

George's doctrine. It's coming, don't you mistake. Judge Browning, too, will come, as some of the brightest of your other lawyers have done. But regarding Thanksgiving, Mr. Caldwell, did you give thanks on Thanksgiving Day?"

"Not publicly. You see the program was filed with conservatives, as the very conservative churches are always careful to do. No Vine street church with a Bigelow in Amarillo. We radicals, however, are yet privileged to howl on the high-ways and by-ways, and we howl. We give thanks in the same places. Now, at discovering that Opie Read, the greatest American novelist, is heart and soul with us, we will bring out our caliope lungs, and awaken the welkin—round about."

That parting hand shake! Well, nothing equaled its heartiness since I separated from Henry George at Waco in 1887.

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND – A SYMPOSIUM.

From ROBERT B. MARTIN.

MR. EDITOR AND BROTHER SINGLE TAXER:

Allow me to thank you for the kind spirit displayed in your criticism of my article on "Private Property in Land" in the Autumn number of the REVIEW, and to ask one more brief hearing upon the matter.

I have no desire to deceive the public by representing the Single Tax as other than what it really is. On the contrary, my wish is to prove that instead of being a denial of the institution of private property in land the Single Tax is the only economic philosophy that justifies it, giving for the first time in the history of economic science a possible method by which land ownership may be enjoyed as a thing distinct from land monopoly.

Private property in land is the necessary and only institution upon which to base a competitive system of industry. Common property in land is the necessary and logical basis of a communistic system of industry. Common property in land is a contradiction of a competitive form of society, just as private ownership is a denial of the communistic order. All that any one attempting to mix the two can accomplish is to confuse those whom he is trying to convert. Reasons appear to me sufficient for thinking that the Single Taxer who represents that the philosophy of Mr. George is a denial of the institution of private property in land is unconsciously teaching that which is not true. Here kindly permit me to reply to your criticisms in the order in which they appear.

You say that I contradict my own position and thereby prove the incontrovertibility of what you are pleased to call the Garrison view by attempting to reduce to private ownership that which I have previously defined as "our heritage." How, it is asked, can that which was "ours" become mine or thine? The answer is, by contract, by agreement, and by institution, the same as when we attend a banquet to partake of a dinner which has been paid for at a given price per plate. When we enter the hall and view the tables bountifully spread we might truly say this is "ours," but as each man sits down at his own plate he reduces that which was previously "ours" to that which is mine and thine. Such is the method agreed upon, and so long as one does not take a greater degree of freedom than any other, the ends of justice have been subserved. Each by his presence asserts and claims the right to pay the price in the

sweat of his brow to a seat at Nature's banquet, and having paid the price, the right to the seat is incontestable.

It is said that I confuse the meaning of the words "produce" and "create." To produce means to bring forth, to cause to be. Now Nature alone can cause a fish to be; man does not produce the fish, he does but *procure* it, and the labor employed in the effort to *procure* is what gives title, and when you grant him private property in a fish you at the same time grant him private property in land, unless it be denied that a fish in its natural state is land.

Again you say that it is one thing to grant private ownership in a fish, and quite another to give ownership to the sea, but I contend that it is only a question of economic relation. If it were possible for man to bear the same economic relation to the sea as he now bears to the land, justice would demand individual property in the sea, as has indeed developed in certain trout preserves and oyster beds.

Of every kind of property or wealth you say "it ceases to be land when it becomes wealth in any form." This statement appears to me incongruous, and confusing. All Single Taxers know, but seem sometimes to forget, that all wealth is but different forms of land plus the impress of human labor. All exchanges of wealth are but exchanges of land, which is constantly tending to return again to Nature's reservoir whence it came. Prof. Seligman rightly says that he does not agree with Mr. George in his attempt to vindicate the institution of private property excluding land. The monopolistic value that we find in any form of wealth is the exact measure of the evil of land monopoly. If we keep in mind that we are dealing always in "land" we shall recognize the fact that, when we pay ten dollars for a five dollar ton of coal, somebody somewhere has cornered a land privilege equivalent to the extortion. A man sells his labor in a competitive market, but he spends his wages in a monopoly market. To abolish this inequality is "the labor problem."

Is it true that the institution of private property in land was born of the sword? Men have dispossessed their fellows of land, have changed their national boundary lines by the sword, by the rule of might, but private property in land has not grown out of this. Mr. George truly asserts that man is the one creature that has the power of supplementing what nature has done for him by that which he can do for himself, and it was the application of this principle in the form of cultivation that gave birth to private property in land. Man could never have enjoyed security in reaping where he had sown without private possession of the area of his cultivation. It was the one necessary condition upon which any progressive social or economic order could be constructed. But, in the process of time, it was discovered that, while private ownership gave security to his own labor, an extension of domain would make it possible for a man to demand tribute of other laborers. Hence has come land monopoly with its attendant evils, and hence the land question, until finally the Single Tax is put forward as a method of conserving the good that land ownership has brought by eliminating from it the bad feature of land monopoly.

The ambiguities that are charged to our philosophy are the result, it seems to me, of Mr. George's failure in "Progress and Poverty," Chapter I, Book VII., on "The Injustice of Private Property in Land," to distinguish between property in land and monopoly of land. When he condemns the institution of private property in land he has in mind land monopoly; if this is not so, then the chapter is a paradox, for in its entirety it is a treatise upon how to reconcile a "fixity of tenure" (private ownership) with "equal rights" to land, a result which he asserts, most emphatically, may be accomplished by socializing ground rent. This is the theme of "Progress and Poverty," just as sure as Salvation in Jesus is the theme of the "New Testament." Substitute in place

of the word property here and there as it appears the word monopoly, and the chapter becomes coherent and consistent, otherwise it makes for confusion. In place of long quotations, which space forbids, let me invite every reader of the REVIEW to re-read "Progress and Poverty," first saying to his prejudices: "Get thee behind me Satan!" Let him also read with profit Thomas Paine's "Agrarian Justice."

What do we mean when we say that our intention is not to tax land, but only to tax land value? Is it not because of a feeling that the private possession of land, which has no economic value, does not contravene the law of equal freedom? Will there not be, under the Single Tax, what we now call "no rent" land, and if so what harm would follow the private ownership of a thousand such acres until the inception of a rental value, and if rent is paid thereafter as it accrues, is not the situation just as harmless as before? Is not this argument conclusive that private ownership of land, *per se*, is not an evil, but that the evil arises from the monopolization of rent, and is not monopolized rent the exact measure of the dominion over the services of others that inheres in land monopoly? "No rent" land—no land monopoly; private appropriation of rent—land monopoly: common property in rent—the Single Tax. Let the individual render to society a tribute equivalent to advantages socially conferred, and society in turn render to the individual benefits proportionate to the value of his individual contribution to the commonwealth. This is justice.

In closing permit me to remark that if the above does not vindicate my position then the situation is beyond the pale of logic. Seriously speaking, Brother Miller and fellow Single Taxers, it is my firm belief that the future of the cause hinges upon the soundness of our position in regard to this point. Let us, therefore, without prejudice, make the best possible use of the opportunity so generously afforded by the REVIEW, and of that faculty of which Jefferson said, it is the "only oracle that Heaven has vouchsafed to man—his reason: remembering we are not responsible for the rightness of its decisions, but only for their uprightness."

Hyde Park, Mass.

ROBT. B. MARTIN.



From LEONARD TUTTLE.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

In the discussion going on in your columns in regard to the question of private property in land, it seems to me that more emphasis should be placed upon the difference between private property in land and private possession of land. The moral object of the Single Tax is to destroy private property and establish common rights in land. This is entirely consistent with private possession, which simply means private and undisturbed occupancy. A tenant leasing land from a landlord, for a year or a hundred years, has private possession during the term of the lease, but not ownership. The landlord still has the ownership while the tenant is in possession, for which he has to pay the landlord.

The whole earth may be held in private possession while common rights to the earth are established and acknowledged in full. To accomplish this it is only necessary that those who hold possession shall pay to the owners—the whole people—the ground rent, which is the value of such possession. The tenant now pays the ground rent to the landlord; the Single Tax would take it in taxation for public use. The landlord now gets the rent because he owns the