

solve the problem of shortage of housing was to make the investment of capital in housing more attractive than investments in any other property. The only way the legislature could do this was to permit cities to take the tax off housing partly or wholly for a certain number of years. Not because the Legislature understood the probable effects of such a policy, but because it was that or nothing, the policy of tax exemption was decided upon and it certainly worked. Something like \$2,500,000,000 was invested in housing and although the exemption was stopped three years ago so far as new buildings were concerned, the flood tide is still running, and though most people think that the point of adequate supply has been reached there seems to be no end of construction in sight.

In the first years of the building boom complaint was frequently heard that the public was not getting the benefit of tax exemption but that it was all going into the pockets of the builders. But no claims had been made that, at the outset, rents would be reduced. All that was contended was that it would cause new buildings to be erected. No one could question that that purpose was accomplished. Those who were far-sighted saw that after a time the supply of building would exceed the effective demand and that rents would commence to fall. This condition has begun to happen. Rents starting at \$25. per room per month have fallen to \$20. per room per month and are now down to \$15. per month per room in many places and still the building boom continues, soon the price seems liable to fall to \$12., which is cost with a slight profit, and if we compute this value in pre-war dollars we will find that the price or rent of these rooms will not be far from pre-war rentals.

Still the cry for housing relief arises. Even if rooms rent for \$12.50 per month per room such rentals are beyond the reach of vast fractions of the City's population. How is the large number of families whose earning range from \$30. to \$40. to be provided for? A large number of well meaning people are committed to the idea that they should be housed in good homes regardless of what the cost of the homes may be.

For the first time, when the flood tide of prosperity is supposed to be running, we find people advancing the view that as there are vast numbers of people whose labor is necessary to our comfort and well-being, and who can not exact a living wage for themselves, that we must supplement this by providing homes below cost, but that this subsidy policy must be carefully differentiated from pauperization. The citizen's self-respect must be preserved even though he may be in receipt of relief by the expenditure of public money. Incidentally none of the projects which has been discussed have resulted in anything practical.

No one seems courageous enough to declare that what we are confronted with is just the old poverty problem back again; a large proportion of the people engaged in unorganized industries have been unable to get their wages

advanced enough to make up for the depreciated dollar, and so while their nominal wages have risen they are actually worse off than before the war. As usual when we get beneath the surface we find that all the so-called social problems, by whatever name they are called, proceed from the same fundamental cause, the denial of natural rights to the earth and its bounties.

Authority

(Republished by Request.)

THE following article by Joseph Dana Miller which appeared in Nov.-Dec. 1926, of LAND AND FREEDOM was in reply to President Coolidge who had said in an address at the Georgetown University: "I would not venture to say what our country most needs from its educated young men and women. But one of its urgent needs is a greater spirit of loyalty which can come only from reverence for constituted authority, faith in things as they are."

To this vicious teaching we made reply as follows: (Fred S. Wallace of the Coshocton, Ohio, *Daily Tribune*, paid the article the compliment of saying: "Several of the paragraphs rise to the heights of Henry George were he writing on the same theme.")

"The final arbiter of all intellectual truth is the mind; of all moral truth the conscience. These are the real authorities, and the duty of subjecting all things to the test of reason and conscience a man owes to his fellowmen, and to God. It is the most solemn of all obligations, for truth is the most valuable of all earthly possessions. How great a wrong then he commits by a slavish subservience to authority. The fallibility of human reason is not to be disputed—we hear much of it, certainly too much. But the fallibility of authority is of an infinitely more tenuous nature. We may decide wrongly by following our own mental processes. But ultimately the path if persisted in leads to truth. To the rational processes of the mind there is no other destination. But Authority is the rock in the way of intellectual and social progress. It is a tyranny that keeps kings on their thrones and fakirs in high places; that moves armies across the prostrate bodies of peoples; that sends Conscience that should rule the world quaking and trembling into dark corners.

What credentials has Authority beyond its apparel, insignia, gold lace or sounding titles? Can it "point with pride" to its record, or "view with alarm" the results of disobedience to its commands? Has it such achievements to its credit that justify the suppression of conscience and the reasoning faculty to its obiter dicta? Read the record and decide. For instead of being usually right this most worshipful Authority is nearly always everywhere wrong. Its history trails with blunders, bristles with fallacies; it is even now pompous with theories long exploded; everywhere it has cheated, humbugged and tyrannized over reason and conscience.

Look at the long record of Authority in every department of human activity. Authority supported slavery; it guided the whip in the hand of the overseer as it fell upon the quivering shoulders of the black; it sounded in the boom of cannon whose dreadful messengers brought death and sufferings to millions of men; its voice is forever on the side of war. And how has it treated the great ones of the earth? To Socrates it gave the poisoned draught; the Gracchi it stoned; Garrison it drove thru the streets of Boston; Giordano Bruno it burned; Christ it crucified.

It was Authority that threw Roger Bacon, the ablest man of his time, in prison. It was Authority that in the person of Calvin put Servetus to death. It was Authority that lit the Smithfield fires, that presided over the horrors of Siberia. It was Authority that exiled DeCamoens, and the glory of Portuguese poetry saw the light on an inhospitable Chinese coast. Authority has denounced the teachings of the prophets of all the ages as heretical, from the Hebrews to those of the present day. What a biting poison it is should be obvious to those who reflect how instantaneously and completely a man is transformed when its mantle falls upon him, and how strikingly it effects a metamorphosis from humility to arrogance.

It is the tyranny of Authority that keeps the Arab sheik of today like the sheik of Abraham's day; that has petrified Chinese civilization; that in the Middle Ages desolated western Asia from the Bosphorus to Jerusalem. It was Authority that hissed "Jacobin" to every proposition for social reform as now it shrieks "bolshevik." In Egypt Authority enthroned the cat and made sacrosanct the crocodile. It has been polygamist, monogomist, polyandrist, as suited its purpose. It put kings on white elephants and clothed them in mail of precious stones. It has invented all kinds of evil spirits from Belzebub to Hobomoko for men to bow before—and industriously they have made obeisance. They have yielded to Authority as did men in fabled Athens to the bed of Procrustes, to which they have accommodated the proportions of such independent judgments as they were capable of forming."

THE Henry George Congress, organized to propagate the Single Tax theory, held an international session at Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, in September. It is not generally known that the late Bishop of Michigan, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Charles D. Williams, was an ardent Single Taxer, so careful and discriminating was he in his public utterance of his private social theories. However on greeting friends who made themselves known to him as churchmen during the General Convention in New York City some years ago, he made his usual gracious response. But when they added: "And we are Single Taxers, too," he bubbled over with enthusiasm and genial mirth and replied with ready wit: "Ah, then, you are very near the Kingdom!"—*The Churchman*.

Lecture Tour of George H. Duncan

DURING January and February, Hon. George H. Duncan, field lecturer for the Henry George Lecture Association, Chicago, filled forty-six engagements in the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri.

In Los Angeles and vicinity it was a pleasure to meet the veterans of the Great Adventure movement, Mrs. Lona Ingham Robinson, Mr. Gerrit Johnson, Mr. R. J. Miller, and others, who have never lost faith in the essential justice and righteousness of Henry George's philosophy. Here, also was found the interesting series of study forums carried on under the direction of Dr. F. W. Roman, in which attention is directed to current events, politics and history, as well as sound economics. Even for Single Tax enthusiasts a general knowledge of the great world movements of this and previous times is desirable; and for those not so fully grounded in economics a "balanced ration" may prove the means of a real gain in economic knowledge. The Tax Relief Association, under the immediate direction of Stoughton Cooley, assisted by Sid Evans, George A. Briggs, George H. Dunlop, and others, is continuously spreading progressive tax thoughts.

At Seattle the Commonwealth Club, with a membership of liberals including Councilman Oliver T. Erickson, W. D. Lane, with Miss Adele Parker as president, pays attention to all public affairs, including sane taxation.

In Idaho, Senator Dow Dunning (Boise) and Robert B. Wilson, (Emmett) lose no opportunity to point out what the state needs in tax method improvement.

In Denver it was learned that John B. McGauran is frequently speaking before various organizations in that city and elsewhere in Colorado on the Single Tax, while at Colorado Springs, Mr. M. M. Sinton, who recently visited Australia, told of the progress the movement is making there.

At Topeka, Kansas, Mr. George Hughes and J. H. Sawtelle arranged for public hearings, while at Kansas City, Mo., Mr. Edward White and Mr. J. C. Fuller kept the speaker busy during his stay. On Tuesday evening, February 14, under the auspices of the Open Forum, of which J. L. Jones is secretary, a Memorial meeting for Louis F. Post was held. At this meeting Mr. Vernon J. Rose and Mr. White paid tribute to our beloved leader, and many others added words of appreciation.

Mr. Duncan being the secretary of the New Hampshire Recess Tax Commission took pains during his visits to various state capitols to confer with state tax officials. In every state visited there is a growing interest in tax matters, evidenced by the organization of Tax-payers' Associations and similar bodies. While thus far study has been directed principally toward expenditures, in almost every instance the method of raising revenues is beginning