

"Henry George told the world simpler and plainer and stronger than any other man had told it, that the right of private monopoly of land was bad, eternally bad; that it tended, in the end, to destroy the civilization that it first built up; that until the people owned the earth, until each person born upon the earth was equal heir to every other, there could be nothing which the human mind calls justice in the affairs of men. Other men had said it; philosophers had said it since the human reason was born; scientists had said it; dreamers had said it; but no one before had said it with the force and clearness and vigor and power of Henry George.

"I believe I am safe in saying that no other book can be found which lays down this doctrine with the same power and force and clearness as "Progress and Poverty," and I shall always be glad that my first introduction to what I believe are revolutionary ideas, because they are against the ideas of the mob that controls—and that is revolutionary—came from a reading of that great book, and wherever I may wander in the fields of intellectual thought and discussion in which I am prone to wander, I believe that what I learned here will remain with me as a fundamental guide to the end."

This testimony reminds one of the similar testimony of Ramsay MacDonald and of John Dewey. These statements, above quoted, are strong statements. The testimony and prophecy in the last paragraph are so forceful, considering the master mind which bore them, that I was tempted to check it up at the "end" or as near the "end" as his seventy-second birthday. So, on his birthday, April 18, 1930, I showed Mr. Darrow these statements, made by him seventeen years ago, and inquired whether he had changed his mind or would wish to modify the statements. He replied facetiously with the question "Are you trying to see whether I am losing my mind?" I replied, "No, Mr. Darrow, I am not testing the soundness or durability of your mind, but the soundness and durability of these ideas as judged by your mind at its maximum maturity." He then gladly assured me that he had not changed his mind, and he has presented me with the following sentence, in his own handwriting, referring to the above paragraphs: "In spite of the length of time that has passed since I made this statement, I still believe substantially the same on the important question of the private ownership of land. Very truly, Clarence Darrow."

CHICAGO, ILL.

WALTER VERITY

"Doug" and the Pirates

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, the film star, is seeking a refund of £110,000, which, he says, he has overpaid in income tax.

We wish "Doug" every success in his encounter with these pirates, but predict he will find them a tougher set than those he so easily disposes of in the "movies."

We suppose he has been too fully occupied with his own job ever to ask himself the pertinent question: "Why pay any tax?"

—*Commonweal*, London, Eng.

Lecture Work of James R. Brown

May 20: Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Kiwanis Club. This was a splendid meeting of 75 or 80 men. I had talked to them several times before and the increase in sentiment was very evident. In answer to their earnest request, I promised to come back again.

May 22: Stamford, Conn., Short's Secretarial School. This is a very fine school of its class and the two brothers who run it are sons of a good old Single Taxer by the name of Short, who lived in Wilmington, Delaware. It was very pleasant to meet with them and we had a most agreeable meeting with about 100 of their students. This will be another place where I will make an annual visit.

Also spoke at the Lions Club at noon. A small group of about 35, very bright and alert men.

June 4: Brooklyn, N. Y., Nassau Fellowcraft Club. While the night was hot, still we had a nice gathering of about 40 men and it was a great pleasure to talk to them and judging by the comments made after and since the meeting that have come to us directly and indirectly, the meeting was a great success. Came away with the usual invitation to come back again.

June 12: Wilmington, Delaware, Rotary Club. Here was a fine group of the best business men of Wilmington, 140 in number, alert, alive. This meeting was everything that could be desired, friendly, attentive, appreciative.

June 18: New York, N. Y., Co-Operative Club, 36 present. These are the men that we have got to make the Single Tax clear to; they represent the great mass of business men who are concerned very much in buying, selling and paying, and particularly are they concerned in the huge burden of taxes that have of late years been rolled upon their backs. I have heard foolish people sneer at them and call them Main Street people. However, they are the people who run United States at the present time and will continue to do so for a long time, and they are the people to whom we must make the Single Tax clear. Otherwise, we will never, never get it.

June 19: St. George, S. I., Kiwanis Club. A fine group of about 80 men, very much interested. I had spoken to them on several prior occasions, always had a most enjoyable time and was kindly received and our doctrine seems to be getting popular among them.

June 27: League for Industrial Democracy at Camp Tamiment, Pa. This was a Conference held by a lot of earnest souls for the purpose of discussing sociological questions. My contribution to the Conference was an address on The Pyramiding of Land Values. In this address I attempted to show that the failure to collect economic rent, artificially boosted rents and necessitated the taxing of improvements to make good the deficit caused by our failure to take our natural revenue for public purposes and therefore adding again to the cost of living

through increased rents. There were about 200 people present at the Conference at this session and they seemed very kind and appreciative and were very friendly in their attitude towards our proposition.

For the rest of the summer we will have an odd speech now and again, but we are making no attempt to get dates as other work, very important, will absorb our time and efforts until the fall.—JAMES R. BROWN.

Announcement

THE Manhattan Single Tax Club through its officers is developing a plan for a Single Tax University Lectureship.

It has long been apparent that James R. Brown could not fill all the invitations extended him, and the lectureship is proposed as an extension of the work now carried on by him through the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Mr. Brown has been delivering more than two hundred lectures a year and this is considered the limit of the capacity of one man.

As the proposition is to provide a lecturer for the economic classes of colleges and universities it seems desirable to employ a man of academic standing. The compensation to be paid him should be commensurate with the salary of a professor of economics and should be at least \$5,000.00 a year. Travelling expenses and literature will probably amount to as much more, making a total of \$10,000.00.

A plan to finance this university lecture work has been considered and agreed upon. It is thought that there are at least forty men who would guaranty \$250.00 a year to underwrite this lectureship, and that some would contribute larger sums. Obviously, say the Manhattan Club officials, the contributions must be separate from and in addition to the contributions now made to the Manhattan Single Tax Club for the reason that they propose to use the organization and machinery of the Club and the services of James R. Brown as director; also to continue Mr. Brown in the lecture field as heretofore.

News of how the work proceeds will be given our readers from time to time.

Two Policies

FROM the *Manchester* (England) *Guardian* I get two interesting statements:

1: Mussolini confiscates 6,500 acres near Rome because the owner kept the land idle.

2: City of Manchester confiscates or takes \$585,000 of the people's money (calling it taxation), pays it to a landowner for unused land, to give jobs to 450 unemployed. If my arithmetic is not faulty, that's about \$1,300 per man which the man who would not use the land got for letting the 450 work.

Which policy do you prefer?

—H. M. HOLMES in the *Cleveland Press*.

The Arbitrator Stumbles

IT is always a surprise to us when an intelligent man, one who like the editor of *The Arbitrator* conducts a journal which calls itself "a digest of news of social significance," writes the veriest nonsense on the subject of taxation.

Replying to a recent communication from John S. Codman *The Arbitrator* says: If the total amount from all sources is to be raised by taking the rental value of land * * * * * the owners of the land will raise rentals in an endeavor to make the land profitable."

The rental value of land, all economists agree, cannot be raised at the will of the owner. If he could do that he would do it now.

The rental value of a piece of land remains constant as long as population and public services remain the same and varies only with its greater desirability due to increase of population and production or better public services, declining when these decline.

Calmly ignoring this elementary fact, *The Arbitrator* goes on to state that these increased rents will thus prove a greater burden on the people than the income tax—a begging of the question that is very naive in its simplicity.

To tax land values is to take a revenue which if it does not go to the state must go into private pockets.

"Very little land is held out of use, for it is to the advantage of the private owners to have it used," says *The Arbitrator*. We think it is rather late in the day to deny that a great deal of land is held vacant or so poorly improved as to be practically vacant, for speculation—much of it in the heart of our great cities as well as great tracts of rural land. We do not believe that *The Arbitrator* is ignorant of this fact.

Therefore, this organ of the news of social significance is not informed on certain facts which most people know, namely:

That the landlord does not determine the rental value of his land.

That a tax on the value of land cannot be shifted.

That a great deal of land is held vacant or only partially improved for speculative increase.

There are other fallacies in this short article which the editor has managed to crowd in to a very small space, such as this: "Unemployment is due to the greed of corporations," which is a discovery remarkable as "news of social significance."

THE delay in tax reform is because nobody can follow the tax question to a logical and sane conclusion without becoming a Single Taxer.—DAVID GIBSON.

LIBERTY means justice and justice is the natural law.

—HENRY GEORGE.