

rent, would be sufficient, but this is too long. When you speak of "land" the average stupid or indifferent person thinks instinctively of worthless or half worthless land. To the unthinking the word "land" suggests area and not a socially created value.

John Stuart Mill said that the "law of rent" is the *pons asinorum* of political economy. If that be true, how much more is it true of the Henry George doctrine. Our equal right to the valueless land is not impaired by present legislation. "Anybody can get it but nobody cares to work it," and with this wise observation the thoughtless voter dismisses the appeal that the land party makes to his vote.

Even in England, where the evils of a wicked system of robbery and plunder should be plainly apparent, the average Englishman, like his American cousin, imagines that land is something far removed from London and the large towns. Most people do not know that there is a monopoly of civilization by those who are privileged to own the land where civilization is. That taxes could be abolished and government made to pay for itself is a much stronger argument, and far more convincing than the plea to exempt industry from taxation, because the former points the way to abolish privilege, and tax exemption seems to confer it.

We seem to overlook the fact that the great mass of mankind know nothing whatever about the fundamentals of economic science. They see no reason why they should substitute one tax for another. All taxes are bad, but one tax is most unjust, they say, because they imagine that we would place an unequal tax on some while exempting others. They are like the socialist in confusing capital with monopoly, property with privilege and wealth with rent.

The article from J. W. Graham Peace in your last issue concerning the Labor party is most illuminating. The Labor party in England, like the "Progressives" and "Radicals" here, is afraid of the ignorant votes. They want immediate results and as a consequence get no results at all.

A thousand good wishes!
Denver, Colorado.

JOHN B. MCGAURAN.

FROM A VETERAN IN THE CAUSE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am feeling the weight of years accompanied with the anxiety of earning a living for myself and wife, and cannot hope for much more of the pleasures of life, excepting the enjoyment it gives me to fulfill the promise I made to Henry George that as long as I lived I would do what I could for the restoring to the children of men their natural birthright in the land.

I often wonder what it is in the nature of the human race that makes mankind so stupid. I have been reading history back a thousand years before Moses and cannot find that the natural rights of man were ever nationally recognized.

What we need more than anything else is publicity. How to get it is the question. So far the most promising way to me seems by way of the Commonwealth Land Party. It will continue to gain friends.

Had I the means that some of the Single Taxers have I would keep advertising it through the pages of the prominent papers and magazines, by sign boards, etc.

With prayers that you may be spared many years to lead the good work,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

W. F. MERCER.

THE RUSSIAN LAND QUESTION.

EDITOR OF LAND AND FREEDOM:

In regard to the land policy of the Russian Government, it is fully indicated in the provisional constitution adopted by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918. That the framers of the constitution considered the clause dealing with the land the most important part of the document is evident from the fact that it is placed immediately after the preamble and declaration of rights. The clause is

as follows: "Chapter Two (a) For the purpose of realizing the socialization of land, all private property in land is abolished, and the entire land is declared to be national property and is to be apportioned among husbandmen without any compensation to the former owners, in the measure of each one's ability to till it."

A question might be raised in regard to the injustice of taking the improvements without compensation; but the majority of the landlords were reactionary and monarchistic and were generally plotting for the overthrow of the government. It has long been the practice of governments to confiscate the property of those adjudged guilty of treason. At a less turbulent time this point might have received more consideration. The constitution has been amended, but this provision still stands. The opinion seems to be general in Russia, that the real worth-while results of the Revolution are the abolition of monarchy, and the nationalization of the land.

Until recently the peasants were required to pay a general property tax in addition to the land tax. At the last session of the All Russian Congress, a law was enacted known as the Single Agricultural Tax Law. As I understand it, this law relieves the peasants from all taxation except the land tax or rent. The city or town dwellers still pay the general property tax. The peasants constitute about 85 per cent. of the population, so it may be considered a pretty close approximation to the Single Tax. It is reasonable to expect that the city dwellers will soon make a demand to be placed on the same footing as the peasants.

Another provision of the new tax law leads one to think that the Russian law makers may not be so ignorant as those of some other countries who consider themselves much wiser. Economists have reasoned that a stable government might issue a paper currency without a gold reserve or any other form of guaranty, except that it would be received in payment for taxes, and that it would not depreciate as long as the total amount issued in one year was not in excess of the tax budget. The currency would be destroyed when received by the government in payment for taxes and a new issue made. The Russian government has adopted this device. I understand that tax certificates are being or will be issued which will circulate as currency and be received in payment for taxes of all kinds.

One of the saving graces of the government here, is that it is not afraid to try experiments. There are no sacred business and vested interests that must be handled as carefully as bird's eggs. The eight hour work day is general and I have heard of no strikes of any importance since I have been in Russia. If a man is dissatisfied with his job he has the land to go to.

With 85 per cent. of the programme of the Single Taxers realized, with cooperative stores in all parts of the country, and cooperative production by artels encouraged, and free trade spread over a greater extent of territory than was ever known before, I think that the stability of the Russian Government, and the ultimate prosperity of the country are pretty well assured. There are many annoying regulations in force, such as requiring travelling permits to ride on the railways, the prohibition of the possession of fire arms by anyone who is not a member of the Communist Party, etc., but what has been gained acts like a cloak of charity in covering a multitude of sins.

Kemerovo, Siberia.

W. A. WARREN.

SHOULD REACH EVERY VOTER IN THE LAND

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I think we all realize now more than ever in the history of our propaganda that LAND AND FREEDOM should reach, if it were possible, every intelligent voter in the land.

Lakewood, Ohio.

J. S. PASKINS.

MINNESOTA'S MINING TAXES

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Henry George taught us to define our terms and then hold fast to the facts. It may well be to do this regarding the Minnesota Occupation

Tax which you assert will now be passed on to the consumer and which Mr. George N. Duncan, in your May-June issue denies. What is there back of it?

Minnesota has wonderful iron deposits. It also had a land boom by which land that could give only a fair return on a basis of seventy dollars per acre rose to two, three and four hundred dollars per acre. This was a logical result of our unjust tax on industry and thrift; the war; the artificial fixing of high prices for farm products; and the establishment of better roads. This made it possible for the farmer to borrow and go deeper into debt than ever before. Then came the inevitable prospect of deflation together with the outrageous increase in governmental expenditures that called for more and more revenue. The farmers were in a dilemma to save themselves and keep up land-values so the ever present mortgage would not eat up the farm and the farmer.

Our legislature, composed of labor leaders, corporation lawyers, and farmers hit upon several things to hold up land values. They obtained a wheelage tax so as to build good roads to enhance land values. They hit upon a gasoline tax to build more roads to enhance land values. They hit upon a tax on the industry of iron mining so as to prevent a tax on land values. However, they struck a snag. It was reported that the Attorney General had shown that such a tax as was designed would be unconstitutional under the name given, and, "as a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" it was suggested to give it another name and so it was called an "Occupation Tax." You see it is unconstitutional to tax privilege but is constitutional to tax an occupation. The bill was passed.

The orators and the farmers said in effect "The values in these great natural resources belong to the people who create them and not to the speculators who did not create them and 'by jing' we will make a fair division, we will let the speculator retain 94% as a sure thing and let the state collect 6% if it can, bigosh."

The mining companies objected as they claimed they were then carrying too heavy burdens and carried the matter to the Supreme Court which decided that an occupation tax was constitutional. There are still some Single Taxers who believe that an occupation tax is the same as the Single Tax but they do not live around here.

Bear in mind that this tax is not in lieu of other taxes as the Single Tax is to be. This tax is distinctly "in addition" to all other taxes and we certainly have other taxes in Minnesota. A few of those other taxes on the iron industry in the state amount to over seventeen million dollars but every economist knows that they are all "passed on plus profit" to the ultimate consumer, and the farmer soon discovered that the new tax also was.

In 1923 there was mined 44,656, 840 tons with a value at the mine of \$102,150,619.00 after making the proper legalized deductions on which the tax of 6% developed a revenue of \$6,129,037.18. This indicates a value at the mine of about \$2.29 per ton and a revenue of about 13.7 cents per ton. These figures are authoritative and seem to be at a variance with those assumed by Mr. Duncan.

But in spite of all these measures (or because of them) the farmer saw the cost of living going up and the price of his product going down and bankruptcy just around the corner, so his legislature decided to get another crack at the iron industry and fix it so that the new tax could not be passed on to him when he buys that new seeder. A Royalty Tax was passed. This is to be a tax on privilege. Again the orators made the same speech as quoted above and they decided on the same division as before namely 94% to the speculator who does not create the value and 6% to those who do, if they can collect it. The matter is now in the courts.

Neither the Occupation Tax or the Royalty Tax are operative when the mines are shut down. The slogan is, "No industry, no penalty." If the mining companies find difficulty to pass the tax to the 'deer peepul' they have a final resort, close the mines. This process promptly does two things. First, by throwing a few thousand men out of work they can soon be crowded down to lower wages, and, second, by

lessening the output the price on the market can and will be raised. It may be suggested that any raise in price would mean a raise in the tax. This is true but the divvy is not 50-50 but is 94-6.

The Royalty Tax is an approach to the Single Tax, but is only an approach, for it proposes to take only 6% where it is entitled to 100%.
St. Paul, Minn.
ROBERT SEIBERT.

THE EARTH OUR INHERITANCE.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I want to thank you and your publication for setting me on what I believe to be the right course—preaching the land gospel in all its fullness. In spite of my zeal for the cause I have in the past stood somewhat with the pussyfooters. It will not work. If we do not go all the way ourselves—how can we expect others to?

At best most of the new converts will gain only a diminished notion of this great question. If we start them with little they will have still less. So let us start them with much—a straight-out moral crusade which is the only thing that gains real converts. The earth is the inheritance of all mankind.

Detroit, Mich.

A. H. JENKINS.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

We have received from Dr. C. Villebos Dominguez portraits of the four municipal Councillors recently elected in the township of Coronel Pringles (Province of Buenos Aires.) Dr. Dominguez believed that they are the first representatives in government which Georgism has obtained anywhere in the world. By this he means of course elected on that issue and by a party advocating the principles of Henry George. In this he is probably right. The names of the four who should be remembered in the coming years are Ambrosio Locale, Yuan M. Lafaille, Augustin Dameno Pelaer and Luis Canale.

ELMER DAVIS, who conducts the column By-Products in the *New York Times*, pokes fun at the general political confusion now raging and under the heading, "Important Notice," announces that Election results will be flashed from his department on Election Night. A white ray to the east will indicate that Des Moines has gone overwhelmingly for the Socialist municipal ticket, the Single Tax county ticket, the Farmer-Labor Congressional ticket, the Republican Senatorial ticket and the Democratic Presidential ticket.

J. B. MCGAURAN writes us from Denver under date of July 12 as follows: "Your Year Book published in 1917 in the public libraries and colleges and in the hands of debaters has done more good than you can ever realize. If you had never done anything else but publish that book you would have earned the gratitude of tax abolitionists."

WILLIAM BRADFORD DUBOIS sent reports of the New Jersey Convention of the Commonwealth Land Party to the Bayonne, N. J. papers which published full accounts, as did the Newark papers.

ON May 29 the Supreme Court of California sustained the principle of land value taxation exclusively as applied by the irrigation districts. This is a final decision which sets aside injunctions secured from lower superior courts by absentee landlords who objected to a tax of five dollars an acre.

THE *Mobile Mobilizer*, of June 8, has an illustrated article on Fairhope, which says: "It started out as a Single Tax colony and attracted the attention of the world by seeking to put in practice in a multiple tax county the Single Tax land theories of Henry George. The strip of high ground on which the Fairhope community is situated is by far the most populous area on Mobile Bay, except the city of Mobile itself."