

would think that such a harrowing example would cause Single Tax advocates to stop, look and listen." But alas, no! They are so wedded to this false theory that they would bring California to the pass which has befallen Russia rather than confess their error.

In spite of the silliness of all this clap-trap it has the value of indicating the plan likely to be pursued in the next campaign against the Single Tax in California. We shall be told that because the Socialists, whom we have been fighting for forty years, came into control of the Russian government on the downfall of the Czar, put the Single Tax into effect on getting into power and made an awful fiasco, therefore the Single Tax is dangerous to civilization. Even Lenin has come to see that it will not work. No wonder that he is to come to Genoa! He may even go to Los Angeles, to help the Otises and their ilk against the Single Tax fight to redeem California from the clutch of the land monopolists. The most powerful supporters of the established order are the wrong-headed radicals who recant.

The Producer

WHEN Lamb confessed that he was "sentimentally disposed to harmony, but organically incapable of a tune," he was expressing a contradiction of will and faculty such as I recognize as affecting my excursions into economics.

For example, I have been frequently bewildered by the philosophy of Single Tax. I find many occasions to like Single Taxers. I have been fascinated by the picture they draw of conditions that will prevail when Single Tax is in operation. But despite a suspicion of inadequacy in my own reasoning—a suspicion emphasized by many a blunder—I continue to question the logic of Single Tax. I keep on seeing tax not as expressing a need to regulate or rebuke, but simply as expressing a need for the money. I keep on seeing basic land taxes as general club dues. I see supplementary property taxes as a corollary of property protection and of various phases of property privilege. I see the club member who uses the billiard-room implements as paying a special fee. The land doesn't need a fire department, a plumbing inspector, or a school superintendent. A skyscraping apartment building holding fifty families asks more service and more implements than the mere land. In that proportion the house committee called the government asks more money. If the club has a very expensive lawsuit—call it a war—the club treasurer may insist upon a special assessment, not because you are a guilty member, but because once more he simply needs the money. And so on. You may know how these can't-see-Single Tax people think. At some point I must be wrong. That is inevitable—even if I am right. But I don't know just where. Like most other people in the same situation, I *think* I am open-minded, yet I may be shut-minded at the very point where conviction might get through.

I illustrate the same obscurity as to the preachment that "all wealth comes from the land." I see all life as deriving its physical nourishment from the land (and the air and sunlight), and I am assured that all material things are derived from the land, but the scientific definitions of wealth that name land and labor as the producers of wealth leave me groping. The Thinker's part in the partnership seems to be silent, but it seems to me to be real. I see the

production of wealth in the union of raw material, physical effort and the Idea. In primitive production the laborer may embody the idea, and the partnership may be that much simpler. But obviously all production is not so simple as that. A field of corn may be raised on elemental partnership terms, but a steamship or a printing press or a wireless telephone system is another matter. I want to make room for a Fulton, an Edison, and a Wright in the partnership, as well as for a Galileo, a Columbus, and a Pasteur. Though I be held to the fixed definition of wealth, and to all of Karl Marx's "socially necessary" implications, I still feel that there should be room for Marx himself; that wealth is derived also from the man who tells where and how to produce it and where and how to distribute it. I still feel that ideas are the foremost of all factors in production, that ideas themselves are a product. (From "The Latest Thing and Other Things," by ALEXANDER BLACK.)

We reprint the foregoing from a most interesting collection of essays by an extremely interesting man, Alexander Black, a New York author and editor, whose fame is wide but whose fame would be much wider than it is, if our reading public had more brains—for his books do need some brains for their proper assimilation. His two latest novels, "The Great Desire" and "The Seventh Angel" are the best presentations of war and post-war reactions on certain sections of our people that anyone has written. We confidently recommend them to our readers.

This recommendation has, of course, no bearing on Mr. Black's inability to grasp the Single Tax philosophy. We all have our blind spots. Mr. Black's may be in economics. We remember once, after a long conversation, that William Dean Howells remarked, "I wish to God I could see in your idea what you and your friends do. It seems to make you optimistic. For my part the more I study social relations the more pessimistic I become." So Mr. Black is in very good company in not being able to comprehend our philosophy. We think it worth while to take up the points, which he does make and see if we can explain them. He says "I keep on seeing tax not as expressing a need to regulate or rebuke but simply as expressing a need for money." We fear Mr. Black is a poor sportsman if he objects to killing two birds with one shot merely because he intended to bag only one. The need for government revenue is admitted; we may gratify it in a way which is harmful to the community or helpful. It is bound to be either one or the other. There are no such things as neutral taxes. They must be levied on privilege or industry. If on the latter they raise prices, if on the former they tend to repress monopoly, it seems clear to Single Taxers that an intelligent man confronted with these alternatives has no choice but to impose them on the former.

"Basic land taxes are general club dues," is quite a good definition, but then he goes on to regard property taxes as paid for protection, etc. But the Single Taxer contends this was one of the things included in the "club dues." Does Mr. Black, perhaps, belong to a club in which he has to pay a special tax for the care of his hat and umbrella when he dines there. Of course he pays extra for his food,