

MARSHALL CRANE

For again a young man from the outlying sections went to the big city, as young men will, and again all was not well there. Once more patriotic pride and the love of national traditions received a rude blow. They only increased, his horror at the awful poverty and destitution of the underprivileged. Once again a heart cried out in protest at seeing such conditions accepted as the natural order of society.

He returned home, sick at heart, to dedicate his life to the cause of the weary and heavy laden. It was many years later, and his hair had become gray in the service of his fellow men, when his career came to an end. Again we find the bearer of a great message facing with cheer and calmness a death which he could have postponed, had he been willing to relax his efforts for the cause which had become life itself to him. Henry George died, as he had lived, for the cause of justice.

"The life of sacrifice is not a popular one. It 'does not pay.' But who can estimate what we owe to the handful of great souls who have chosen this harder path!"

Easter has its own special significance, but it is also a most appropriate day to remember those too often forgotten creditors, of all races and creeds, the blessed few who, like the Carpenter of Nazareth, have given themselves to the life that "does not pay."

We Progress Backwards

From an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*
January 29, 1951

AND SO, for better or for worse, we are going back to the days of O.P.A.

This newspaper believes that both the economy as a whole and the people as individuals will find that it is for the worse. Our reasons for believing so have been set forth many times.

First, price control seriously impairs, if it does not destroy, the pricing mechanism by which the productive system operates and through which it adjusts itself to new and ever-changing conditions. The result is to freeze the economy into its present mold. And we do not believe that a frozen economy is a healthy one.

Second, price control defeats its own purpose. The argument for it is that under inflation people—the "poorer" people—cannot buy the type of food, clothes and the like that they wish because the price climbs too high for them. Price control is to help the housewife. But the result, for predictable reasons, is that people under price control still cannot buy the type of food, clothes and the like that they wish.

The goods move over into the black market at even higher premium prices; or, if the law is sufficiently stern, they disappear entirely; or, if the ceilings keep pace with dollar depreciation, the regular prices go up anyway. But in any event, housewives—unless they are married to influential officials—can't get the goods at the good old price.

Thirdly, the difficulties are compounded because the relationship between prices of millions of items is so hopelessly complex that the administration of price control, even if it were sound otherwise, becomes sheer chaos.

A Name for Baby By ROBERT CLANCY

MARSHALL CRANE'S article, "What's in a Name?" in the February Henry George News, brings it home that we are still not sure of what we shall name the major reform proposed by Henry George (or what we shall name ourselves—we who recommend this reform).

It seems anomalous that the baby hasn't been named yet, especially as the baby is seventy-odd years old. Of course, it has been named the "single tax," but as suggested by Mr. Crane, dissatisfaction with this name has given rise to an "it-must-be-baptized-again" movement.

Well, I for one have concluded that the name *single tax* fills the bill; and I'd like to answer the following objections which I have heard and, till now, agreed with.

"Single Tax" does not express our philosophy. Of course it doesn't. I do not believe it should be used as a synonym for the entire philosophy of Henry George, but simply as a convenient name for George's specific proposal, when it must be referred to. A name of one or two words, no matter what, is going to have severe limitations. Let us stop looking for a mere title

that contains all necessary explanations, demonstrations and inspirations.

But it isn't a tax at all. Why call it a tax, single or otherwise?

A tax is "a rate or duty on income or property." The public collection of rent is certainly a levy against a special form of income. And the particular method proposed by Henry George involves the instrumentality of taxation. If it is this method that is in dispute, then it is not simply a question of looking for a new name but of examining the method. As for George's own proposal, it is perfectly fair to refer to it as the single tax.

The "single tax" is a label that has been scoffed at.

Who have scoffed at the "single tax?" 1, The uninformed. 2, The vaguely informed. 3, The well informed who knew pretty well what they were scoffing at.

As for the No. 1 group, let us inform them. When the No. 2 group says quizzically, "Henry George, oh, the single tax," why need we blush and say, "No, no, it isn't that . . . at least it's a misnomer . . . anyway it's more than that . . ." Why not say, "Yes, the single tax was proposed by Henry George," and take the consequences? Who ever heard of a single taxer losing an argument anyway? As for the No. 3 group, what good would a change of name do?

We ought to avoid a name that suggests an "ism."

In these days it is difficult to keep from being labelled an "ist" of some sort, no matter what you propose—even if you propose nothing. Certainly most of us discuss George's proposal. Why not under the heading of "single tax"? As for what the proponent is, or what the philosophy and economics behind the single tax are, "Georgist" and "Georgian" already seem to be in currency. However, it is up to each individual to adopt whatever label suits him best.

Henry George himself did not approve of the name "single tax."

It is true that George did not so name his reform in *Progress and Poverty*. Indeed, he did not name it at all in that book. But as it became more widely discussed as the single tax, George did adopt it. Following is an excerpt from a speech by George in Scotland, 1889:

"Our experience in the United States is this, that the adoption of the name 'Single Tax' has been extremely useful, because it shows clearly our method. We were constantly met there by people who pretend to, or do, misunderstand our purpose, and who were continually asking us, 'How do you propose to divide the land up equally and then keep it divided?' Now the Single Tax allows of no such misinterpretation. The Single Tax does away, too, with the idea that we propose to take land formally and rent it out, and there are, to my mind, many serious objections to that course. The advantage of the term, the 'Single Tax' is that it shows precisely the road on which we wish to move, and that is just now the most important thing. The feeling that private ownership of land is unjust, is now widely spread and people are aroused to the truth that all men have equal rights to the land. The difficulty with them is to know how men are to gain those equal rights. The title 'Single Tax' has therefore the great advantage of pointing out very clearly the way. The newspapers cannot say, 'Those Single Tax men propose to divide land up.' They cannot say, 'Single Tax men propose to put land up at auction.' Of course 'The Single Tax' is not a full name. It does not express our aim; it only expresses our method." Neither fully does "Land Restoration." Our true title, if we wished to express what we really are, would be, "Justice Men" or "Liberty Men."

The Mails

By LUCIUS BEEBE

AMIDST the almost universal dissatisfaction with the conduct of its affairs by the government's Post Office, it would seem no impriety to point out that before the mails became a government monopoly conducted for the general inconvenience at great annual deficit it was conducted to substantial profit and the general satisfaction of patrons by private capital and enterprise.

Long after the coming of the railroads in the '30's the mails were still conveyed, reliably, swiftly and in some cases with great daring and imagination, by private firms and individuals. They only became a government monopoly at the insistence of incompetent politicians who were rewarded with postmasters' jobs and whose service could in no way measure up to the efficiency and excellence of the private mails. In the Far West, notably in California, the public which wanted the best patronized the private mails conducted by the firm of Wells Fargo as late as the '90s whenever dispatch and reliability were required. Wells Fargo made money in its mail department and was highly esteemed and respected by Western merchants and other citizens until the local postmasters who were being beaten to a frazzle in their own highly subsidized business screamed to Congress for help and outlawed the private mail.

Outside of the military there is scarcely a function of the Federal government that could not be more effectively discharged by private initiative, and yet there are champions of government medicine, government electricity and government insurance policies of many sorts.

Whenever these measures are suggested it might be well to remember the Post Office which, from a well ordered and efficient private business, reduced the mails to the sorry farrago of poor service and politics they now represent. The writer for one would be glad to pay five cents or even a bit more to have his urgent mail delivered within the limits of the city in which it is posted within, say, a week's time.