

Mrs. S. E. Greeno. Rents, \$30.00 on 2 bay front lots. Taxes refunded \$11.90, leaving \$18.10 rent for the 2 lots, or \$9.05 per lot, which may be compared with the \$6.80 paid by Mrs. M. A. Robinson for lot nearer the bay front.

James Bellangee. Rents, \$6.50 on 2 acres at \$2.25 and 2 acres at \$1.00. Value of improvements, or amount of taxes refunded, is not shown on the statement from which the above facts and figures have been compiled and which was furnished to me by the present Secretary of the Colony, but the value of the property is not less than \$500.00, which at the rate of taxation now ruling here, i. e. \$1.40 per \$100.00 would make the tax exceed the rents, he therefore being paid to occupy colony land.

While colony farm lands are rented at from 35 to 85 cents an acre, it is most likely that under the Single Tax it would pay no tax, because such land so situated, would have no rental value. Still we may compare it with the nearest adjoining lands, some of which—that of the Stapleton boys—is assessed for taxes at less than \$2.50 an acre, which would bring the rental value down to something like 10 cents an acre. Without multiplying instances, it may be stated that other nearby lands are valued at about the same as those of the Stapleton boys.

I cheerfully admit that the Fairhope plan is as well applied as our present state laws will allow, but the facts and figures given above show that this plan does not equalize the varying advantages, etc.—other things being the determining factors, and that there are many cases where injustice is done in the operation of this plan, which would not be the case were the Single Tax in operation. It is therefore misleading and even worse, to call this plan the Single Tax, or any application of such principle.

Many people have visited Fairhope to investigate the workings of what they have been told was the Single Tax, and have gone away disapproving of it, supposing that they had seen the Single Tax applied. For seeking to set some of these visitors right, whom I have met on the boats and elsewhere, I have been by some few people charged with trying to injure Fairhope. I appeal to the facts and will state that in this communication I have touched upon only a few phases of the "Fairhope Plan;" there are others.

It may be asked here: What changes would I suggest? The two most important changes would be that of giving to all who directly aid in making the rental value of Fairhope land, a voice in fixing the amount of such rentals. Second: That in all statements made by the officials of the colony, by its official journal, and so far as possible, by all Fairhope's friends, an attempt shall be made to show, if ever so briefly, the difference between the Fairhope colony plan and the Single Tax.

EDWARD QUINCY NORTON.

DAPHNE, ALA.

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IN DEFENSE OF FAIRHOPE.

Editor of the Review:

Two editorials from the Daphne (Ala.) *Standard*, edited by Mr. E. Q. Norton, were reprinted in the Spring number of THE REVIEW. They criticised the Fairhope colony and made suggestions as to how it should be administered.

The statement is made by Mr. Norton that if a proposition to raise local or direct taxes from land values alone were submitted to the citizens of Mobile,

it would be adopted by a large majority. It is to be regretted that Mr. Norton should make a statement so ill-advised. It must be plain to any person of ordinary judgment and experience that Mr. Norton is extremely reckless in coming to such a conclusion.

The Fairhope colony is applying the Single Tax in the best way it can be done in the absence of legislation. Mr. Norton's plans are possible only through legislation; and with so grand an opening as he says there is in Mobile, where he is well acquainted, why waste his time on Fairhope? Why not begin in a community where the land values amount to millions, and where he says the people would vote for the Single Tax by a large majority?

In the first editorial he states that it should be understood by everyone that the issue, whether part of the rent or all of it, shall be taken in taxation, is not involved in the differences of opinion at Fairhope. After strongly making this statement, he flatly contradicts it in the editorial following on the next page of the *Review* by saying that it is the attempt to take all the land values that has brought on the present difficulty.

Everybody familiar with the facts knows that the latter statement is the true one. In January a meeting of protesting tenants passed a resolution demanding that the ground rent for the present year should be but ten per cent: more than that of last year, while population and the actual rental value had increased over thirty per cent. This opposition to the assessment was led by a landlord who leases a tract of colony land, but who owns several acres on the bay front, right in the heart of the colony. He is opposed to the Single Tax and is one of a number of land speculators in and about Fairhope who watch the colony as a cat watches a canary. They would not leave a feather if they got half a chance.

Mr. Norton then tells how Henry George proposed to establish the Single Tax, but misquotes him, and says that Fairhope begins at the wrong end. The Single Taxers of Fairhope agree with Henry George just as much as Mr. Norton does, but they are applying the Single Tax in the best way that it can be done in the absence of legislation.

The statement is made, also, that "The Fairhope plan has not abolished any other taxes whatever, Federal, State, county or local." He might as well say that Henry George's plan would not destroy private ownership of land, because he proposed to let landlords keep their titles and continue private possession. The Fairhope plan does not abolish taxes in form, but it does in substance. The leaseholders present their tax bills to the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, and it repays them the amount out of the ground rent it collects.

In quoting from *Progress and Poverty*, Book VIII., Chapter II., Mr. Norton has garbled Mr. George's words, giving them a different meaning from the statement in the book. Any person can see this who will take the trouble to read this chapter and note the paragraph quoted. Mr. Norton's reasoning on this point is much like that of the darkey who decided that the moon is more useful than the sun because it shines at night when we need the light; but the sun shines in daytime, when it is light anyhow.

The charge is made that Fairhope is not democratic, because the whole community is not allowed to decide and administer its policy, and Mr. Norton wants to know why a government should be forced on any people.

If a free-trade club invited protectionists to vote on its policy and administration, we would not call it democracy—we would call it foolishness; the same is true of Fairhope. Its members are Single Taxers, but many living on its lands are not. Others in the community are hostile to the plan because it kills their private speculation in land.

Democrats never dreamed of a purer democracy than that within the mem-

bership of the colony. The Executive Council is simply a standing committee which attends to business details. On petition of five per cent. of the resident members, any act of this Council, or any measure proposed by the petitioners, must be submitted to a vote of the membership after twenty-four hours' notice. Upon petition of ten per cent., the membership must decide upon the retention or dismissal of any officer. A majority governs in either case.

If the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation was simply a parasite on the community, as other land companies are, and pocketed the rent, crushing their fellows and helping to make our so-called civilization a lingering tragedy, no Single Taxer even would accuse its members of forcing a "government" on the people which they did not want. We would not demand that the tenants who were not members of the corporation, should help run its affairs under the plea of democracy; but when a number of men and women form a land company for the benefit of mankind, and instead of pocketing the rent turn it over to the whole community, to show the benefits of a noble and praiseworthy reform, there is all kinds of unwarranted antagonism and petty fault-finding. Those living on colony land who want to violate the terms of their leases—contracts freely entered into—have the privilege of giving up their land at any time. The real objection is not that they have not the privilege of voting in a voluntary organization of which they are not members; the objection is to paying their ground rent. This was clearly shown in their action of last January. The plea of "democracy" was a subterfuge invented by two or three discontented Single Taxers who opposed the colony from purely personal reasons, and whose judgment is not to be trusted on this account. Those interested in land speculation were quick to take advantage of the situation and are doing all they can to influence residents who are ignorant of Henry George's philosophy.

Mr. Norton claims that there would be no danger in calling in the whole community to help apply the Single Tax to colony land. If this is true, why did the protesting tenants, who were led by a land speculator, call their ground rent a tax and demand a fixed increase in their ground rent far below its market value? If his claim is true, why is it that voters who have an equal voice in determining our land policy, almost unanimously uphold private ownership of land in every state and county in the United States? In a country where Single Taxers are overwhelmingly outnumbered, and where people of all shades of opinion are welcomed to live in the colony, it is necessary to the preservation of the Single Tax, that the colony be administered by members of the corporation. There can be no injustice in this plan because it in no way violates the law of equal freedom.

Beginning with fundamental principles and reasoning step by step, it will readily be seen that the application of the Single Tax to colony land by the membership plan, is not only the practical and successful way, as past experience has shown, but it is sound in logic and ethics.

The right to the use of the earth is an individual right and existed before organized society. Single Taxers know that private ownership of land is an aggression upon our rights. It is the duty of the majority to stop this aggression. But the moral right to stop an aggression does not exist because the majority decides to do so; it exists because it is just that it should be done. The majority has no monopoly on the moral right to stop an aggression on individual rights. A minority has just as much a moral right to do so as a majority.

If the majority of citizens, through their organized government, make it necessary for the colony to be administered by a "close corporation" to secure their individual rights to land, who is responsible? Is not the majority responsible? Why condemn the method of a voluntary organization in securing a right that everybody is justly entitled to, when other methods for securing it

at this time are closed by a hostile majority? The present policy of the colony is not only sound in law, it is sound in logic and ethics as well.

The Fairhope Single Tax Corporation has no power to collect taxes and no power to make or execute laws. It does not and dare not interfere in any way with the citizenship of those living on its land. It is a voluntary organization, ingeniously adapted to securing, under existing laws, the application of the Single Tax to as much land as it can get under its control. The colony is simply a community of several hundred people, living on a tract of several hundred acres of land owned by this land company, chartered under the laws of Alabama and known as the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation. This organization secures the equal right of all to the use of its land in the best way it can be done, until the people become wise enough to establish it by legislation.

The people living in the colony lease their land under free and voluntary agreements. They agree to pay the ground rent at its market value, to be assessed every year. They have a voice in deciding how the rent shall be expended. When assessments are made, they are not only invited, but urged, to assist the Council by making estimates of the rental value of their own ground as well as that of their neighbors.

The people of Fairhope are secure in more of their natural rights than the people of any other community in the United States. They have all the political rights that people have elsewhere, and have their rights to land besides. There is no franchise robbery. There is a substantial equality, a diffused prosperity, the equal of which would be hard to find in any other community. You find no children at work there who ought to be at school. You find no corner loafers about the store, and there is employment for everybody. You find no great wealth, but you find no want in Fairhope. The heart of the difficulty is this: It is a growing community; the ground rent is low, but it is rapidly rising. There are people living on the land not in sympathy with the Single Tax enough to keep them from getting hysterics every time the rent is collected. The whole question is whether these people should be allowed the privilege of voting part of the rent into their own pockets, or whether equal rights to land shall be maintained by the rent going to the community, where it belongs. It is a question as to whether the wolf of landlordism shall steal in again, clothed in a sheep-skin called "democracy."

W. L. ROSS.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

For a continuation of the Fairhope controversy, and the "Editor's Reply to His Critics," see page 42.



It was Henry George who advocated the public ownership of all utilities that are in their very nature monopolies and the most distinct individualism and freedom of competition in all lines which are not monopolies. The people of the country are gradually coming to the Henry George position in these matters.—Great Falls (Mont.) *Daily Tribune*.



In Auckland we fine a man once for getting drunk and misbehaving himself; but if he keeps sober and adds a couple of rooms to his cottage we fine him so much a year for the rest of his life. Rating on unimproved values will encourage industry and check the monopoly of opportunities of building cottages.—Auckland (N. Z.) *Liberator*.