax organization and I'll show you one or two human horses in that association who are carrying all the load insofar as real work is concerned. The rest of the outfit invariably limits its activities to profound and puerile chatter and to the finding of jobs and programmes in which some one else does all the work. It is always a case of "let George do it."

Single Taxers simply cannot do team work. It is contrary to their eternal struggle for individual economic freedom, and this fundamental idea is so ingrained in their every thought that organization and cooperation, or any other form of limitations upon individualism, is repugnant to their pet theories. They have yet to learn that the very goal which they now seek through diversified channels and contrary notions cannot be attained except through organization and concentrated effort—unless, of course, the Creator steps in and establishes Single Tax in spite of us anarchistic Single Taxers.

Too few Single Taxers are willing to do the menial tasks of mixing mortar or carrying bricks to the foundation walls of the Economic Temple, except when it can be done within the depths of a cushioned easy-chair adjacent to a warm radiator or in a hammock under the shade of a sheltering tree.

As one of your correspondents has pointed out, those who attend congresses and conferences probably would not spend the same amount of money for other Single Tax purposes if said congresses were discontinued. However, there remains no valid reason why congresses

and conferences should not lay down a programme of business-like procedure and actually make progress to the very necessary goal of establishing social justice. If this were done, as you have very properly suggested, the number in attendance at congresses would soon dwindle to the very few who are really willing to get down to brass tacks and go to work. The actual working-ability of congressional orators and spellbinders is very easily discovered by assigning these gentlemen to committee work where actions, not words, are in order. This procedure would, of course, take all the glamor out of attending congresses and we could not then make speeches nor read papers, the recording of which might some day awaken a sense of pride in our great-great grandsons when they read what a prominent part their grandpops played in the Single Tax Congress, or in the Hicksville Single Tax Club, 'way, 'way back in 1934.

Homes, factories, skyscrapers, etc., are made by laying brick on brick, driving nail after nail, threading pipe after pipe, sawing plank after plank, etc., all done under centralized authority and systematic procedure. Workers with contrary schemes, plans or purposes are promptly fired. Buildings cannot be successfully constructed in any other manner; nor can the Temple of Economic Justice be erected in a contrary fashion, unless, of course, the Creator knocks our anarchistic heads together and does the job Himself.

It has been wisely said that "Those who can, DO; those who can't CHATTER."

More power to your pungent pen.

Fall River, Mass.

THOMAS N. ASHTON.

DOMINANCE OF WEALTH IN GOVERNMENT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The article by Frank Chodorov in Jan.-Feb. number of LAND AND FREEDOM, to my mind, is one of the finest specimens of logical reasoning which I have met in many a day. It might be epitomized in the simple statement that the Georgist philosophy has been handicapped by "respectability" and that no leader of a Moses-calibre has risen to carry it to triumph in its complete and uncompromising form. My own impatient soul, longing for that "kingdom of heaven," urges me to say "amen." Then arises that kindly angel—Natural Law—gently warning me, "Not so hasty, my little man."

Never must we ignore the fact of the invariableness of Natural Law. Under that law we are taught that heaven is not gained by a single bound, theological offers to the contrary notwithstanding. He who is rescued from the glaring sun of a blazing desert must pass through gradual stages toward normal light. Else all is surrounding darkness. Or, to reverse the figure, after one has known naught but darkness, suddenly to be plunged into the brilliant light of midday, is to be blinded. So it is with mankind. He who has known nothing but tyranny must grow into the blessings of freedom before he may understand the grandeur of Liberty. Nature herself restrains the hasty step, because she would build her structures without flaw that we may withstand the storms of time.

We must distinguish between a compromise of principle and the details through which we must realize the fruits of it. All human progress, all individual advancement, civilization itself, is accomplished by everlasting compromises regarding the details of achievement. But all progress is stopped when we compromise with principle. This was well illustrated in the course of Lincoln as expressed in his letter to Horace Greeley. His one aim was to save the Union. If, day by day, he saw that might best be achieved by this or that policy, he did not hesitate to shift the policy. (I wish our present President could realize this.) We must advance beyond error before we can realize it for what it was. Polity must be held sacred. Policies through which it may be realized may shift with the current of common thought.

Truth has a cunning way of insinuating its spirit into the heart of all things. The heart of them is the soil in which that spirit thrives.

There it grows, it expands, and, like the tender vine that finds a crevice in the solid rock, bursts its environment to find the light of day.

Throughout all history, wealth has been the dominant power in government and all social order. I do not deprecate that fact. It is right and just that this be so. My only quarrel is that they who have, through special laws and privileges, secured that wealth, constitute just a minority of mankind. Having it, that minority has dominated the enactment of laws and their administration of government. It has grown by what it fed on. Human rights—which means natural rights—it has trampled under foot, until, even the trampled-upon (or, as an Irish friend calls them, "the submerged tenth") seem to think that such is heaven-ordained. Hardly attempting to rise from beneath the feet that press them down, they peek about in worship of the power that oppresses them. They praise those above them, for "giving them work"—as if "work" is the want of man. Poor sodden masses! But, at least, the majority of those above them know that they are oppressors. Therefore are they guilty, not so much in taking what is surrendered to them, but in false instructions to the underlings and in their cruel determination to maintain the fiendish system through which their diabolical cruelties are effective. The relentless hand of Natural Justice always has and always will, in time, scoop up that parasitical group and hurl it into oblivion.

Now, if the "submerged tenth"—which in fact is about ninety per cent of the population—are willing to persist in their own ignorance, Nature is no more disposed to spare them from the effect of their own stupidity than she is to spare the leaches who suck their blood. They must learn—leaches and leached alike—that the highest obligation of life is to be intelligent. Then to be intelligent, intelligence will see to it that every form of privilege is stamped from out our social life. When that desired event shall have arrived, men will understand that Nature gives to toil, and to toil alone, her boundless riches. Beggars and thieves—both above and below the crust—will be no more. Cunning shall no longer thrive at the expense of MANHOOD. Wealth, created by toil and enterprise, will be in the hands of its creators. Being in the hands of the many, its force still will dominate the making of laws, together with their interpretation and administration. Then shall LIBERTY prevail over all.

Yes, I agree with Mr. Chodorov, that, to realize this happy state, a Moses must arrive, for it must always be that the mass of men will follow the strong, the masterful. But, when all is said, this truth shall remain: That unless the followers be intelligent, their lack of it will mean—as it did with the Moses of that other day—that their leader shall not himself reach the promised land, and with his personal failure so to do, neither shall the followers—again as of old—realize the glory of his dreams. Or, as in the case of the later Nazarene, lacking intelligence, they buried the beauty of His teachings under the debris of superstition and theology, making His crucifixion endure through the ages.

Let me repeat: The highest individual and social, moral and ethical obligation of life is to be intelligent.

Hollywood, Calif.

LAURIE J. QUINBY.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF OUR NAME

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The Single Tax is a means to a very desirable end. But the end is the important thing. The chief end to be attained is the Abolition of Landlordism. I suggest for consideration and discussion the question whether we should not emphasize "Abolition of Landlordism" more and Single Tax less.

When human slavery was the major political question in this country the discussion was direct, and on the question of Abolition of Slavery. Everybody knew precisely what the argument was about; and it is putting it mild to say that the argument was full of life and electricity. But to those who have not studied the Single Tax, and they are the great mass of voters, it is just another kind of tax more or less irritating than what we have.