

economic barriers, which now divide them, with due regard for the workers in the period of readjustment. The relative prosperity of America has not been chiefly due to its protective system—every little tiny country in Europe has that—but to the fact that within our own boundaries the people of the United States have the greatest free trade market in the world.”

He also says: “None of our hesitant liberal friends have advanced one single reason for believing that the Republican or Democratic Party can be made the effective weapon of any sort of struggle for the things that most liberals profess to desire.”

The Socialist Party has done itself credit in placing in nomination for the highest office a man of liberal and advanced ideas and a good deal of real economic knowledge. Single Taxers unattached to any party can do nothing better than to give him a whole-hearted support.

We who are not prepared to go the way of socialism, who are disciples of the new *laissez faire*, who believe in the natural law of competition, can afford to ignore these considerations for the time for the sake of the candidate's clear-cut utterances on the tariff and land question. The plank of the Socialist Party platform which reads “Appropriation by taxation of the annual value of all land held for speculation,” is altogether meaningless and would prove utterly futile in practice, but it is a gesture and a recognition of the importance of our question. It may indicate the entrance of the party into a new and promising field in which it will rally to its ranks the liberal forces of the country. For almost the first time in any presidential campaign we wish well to the party and to its splendid standard bearer. For he not only feels and cares, as did Debs of revered memory, but he seems to *know*, and the union of knowledge and heart may mean a new era in politics.

A Maine Editor Endorses the Single Tax

ONE theory that will not die is “Single Tax.” And that means tax on land values only. There must be value in the theory, because year by year it rather more than holds its own; maintains “house-organs” that put forth modestly but persistently its arguments to the public; gathers its advocates and maintains its position. Here and there as in certain cities in Pennsylvania, its practice is adopted in an amended form that is satisfactory because it works.

The arguments are so varied and extensive that no one can put them in a brief statement. Henry George wrote a great book on this subject. It has never been demolished as an argument. We merely sketch a single phase of it as to rent. Rent is paid for two services—use of building and use of land. Political economists do not call the part paid for the house “rent.” It is interest on invested capital of the owner. But what you pay for the land is

not the same. The land does not wear out; it does not grow old. It does not lose values; often it gains values. There is no depreciation on the land, in places where rent is commonly paid, such as towns and cities.

When a landlord buys bricks and mortar he buys produce, that cost labor and expenditure. When he buys land, he buys a privilege of charging you something for occupying it. It cost nobody anything in the first place, as did the bricks and mortar. No toil entered into its making. So when the landlord buys land, he buys a privilege of collecting from you.

This is a fundamental of the Single Tax argument and is rather hard to get past, without showing your coat-tails.

Now how does the Single Taxer propose to lower rents? It seems too simple. That is why people do not take very much to it. They propose to lower rents by taxing this land and not taxing the bricks and mortar. The land tax is a tax on a privilege or franchise conferred by society. The tax on bricks is a tax on toil.

The friends of this theory of taxation say that it works like a charm because the taxation on land values does not add to the rent—it lowers the rent. If you tax tobacco or gasoline (which is a better example) the price goes up. We are paying 22cts, for gas in Auburn and they pay 18 in Boston. There is a four cent tax in Maine. Every time I buy 25 gallons of gas, I pay one dollar to Maine roads and some other things, which are less essential; and which could be named easily, if we pleased.

But if we tax valuable land, will any less land be used? Not so. When anything lying idle waiting for prices to advance is taxed at its potential values, the first thing the owner does is to make it earn something. He puts it to use.

Here in Lewiston, we have had great stretches of land lying around idle, being owned by a wealthy corporations which can assimilate the taxes into other rents. Try to buy a piece of this land and you are asked a price for location—said location being in a community of 50,000 to 60,000 with water works, street railroads, schools, orderly law. This land did not establish these improvements. It has never shared much in the costs. It can afford to pay taxes because it enriches itself on the enterprise of others.

—Editorial—Lewiston (Maine) *Evening Journal*

PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY, speaking at a League of Nations Union Meeting at Matlock Bath, on Thursday, said: “A great many of the boys who join the O. T. C. (Officers Training Corps) do so with the idea of living a life of sacrifice for their country.”

This we believe to be the case. When the boys grow up they may learn that their sacrifice was for the Land Lords who claim to “own” *their* country!

—Commonweal, London, Eng.