



Joseph Thompson gives a good answer to the objection (March HGN) that the public collection of the rent of land constitutes an unjust singling out of one group (land title holders) for taxation. But a better answer is that the public collection of the rent of land and its application for public uses is, from the standpoint of the relation of title holders to non title holders (which is a relation of privilege) a form of redress.

Land is, in justice, common property—therefore, the individual or corporation having exclusive control of any portion of it is in debt to all of us. If this debt is satisfied through the public collection of rent and applied to the reduction or abolition of the present taxes which do not constitute a public collection of rent, then we should say simply that taxation is partially or wholly eliminated—not that any group is being singled out for taxation.

The buyer of labor products as such pays no rent—he simply pays for what he gets from the seller or producer. Any producer, whether he produces on inherited, bought, or hired land is a payer (not a receiver) of rent. If the value of his output does not cover the rent of the land he is using (before wages and interest), he will not continue to produce on the land, although if he is the owner he may continue his ownership, hoping to receive its rent from another producer.

Prices of labor products contain no element of rent—they represent what the market place values them at, as so much stored-up labor. Rent is paid for, and represents, the advantage of a particular location or natural resource for the purpose of producing wealth.

It is a share of the value of total output—not of the value of one unit of output.

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I am sorry to find myself in disagreement with Oscar Johannsen, because I know him well from his articles in the HGN, and generally approve what he has to say. But I take exception when he says that George goes too far in his vision of publicly owned social services (*Georgism versus Socialism*, March HGN).

George's argument was that in all those forms of business that permit of it, competition between businessmen will set fair and just prices and that in all those forms of business that are natural monopolies, that is, where competition is not possible, the state should own and operate the business under civil service regulations.

I agree with George's stand, and I think we carry our enthusiasm for private enterprise too far when we object to the state building the roads and post offices and operating the schools. I haven't heard of anybody advocating that private enterprise ought to take over the armed forces and the White House. Armies, navies and governments were privately owned and operated in the Middle Ages, and to me it makes just as much sense as for governments to give exclusive franchises to electrical companies or railroads.

A government, rightly considered, is a cooperative enterprise, owned and controlled by the citizens. If private enterprise had ample scope to develop