

By ROBERT CLANCY

Georgists thrive on "objections to the single tax," provided they are specific enough and provided the objector sticks to his guns. Such chestnuts as: "It is not fair to single out the landowner;" "There is an unearned decrement as well as an unearned increment;" "Land isn't important any more;" and such like these can be taken in stride.

Pinning down the objection is half the job of overcoming it. Often it is difficult to determine an objector's position. A classic example is the assertion that "the single tax is based on 'natural rights' which do not exist; society, the state, determines whatever rights there are." And just as we're about to deal with this, up comes another objection from the same source: "The single tax would be *unjust*." Amazing, isn't it?

But the most elusive thing to deal with is the airy dismissal, "As everybody knows, Henry George has been discredited, disproved and dispelled; period." We try to get hold of something before it disappears up a chimney or through the looking-glass, but in vain. The subject is changed or an appointment must be kept.

Keep at it though, and if we're lucky, we may find this: "The single tax will not do all its proponents claim for it; it will not cure all human ills; many things must be done; we're living in a complex world." Still pretty airy, isn't it?

Suppose it doesn't do all we say, suppose it doesn't cure all human ills? Suppose other things must be done? When you have to do your laundry, do you refrain from buying soap at all because such wonder-claims are printed on the wrapper?

All right, there are other things. We offer you equal opportunities to nature's riches. Do you refuse because we don't put a shovel in your hand?

Do you wonder why we're so insistent about our fundamentals when there are "so many other things"? It is because you must build from the ground up, and unless you have a strong foundation you can't have a strong superstructure. Let the study of economics be as complicated and prolix as you please, but so long as man's fundamental relation to the land is ignored and neglected, it all comes to naught.

So please excuse us if we do not spend our time nailing the furniture in place and reinforcing the quivering chandelier. Indeed, we are so audacious as to hope, dear friend and objector, that you will help us with the foundation.