

OUR higher criticism might also straighten us out on Interest. We know that this has become a subject taboo among certain Single Taxers notwithstanding the fact that George says: "The returns are Rent, Wages and *Interest*." Some seem to think he said rent, wages and the rate of return on loans. We have an idea that this interest which George says is a return, has nothing directly to do with loans and nothing whatever to do with loan rates. Some dismiss the subject saying that when the Single Tax is in full operation interest will "tend to disappear or disappear altogether." We hope they are not right in this because we feel that if this is so capital will disappear also, and wages will then surely tend to a minimum.

OUR higher criticism might also tell us the difference between government ownership of land and government empowered to collect 100 per cent of ground-rent. At present the individual owns land only to the extent of title in fee and this is not absolute ownership. By what process may society, even with its authority, endow its creation, the state, with rights, inherently denied to any of its members. We are told that when land is "free" the ground-rent will be determined by the higgling of the market, that is by the bid-and-ask method. In this case we ask who will make the proffer, and it is somewhat incongruous that under this freedom the government should *levy* on ground-rent. Incidentally, in a free market, what will be the duties of the assessor?

THOSE who believe in the Science of Political Economy may need enlightenment and those whose business it is to administer the public revenue not only now but in time to come will need a clear understanding of the fiscal side of what Henry George so clearly outlined in principle. In his preface to "Progress and Poverty" George says: "What I have most endeavored to do is to establish general principles, trusting to my readers to carry further their application where this is needed."

Over the doors and in the literature of a large public service corporation we find the following:

"Progress is assured in this system by a large group of scientists and experts devoted exclusively to ways and means for making its service better."

In a spirit, not of controversy but of true research we feel that Georgeists should welcome the higher criticism.—K.

THE WAR

TWENTY-ONE years ago at the end of the war to end wars, we had no delusions that we had lived through the last great conflict. We had only hopes that privilege and trade barriers would subsequently be abolished.

Instead of a removal of tariffs we saw them mount

higher both in the large and small countries together with internal restrictions, quotas and regimentations. These are the basic causes of war. In every country these tariffs and restrictions have created lower per capita production and enabled the few to fatten at the expense of the many. So that with each of the aggressor nations, maintaining the *status quo* as to these privileges (which include land monopoly) there has apparently existed a lack of territory necessary to the life of their respective populations. Instead of putting their own house in order these nations have acquired by force or subterfuge or have attempted to acquire, the land of other nations. True free trade would have obviated all this. Nations, like individuals, do not murder their customers.—K.

The Law of Rent

By W. R. B. WILLCOX

IN the July-August LAND AND FREEDOM, Mr. C. J. Smith argues in disparagement of the writer's attempted demonstration of the fallacy of Ricardo's "Law of Rent," which appeared in the March-April issue. He contrasts the definition there given with this law, and generously concludes that it is an effective, though probably an unwitting, paraphrase; but that between the two, the difference is only that between tweedledee and tweedledum. Due, possibly, to brevity of statement or lack of emphasis, the prime purport of that writing seems not to have been grasped, or at least to have been dismissed as unimportant. This should justify another attempt to reveal it.

In the statement (literally true) that "nothing essentially new has been added to Henry George's treatment of Ricardo's law of rent," the *fact* of difference may, as unwittingly, have been overlooked. What is new is not an *addition*. It is an essential *subtraction*. This, possibly, may compel revision of "the accepted dictum of the current political economy" that "authority here coincides with common sense," "that it has the self-evident character of a geometric axiom" and "the force of a self-evident proposition." The statement that "the fundamental character of Ricardo's principle he (George) deemed unchallengeable" cannot properly constitute proof to the contrary.

The point at issue appears, happily, in the critic's own words, as follows: "George himself pointed out the error of Ricardo *in limiting* the application of the law to the extractive mode of production. He showed that it held *as well* in the case of industrial, commercial and residential sites as in the case of farming and mining lands." In other words, as this reveals, Ricardo regarded rent as payment, solely, for benefits which were supposed to accrue only from the provisions of nature independent of human exertion; and George subscribed to the idea