

JANUARY, 1928

# Taxation Quarterly

---

*Organ of the*

**Manhattan Single Tax Club**

226 West 47th Street

New York, N. Y.

**NEWS**

--

**VIEWS**

Annual Subscription \$1.00

6668

## Manhattan Single Tax Club

FOUNDED BY HENRY GEORGE

Phone Lackawanna 3519

### OFFICERS .

JAMES R. BROWN, *President*  
 ALFRED BISHOP MASON, *Vice-President*  
 O. K. DORN, *Treasurer*  
 WALTER FAIRCHILD, *Gen. Secretary*  
 ELMA DAME, *Rec. Secretary*

### DIRECTORS

JOHN H. ALLEN  
 RICHARD EYRE  
 FRED C. LEUBUSCHER  
 JOHN M. HOLMES  
 H. C. MAGUIRE  
 CHAS. T. ROOT

The Manhattan Single Tax Club was founded by Henry George and is the oldest Single Tax organization in the world. Our work is purely educational, non-political and non-partisan. We believe, when we have created sufficient Single Tax sentiment, our tax laws will be amended to conform to an advanced public conception of what taxation really is and how it should be applied.

As correct thought must precede correct action, our concern is not how people vote, but how people think. Educational work is irresistible because it is unresisted. We aim to present taxation in a simple and practical manner to be easily understood by any thoughtful man, without the necessity of a thorough course in the Science of Political Economy; also to present it untrammelled by complex or abstruse reasoning, void of offense and unweighted by rabid or foolish utterances.

The gist of our gospel is that Taxation is Payment for Social Service and Advantage, and that Land value is the only true and just measure of the value of the Services and Advantages, that Society gives to the individual citizen.

Presented after this manner taxation becomes an understandable subject full of vital interest to everybody.

As to the manner the Single Tax should be adopted, we are not revolutionists but evolutionists and any fundamental change in our social order that will endure must be dictated by cool reason and calm judgment, and not by anger nor yet by sympathy.

The geographical scope of the Manhattan Single Tax Club work is the continent of North America. Wherever an opportunity to teach presents itself, or a request comes for literature or lectures, it is our pleasure and duty to respond.

We respond freely to all requests for literature or lectures; we make no demands for money; if the local people can defray expenses, well and good; but if not we go just as cheerfully. This attitude enables us to light lamps in many dark places.

We maintain a well equipped office that is always open. We keep a good stock of books and tracts. We distribute a vast amount of literature yearly, and are always on the alert for opportunities to explain what taxation really is and how it should be applied.

Our membership is composed of many of the oldest and most substantial Singletaxers in the country, and our roster of members contains the names of many men and women of whom we are justly proud and whose names would be a credit to any organization in the land. Our desire is for quality of membership, not merely quantity.

Our dues are \$5 per annum and upward, the maximum is determined by the member, the minimum is fixed by the Club.

**LIST OF LITERATURE**

COMPLETE WORKS (10 Vol.) Henry George.....	(Cloth)	\$15.00
PROGRESS AND POVERTY, Henry George.....	(Cloth)	1.50
PROGRESS AND POVERTY, Henry George.....	(Paper)	.75
PROGRESS AND POVERTY, Henry George.....	(Abridged)	1.00
SOCIAL PROBLEMS, Henry George.....	(Cloth)	1.50
SOCIAL PROBLEMS, Henry George.....	(Paper)	.75
PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE, Henry George.....	(Paper)	.75
LAW OF HUMAN PROGRESS, Henry George.....	(Leatherette)	.75
LAW OF HUMAN PROGRESS, Henry George.....	(Cloth)	.50
MOSES AND CRIME OF POVERTY, Henry George.....	(Cloth)	.50
LIFE OF HENRY GEORGE, Henry George, Jr.....	(2 Vols.)	3.00
NATURAL TAXATION, T. G. Shearman.....	(Cloth)	1.50
NATURAL TAXATION, T. G. Shearman.....	(Paper)	.75
SOCIAL SERVICE, Louis F. Post.....	(Cloth)	1.50
SOCIAL SERVICE, Louis F. Post.....	(Paper)	.75
TAXATION OF LAND VALUES, Louis F. Post.....	(Cloth)	1.50
TAXATION OF LAND VALUES, Louis F. Post.....	(Paper)	.75
TAXATION OF UNEARNED INCOMES, H. G. Brown.....	(Cloth)	2.00
ECONOMIC SCIENCE AND THE COMMON WELFARE, H. G. Brown.....	(Cloth)	3.00
THEORY OF EARNED AND UNEARNED INCOMES, H. G. Brown.....	(Cloth)	2.50
THE REAL TROUBLE WITH THE FARMER, Herbert Quick.....	(Cloth)	2.00
BISOCIALISM, Trowbridge.....	(Cloth)	1.50
JOSEPH FELS, HIS LIFE WORK, Mary Fels.....	(Cloth)	1.00
THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESSION, P. J. Dove.....	(Cloth)	.75
THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESSION, P. J. Dove.....	(Paper)	.25
A. B. C. OF TAXATION, C. B. Fillebrown.....	(Cloth)	1.00
WHAT IS THE SINGLE TAX? Louis F. Post.....	(Cloth)	.50
PROGRESS AND POVERTY, Vanguard Press Edition Abridged.....		.50
PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE.....	(Cloth)	1.00

	Single Copy	Per 100
STORY OF MY DICTATORSHIP, Berens and Singer.....	20 cents	
CRIME OF POVERTY, Henry George.....	10 cents	
MOSES, Henry George.....	10 cents	
PLAIN TALK ON TAXATION, Jas. R. Brown.....	5 cents	\$3.00
FARMER AND THE SINGLE TAX, Jas. R. Brown.....	5 cents	3.00
HURT IN HER OWN HOUSE, Jas. R. Brown.....	5 cents	3.00
NOT A SINGLE TAX, Chas. T. Root.....	5 cents	3.00
TAXING LAND VALUES, Henry George.....	5 cents	3.00
UNEMPLOYMENT AND OUR REVENUE PROBLEM, John S. Codman.....	25 cents	
RELIEVING BUSINESS THROUGH SCIENTIFIC TAXATION, Prof. H. G. Brown.....	5 cents	3.00
ARMAGEDDON, E. J. Burke.....	2 cents	1.50

**SPECIAL BOOK SALE IN LOTS OF TEN**

10 copies <i>Progress and Poverty</i> , cloth bound, unabridged.....	\$5.00
10 copies of <i>The A. B. C. of Taxation</i> by C. B. Fillebrown, bound in cloth (this is one of the best books written on the Single Tax) .....	5.00
10 copies <i>Natural Taxation</i> by Thomas G. Shearman, cloth bound	5.00
10 copies <i>Law of Human Progress</i> , bound in leatherette.....	2.50
10 copies <i>Theory of Human Progression</i> by Patrick Dove, cloth bound .....	2.50

### EDITORIAL

It is with keen regret that we announce the passing of Louis F. Post at Washington, D. C. on Tuesday, January 10th, at 2 a. m. For some time his demise had been expected almost daily. The last time I saw Mr. Post, about two months ago, it was clear that the end was not far off. "They that looked out of the windows were darkened" and general conditions indicated preparations for the great journey.

In contemplation of the life and the passing of Louis F. Post, we cannot but think of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

Sunset and evening star,  
 And one clear call for me!  
 And may there be no moaning of the bar  
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
 Too full for sound and foam,  
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
 And after that the dark!  
 And may there be no sadness of farewell  
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
 The flood may bear me far,  
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
 When I have crost the bar.

### 100 PER CENT. AMERICAN

Louis Freeland Post, who has died in Washington at the age of 78, was an outstanding example of the old-time American radical, the man who persistently and intelligently sought root causes for social discontents and economic mal-adjustments. Clear-headed, kindly, blazingly sincere and transcendently honest, he won and held the admiration of all fair-minded men, regardless of how they differed with his theories. The passing of Louis Post is in itself a cause for national regret. The loss is increased by the thought that his type, so influential in the early days of the Republic, is now becoming very scarce.

None could more perfectly meet the test of "one hundred per cent. Americanism" than Louis Post. Not merely in the fact that he was a scion of three centuries of American stock, but even more in the fact that most of his absorbing intellectual interests, such as the Single Tax, or, in late years, the League of Nations, were of American origin. He even took, as vividly he showed during his eight-year term as Assistant Secretary of Labor, the Constitution of this country with utmost seriousness. In the sorry episode of the deportations delirium of 1920 the courageous liberalism of Mr. Post stands out as a bright and a redeeming light.

—Editorial *Baltimore Sun*

**LOUIS F. POST**

The principle of a tax on land as the only one to be laid on a people carried with it preeminently the names of two men, Henry George, the founder of the single tax, and Louis F. Post, for over a generation its great propagandist.

Louis F. Post, who has just ceased his labors for the common good at almost four score years of age, has a much greater claim on the memory of this and succeeding generations than his advocacy of some particular principle of taxation, important as it may be in the life of man.

As the editor of *The Public* for many years his brilliant intellect was always at the service of those who were fighting to realize that equality of opportunity so vital to the happiness of the race and so necessary to the continued existence of a truly free government.

One remembers the magnificent fights he waged in the latter part of the last century and the early days of this one for absolute freedom of expression. Some of his greatest battles were fought to maintain the rights of those with whose opinions he had not the least sympathy. He once said that he would fight for the right of the devil himself to give expression to his point of view, and that no institution could endure whose humblest member was deprived of the right to express the truth as it was given him to see it.

Post believed that the prime reason for the existence of government was to enable its citizens to exercise the fullest freedom in individual development. Men were not made to be the mere pawns of the state. Government could be either a tyrant or a nourisher of great souls, and Post had no love for it except as it allowed the freest individual development.

Louis F. Post chose to serve the cause of the common man throughout his long life, and he died in the full assurance that he had achieved that happiness which comes only to those who have kept faith with their own souls. His life will go on in the struggle that other men will continue to wage against all the powers of tyranny in whatever shape they show themselves.

—*N. Y. Telegram*—Jan. 13.

**NEWS**

William N. McNair of Pittsburgh is a very earnest and capable Single Taxer and whenever he has spare time on his hands, he advises us and we make up a tour for him. This is easy, for among the Service Clubs in Pennsylvania, the Manhattan Single Tax Club stands well. He will speak under our auspices as follows:

- Jan. 12 Reading, Pa.....Lions Club
- 13 Slatington, Pa.....Rotary Club
- 26 Bethlehem, Pa.....Kiwanis Club
- 31 Mahanoy City, Pa.....Rotary Club
- Feb. 20 Pottsville, Pa.....Lions Club

Newspapers gave a generous amount of space reporting Mr. McNair's addresses.

By the 1st of February, our President, James R. Brown, will have spoken in the following cities: Bloomfield, N. J.; Ocean City, N. J.; Montclair, N. J.; White Plains, N. Y.; Glen Rock, N. J.; Jersey City, N. J.; Perth Amboy, N. J.; Tarrytown, N. Y.; Providence, R. I.; White Plains, N. Y.; Hempstead, N. Y.; South Amboy, N. J.; Woodbridge, N. J.; Newton, Mass.; Boston, Mass.

**ATTENTION**

If lectures or literature on the Single Tax are desired, kindly write to the Manhattan Single Tax Club, 226 W. 47th Street and we will be happy to accommodate.

Nothing in life so reflects upon the intelligence of man, as the methods we employ to raise public revenue. Our methods are unrelated to any sound principle of business, ethics or science, just one grand hit-or-miss, catch-as-catch-can way of doing.

If a man ran his business as we run our tax department, we would account him crazy and lock him up in the bughouse.

Taxation is not a collection, such as we take up to support a church or charity. No, most emphatically no, it is a payment to the city or state for the services and advantages we receive from city or state, and to base the charge upon anything else than the value of such services or advantages is sheer idiocy.

Take the theory of ability to pay, that some statesmen of supposed intelligence advocate. It is the concept of a defective mind. Just try and run a department store on that plan and see where you would land. Imagine a woman coming into the store and picking out a suit. She says to the saleswoman, "How much?" The saleswoman says, "How did you come to the store?" "Why I came in my auto." "Well, what kind of a car do you own? Is it a flivver, or is it a Packard?" "My goodness! what has my car got to do with this suit?" "Well, Madam, you see we run this store on the same plan of business they run the tax department. Ability to pay is our theory of business now. If you came in a flivver this suit will cost you \$40., but if you came in a Packard, it will cost you \$80." One thing is certain, that merchant would be regarded as insane, because he ran his store as we run our tax department. In our tax departments we should be treated as we are treated in a sanely run store. We should pay for what we get from the city measured by the value of what we get from the city and not measured by the value of what we do *not* get from the city. We get from the city, roads, streets, sewers, lights, police, fire department, etc., etc., but we pay for all these things according to the value of the house we build or do not build. In other words, we pay for our hat according to the value of our watch and chain. If I own a lot, and have the use of the street, sewer, police, fire department, etc., if I build no house but let the lot remain idle, I will pay very little tax. On a lot worth \$1,000. 3% tax rate I would pay \$30., but if I use my opportunity and put a \$9,000. house on my lot, then the tax department would add my private property to the public value, assess me \$10,000 and tax me \$300., simply because I used my opportunity, or in plain words charge me for what the town did for me based upon the value of what I did for myself.

What are the true facts in this case? The \$1,000 of lot selling price or assessed value is \$50. a year of social or public service value the town gave me but did not collect. Add to this the \$30. the town did collect and we have \$80., being the full annual value of the town's services and advantages and is the correct and honest amount of what my tax bill should be, and to charge me \$300 simply because I build a house is a burglar's way of doing business. I am robbed of private property to the extent of \$220. a year and in about 40 years the value of the house is taken from me by a stupid, dishonest and idiotic tax law. While on the other hand, a man next to me on the same street, receiving from the city exactly the same services and advantages, which he does not use but which is no reason why he should not pay for them, only pays \$30. per year for services worth \$80., and he can capitalize the \$50. of what should be taxes, into selling price of \$1,000 and still further add yearly quite an increase of economic rent due to added service and advantage, until at the end of 40 years he has received \$20,000 for which he has rendered no service nor delivered any goods. He got something for nothing, while I, who built a house, employed labor and capital and added to the general well-being, am out \$9,000. I get nothing for something. The present tax system is a fine on industry and a premium on idleness.

### PROGRESS IN NEW JERSEY

The following letters tell a story—a good story—a story of good fruit, the result of patient effort—of a truth—if we sow good seed and cultivate the soil, a bounteous harvest will surely be ours.

I have spoken on taxation and distributed literature in Perth Amboy, N. J., some six times, to various organizations and am booked to speak in a few days in adjacent towns.

Out of these meetings and other influences, the desire for a radical change in taxation has come to the good people of Perth Amboy.

In all my addresses I draw a very distinct line between the true interests of the real estate operator and the real estate speculator. This is proper, for the former is a victim of the latter. This presentation has enlightened operators, and after study, many have discovered the Single Tax to be their friend, as it is to all industry.

A meeting of Realtors and Chamber of Commerce representatives was called by Howard Hardiman, President of the Perth Amboy Real Estate Board, for January 9th.

The meeting was held in Perth Amboy, about one hundred fifty men representing real estate and chambers of commerce, were present, and after a splendid discussion, almost unanimously carried the motion to get behind a bill that provides for the abolition of all personal property taxes, and the amount \$27,000,000, it provides shall be placed on land values.

A very vigorous campaign is going to be carried on in the support of this measure.

EWING T. CORSON

*Realtor*

757 Asbury Avenue

OCEAN CITY, N. J., Dec. 30, 1927.

Mr. James R. Brown,  
c/o Manhattan Single Tax Club,  
226 W. 47th Street,  
New York City, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Brown:

Since your talk to the Kiwanis Club in Ocean City I have heard a number of people remark upon your subject, and it was with interest that I received the enclosed letter from the President of the Perth Amboy Real Estate Board.

It appears, at last, that the Real Estate men are beginning to realize what single tax means, in fact, this realtor seems to believe that single tax will advance us in business.

Perhaps Mr. Hardiman is a disciple of yours, I have been wondering whether that is the case, or whether this idea came to him from the outside.

Again expressing appreciation for the talk which you gave us in Ocean City, I am

Yours very truly,

(Signed) EWING T. CORSON.

Dear Realtor:

Re. Restrictions on the Realty business.

Existing New Jersey land and tax laws encourage the holding of land by absentees and estates for an indefinitely long time. This is against the business

interests of realtors, who, like all business men, are in business to make all the transactions in their particular line that can be made. In no other business do the laws of a state encourage the holder to hold on so long to an object, or commodity, of purchase and sale.

Prices of manufactured and agricultural commodities are subject to fluctuation, and the law offers no inducement to hold for increased prices. There is a widespread belief that the way to make money is to buy land and hold it until the price advances. Land is often willed in such way that it cannot be sold for a long time, and often the heirs voluntarily continue to hold for a hoped for increase in value. The realtor rarely has a commission to sell for such holders, and in fact, often has a buyer at a good price, and the holder refuses to sell. Then the broker's efforts go for naught.

The state Legislature encourages this condition in failing to recognize that the site-value of land is automatically created by mere increase in population and social services; that it is a publicly-created value and not a privately-created value to be privately appropriated as is now done. Instead of levying sufficient taxes on this publicly-created site-value to pay the expenses of government, the Legislature imposes taxes on privately-created property, such as buildings, machinery, commodities, earnings, etc., to balance the budget.

The lower the tax is on site-value of land the easier it is to hold sites indefinitely for an increased sale price or rent. Such practice restricts industry and housing in the cities, and agriculture in the country, and thereby retards the rightful development of any community.

Some may think the realty business is helped by land speculation, but on second sober thought they will realize that the material success and prosperity of realtors depends largely upon the prosperity of the community in which they operate. Any place where development of industry is retarded by law is a poor place for realtors.

A tax on dogs is levied, not specially for revenue, but to suppress dogs. A high license fee on saloons was levied years ago largely to restrict saloons. The way the Louisiana Lottery was put out of business a generation ago was by levying a tax on its transactions. Just so will a tax on industry drive industry away and keep others from coming in. That is now the condition throughout New Jersey, and as cost of government, and the tax on all forms of labor products is increasing year by year, the economic burden becomes more unbearable.

As has been rightfully said, the earth is the mother, and labor the father of all wealth, and any restriction put on the application of labor to land (and New Jersey tax laws do this) increases the army of unemployed.

Try as we may to find a source of revenue to replace the tax on labor products that will not again rest on labor products, we shall find none except the publicly-created site-value of land.

There is a rapidly increasing sentiment and demand for more public revenue from site-value, and less from industry, farms and homes. A bill will be introduced in the coming session of the New Jersey Legislature to enact this, and it is especially to the interest of all realtors to help advance it.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) HOWARD HARDIMAN,  
President,

Perth Amboy Real Estate Board.

Perth Amboy, N. J.  
December 27, 1927.

HARDIMAN & Co., INC.  
*Real Estate and Insurance Mortgages*  
283 Maple Street  
Perth Amboy, N. J.

January 3rd, 1928.

Mr. James R. Brown, President,  
Manhattan Single Tax Club,  
226 West 47th Street,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of December 31st, 1927, enclosing copy of letter from Ewing T. Corson, Realtor, of Ocean City, N. J., I wish to state that



I am very glad to see that this letter is doing good work with the Realtors in the State.

I am having several copies of my article "Restriction on Realty Business" copied and I will be very glad to mail you some of them as soon as they are finished.

We are going to have a State wide meeting on this tax question, on January 9th, 1928, at 2:30 p. m., at the Perth Amboy Elks Club. I would appreciate it very much if you could be present at that time to help us in our endeavors to put this proposition over. The way things look now, we will have representation from all over the State at this meeting. I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, but I have heard our mutual friend Mr. Oliver Hetfield, Secretary of the Perth Amboy Industrial Association, speak of you and he joins me in asking you to be present at this meeting, if you can possibly make it.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) HOWARD HARDIMAN,  
President.

### BUILDING INCREASE; GRADED TAX

From: "Pittsburgh Post-Gazette" issue of November 30th, 1927.

H. S. Breitenstein, chief accountant of the City Controller's office, has drawn attention to a fact that is certain to add to the credit of Pittsburgh's already famous graded tax system by which buildings are levied on at only half the rate on land. When the graded tax law was put in operation here in 1914, with provision for a 10 per cent reduction on buildings and for similar cuts at regular steps until the half rate was reached, the building valuation was not much more than half that of land. Mr. Breitenstein says that by next year the land valuation will be surpassed by that of buildings. In 1914 the city's land valuation was \$480,860,000 and that of buildings \$282,070,000. For 1928 the valuations are given as \$562,000,000 for land and \$540,000,000 for buildings. The valuation estimates for 1929 are buildings, \$575,000,000; land \$565,000,000.

No one contends that the graded tax law is the whole explanation of that. For years, in making up for the halt in normal construction during the world war, there has been building activity throughout the country. Nevertheless it comes back that those who put the graded tax law through the Legislature promised definitely that it would stimulate building; that it was only a matter of common sense that favoring improvements as against land held in idleness would have that effect. No matter how much they were called mere "Single Tax theorists," they stuck to it—even in the years when the war checked ordinary building. And what a fight the law had for its life at the beginning. It even was repealed by the 1915 legislature, but Governor Brumbaugh saved it by vetoing the repealer. It is significant that a number of sessions have passed since without hearing a single call for repeal of the measure. Pittsburgh seems at last firmly to have adopted the plan, and this latest announcement inevitably will add to that hold.

Further, with an increase in building—with a greater valuation for distribution of the levy—the tax rate, if not reduced, may be kept from soaring. It tends to reduce the average rate. The tentative millage figure suggested for 1928 are 25.5 on land and 12.75 on buildings. Computation under the graded plan would make of the two a flat rate of 19.3 mills.

The enthusiastic supporters of this Pittsburgh tax plan should start now arranging for the celebration when the building valuation passes that of land.

*(Information is already for charter)*

## TAXATION AND HEALTH

By

PROF. WM. H. DINKINS

Selma University (Colored)  
(Alabama)

The widespread interest in good health has caused a close study of the conditions affecting health. As a result of this study people are learning in a scientific way much about sanitation, food, proper housing, working conditions, poverty, worry, physical culture, travel and recreation, child labor, and women's labor in relation to health and general well-being. It may be fairly said that the American people now have a real consciousness of health, and they are prepared to go the limit both personally and in the various governmental units to arrive at a better plane of living.

The campaigns of newspapers, magazines, books, societies are bearing fruit. It is nothing unusual to see houses screened in districts where people formerly paid no attention to mosquitoes and flies. The great cities are grappling with the problem of homes for the people, and largely with a view to conserving the people's health. Insurance companies that used merely to collect premiums and pay claims now maintain expensive health services to protect their policy-holders, while their advertisements tell the whole reading public "how to live". The National Life Extension Institute, composed of some of the biggest men in the country, advises and conducts physical examinations so that people will not go too far before incorrect bodily conditions are observed and corrected. Men from the farms find a health examination awaiting them when they seek work in the factories; and students in school and college must take the tests. Matters like dust in factories, safety appliances, hours of labor, are the subject of legislative as well as industrial regulation. Within the last two or three decades a great impetus has been given to the recreation movement. The one thing binding together all these activities of private and public, local and national bodies, and of individuals is the idea that man is entitled to a life as free as possible from disease both for his own sake and for the sake of the entire community. And we have learned to think of the community in the widest possible sense.

What I am to do in this article is to show what part taxation may play in the effort to build up the people's health, or what part it may play in tearing down their health. It may not be exactly a syllogism to say "Taxation affects everybody; health is a concern of everybody; therefore taxation affects health." But at least if some connection can be found between our system of getting the money for public purposes, and the public health, we need not be surprised.

Now most folks, including legislators, act as if it makes no difference how we levy the taxes, so long as the money comes. If you doubt this, just consider the public statements made by law-makers when taxation bills are being considered. Practically every statement issued in print and on platform tells how much money each section of the tax bill is estimated to bring into the treasury of nation or state or county or school district, and sometimes how much will be spent for this or that important government service. The effect that a tax may have on the people—except the one effect of protecting

home industry and providing the workmen with full dinner pails—is entirely overlooked. So far as taxation having any effect on health one way or the other, that is farthest from the thoughts of our public men as expressed.

All of us will agree that good houses, of reasonable size in proportion to the family, are necessary for health, and so we have many and varied efforts for better homes.

A man proposes to build himself a home. He has heard so much about good homes that he is surprised that good roads are more wanted and more hospitably treated. He thought that the government would be proud to have him establish a shelter for his family, but he finds that after all they did not want him to build a home. They are so angry with him for getting a place to stay that they charge him a round sum every year and call it tax. He finds out about it when his contractor includes the cost of a city permit with the contract price. "Permit?" he exclaims; "you mean the permit is a little matter of formality so that when I go to the city hall to get it the mayor will congratulate me on building." "Oh, no," says the contractor, "they make every man who builds a house pay them a percentage for a piece of paper with some writing on it."

"I see, I see," says our young husband, who has been so busy first in school and later at work that he has not had time to keep up with the city hall tactics. Only he had listened to so many spell-binders speak up for the American Home, with a capital H, that he almost thought there might be a city appropriation to help build them. So he says, "Well, here's the money for the permit. I reckon that's all the mayor wants."

"No," says the contractor, "you will have to pay the city, county and state together two dollars on every hundred the house and lot are worth. The house is costing two thousand and the lot cost—five hundred, do you say? Well, twenty-five hundred dollars. Two percent of twenty-five hundred is fifty, and you will have to pay them fifty dollars."

"You don't mean it."

"Yes, just that. I've been building houses here a long time, and I know."

"Well, I'll pay the fifty and be through with that."

"Through? Why, man, you have just begun. I mean you will have to pay fifty dollars a year!"

"Give me those plans, then, I sign nothing till this thing is cut down. Fifty dollars a year! And me building one of those homes, sweet homes, that the city school taught me to sing about!"

The young man figures and figures. Finally he shows his work to the contractor and tells him to cut the plans and specification to \$1500. Here is how he reasoned it out. The tax was \$50.00 a year on house and lot, \$40.00 on the house and \$10.00 on the lot. \$2000 was all that he could put out for a home so that he would need to invest a part of his cash in order to get enough interest money to pay the tax on the rest. So it worked out that \$1500 at 2 per cent. would give a \$30 tax on the house, while the other \$500 invested at 6 per cent would produce an income of \$30, enough to pay the tax.

He figured that he would gladly pay \$40 a year for the lot if he had not had to pay \$500 for it in the first place.

It means just this: every house is cut down about one-fourth in size and equipment on account of house taxes. No matter how rich a man is he cannot build a taxed house, whether for his home or for rental, to equal an untaxed house. Cutting down the house may not mean much to a rich man, but to a poor man it means that he is cramped for space, or that he does not have proper heat insulation, or substantial lumber, or that it is not fire-safe, or that he is without good quality of plumbing, or maybe that he has no plumbing at all. Cutting down the house may mean the lack of privacy for various members of the family, or no sewing room or nursery or study room, no place to isolate the sick members of the household.

It is hardly necessary for me in this year of grace to argue the effect of this cutting down of the house on the family's health. It is bad enough on the family in a detached house. But when we consider the tenements, we come to the despair of our social uplift agencies. Living in dark holes in the walls, in breezeless hot houses in the summer time, without play space or decency space, it is well known that tenement dwellers have too high sickness and death rates.

The taxation of houses and furniture, since it operates to increase the cost of that prime family necessity—a home—and to curtail its utility, is seen to be distinctly a factor against the people's health.

What we want in food is the proper variety of high quality in sufficient quantity at a fair price. Taxation touches us at all these points. The taxes on farm equipment and railroads operate to raise the price of goods at the farm and at the stores without increasing the income of farmers or railroad men. The taxes that consumers of farm products pay on their homes take so much money that there is very little left to buy food. Hence, between the hard facts, first, of little money with which to buy food, and, second, of high price for what one does buy, there are many who never get enough to eat, while few people there are who can get the wide variety of things that they need. Farmers keep talking about the injustice of the tariffs on imports. They are right in seeing the tariff as harmful to them and to their customers. But to clamp on an agricultural tax in addition to our other taxes would only make matters worse by ruining the farmers' market. "Equalize" is right. But how to equalize?

Every operation with food pays its tax, and every tax adds a percentage of profit every time the goods change hands. Grocers must take out license. There are special fees for handling many products. And the consumer must pay for it all. I would not be surprised if more than half the price of food is really taxes and profit on taxes.

What, then, about the milk, and the fruit and the vegetables that people need? The people just suffer for the lack of correct food, while the farmer is always needing relief. Something wrong? Maybe.

Ask any sanitary officer or social worker what is the greatest single menace to sanitary conditions in a town, and he will probably tell you: "the vacant lots full of weeds, the rickety shacks called houses." This sounds like two things, but it is one thing—land not put to the best use. And land is held from the best use because the owner, who

perhaps bought it years ago at a small price is taxed very little on the growing value of the land, and so can keep on holding it until somebody in great need of the lot pays his figure. Thus, while men who build homes are made to pay an annual fee called tax on house and land, their neighbors may be breeding mosquitoes and maintaining a weed-seed nursery on the vacant lots, paying very little to the government against the day when buyers will beg for the land at any price. Thus by our simpleness do we maintain nuisances at our doors.

Likewise the wornout shacks. There they will stay, the house decreasing gradually to nothing in value, the land increasing steadily, the rent remaining high, the tax remaining low, until one day our landlord sells. The new owner is penalized by the high price of the land (the buildings are mere junk), by the tax on this high value and by the fact that capital which might have gone into his development went largely to buy the land. The low tax that we charge on valuable land thus directly encourages the maintenance of unsanitary conditions in our midst.

Why the hard, and often losing, struggle to secure good working conditions, with regulation of adult labor and elimination of child labor in industry? Ordinarily we hear and read that it is the capitalist who is the enemy of labor. I do not believe it. How can a man who has a club (i. e., a tool, capital) injure me in my work or prevent me from working with a club, as long as I can go to the woods and get me a club myself? But when a man tells me that the woods are his and that I cannot get a club from them unless I accept his terms, then I am injured in my work. The enclosure of the public land by private parties with public approval and inadequate payment to the public, permits a few people to claim title to land many times what they can ever use, while other men are landless and cannot buy at all. When these landless men bargain for a job in industry they must accept a one-sided contract because they cannot maintain themselves by working for themselves on the land. It would not be necessary for the workman to leave the factory in order to enforce a demand for better pay. If he could get hold of some land to use, on payment of what it is worth for use while he uses it, the very fact that it was possible to do that would put him on an equality with the employer, and he would secure his full earned wages.

Why, then, would his wife or young children need to work in the factory? He could maintain them himself. As for the few children with no one to support them, the government would better maintain and educate them up to a certain age than to permit them to enter industry too soon. Women who must work would benefit as men would from freedom to use the land. It is only through the equality that comes from the freedom to use the land that working conditions will be made right. All things that labor unions strive for, if these are really valuable and worth while, they would get, and that by simple bargaining. The health of the worker would be directly safeguarded in the industry, and the health situation at his home would feel the effect of increased wages and better working conditions.

Physical culture, recreation, travel, reading, call for leisure, and health depends in large measure upon them. But how shall we get leisure? There is almost none for the majority no matter how they

work, for their wages are held close to the line of mere subsistence; and leisure is for the minority only as they live upon the labors of the majority. But what we want is a reasonable amount of leisure for everybody. The application of science to the physical problem of production has given us an earnest of a gracious plenty of goods for use. Indeed we now have periods of so-called over-production, and factories shut down because they have produced too many goods, while folks have not enough clothes or food or books. The fact is that, with the increase of knowledge and skill, there is now and will be in increasing proportion an ability to produce the goods we need in a short time. But now the heavy taxation on work as it is performed increases all costs and consequently increases the time it takes to earn a living. The taxes act as so much unnecessary friction, increasing the labor required to accomplish a given result. The workman is beaten down on both ends. At his work he is unequal to his employer in bargaining because of the employer's control of land (not his control of tools), and thus his income is below what it should be; as a consumer he must reimburse all the men who paid the rates on the goods he buys, for the rates and for the profits on them. And profits on taxes mount up just like compound interest, only faster. Beaten down as producer and as consumer he becomes almost like Browning's Pippa with one precious day for vacation each year. Yet he does have some time with no work to do—but this is not leisure; it is unemployment. The tired man, needing the time for recreation, for travel, for reading and physical culture, must walk the streets looking for work, cursing his fate because so much has been produced that men must stop work until they are able to save enough money to buy what has been produced so that they can go to work again.

Meanwhile the family of the employer is enjoying itself with leisure that is too great for useful personal advancement.

Taxes? Yes, that is the answer again. Remove the taxes from labor and commodities, which means to take the friction from the industrial machine, and put the taxes where they belong—on land. Do this, and you will find that the natural common sense of men will assert itself. They will work as long as necessary to provide the necessities, comforts, and some luxuries of life; and then they will use a liberal amount of time to re-create, to rebuild themselves, to live with their families, to study nature, to see something of this world and its people.

Health? Tell me—who are healthier—the people who live a cramped life, without leisure, in fear of unemployment, or those whose interests are as broad as humanity and who have time and means for developing these interests?

And now comes Old Man Worry. We all know that worry is against health. There is no need to dwell on that. The great worry that we have comes from fear—fear of losing financial standing and thereby losing one's relative position in the community. I claim that the system of a capitalized value for land causes men in buying land to bet that the land will never go below a certain annual value as long as they have a direct or indirect interest in it. Here is how it works out: A piece of land is worth \$80 for use one year. We say it has an annual value of \$80. If the government takes \$20 in tax,

there is a net value of \$60. If money is worth 6 per cent. per year then the land is worth \$1000 at capitalized price, because \$60 is 6 per cent. of \$1000. Now then, if the man has any reason to believe that the net rent will drop below \$60 he will hesitate or refuse to pay so much. But if he is willing to pay \$1000 it is because he believes that, with interest at 6 per cent. the net annual value of the land will never be below \$60. And in paying \$1000 he really is placing a bet against all the world that during any time while he may be interested the land will never drop below \$60. When, therefore, the value mounts, in a boom, the owner is feverish with excitement, and his one agony comes from his struggle to sell at the "top of market." If for any reason conditions bring about a decrease in annual value, then his worries begin. He counts his loss not from the \$1000 at which he bought but from the "top of the market" where he might have sold. The real estate men told him that the land is a fine investment because "land can't run away." He wakes to find that the value can run away from land.

Thus we have the ownership of land causing a hectic existence, full of worry and excitement. In place of this system is offered the tenure of land on payment to government of the annual value, whatever that value may be. If population increases in the region and the governmental services increase, there will be more annual value and no hardship will result because the land is returning to the owner full value. If on account of decrease of population or establishment of a nuisance in the neighborhood the value decreases, the owner will simply in that year pay a smaller sum to agree with the value of the land. The owner will pay little or nothing for the transfer of the land to him, but he will pay to the government (for the use of national, state and local units) practically the full value for the time being. A man's hope of income, then, is based entirely on his own labor. But as every other man's income is based on labor of mind and hand, there is no opportunity for the varied changes of fortune and the worries incident to them. This, then, is "how to equalize," and how to get rid of poverty.

Folks, look through this proposition. It is not original with me. But if you want to improve the general health and if you believe that factors governing health are good housing, good food, sanitary arrangements, good working conditions, leisure for personal development, and freedom from worry and from the fear of poverty,—then if you want to continue the present system of low tax on land and high tax on labor and materials, you have the job of showing how the present system may promote health. *then with the tax on labor & materials*

We take tax money for the building of good roads. But we do not tax the public roads. If we did, we would have few good roads. *By the same token* as long as we tax houses we shall never have as many good houses as we need. So it does make a difference after all how we carry the tax burden just as it makes a difference how we carry any other burden.

WILLIAM H. DINKINS.

## SONS OF MARY—AND OF MARTHA

"Ninety per cent of the world of men  
Are envying daily the other ten

Who somehow seem to cut the pie  
As days and weeks and years roll by.

"They're lucky guys" these other ten  
Who are envied by the rest of men;

But the ninety wishers never seem  
To sense it's the milk that makes the cream.

Beneath the surface the reason lies  
Which proves the ninety are not "wise,"

For why are they *not* like other men  
These few we call the Upper Ten?

Once and for all the reason learn:  
Because they *Own* instead of *Earn!*

Legalized privilege gives them gold  
Beyond the dreams of a pirate bold.

The Community's natural income—*rent*,  
To these sons of Mary is given and spent;

Become a ground hog, that's the wheeze  
If you aspire to "raise the breeze!"

Well—what can the sons of Martha do  
To unscramble this economic stew?

For public revenue let them take,  
The rent, that everyone helps to make.

From all taxation thus set free  
The human family will live in glee,

'Cause each will have what will be "bon,"  
A full return from his brain and brawn.

Why do the Ninety suffer a flaw  
To darken the mirror of Natural Law?

Lack of knowledge!—there's the cat  
That's eating the proletariat.

J. R. DICKSON.  
Ottawa.