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NEW APPROACHES NEEDED

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Unfortunately, there has been too much of the closed mind in our movement. Had more sympathetic treatment been accorded men like Beckwith, Jorgensen, Cullman, Wilcox, to name a few, when they tried to break fresh ground forty years ago we would not be experiencing barren discussions on Rent. Concentrate on the every-day problems of government. Never cease working out how the single tax would operate in practice, how it could be introduced with the least disturbance to existing interests, broaden our knowledge of men who have tried to reform the world and find out why they failed. Get away from Henry George.

Not that there isn't much to be learned from George. I never cease being amazed at the grasp he had of the problems of government and the modern approach he made to them. But most "Georgists" (a hateful word to me) having never read anything except Progress and Poverty are unaware of the good stuff to be found in his lectures, speeches and writings in The Standard. We have had too much idolatry of George and not enough effort to learn from other men.

Idolatry leads to superstition just as much in politics as in religion. Idolise a man and you accept and are responsible for his mistakes as well as the truth he preaches. Turgot, the only single taxer to get his hands on power, never joined the Physiocrats because of his distrust of "sects." George himself would have rejected the suggestion that any one should call himself a "Georgist."

Let us use the IU NEWSLETTER as an outlet for those with a new approach to our problems. There is need for new thinking. At a time when the world needs our remedy for its ills, for all practical purposes we are dead from the ears up. All legislation introduced since we got the first small installment of the single tax (in Australia and New Zealand) has been in the other direction. Nevertheless I would not agree that land-value taxation has been a failure. On the contrary it has been successful to the small extent that it has been used. When the land tax was introduced in the nineties of the last century it was at the rate of a penny in the pound - the first step. In the minds of single taxers, if not in the government's, another penny would have been the next step with a corresponding reduction in commodity taxation, probably customs. But the second step was never taken. Our taxation policy since has been away from the single tax.

In the meantime the taxation policy has created vested interests that will fight vigorously against a more scientific system. Our task is to work out how the transfer from the present unbusiness-like system to a single tax system can be made with the least disturbance. Discussions on Rent are of little help to us. Let us use the NEWSLETTER for discussing ways and means of introducing the single tax system, an objective that will tax our talents to the utmost.