

# A Word With You

EVERY age has its own panacea, I suppose—its remedy which everyone believes will solve all problems.

In the eighteenth century, the indispensable cure-all was Reason. There was no folly so great but that it could be Reason'd out of man... or so it was thought.

But, regrettably, an overwhelming portion of mankind remained impregnable to reason and persisted in its perverse and persnickety ways. And so a new remedy had to be concocted.

In the nineteenth century, that new remedy was—Evolution. Man might still in large measure be an unreasoning beast, it was argued, but it took him a million years to gain what little sense he has; give him another million years and he'll come around. Henry George in *A Perplexed Philosopher*, recalls a conversation he had with an evolutionist who said, "You and I can do nothing at all.... We can only wait for evolution."

Well, that might have been all right for the quiet nineteenth century, but the frantic twentieth century couldn't wait a million years—or even a thousand years. In the meantime, disastrous things could happen, and in fact were happening.

By now, the twentieth century's panacea has clearly emerged. It is—Government. Whatever the problem, large or small, the well-nigh universal attitude is that the government should take care of it, can take care of it, is

taking care of it, will take care of it, must take care of it.

Education? It needs governmental aid. Science? The government should subsidize it. Health? There should be a governmental health program. Old age? The government must give help. Unemployment? The government must step in. Strikes? Wages? Farm surplus? Housing? . . . You name it.

So far has our reverence for government gone that when communism—which is based on an all-powerful government, and which we abhor—rears its head, we are convinced that the only remedy is for our own government to go and do likewise!

What is government that it should be invoked with such faith? Our collective selves, no doubt. But we turn to it with our supplications as though it were a deity, something greater than ourselves. And government responds by taking unto itself more and more of the garb of a deity—the kind of deity which ends by devouring its devotees, like the stork and the frogs in Aesop's fable!

If any of us frogs are left we will no doubt be hunting for the next panacea—and the Single Tax would not be the worst one to be taken up.

The various panaceas all have their place. After all, Reason is a good thing to have around; so is Evolution. So, for that matter, is Government, in its rightful place. And so is the Single Tax, which has not yet been accorded its rightful place. —Robert Clancy

Vol. 23, No. 12

November 1960

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$2 a year; single copies 20¢. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.