

conomic rent. Because we have called ourselves "Single Taxers" we have split *one* question into a thousand questions, each of which we find it necessary to justify in argument. The assumption that it is necessary to get rid of existing taxes before taking this economic rent—in accordance with our stated programme, "Abolish all taxes save that on land values"—has obscured the more important question that the rent of land belongs to the people and that it is the first duty of government to collect it. Add to this, "in lieu of all taxation," if you like, but be careful to follow the French maxim, "First things first," or, better still, the most important thing first.

Transferred to the political field this teaching which Mr. Post defends by inference, has brought almost catastrophic results. It led Henry George into the mistake of supporting Cleveland in 1888, a mistake that could have been rectified when it was seen that it was a grave error of policy. Animated by that example we drifted into a variety of movements, socialistic, semi-socialistic, progressive, but never representative even by accident of the thing we believed in. There was a bewildering procession of political leaders whom we were urged to "get behind." Always we were to get behind—somebody or something—never in front of anything. Cleveland, Bryan, Hearst and many others, now among the discards. And today, learning nothing, remembering nothing, numbers of Single Taxers are trooping behind La Follette.

Better to stand alone and refuse to vote, better still to register one's convictions in a hopeless contest, going down to defeat if need be to the very end, than to support things we do not want, measures we do not approve, policies we oppose and candidates hopelessly ignorant or covertly hostile to the truths we believe in.

Such has been our leadership! Lacking courage, talking at election time everything but the great truth, voting against the thing we hold as the salvation of mankind, we have been the Hessian soldiery of every political mountebank who has appeared. But we made no bargains. We did not demand that this motley collection of political tatterdemalions give us anything for our support of their ambitions, not even a few crumbs from the banquet board. We had a truth which had it been persistently presented, would have surely found a popular response. But every political pretender knew that we could be depended upon when the time came and the trumpet sounded to sink this truth until the campaign was over. Insistence upon it might prove hurtful to the interests of the leaders, so we were as silent as the grave.

Oh, the insensate futility of it! And some of us are repeating it today. Every vote cast for La Follette is a confirmation and continuance of the policy that has left the movement without leaders that any man respects, while the great truth that means everything for mankind lies a political football, a derided thing, a jest in the mouths of the politicians to whom we have sold ourselves. For

well they know how to estimate the value of a movement whose high professions are voluble nine months in the year, utterly unheard of during the other three, and finally strangled to death on election day!

The Fairhope Courier on Party Action

E. B. GASTON, editor of the *Fairhope Courier*, in a recent issue of that admirable paper, says, replying to Messrs Seibert, of Minnesota, and Vyne, of Arizona, both convinced Single Tax Party men:

"The idea of Single Taxers 'standing up and being counted' for some Single Tax candidate whom everybody knows stands not a ghost of a show of being elected, seems heroic, but when it results simply in emphasizing how few Single Taxers there are; in leaving the reactionaries unopposed to control the dominant parties and in withholding all aid and encouragement from much larger groups than ours, which while they may not all see the full truth as we see it, are honestly concerned with reforms embodying real principles in which we also believe, there is, in our opinion, nothing to be said for it from the standpoint of virtue or practicality.

"Fairhope Single Taxers were zealous enough and heroic enough, if you please, to 'go the limit' of what they knew they could individually accomplish, but they are not strong on withdrawing from contact with their fellow citizens and standing apart in an effort which they know stands no chance of success."

As we understand the arguments of the advocates of party action, they urge voting for what they believe in not because it is "heroic," but because it squares with common sense and common honesty.

Mr. Gaston thinks it unfortunate that Single Taxers who affiliate with the Commonwealth Land Party should thus withdraw from the larger groups "who may not see the truth as we see it but are honestly concerned with reforms embodying real principles."

There are several answers to this. Perhaps it may be instructive to suggest an analogy. When the Fairhoppers heroically withdrew from the "larger groups" and settled on the shores of Mobile Bay to attempt a working demonstration of the Single Tax principle, they did just what Mr. Gaston thinks it unwise for the Single Taxers to do in other fields of activity. In the religious world Christian Scientists, Swedenborgians, and others withdrew from the "larger groups" and in the beginning organized their smaller groups as the best way to advance the cause of Christ. They were not deterred by the thought that they were no longer part of the "larger group."

But there is another and more conclusive answer to Mr. Gaston's argument. Note the words: "Are honestly concerned with reforms embodying real principles." As applied to the La Follette party this is simply not true.

"Honestly concerned" they may be, but we credit too highly Mr. Gaston's intelligence to believe that *he* thinks there is anything fundamental or real about the principles of La Follette and his party. He knows better, and because the light has been given to him he is sinning against that light. Surely, there is a code of conduct in politics as well as in religion; surely there are canons of commonsense which should forbid a man aiding and abetting causes fundamentally at war with the beliefs he holds.

Mr. Gaston has been so brave a protagonist for principle, hazarding his personal fortunes in what twenty years ago was a project wholly in the experimental stage, that his argument as he presents it seems a little curious. There may be arguments against independent party action, as there are surely arguments in its favor, but Mr. Gaston has not indicated any of the former, and as for the latter, time and the early eclipse of the La Follette movement, will tell the story.

One thing more. We do not understand the advocates of party action as expecting success. The Single Tax movement is in the propaganda stage. Party action seems to them the best mode of propaganda. As Mr. Le Barron Goeller, noting the publicity he has gained for the cause since his nomination for Lieutenant governor, exclaims delightedly, "It is great advertising."

How Would Henry George Vote?

IF Henry George were here today, and he is truly present in spirit and in the abiding fruits of his great mind and dauntless courage, how would he vote at the coming Presidential election? No one who knew him can believe for a moment that he would endorse the present incumbent, advanced by accident after a long service as handy man for Senator W. Murray Crane, of Massachusetts, representative of the privileged interests and public service corporations. Nor would he support the counsel of big business and the Standard Oil Co., running on a platform of meaningless generalities and weasel words that mean anything or nothing as you may choose. And most decidedly he would not favor Senator La Follette. Henry George once voted for Grover Cleveland because he mistakenly believed that the assault on the thieving protective tariff would lead to a general attack on all crooked taxation and special privileges. Later he supported W. J. Bryan, believing that that eminent mouther of phrases was in reality a democrat, who would work for the restoration of the rights of which the American people have been robbed by class legislation. His experiences with these false alarms would have convinced him that there is absolutely nothing in the candidates or platforms of the three parties today to merit a vote from anyone who hopes to see established through constitutional methods the reign of industrial peace and social justice.

Coolidge and Davis are not worthy a paragraph. They are both eminently respectable tools of monopoly and privilege, neither of whom will do anything to lighten the burdens of the producers who by the alchemy of unjust laws are robbed of the larger part of the value of their product. Nor is there any real hope from La Follette. Though his record for forty years is open, and free from any proved charge of corruption, he, nevertheless, has not been granted the vision to see the source of all the economic evils that afflict mankind, nor the first great and sufficient remedy for them. Like so many millions of other would-be reformers, he denounces monopoly and privilege, without specifying the greatest monopoly of all, the control of the land on which all mankind must live, and out of which all wealth is produced. It is not enough that he is honest and courageous as his friends contend. More is required of him who would lead this people out of the house of bondage and set them free. He must know the right way out, and there is no evidence that La Follette has caught sight of the great truth that the way out is through the repeal of all class legislation, and the freeing of the land to all who wish to work upon it, by taking for public purposes the full economic rent of all desirable portions of the earth. As John Stuart Mill well said. "When the object is to improve the permanent condition of the people, small means do not merely accomplish small ends, they really accomplish nothing." No real and lasting reform in existing monopoly conditions can be brought about by the forces aligned behind Senator La Follette. A vote for him even as a protest against the two old political parties, is a vote wasted.

To Men and Women Who Write

ANYONE familiar with the books and magazine articles of thirty years ago will remember that a considerable percentage was devoted to the serious discussion of important social and economic problems. Following the publication and widespread circulation of Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" and "Social Problems" came various other books, such as "Looking Backward," in which an attempt was made to set forth plans for a better-ordered system of society that would abolish the strange inconsistency of vastly increased wealth production being accompanied by persistent poverty. There were magazines, such as *Arena*, devoted to the presentation of the blunders and defects of the existing social order, while other publications were opening their pages to writers who sought to mould public opinion so as to bring about the enactment of state and national legislation that would abolish monopoly and privilege, and establish harmony and justice in the industrial world. It was a period of optimism, when earnest men and women looked forward hopefully to the immediate