

to vote on specially taxing the value of land—not improvements, but the bare land—of taxing extra every land-holding worth more than \$10,000, and taxing it on a rising scale so as to discourage big holdings, except for use.

If the Oregon proposals carry, working farmers will have their taxes reduced \$8 a year apiece on the average. With most working farmers the reduction will be greater. Pretty much the same effect will doubtless be produced in Missouri.

But whether the proposals carry or not, isn't as important as the fact that the questions are being discussed by the people themselves all over those States. Oregon and Missouri have become great debating societies for deciding whether industry or land monopoly shall be favored by taxation.

All of us have something to learn from those debates, for it is impossible anywhere to tax industry without favoring land monopoly or land monopoly without favoring industry.



THE RIGHT KEYNOTE.

Samuel Danziger in No. 288 of the Press Bureau
Publication of the American Economic
League, Cincinnati.

It is a rare good fortune to have this year at least one Presidential candidate who bases his arguments on sound economic principles.

That candidate is Woodrow Wilson.

It is not always popular to stick to logic and common sense in discussing current problems. There are more people who will applaud a suggestion to send trust magnates to jail than will appreciate the suggestion to deprive trusts of the privileges which give them power. More will demand an arbitrary minimum wage-law than understand the fact that more freedom instead of less is what workers need to get what they produce.

So when a candidate discusses such questions as trusts and minimum wage, and appeals to reason and logic rather than to ignorance and prejudice, there is good ground for hope that his election will result in establishing a policy that will deal with evils in such a way that their cause will be removed and make no spectacular but useless efforts to strike at symptoms.

In speaking on the trust problem Wilson leaves to his opponents the advocacy of such quack remedies as regulation, prosecution and litigation. He points to the privileges which have given them power, the privileges which his opponents would leave undisturbed, and says that these must be removed.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SINGLETAX IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Vancouver, B. C.

In the Oregon and Missouri campaigns for Singletax the statement is being made by opponents of the reform, that the Singletaxers of British Columbia are tired of their "experiment" and are anxious to have

the Singletax system repealed. Let me say that such statements are wholly and absolutely false.

The Singletax is not an experiment in British Columbia. Since 1894 we have been exempting 50 per cent of the value of improvements from Municipal Taxation. This partial application of the principle worked so well that now nearly every municipality in British Columbia voluntarily exempts the total value of improvements from taxation and finds that that works very much better.

Twenty years ago candidates for municipal offices who sought office for the sake of office boldly announced that they were opposed to Singletax. Today they advertise that they will see to it that improvements be not taxed.

And the principle is now being accepted for Provincial taxation. There is not a Singletaxer in the present Provincial cabinet, and nearly all their appointees to office are opposed to it; yet the Premier has announced that at the next session at Victoria, amendments to the Provincial revenue laws will have a prominent place on the legislative menu. The proposed new law will involve the cancellation of the old three dollar poll tax, as well as important changes in the way of reduction in personal and realty taxation. The Government holds the view that all the revenue necessary for carrying on the machinery of government should be derived from natural resources.

A few days ago an honest Tory who consistently opposes Singletax said to me: "I am afraid that this Singletax is going to be very hard to repeal, now that people have got a taste of it." That expresses concisely the feeling of the opponents of Singletax in B. C. today. More than likely the opposition in Oregon and Missouri have a premonition of this. I asked my Tory friend: "Why should it be repealed?" He replied: "It is very hard on any one who wants to hold vacant property."

Exactly. No self-respecting Drone likes to be forced out of the Hive.

Now what has Singletax done for British Columbia?

First. I have noticed in American municipalities where I lived that a small army of men are employed to chase up owners of personal property for assessment and collection of taxes. To say nothing of the unpleasantness of this inquisitorial proceeding, I noticed that the boldest liar had the lowest valuations and the man who moved oftenest and farthest paid the least taxes in proportion to the value of his personal property. In B. C. we no longer pay this army of gum shoers, and the falsifier of personal property valuations is without a vocation. A man may tell the truth about his personal property and he won't be fined for doing so.

Second. The C. P. R. Co. are, I think, the most powerful landed monopoly on the American continent. They owned 6,000 acres in and alongside the city of Vancouver. For eighteen years, under the old system of taxation, they held the greater part of this land idle, selling timber from it and waiting for a rise. Under the Singletax they got a tremendous hustle on. In three years, by employing constantly several hundred men and half a dozen logging engines, they have cleared the greater part of that land, and it sold like hot cakes and at good prices, too. Two years ago the ground on which a splendid apart-

ment house is now going up was a wilderness of blackened logs and stumps 10 or 12 feet high—a scene of desolation such as no country outside of B. C. could show.

Third. But the best thing Singletax has done for us is that it has instilled into all our citizens a feeling of Civic Pride. Vancouverites are proud of their city. Let any of your spouters against Singletax in Oregon or Missouri come up here and ask them.

And we have good cause to be proud of her. Of her splendid buildings, her broad thoroughfares, her hustling industrial and commercial activity, and the independence and vigor of her people who have wrought this miracle under the fostering influence of the exemption of enterprise and industry from taxation.

To the people of Oregon and Missouri I say you can do likewise—if you have the courage. God does nothing for people who are afraid to enter the promised land.

JOHN MACMILLAN.



CORRECTION.

By an error in editing, Mr. Hermann's letter in last week's Public at pages 966 and 967, made it appear that the incidents described by him had occurred at Savannah, Mo. They occurred at King City, Mo.—Editors of The Public.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

FREETRADE PRINCIPLE.

Gottingen, Germany.

It is strange how simple facts often escape us for a long time, only to spring suddenly into our consciousness—simple facts that we should have recognized long before.

I have been a Freetrader for a long time. I recognized that as a taxation system the tariff is indefensible. I felt that, as for Protection, the capitalist got the doughnut and the rest of us got the hole. Still, in discussions with Protectionist friends, it never occurred to me to argue that capital, as opposed to capitalists, actually loses by being protected—and that, too, not only from a broad world-wide standpoint but from the narrower national viewpoint.



It is an old dodge and a fair one to take an absolutely simple case which embodies all the principles.

Let us, therefore, imagine two communities so situated, and possessed of such natural resources, that one advantageously produces cotton goods and the other wool.

Suppose that if the entire community of A—produced cotton cloth, the value thereof would be \$10,000 a year, whereas they can produce only \$5,000 worth of wool goods.

B—, on the contrary, can produce \$10,000 worth of wool, and but \$5,000 worth of cotton cloth.

Under a condition of free trade and unrestricted competition A— would devote all its time to cot-

ton, B—to wool, which they would then exchange. Each would thus have \$5,000 worth of both commodities.

But some "patriotic" citizen of A— suggests that home industry should be encouraged.

For this purpose A— carries Protection to its logical extreme and prohibits imports from B—. Half its citizens now go to producing wool, for which the community is but poorly suited. The result is \$5,000 worth of cotton as before, but instead of the \$5,000 worth of wool which B— formerly supplied, the \$2,500 which the half of its workers are able to produce.

Thus the result of this system of "protection" is that with the same number of workers, the same capital, much less is produced.

That is precisely what the nations of the world are doing today—our own land being the worst offender.



I suppose this way of looking at tariff reform is very old and I've no doubt it is elsewhere much better stated. Like many another, I haven't read a great deal that isn't required for the University course. A lot of good things "have to wait" till the strenuousness of college days is exchanged for Life's comparative quiet. The idea came to me with such force that I burned to impart it. It may be that this will catch the eye of others who have never happened to think of this phase of the matter, and another nail be driven in the coffin of an antiquated tax system.



To add a paragraph that is almost entirely foreign, free trade and land reform are pretty well bound up together now in England. Free trade has made England enormously wealthy; a system of land tenure comparable only to that of such enlightened countries as Mexico and Russia has gathered that wealth in the hands of the few. Today, as The Public's correspondents have repeatedly remarked, the land question is almost the only one which excites the English electorate.

Unless the Liberal Party adopts some comprehensive scheme for Land Reform, the Tories, knowing well the value of such a war cry, are going to advance their plan. One can easily imagine how effective a land reform the land-owning aristocracy will bring forward! But by talking of housing, city improvement and a lot of details, and parading themselves as the real friends of the workman, they may well becloud the issue and win.

One shudders to think of the condition of England with her abominable system of land tenure and a high protective tariff. Either is bad; both would be insufferable.

H. B. ENGLISH,
(Rhodes Scholar in Oxford from Nebraska.)



SENATOR OWEN.

Madill, Oklahoma.

Noticing your statement to the effect that Congressmen George and Buchanan were Singletaxers in the House, and that probably Owen was one in the