

But the irrefutable general principle is the one outlined above. In so far as taxes are exacted of the owners of buildings as a class, they tend to increase house rents and house prices, and are borne by the tenant; but in so far as they are exacted of owners of building lots as a class, they tend to decrease land rents and land prices, and are borne by the owners. In the former case they are shifted to the ultimate consumer, and in the latter they cannot be shifted.

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Misapprehensions of Henry George.

Curious notions about Henry George's idea of taxing land values to the exclusion or exemption of industrial values, have been spread abroad. Among them is the idea that he contemplated no sales of land. This misapprehension evidently arises from the fact that in justification of taxing land values alone, he argued the injustice of land ownership. But he approved private possession. What he aimed at was to secure exclusive occupation of land for use to the individual using it, and its community-made value to the community. As for buying and selling, he contemplated this custom as continuing just as it does now. But what the seller would sell and the buyer buy, would be the improvements and the right of possession and use of the site. Any special value added to the site by social growth and not by the occupant would be taken in taxation. This is fully set forth in George's "Progress and Poverty."

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Another misapprehension of George is the notion that under his proposals persons who "use no land" would pay no taxes. Of course there are no persons who use no land, any more than there are persons who use no water or air. Under the Georgian taxation method, those who rented land, whether as tenants of buildings or denizens of hotels and boarding houses, would pay their taxes in their rent or their board money, and the public would get it from the so-called owner of the land. Under the present system most taxes are paid in that way, but unfairly; under George's system the distribution would be fair—simply in proportion to the desirability of the spot where they lived or did business. Let no rich man imagine that he would escape. Nor let him imagine that he would escape with a small land tax for his home or his office. The wealth of rich men who "do not own land," consists for the most part of paper titles to interests in land of enormous value—of stocks and bonds controlling railroad rights of way, con-

trolling mineral deposits, controlling city building sites, great stretches of farming land, immense water power, and so on. The land value tax would fall upon all those interests at their source.

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Sometimes this question arises: "The single tax would do away with an income tax, would it not, and should not the people who are the best able to stand the tax be the ones to pay the most?" It would, indeed, do away with that species of income tax which taxes men regardless of whether their ability to pay comes from their own earnings or from the earnings of others through some privilege conferred by law. But it would establish an income tax on firm moral and economic foundations. For it would tax no man on the income he earns, but would tax away the income which, through the social necessity of private ownership of land, comes to him unearned simply because he monopolizes land which others need.

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CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION

Cooperation is another name for civilization. It is suggestive of mutuality of aid and interest. It means good will, fellowship, public and private health, and, through specialized industry, the largest possible production of wealth. It spells soap, sanitation, social peace, individual security. Without it, man has always been, is, and must remain a savage.

Competition, on the contrary, is suggestive of strife, stress, pressure and ill feeling.

The one is coming more and more into popular favor, the other is growing steadily in disrepute.

There is a substantial reason for this, as there is a reason for every thing else in the affairs of men. The reason that competition hurts the masses of men today is because opportunity is limited. It is penned up by legal enactments and institutions which narrow the field of effort, limit and hamper exchanges of wealth, and prevent production absolutely in a thousand directions.

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It is as natural for men to cooperate as to breathe, to eat or sleep.

Cooperation is founded upon the simple, universal and wide reaching social principle that men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion. Give this social law full sway and social regeneration will inevitably result.

What is it which prevents man's following this law? What is it which everywhere cramps his

social and industrial activities, and produces every few years a partial paralysis of industry and pitiful distress in the underworld of labor.

Must it not be something which somewhere, somehow, prevents his doing that which all his physical needs and social desires forever prompt him to do, and to do with the least exertion?

Manifestly, the real reason why the cooperative commonwealth of socialist dreamers is not an actual and beautiful reality is not because society is unable or unwilling to cooperate; not because there is lack of skill or industrial knowledge; not that incentive or substantial reward are absent. Nor is it because man's social instincts run counter to this great vital principle; everything in nature and society tends irresistibly in the direction of least resistance. It is because economic institutions, based upon false teachings, untenable doctrines, hamper social and industrial progress in ways which men feel but do not understand, and which they resent bitterly and oppose clumsily.

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Industrial oppression, jug-handled competition, economic pressure, and the strife and stress of life all over the world today, are all parts of the same thing. They are manifestations of the one central social defect, "scarce opportunity." It is this that creates our social problem. This alone is responsible for long hours and short wages, making labor the serf of idleness and luxury. It alone is responsible for the competition at which social agitators launch their anathemas.

It is "scarce opportunity" for labor that produces the well paid parasite and the ill paid laborer. "Scarce opportunity" is the nether millstone which, in conjunction with the upper one of necessity, grinds the worker and his children to powder.

Any principle or agency that will remove this social barrier will remove at the same time all the others, because it foundations them all. Ten thousand evil effects flow from this central cause. Remove the cause and the rest will follow in this as in all other relations of life.

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What is opportunity? Is it not clear that Nature in her munificence has furnished man with all the opportunities he has or can ever hope for, and has embodied and condensed them all in the thing we call "land"?

The notion that men give each other opportunity by employment is as fallacious as it is baseless. The so-called "employing class" is but an

other disjointed result of a worse than disjointed system which everywhere, under all systems of government, rewards monopoly and punishes industry. It treats the monopolizer of land as a friend of society and gives him vast wealth, but treats the user of land as an enemy and takes his wealth without return or excuse.

This system is as old as government, as oppressive as tyranny, as useless as idleness, as deadly as disease, and as needless as ignorance.

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The three things which block the highway of open opportunity and therefore of progress are taxes upon production, taxes upon exchange, and laws which permit the monopolization of land.

Removing the first would free production from social hindrances. Individuals cannot interfere with production except with the aid of government.

Removing the second would make trade free, universal and wide as the surface of the big round earth. Production on its present scale is both useless and impossible without trade.

Removing the third would open up to labor the only possible storehouse where Nature keeps her raw materials—a storehouse which we call "land," without thinking of the measureless meaning of this simple little term.

Those things done, all the rest would follow in easy sequence as naturally as the trickling mountain stream finds its way to the welcoming ocean without a guide save unseen gravity.

Oh! if men could only grasp the simple and beautiful natural laws of human association—sweet, kindly, beneficent—which offer so much, and ask in return only that we be just. "Here are my laws, O people of earth!" says Nature. "Obey them and you shall be healthy, prosperous, happy. Violate them at your peril."

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Men live by industry.

They can never be free to cooperate to the full until industry is free.

Industry is production and exchange. That is all. Leave them alone.

And the way to leave them alone is to untax them. Taxation is the real brake on industry's wheels. Take it off. Place it where it belongs, upon the monopolizer of opportunity.

Then we shall have opportunities to labor wide as the world itself. Trade will follow, limitless as human desire. Both will depend only upon inexhaustible Nature.

Then will come the cooperative commonwealth of the socialist. Then will come the universal voluntary association of the anarchist. And what are these but the orderly, helpful, wholesome, natural social state which every single taxpayer sees in his dreams and hopes for in his waking hours.

HENRY H. HARDINGE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

JOHN Z. WHITE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.*

San Luis Obispo, Calif., Feb. 16, 1910.

Mr. John Z. White has come and is gone. He came, he spoke, and he conquered. His California itinerary was arranged by the Direct Legislation League of California, and his visit here originally was to have been arranged for by our public librarian, Mrs. Frances M. Milne. Mrs. Milne was, however, unfortunately taken ill, so that she had to withdraw from the effort, but she placed the matter in my hands, as President of the local Municipal League, and I was only too glad to follow her recommendations and secure Mr. White to speak on the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall.

Our city is in the midst of a contest to secure a Freeholders' charter with all these features embodied therein, and Mr. White's lectures have been so opportune and beneficial that we may speak of them as almost providential. He has succeeded in amalgamating some of the opposing forces to such an extent as to make it appear that there will not be such strenuous opposition as was at first encountered.

At the State Polytechnic School, on the 14th, Mr. White met with hearty enthusiasm. The same day he appeared before the High School and had a similar reception.

His first lecture was delivered on Sunday evening, Feb. 13, at a union meeting of the churches, and the large auditorium of the Presbyterian church was packed. On Monday evening he spoke in Columbia Hall to a large crowd of business and professional people, representing all legitimate interests. Both lectures have been well reported in the newspapers.

J. FRANK HAYES,
President Municipal League.

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PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES.

London, Feb. 5, 1910.

Nothing was more alien to my intentions or farther aside from my expectations, when I left Chicago for Liverpool on the 23d of last December, than taking a speaking part in the British campaign for the election of the new House of Commons. All along the route of the Pacific Railway train, to St. John's in New Brunswick, where I embarked on Christmas day, and across the somewhat but only briefly turbulent (and to me exceedingly kind) Atlantic, my thoughts had been occupied with the one

purpose of my trip, which was to observe those elections, and to observe them with reference especially to their bearing upon the world-wide land question. I wished to see for myself, and for the readers of *The Public*, how the rights of the people to homes of their own upon the earth, and to a stake in the social values which social progress attaches to socialized areas of land, were involved in the British elections. I had gone to learn how the British people were taking a political campaign which, as Lloyd George expressed it, was to ascertain why ten thousand should own the soil of Great Britain, and all the rest of the population be "trespassers in the land of their birth." But in less than twelve hours after I had passed custom house inspection at Liverpool, and to my own great amazement, I was (as in former letters I have indicated) making a campaign speech to a British audience at a Liberal meeting in behalf of a Liberal candidate for Parliament. To tell of this may be repetitious, but in a story of personal experiences some repetitions of incident may be pardoned.

"I wish," said J. W. S. Callie, secretary of the historical Financial Reform Association of Liverpool, and election agent for John F. Brunner (now a member of Parliament and successor to his father, Sir John Brunner, who has been a distinguished and radical member for twenty-five years),—"I wish," said Mr. Callie, to me, about two hours after I had stepped ashore, "that you would go out with me tonight to a meeting at Middlewich." With my thoughts upon the exceptional opportunities for observation which this invitation might give me, I replied that I would go gladly, for that sort of thing was what I had come over for. Mr. Callie expressed his gratification with rather more enthusiasm, I thought, than my acquiescence had warranted, and invited me to the Young Liberal Club to luncheon. On our way to the club he began a remark about the Middlewich meeting. "When you speak tonight," said Mr. Callie; but I interrupted with, "When I what!" He began again: "When you speak tonight at Middlewich"—"But I am not going there to speak," I broke in; "I am only going to look on and see what your political meetings are like." "By no means," he responded; "I asked you down to speak for Brunner, and that is what you're to do."

It was in vain that I pleaded the unwisdom of having a foreigner take part in the campaign, explaining that in the United States it would be fatal to the candidate. Mr. Callie laughed at me. England was more cosmopolitan than that. Her people were glad to welcome foreigners upon their platforms, and the supporters of a British candidate were proud to know that foreigners take an interest in his candidacy. Moreover, this meeting would want to hear what an American thinks of Protection, etc., etc., etc. I held back until a telephone message from the candidate himself gave assurance of his willingness to take the chances of my defeating him (it was not a close district, by the way), and then I went.

Arriving in the quaint little village and moving toward the town hall along the narrow and winding streets, as I have already related in these letters, we were greeted through its windows with the strains of "Marching Through Georgia." It seemed as if I could make out the words, "Shouting the bat-

*See the *Public* of February 18, page 160.