

No kind of land can be assessed correctly till ready to be worked. How silly it is to try to get coal valuation that is not needed for use for twenty years. I cannot understand why any Single Taxers want to tax coal fields, instead of the bank-leave or royalty. I was raised over a coal field. Our farm was all underlaid with coal. You can bet that I would pay no tax on that coal field if government took the royalty. There would not even be a shell for me, all would be gone, just like the boy who asked for the core. He was told that there would be no core in that apple.

You raise it good and effective on the speculator when you take the royalty on coal, ore and oil. See "Boreman Busy" in last REVIEW, page 51.—CALVIN B. POWER, Fayette City, Pa.

#### THE TAX ON RENT.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Certain missionaries to the Single Taxers wish to show them the folly of denying private property in land, and reveal the mistakes of Henry George who condemned private property in land in strong terms. He says, (Progress and Poverty, Double-day edition, page 347) that the effects of chattel slavery are "trivial as compared with the forms of slavery which have originated in the appropriation of land." According to his definitions land is not and cannot be private property. He asks, (p. 332):

"What constitutes the rightful basis of property," and answers: "That which a man makes or produces is his own, as against the world. No one else can rightfully claim it."

Not even the State can rightfully take such property by taxation. Our missionaries do not urge that land be so held; they recognize the claim of the State to a tax on site rent.

Property must be wealth. Land is not wealth; it cannot be property. Among things that "cannot be considered wealth at all" are "lands, the value of which is but the result of the acknowledgment in favor of certain persons of an exclusive right to use." (pages 38-39.)

Mr. George always treats the value ex-

pressed in the selling price of land as wholly fictitious. Selling price is "rent capitalized" (page 166.) A fictitious value cannot be real property. Watered stock is capitalized income which is based on injustice. The "watered" value of stock often disappears from the market after the unearned income ceases, but no real wealth disappears, for no wealth was back of the "water." Just so the value of land titles may be destroyed without reducing actual wealth.

Land satisfies no human want until labor is applied; then land is opportunity, and can be nothing else. The origin of what we imagine is private property in land is the patent given to the favorite of a monarch, permitting him to collect rent from users. The right is bought as wholesale, so to speak, at a low price, and retailed at a high price. It is this legal power to retail opportunity that is bought and sold. As our missionaries agree with us that this power resides only in society as a whole, I as an unconverted heathen, remind them that their "private ownership," Henry George's plan of possession on payment of economic rent if any, and the present land system, are precisely the same, the differences in result resting entirely upon the amount of site rent collected by taxation. If a low tax means private property, and a high tax means common property, at what point does the change occur. Could 30% of rent in taxation be consistent with private property, and 31% be the amount that produces common property. Stated in this way, the agitation of our friends becomes absurd. Abolition of taxation and the substitution therefore of site rent, causes no change in titles. The remedy is therefore simple and conservative, although the effect is revolutionary, placing the producer, instead of the idle land monopolist, in possession of opportunity.

—C. F. HUNT, Chicago, Ill.

#### MR. HALL AMENDS OUR "DEFINITION."

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Your definition of the Single Tax in the May-June number is clear and excellent,