

## Washington Letter

**F**ORTY guests gathered at the banquet held in the dining room of the old historic Cosmos Club building, known for many years as the "Little White House," on April 17, by the Woman's Single Tax Club of Washington, D. C., in honor of the four Single Tax Congressmen. The president of the club, Mrs. Helene McEvoy, acting as toastmistress, introduced the speakers.

Honorable Charles R. Eckert of Pennsylvania, opened his address with a quotation from the aviatrix, Ruth Nichols, expressing the awe and admiration inspired in her during her night trips, by contemplation of the heavenly bodies all moving in harmony with natural law, and her thought of what a wonderful thing it would be if human beings could arrange their national affairs in such a way as to move in the same order and harmony that prevail in the heavens. Mr. Eckert declared there are certain natural laws which govern our economic life, and if we would regulate our social affairs in accordance with these natural laws, we might abolish poverty and secure prosperity. Followers of Henry George believe this philosophy to be sound, and that the declaration of that great economist fifty years ago is true, that there are certain natural laws governing our economic life, and he held that it is the duty of statesmen to discover these laws and then adjust our economic affairs in accordance with them.

Our people seem more "government conscious" than ever before, but it seems that the trend is in the opposite direction from the great central truth, but if a proper appeal were made, he believed that greater progress could be made. It is not enough merely to say that we must collect the economic rent and by doing so, solve all our economic problems. In the first place, it would not do that. As Henry George said, the Single Tax is not a panacea for all our ills, but freedom is. The first thing that should be done is to formulate in plain terms, a governmental policy based on sound economic principles, that would meet the present situation. If that were done, we could point the way out to those who are shaping present policies. There is a great deal being said these days about the inability of certain branches of government to carry into effect the programme they have in mind, and one of the things the Administration has in mind as being necessary in order to reap the benefits of the so-called New Deal is legislation to regulate labor and industry in the hope that hours of labor might be shortened and wages maintained at a certain level. Mr. Eckert favored this as an emergency measure but declared that some other method would have to be resorted to in order to effect a permanent cure for present-day ills, and in carrying that out, it would be necessary to be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves. Even Supreme Court interpretations of laws may be influenced by public opinion, and the trend of legislation in the uttermost parts of the country, and if Single Taxers could get sufficient pressure to bear, both in the halls of Congress and out on the street, he believed we could take this New Deal, which is now in the process of development, and bring so much pressure to bear upon it that we could divert it from the course it is now taking and direct it toward those eternal laws that govern our economic life. The Single Tax philosophy is based upon eternal principles and the order that prevails in the universe also prevails in our social life, and until we adjust our social affairs in harmony with those principles, we are going to be afflicted with the ills and wrongs and hardship and misery that come with violation of law.

Speaking in place of Honorable Herbert S. Bigelow of Ohio, who had to address a mass meeting in Cincinnati, Congressman Henry George Teigan of Minnesota explained that the fact that he had been elected on the Farmer-Labor ticket did not prevent his still believing in the principles of Socialism, even though no longer a member of the party, and that as a Socialist, he believed in working with the Single Taxers to abolish the evil of land monopoly as the first great step to economic freedom. In fact, he said, it was from Henry George's "Protection or Free Trade?" that he had gained his best understanding of the basic principles involved, and he declared the

author to be without question, one of the greatest economists this country has produced, and a writer who stated his ideas in language that ordinary human beings can understand.

Mr. Teigan told the Congressman who just preceded him that Single Taxers had reason to be elated rather than discouraged in this fight. As an instance of their accomplishment, he cited their aid in the growth of the Non-Partisan League which was organized in North Dakota and spread through the adjoining states. In agricultural sections, the Single Tax should be explained, he said, in phrases that will appeal to the farmers. As soon as the state had been captured, a law had been enacted exempting farm improvements from taxation. The law could not go as far as Single Taxers would wish, due to constitutional difficulties, and it is very difficult to amend the constitution there, and their Supreme Court is more reactionary than the Supreme Court of the United States. While other taxes may have their weaknesses, some are worse than others, and one of the worst is the sales tax. In Minnesota two years ago, the Republicans in their legislature had tried to put through a sales tax, but the Governor vetoed it and the state escaped. It became an issue in the campaign of 1936, Mr. Teigan's party of course taking a decided stand against it and the sales tax became so unpopular that its opponents won their greatest victory at the election. While Single Taxers are not, as a class, enthusiastic over income and inheritance taxes, the speaker believed these to be less obnoxious than the sales tax, and he closed by saying he was always happy to be in the company of those who had high ideals, and he wished the Single Taxers every success.

Mrs. Dora Ogle, an invited honor guest, widow of Charles Ogle, who had been a member of the Maryland State Legislature, responding to an invitation from Mrs. McEvoy to say a few words, spoke in favor of the minimum wage law and equal rights for men and women. There was nothing the matter with the Single Tax programme, she said, but there were not enough women working for it, and she expressed the hope that the Woman's Single Tax Club of Washington, D. C., would be a branch of a national organization with headquarters in Washington.

Mrs. Elizabeth M. Phillips, whose "Landlord's Game," originally designed to teach the principles of the Single Tax, had formed the basis of the game of Monopoly which is sweeping the country, recited "The Man with the Hoe," and as an encore, a humorous selection, "Labor vs. Art."

Honorable Robert Crosser of Ohio, the next speaker, treated the Single Tax from the religious angle, declaring that those who were not fundamental democrats were essentially atheists at heart. A man who is not a Democrat is a despot even if a benevolent one. It is necessary to go into an analysis of human psychology to understand why the Socialist programme is making more progress among the masses than the Henry George philosophy. It is a fact that the human race is not given to thinking for itself much. It is easier for the ordinary person to grasp what is meant if told that if he will allow a certain group to manage his affairs for him, they will see that he is taken care of, than it is to study economic principles. There are two essentially different philosophies involved—the divine right of men to govern themselves, and the right of a few to lay out the programme for the rest. But with the Single Tax in force, what need or right would we have, after collecting the economic rent from him, to tell a man what kind of food he should eat or how to run his house, or take from him to help another man?

No human being could create a single idea in the universe, the speaker declared—it was already there, and he quoted the Christian Science maxim, "There is only one Cause." Henry George did not create any truth, he only discovered a great law of the universe and we should strive to conform ourselves to it. There is already a perfect government, and all that men can do is to give manifestation to that truth. The sooner we realize that fact, the better for humanity. That is why Henry George's philosophy has not made more progress. Some benevolent despot comes along and wants good things for



humanity but wants them to come from him. When he reaches the point where he begins to see there is infinite good, which religionists call God (the Saxon word for "good"), he finds there the perfect answer. The speaker closed by quoting Ernest Crosby's poem ending with the line "Then we'll talk of the life that he lived—never mind how he died."

Jackson Ralston of California, who happened to be in Washington on a visit, was a welcome guest at the banquet and spoke in place of Honorable David John Lewis, who had found it to be impracticable to be present. Mr. Ralston recounted the fight which he and other Single Taxers, including Mr. Mooney and Mr. and Mrs. Ogle, waged years ago to give the people of Maryland the right to exempt improvements and tangible personal property from taxation whenever they had the sense to take advantage of it, and several of the towns had already done so. Mr. Ralston then reviewed the campaign in California where he had been in the forefront of the battle for the Single Tax amendment, whose enemies had appealed to the Supreme Court of the State to prevent the measure from being submitted to the people, thereby confessing their fear that it would succeed. He believed, however, that this amendment stood a somewhat better chance of passage now that the sales tax had been tried out and proved so unpopular.

Mr. Mooney of Baltimore, Mrs. Adelaide Johnson, the sculptress of the marble busts of suffrage leaders in the Capital, and Mr. Charles E. Fairman, Art Curator at the Capital, also spoke briefly in response to requests from the toastmistress.

—GERTRUDE E. MACKENZIE.

## Correspondence

### SINGLE TAX AND MACHINERY

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The letter from Rev. John Haynes Holmes to Mr. Burger, which is quoted in Mar.-Apr. "Comment and Reflection," holds that "Single Tax handles the land question—Socialism handles the machine question."

Mr. Holmes is a very outstanding example of the great mass of earnest and intelligent thinkers who see that Single Tax will free workers from the burden of supporting idle owners of land but insist that they must also be freed from supporting idle owners of wealth (machinery). They naturally condemn Single Tax as a *complete remedy* because its advocates themselves allege that it will continue this latter "burden" as actual "earnings of capital."

Evidently "thinking through" on the matter of machinery is important to Single Tax progress, notwithstanding that the actual (natural law) outcome cannot be affected by beliefs about it.\* And to this end your "Comment" clearly notes that "machines can be multiplied many fold"—that the owner "cannot charge more for their use than his competitor demands"—that with labor free to apply itself to natural resources wages "cannot be less than what a laborer could earn if he owned the machinery."

This should help Mr. Holmes to "think through"; and *Single Taxers also*. For does it not apply equally to *all* tools helpful to labor? Does the fact that certain capital tools (animal and vegetable) carry God-given aid to production, affect the fact that *they also* can be multiplied and competitively owned just as other machinery is,—or the fact that output from *their* use (as calves and wheat) must be sold competitively just as output from other machinery is?

If Single Taxers "think through" on this matter,—and on the naturalness of workers agreeing with the dictionaries that *only human beings* can really "earn"—then the present harmful antagonizing of honest and able thinkers like Mr. Holmes may be avoided. The fair assumption that their honesty and intelligence about equal ours seems clearly essential to our successfully passing on the blessing of "seeing the cat."

Reading, Pa.

WALTER G. STEWART.

### RENT AND PRICES

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Both sides are right.

If rent did not enter into wages and prices, there would be no use for any one wasting time with Political Economy.

But, generally, there is no higher price of commodities where the land-value is higher.

Wages and Prices are the Siamese twins of Political Economy. A person with a scientific mind cannot think of one without thinking of the other.

An interesting study: Note the prices for parking in the downtown area of big cities. There the prices are higher where the land-value is higher.\*

Let us all re-affirm and continue to re-affirm: No taxes, but the collection of ground rent in lieu of taxes.

Peoria, Ill.

ALBERT HENNIGES.

### RECALLS DR. BRAUN AND ALEXANDER HÖR

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. Robert Braun, of Budapest at such an early age. In 1893 I had an intimate acquaintanceship with a young Hungarian Jew, Alexander Hör (Hör Sandor). He was eighteen and descended from a long line of Rabbis. I can see him now, when he jumped up from the floor in my store in Waco, Texas, and exclaimed: "I see it now!" (the cat). He later aided me in establishing a dozen or so of the boiler-plate SingleTax papers published in as many Texas cities, at the instigation of Percy Pepon and Sheridan Webster, of Western Newspaper Union, St. Louis. Also with the lecture tour of Louis F. Post in the State in April, 1894, and of Dr. Longstreet's lectures (about 6 months in Texas and a couple of weeks in New Mexico) in 1895. When I bought the circus tent, to which Tom Johnson contributed \$100, and gave it to Dr. Longstreet and paid its expressage to Delaware for the long campaign there, young Hör followed. After the campaign there ended in autumn of 1896, Hör returned to Hungary and entered the National University of Budapest. He organized a Henry George Club with a membership of sixty students. His most promising member was a young medical student, Braun Robert (Robert Braun) of Vasachely, Eastern Hungary—afterward Dr. Robert Braun of Budapest, who later translated some of George's works. Hör thought that the faculty of the University were impeding him in his studies—holding him back, and, not knowing but that more severe punishment awaited him for his activity in our cause, he thought to play safe by returning to America—which he did, foregoing his educational ambitions.

Early this month Hon. John C. Stevenson, recently County Commissioner and candidate for governor, spoke nightly for a week or so over station KOL on Single Tax, at the conclusion of each talk urging his auditors to read "Progress and Poverty!" As Stevenson is the most dominating personality in the state and also its best radio speaker, having had years of experience, daily; his final acquisition, after years of uncertainty, is appreciated. I did not have the pleasure of hearing him, but heard of the talks from many who did hear them.

Seattle, Washington.

A. FREELAND.

### SOCIALISTIC MISCONCEPTIONS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Thus, the fact that wages are low, that the laborer does not receive the full value of the product he has created, sent George in search of the cause of low wages, whereas, according to the followers of George, the same phenomenon sent the socialists hurtling against the very concept of wages. This was the prime fallacy of socialism—the habit of seeking no further than the obvious.

Wages are paid by the capitalist to the laborer; they are there—

\*But this is pure rent—not the price of a commodity produced on the location.  
—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.