

A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

When you expound Henry George to a likely customer, one argument after another is raised and disposed of. Then when your reluctant prospect has exhausted his objections, his final retort is apt to be, "Well, if it's as good as you say, why hasn't it been tried?"

At this point your answers cease to have machine-like precision. There are many reasons, you parry. Resistance of entrenched privilege, for one thing, and above all, ignorance which can only be overcome by education.

Education. It's a reasonable and fairly final answer. But you fear you've won a Pyrrhic victory. Your friend shrugs. After all, there are so many things which can be said to be a matter of education. Temperance, world peace, brotherhood of man. And still the world sins, fights, hates.

There may be another reason for the fact that "it hasn't been tried."

The simple measure, to abolish all taxation save that upon land values, is offered as a *remedy*—a remedy for the woes of which the world is heartily sick. The vision of the land promised by this remedy is in the hearts of all peoples.

And that's why it isn't tried.

Imagine, if you will, the world as it is encompassed in a small town. Strife, struggle and suspicion. Hot and cold wars between the leading citizens, poverty and hunger and despair. "Remedies" proposed periodically—but the "talks break down." Adjustment to this chronic condition, and palliatives eagerly sopped up to deaden the suffering.

Then a Promised Land appears within sight of the stricken citizens. Will they rush for it? They will shrink back all the more, because they have been conditioned against remedies. "No, it *can't* be!"

It would require—yes, faith and courage for a few hardy souls to venture forth. It would take much time and skill and reasoning to convince the citizens that this time it's not a phony.

Yes, the job is education. The sort of education that understands the reactions of a man shut up in the dark all his life when you lead him toward the light. He resists desperately because he wants it desperately.

Is there any real general conviction that *anything* is worth trying any more? Our first and perhaps biggest job is to condition people to realizing that there *is* a remedy.