

In writing as I have, I would not be understood as claiming inerrancy for Henry George. He would have been the last one to make such claim. But, I submit, it will take a more astute intelligence than Messrs. Bernard Shaw, Jorgenson, our Australian friends and Mr. Ogden, collectively, possess, to find any "lapsi linguae" in the numerous writings and speeches of the great master of economic reasoning.

Forty years ago, Mr. Ogden made the same claims in the columns of *The New Earth*. The editor of LAND AND FREEDOM pointed out to him that land values might exist, and often did exist, independently of public service. Mr. Ogden persists in his fallacy.

And here it will be interesting to quote from that article by Mr. Ogden:

"When I conceive of trade without roads, I may then conceive of land value arising without government service. When distance has been obliterated; and goods can be transferred without a consideration of the elements of time, space or resistance, then rent will disappear, and the dreams of some of our friends realized; but I am inclined to think that as long as we have legs, we'll use 'em, and that roads will always remain, and with them rent."

Well, the very thing Mr. Ogden conceived as impossible, has come to pass. Airplanes can and do carry mail and merchandise, "without roads;" "distance has been obliterated" (almost) *but land rent keeps increasing*.

Why? Because every human activity, even flying in the air, requires land, and those who "own" our earth can charge the users Rent, *without rendering any service in return*.

Mr. Ogden claims that George failed to perceive that individual right to land value is as clearly defined as individual right to any property produced by an individual.

Evidently our author is unaware that there are six qualities which distinguish land from private property, and therefore stamp it as unique.

1. The earth on which we live was not produced by any human being, but is the free gift of the Creator to all his children.
2. It is limited in quantity.
3. It is essential to our existence, because we can produce nothing without it.
4. It does not owe its value to anything which landowners choose to put upon it.
5. It owes its value entirely to the presence and activities of the community.
6. It cannot be carried away or concealed.

Were he clearly to grasp the significance of these distinctions, he would not write:

"A good title to individual ownership in the land and all the value that attaches to it is therefore founded upon the same right of self-ownership that is the foundation of the right to own personal property." (p. 90).

Mr. Ogden informs us that before his death, Henry George modified his declaration that "private property in land is unjust." (p.112).

Pray, when and where did this take place? This reviewer is authorized to offer Mr. Ogden \$500.00 to substantiate that statement.

Chapter XVIII is entitled "The Error of Henry George." Our author attempts to prove that George made "a fundamental error in omitting the largest and most important factor in production, viz., Government." (pp. 144-145). Mr. Ogden contends that land value is produced by an individual "as truly as was the house and personal property therein." (p. 150).

If this were true, how will Mr. Ogden explain why land values decline when population moves away?

This chapter might more accurately have been entitled "The Errors of William J. Ogden, LL. B."

Mr. Ogden has been familiar with the Georgist philosophy at least forty years, but, as his book amply demonstrates, he has failed to grasp it, not only in its material phases, but in its vastly greater spiritual implications.

Henry George sought to introduce a spiritual condition of equality in a material condition of inequality. Only that which is spiritual is constant; that which is material must ever be inconstant. Our common Mother, the Earth, being material and inconstant, rather than spiritual and constant, does not yield to her children the same wages for the same labor.

Henry George showed how we could *approximate* a spiritual condition of equality in a material condition of inequality by expressing the inequalities in nature in land rent, and distributing the land rent equally amongst all Earth's children.

For that he will ever be remembered, long after his critics are forgotten.—B. W. BURGER.

## PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

"Labor Relations" by George A. Briggs of Los Angeles, member of the Federal Relations Board of the 15th District, sends forth a pamphlet of nineteen pages which treats of the Georgist philosophy. Incidentally it touches upon the abuse of patents. The author states that if the land value tax is insufficient it might be added to by "steeply" graded taxes on incomes and inheritances. The word seems deliberately chosen. He says: "Such taxes would compensate for failure, if we did fail, to identify and abolish lesser legalized monopolies overshadowed by patents, tariffs, franchises and land monopolies." We do not believe that there are any "lesser monopolies" not included in this category, and they are not of sufficient importance to justify "steeply" graded taxes on incomes and inheritances, nor any such taxes at all. If it be found necessary to resort to such taxes, which we do not for a moment believe, they must be defended solely on the need for additional revenue that *might* arise and not as remedial measures for the correction of economic inequalities. All the lesser monopolies will disappear with the disappearance of the basic monopoly on which they rest.

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We all know and love Peter Witt, of Cleveland. Certainly the greatest orator in the movement today, he is also an entertaining and forcible writer. Here from his pen is a neatly printed pamphlet of sixteen pages entitled "How Economic Ignorance Causes Depressions." He tells of the work of Tom L. Johnson to whose memory he is deeply attached. He relates how a few years ago the city of Cleveland was worth fifty cents an acre and how since the days of Moses Cleaveland it has risen to be worth many millions of dollars. He enforces his plea for economic change in the system by many interesting local illustrations. The pamphlet may be had for ten cents a copy with reduction for quantities.—J. D. M.

## Correspondence

### NEED OF FUNDAMENTALS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

A multitude of words anent our untoward and unnecessary economic material condition, but nothing along the line of remedies in simplified fundamental form.

Many reputations made in giving a speech or writing an article on existing conditions, in which nothing of importance is mentioned. There must be a reason for this, which must inevitably be termed indifference or ignorance.

It seems incredible that the so-called moulders of public opinion are unaware of the source and magnitude of our material supply—THE EARTH—sufficient for all our daily needs, provided same is treated in a natural way, in accord with the laws of justice.

The general notion seems to prevail that injustice is largely prevalent, but as an actual fact there is no such law. Apply the law of Justice and the thought of injustice vanishes into its native nothingness.

The entire situation revolves around a seeming lack of necessities,

such as Food, Raiment and Shelter. It would seem unnecessary to repeat to an intelligent people that these necessities are secured in only one way, viz., by application of our intelligence, muscular power and a sense of cooperation, to our supply, THE EARTH, which was supposedly created for all mankind. Man was given dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26). We ask, what man, the one who first saw and claimed it, or all mankind?

It would be equally consistent and ethical to allow a monopoly of the sunshine and fresh air as the earth, a heritage from the Creator, which should not be held out of use for speculative purposes. We are either mentally blind or morally crooked. Cannot we realize that all wars are largely, almost entirely, caused by our economic maladjustment? They originate in greed, largely because of desire for additional territory to exploit. Men are also perfectly oblivious to crime conditions, especially among the younger generation.

This was especially emphasized in an article which appeared in the *Monitor* of February 21, by Ralph A. Felton, entitled, "Jobs or Jails for Youth," in which he states that eighty per cent of juvenile delinquents in a New Jersey reformatory were out of work when they got into trouble. They were inherently honest, but needed food in order to exist.

Is there a simple remedy for this unjust condition? There is only one scientific and ethical method, viz., cease penalizing (taxing) labor products, and take land values for public purposes.

Labor products belong to the producer; land values are produced by the community and should be appropriated for community uses. Of course, this solution is too simple for our expert economists to contemplate. It implies no statistical elaboration, historical data or prognostication anent the future; merely functions in the here and now. Why not give it a little brotherly thought for a change?

We cannot continue to ignore these fundamentals and maintain the title of Brotherhood.

Chicago, Ill.

F. J. EDDY.

#### COGENT AT LEAST

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your May-June issue there appears a reply to Mr. Walter Fairchild by Harold S. Buttenheim in which Mr. Buttenheim closes with:

"Nor need the Single Taxers fear that the fundamental thesis of their great leader will be weakened by constructive attempts to re-study and re-state it for the world of 1935."

By all means, Mr. Buttenheim, re-study and re-state "Progress and Poverty," but when you do, also re-study and re-state the Commandment:

"Thou shalt not steal!"

For after you have brushed aside all of the trappings, the philosophy of Henry George reduces itself to this:

Let not the community take from the individual that which the individual creates. Let not the individual take from the community that which the community creates.

Unfortunately Single Taxers generally, go off on the same tangent that Mr. Buttenheim has. They accept the Single Tax as the end instead of the means to an end, the end being individual freedom.

Cleveland, O.

NAHAM BEN ISRAEL.

#### JOHN LUXTON RETURNS TO THE ENCOUNTER

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In the May-June number of *LAND AND FREEDOM* Mr. Loomis of Chicago attempts to justify his fallacious claim that there will be a selling value to land under the Single Tax. He says that in my reply I assume that Single Tax is to take one hundred per cent of the economic rent. Most certainly I do. And furthermore I declare it to be the only way in which full justice can be done and an equitable distribution of wealth be made. Mr. Loomis probably expects that

the full economic rent will be paid in money but in that he is wrong. We quite agree with Henry George in his suggestion that we permit the landowner to retain a percentage of the rent and thus escape the losses incident to renting lands in the way he mentions in "Progress and Poverty," Book VIII, Chapter II. In so doing we are collecting the entire rent, one hundred per cent of it. The landlord's services are equal to X per cent, and the rent which he pays over is equal to one hundred per cent plus X per cent. If we did not pay the landowner for collecting the ground rent, either from himself or from his tenants, we would have to pay an agent to do so. Thus we collect one hundred per cent of the economic rent, services plus money, or perhaps goods and services of equal value to money if the necessity for receiving the rent in that manner should eventuate. It seems to me that to be a good Single Taxer a man must first be a good economist, and that is where Mr. Loomis' trouble seems to be.

Mr. Buttenheim is quite enamoured of the idea of triple tax. It is enough for Single Taxers to know that he does not believe that all privilege and exploitation would be abolished by the socialization of ground rent, and that all community expenditures are reflected in increased land values. We do. A full and complete demonstration of the former must wait until we have advanced far enough to try it. Philosophy points that way to those who have logical minds. A detailed account of facts is necessary to prove the basis for his disbelief of the latter. Such facts must be actual and bona fide, not figures from reports of State tax officials, State Real Estate Boards, Chambers of Commerce, and other interested bodies. Until such facts are presented to us Mr. Buttenheim must not be offended if we do not believe him. We must have a chance to winnow the chaff from the grain, to point out what are real, legitimate community expenditures, and not just graft, waste, and downright loot. Away with most government reports. As contributions to our knowledge they are not worth the paper they are printed on, nor the energy necessary to read them. So Mr. Buttenheim's answer to Mr. Fairchild falls flat.

But it is not this which impells me to find fault with Mr. Buttenheim's logic. He attacks our consistency in fervently embracing the "benefits-received" theory of taxation, and rejecting the "ability-to-pay" theory. We do not ignore the fact that ability to pay has often resulted from benefits received. And in taxing according to benefits received do we go out of our way to exempt those who are able to pay because of benefits they have received? Under Single Tax the thing that will decide will be the benefits received. Mr. Buttenheim might have made a better case for himself and asked the question which every advocate of the "ability-to-pay" theory asks those who advocate the other method. The question is, "How are you going to tax those who haven't the ability to pay for benefits received?" That would give us the chance to answer in a way that shows that Single Tax is not going to be partial tax reform, weak and without teeth. The answer is that in case an individual or corporation has enjoyed a site value and either has not produced any economic rent through non-use of the site to its fullest possibility, or has made way with, squandered, dissipated the economic rent, the State or community will pry such individual or corporation from such site and lease it to the highest bidders. It is the moral duty of society to relieve members of society of burdens beyond their strength. To relieve the holder of a valuable site from the burden of carrying it when he shows his positive unfitness for the job is justice, justice to a poor weak brother, and justice to those of us who are ready to show their ability to make the most of such an opportunity.

In most instances, since man is naturally industrious and ambitious always seeking improvement, and creating new wants as he satisfies old ones, it follows that if we tax according to benefits received, we are also taxing according to ability to pay. But the method of taxing according to ability to pay is not always taxing according to benefits