

Oklahoma range in value from zero up to \$300 per acre, with \$100 per acre as a good average. Loans based on 50 per cent. of the value would then average pretty well around \$50 per acre.

With high taxes to meet, high interest rates to pay, short crops, low prices, and very little money with which to pay the taxes and interest it is not at all surprising that many farmers and land owners, who are not farmers, should be offering their land for sale. Some of it very low, some moderately low or moderately high, and some very high. But there is a dearth of buyers. What they really offer for sale is merely their equities in the land, the purchaser agreeing to assume the loan. Therein hangs a tale.

A reasonably careful investigation has convinced me that the majority of the land being offered for sale is not actually worth the amount that has been loaned upon it, with farm products selling at what they have been for the past year. So that if one received the owner's equity as a gift, and assumed the loan on the land, the money he would receive from the sales of live stock or produce during the year would not amount to 3% on the investment, after deducting expenses, and in many cases it would be less than 1%.

A natural consequence of this condition will be that a great many farms will be foreclosed on and sold to the highest bidder. Where they do not bring enough to satisfy the amount of the mortgage the loan companies will bid them in in some cases. But as most of the loan companies are not financially able to buy back any great number of farms and pay taxes on them, it is extremely likely that during the next two or three years farms are going to sell pretty cheap in this part of the country.

It is impossible to prophesy or prognosticate with any degree of accuracy whatever, as to what the future has in store. But it has been and still is the opinion of the writer that certain forces are at work which will aid, hasten, or actually bring about some of the ends toward which Single Tax advocates have been striving all these years.

L. R. W.

This Was His Well Known Historical Novel

OWN your own home and reap the benefits of increased land values rather than your landlord," was the advice of Bradley Hull in a speech before the Single Tax Club in The Hollenden yesterday. His entire address was spent in interpreting the seventh chapter of Henry George's book, 'Prosperity and Progress.'—Cleveland (O.) *Plain Dealer*.

The above clipping from the *Plain Dealer* reminds us of the experience of Harry Cline in the Cleveland Public Library when he asked for Henry George's "Progress and Poverty." The book was out, said the woman of whom he inquired, "But," she added, "we have another very good book on progress," and handed him "Pilgrim's Progress." Cleveland (Ohio) *Press*.

The Farmers' Load of Taxes

THE Single Tax movement in California has found a new channel for its activities.

The recently organized Farm Center meetings are attended largely by men who are engaged in farming as a business venture and it is necessary for them to become conversant with all phases of farming, especially the selling of their crops at profitable prices. This in turn, requires a broad investigation of the whole situation and leads to the study of economics and influences which depress or stimulate markets and prices.

The land monopolists' usual way of discrediting the Single Tax is by using the columns of country newspapers, but this no longer succeeds, for the specialist on the tax question must now face audiences and stand questioning and prove his contentions or withdraw his attacks.

Many of these modern farmers are men of means, and have the ability of public speaking; they have some leisure time and a large measure of interest in the welfare of mankind. One of these men is Mr. George A. Briggs, whose farm is near Wasco, in Kern county. He was drawn to the city of Fresno on account of its facilities for handling and marketing cotton. While here, he visited about twenty Farm Center meetings in this county. He specializes on urging a sane system of taxation which will advance the interests of farmers in particular and all others in general.

In order to give the farmers a full view of our unscientific system of taxation and show them in a clear and distinct outline the complete load of taxes which must be paid by the farmer himself when he buys back some of his own products in finished clothing, household goods and implements, Mr. Briggs cites a typical case—that of a pair of shoes—the leather of which came from the cattle sold by the farmer and passed through seven or eight enterprises each of which had to add to the cost of the shoes, the cost of other materials and of labor, etc., and their regular profits; and each of the eight concerns, had of necessity, to add a proportionate part of their several taxes, the full amount of which had to come out of the pocket of the farmer who in the beginning got only a very few cents for the part of the hide contained in the shoes.

Mr. Briggs concedes the regular cost of materials and labor and profits of business and the interest on the invested capital; but he questions the necessity of the long list of the several taxes amounting to 30 cents on every dollar's worth of goods we buy, as well as on every dollar that is paid by the consumers of the crops we raise. He explains that our government must have funds to perform its various duties, but immediately he refers to the center of all cities where land is worth millions of dollars an acre and their inadequate taxes which are not commensurate with the big income of rents that are laid in the laps of city landlords, and which are sadly out of all proportion with the taxes paid by the industrious and oppressed farmers.

He then cites a case of a certain city workman whose wages are \$100 a month and who lives in a rented bungalow

for which he formerly paid \$25 a month. "But, because city lots are taxed too low the owners can hold out for a long time for the highest prices," he says, "this not only prevents the building of enough houses, but raises the cost of building them, and this higher cost of houses, and the scarcity of them, very naturally raises the rents, which this workman has to pay, to \$40 a month, which takes 15 per cent. more out of the workman's wages in addition to the 30 per cent. already taken out for food and clothing taxes, which makes \$45 a month which the workman cannot use to buy products nor anything else.

"When we multiply this one case with the millions of workmen throughout our nation with about half of their wages filched away from them in misplaced tax burdens, and with every month in the year, then we can first begin to realize the viciousness of our present oppressive tax system and the stupendous burden upon them and ourselves and the crime against us all.

"If taxes were placed upon all land and lots and locations suitable for big buildings as well as on all idle farm lands, according to their true selling value, then there would be enough income to run our whole government and there would be no need for the several taxes on our farm improvements, and chattel taxes, income and food taxes, and license fees for every move we make. Then our dollars would buy 30 per cent. more things for our homes and families; and the millions of city workmen could buy 45 per cent. more of our products and other needful things for their insufficiently fed and clothed children, and they could live in better homes at the old time rate of rents. Our surplus farm products would then find a ready market right here at home among our own people, right here in our own country; and the manufacturers of machinery for farming purposes could sell their whole output to us American farmers instead of shipping their machinery out of our reach into far away foreign countries."

In addressing Farm Center meetings relative to our unsound and unjust system of taxation Mr. Briggs relates his own experience of transforming his farm from its wild sage brush and uneven condition, to its present leveled up, checked and fully irrigated arrangement suitable for grape and cotton culture.

"The outlay for the transformation, together with the cost of two dwellings, barns and irrigation pumps cost \$100 per acre besides the purchase price of the land," he says. Then the assessor came around and raised the taxes on this quarter section from its former ridiculously low figure to an enormous sum that was equivalent to an actual penalty for changing this barren waste of land into a farming enterprise capable of producing big crops for the benefit of mankind. This is no fault of the assessor. It is a defect in our system of taxation which places blocks under the wheels of progress, which obstructs every good move we make, and under which we all suffer alike and from which none of us can escape until the system is changed and corrected.

"The real causes of our handicaps and shortcomings in

the business of farming have their actual beginnings in this unsound tax plan, and its bad influence operates in such a roundabout way and so underhanded and silently, that we don't notice it until its damaging results are fully on our hands. And even then, hardly anyone realizes that the real cause of most of our hard struggles and losses begins away back in this unrighteous tax plan.

"This imposition upon us improvers is bad enough in itself; but when I and others, and the nearby Herbert Hoover 2,500 acre enterprise, demonstrate what this unproven land is capable of producing, then the holders of the millions of acres of surrounding land immediately raise their prices per acre and thus exact a forestaller's unearned ransom. This has the blighting effect of keeping the rising generation from their natural rights to a place on earth, causes tens of thousands of newcomers to again leave our fair State and keeps it from its proper and well deserved development."

When Mr. Briggs makes these points, I invariably noticed persons brightening up, seeming to have had the same experiences in their own localities. The routine business of the Farm Center meeting precludes going into the academic phases of a correct plan of taxation, but always at the close of the addresses, someone is bound to have sensed Single Tax sentiment and will ask if he would advise a change to that system to escape from our deplorable predicament; whereupon, Mr. Briggs replies by asking the questioner, "Well, considering the fact that on every dollar's worth of merchandise you buy, you pay the taxes on nine different businesses—wouldn't you on the whole prefer a single tax?" And this sets the questioner to thinking, and seems to amuse the others, and always creates a noticeably favorable impression on the audience.

JOHN H. MEYER.

A Few Words With Samuel Gompers

DEAR MR. GOMPERS:

My attention has been called to an article in the January number of the *American Federationist*. Its title is "Abolish Unemployment," and its sub-title is very positive: "It Can and Must Be Done—Labor's Remedy."

Years ago Mr. Henry George said in a public address: "My friend, Sam Gompers, has proposed 24 solutions for our labor troubles, and not one of them the right one."

Speaking in San Francisco, December 1st, 1913, 16 years after Henry George's death, you spoke as follows: "I believe in the Single Tax. I count it a great privilege to have been a friend of Henry George, and to have been one of those who helped to make him understood in New York and elsewhere."

I beg to call your attention to this very emphatic statement. I will not hint that in the work of "making Henry George understood" you have not been as unremitting as we might have desired. I refrain from indicating your