

# Land and Freedom

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## Current Comment

THE Los Angeles *Examiner* is a little frightened at the condition of what is euphemistically called "the real estate market," in that city. It seems, what has been for some time apparent to the intelligent observer, that the "ground hogs" have come to a critical stage in their operations—that the inevitable slump has arrived or is seriously threatening. The paper endeavors to inject a little encouragement into the situation. "Prices are standing like Gibraltar," it says. "Los Angeles real estate continues high in the confidence of the investors; everywhere investors are looking for new price levels in the Fall."

All of which is intended to be reassuring to the speculators in land. We invite the *Examiner's* attention to a little publication called *Current Conditions*, published in this city at 30 Church street. In its July number it has this to say: "One can hardly conceive that California can properly support 40,000 real estate agents; that with four hundred miles of coast line certain more or less desolate areas of Florida removed from centres of activity can properly support values ranging around several thousand dollars a 'lot', meaning approximately 100x150 feet."

*Current Conditions* does not see the consequences of what it indicates, but its fears are warranted and at least show a somewhat more intelligent apprehension of what is impending.

THE out-and-out Socialists are now with La Follette. Other kinds of Socialists are with the Democratic and Republican Parties. For all stand for socialism, or for regulation closely akin to it. The only party standing for freedom is the little group calling itself the Commonwealth Land party. Why not recognize this very important distinction? It is the only clear division marking off the party groups now in the field. Where, fellow Georgian, do we belong? Small in numbers as the Commonwealth Land party is, it is the only group in America today voicing the doctrine of freedom, the philosophy of economic liberty.

WE can understand why a Socialist may vote for La Follette. We do not understand why any Single Taxer can. The platform of his party is the weakest thing that ever came out of a convention, but what there is of it is socialism. Single Taxers who now favor La Follette

are making the same mistake they made when they tagged on behind W. J. Bryan, despite the protests of such men as William Lloyd Garrison. They cannot now vote for La Follette, Davis or Coolidge without stultifying themselves. But Single Taxers are peculiar in this—they are the only persons in the United States who make it a practice of voting against what they believe in!

IN his speech at the Democratic convention W. J. Bryan said: "When Lloyd George made his fight to tax the landlords he used a sentence more powerful, I think, than any other sentence that has been used in a thousand years. He said, 'Why make ten thousand owners of the soil and all the rest trespassers in the land of their birth.'" Mr. Bryan is great on sentences. It rarely occurs to him to make application of even the most "powerful sentence." And so in this case he hurried on as if it meant nothing at all. Or about as much as it seems to mean at the present writing to Lloyd George himself.

OUR English friends of the United Committee, through their organ, *Land and Liberty*, of London, commenting on the Liberal Party's late Manifesto to the voters, are bitter in their denunciation. After a reference to "credit facilities for the farmer," the Manifesto says: "Opportunity should be given for the cultivator to become the owner of his own land on reasonable terms by a system of land purchase." The Liberal party is thus committed by the signatures of Lloyd George and Asquith to the policy of buying out the landlords with public funds. *Land and Liberty* accusing the Liberals of political trickery, says:

"The Taxation of Land Values, a national tax on the value of land in substitution for such burdens as taxes on houses and improvements, customs duties on tea, sugar etc. (the "breakfast table duties"), or other taxes on trade and industry, is omitted from the Liberal manifesto by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George. The programme, carefully worked out by the National Liberal Federation and officially adopted by the Party, is ignored. Mr. Asquith's own declarations made in speech after speech until the eve of his reunion with Mr. Lloyd George are effaced. The pledges of the party and its public pronouncements for a generation are forgotten. If this is not betrayal, then what word shall we use?"

OF course, this is betrayal. But by this time the gentlemen of the United Committee should have got used to betrayal. They have been fed up on it for some time now. But they seem rather to like it. They do protest

every now and then, but they go right ahead. The only disciples of Henry George who are not betrayed, and refuse to be betrayed, are our good friends of the Commonwealth Land Party of England.

WE are glad to welcome the appearance of the third anniversary number of the *Forum*, edited and published by L. D. Beckwith, of Stockton, California. The *Forum* is a unique publication. It is distinctively a people's paper in a very real sense. Its opinions are those of its contributors who are also its advertising patrons. Anybody can advertise his opinions at cost—no more. That is, the cost of printing and press work. The subscriptions alone constitute the editor's salary. His income is therefore not made conditional on his advertisements, nor are the paper's opinions determined, as in so many cases they are, by the advertisers. Altogether it constitutes an adventure in journalism that will be watched with interest in influential circles. Letters from well known Single Taxers appear in the columns of the anniversary number, among them being an enthusiastic endorsement from William J. Wallace, candidate of the Commonwealth Land Party for president, and many others.

## Real Teachers of Political Economy

DO our readers peruse the real estate advertisements of the daily press? From time to time we have given sample extracts. These real estate advertisers are the great teachers of political economy. They have the economic professors in our colleges and universities "beaten to a frazzle." The latter always have reservations; they qualify, they state principles and then proceed to note what they think are important exceptions to the principles, so that no conclusion is arrived at and only doubt is left in the student's mind whether there are any principles at all or not. Everything is a jumble.

Not so your real estate advertisers. Now and then they leave a word to be supplied, and "real estate" is sometimes used when only land is meant. But on the whole they are, when read understandingly, very impressive lessons in political economy.

Here, for example, is a page in the *Kansas City (Mo.) Times*. One sentence reads: "Kansas City is owned by the men and women who hold title to its real estate. Theirs is a participating partnership resulting from the growth and development of the city." Here is, too, we may add, a participating partnership in every drive of every wheel of production, in the movement of every piece of machinery, in every stroke of the hammer, in every dollar of wealth that comes from the union of labor and capital. That is, of course, if by real estate is meant land. It cannot mean houses and other improvements

since these do not increase in value by reason of population and the industrial growth of the city.

It is made clear in the next sentence that land and not improvements is meant, for it says:

"Where ground for business future is offered at lower prices than similarly situated property (by which is meant land again) in cities of equal size, where leaseholds can be purchased on a lower basis, where adequately protected freeholds offer safe and profitable estate building investments \*\*\*\*\* opportunity beckons."

Then this advertisement goes on to say, "Lots that sold for a few hundred dollars after the Civil War today earn over \$50,000 a year net. But the rise of such centers as at Thirty-first street and Troost Avenue are of the last two years."

But this advertisement has a touch of humor. We have seen nothing quite so good as this:

"The man who will study in the classified columns the property offered for sale, making independent investigations, in a few months will have a good foundation in real estate values. Merchants and professional men have thus found in real estate not only a chance to make money, but a field of recreation. The subject of real estate, followed as a leisurely sideline, has the fascination, minus much of the risk, of games of chance. It strengthens the imagination and leads to a sympathetic understanding of the basic structure of the city."

The humor of this is in the words, "sympathetic understanding," "leisurely sideline," "strengthens the imagination," etc.

The advertiser is right, however, in the statement that this kind of investment has the fascination minus the risk of games of chance. For only one side can win; the producer must lose, for the dice is loaded against him.

## The Political Chaos

COMPARED with the political situation in the United States Chaos is a quiet and orderly arrangement.

Compared with the political insanity that rages Bedlam is a sanctuary for the reasonable and sane.

A great party met in this city to nominate a candidate for president and succeeded after taking over a hundred ballots, which broke all known records. Cheering to the echo the denunciation of one man placed in nomination as representative of the privileged interests, it thereafter selected him as its candidate amid loud cheering. The man who had denounced him, placated by the nomination of his brother as this man's running mate, said the nomination was perfectly satisfactory! He is now heartily for the man he denounced.

Then another convention met and nominated La Follette. Though a platform was adopted it was declared that "La Follette is a platform in himself." The communistic element had already broken away and nominated a ticket of their own. But what is particularly amusing,