

A Chicago Paper's Editorial on the New York Single Tax Platform

HENRY GEORGE'S Single Tax plan is probably the greatest policy for human betterment ever enunciated.

Private ownership of land is as illogical and as opposed to public policy as private ownership of water, air, sunlight or other natural elements.

Man has a true title only to that which he creates or which he has acquired by fair barter and exchange. No man can ever acquire an honest title to real estate for the very excellent reason that the Creator never gave anyone a deed. All abstracts begin with seizure.

The system of land titles that allows a man to "own" more than he can use is manifestly opposed to public policy.

The value of land is created by public demand. A large city makes land valuable and the city should receive the values it creates in the form of taxes.

By removing the taxes on industry and thrift and placing all taxes on land values—this policy would force unused land into activity. It would encourage thrift and industry instead of penalizing them as under the present tax system.

The convention of the New York Single Tax Party was in refreshing contrast to that of the old-line parties. The Single Tax Party platform is a rather lengthy document. It demands, as the ultimate aim of the party, that the rental value of land be collected by the State and that "all improvements, industry and enterprise be exempt from taxation." It then outlines the manner in which the taxing power is to be used to attain this end, and in separate sections outlines the effect of the application of the Single Tax upon agriculture, upon labor, upon capital and upon the government.

An entirely new departure is the adoption of a plank declaring opposition to the advocacy by the Socialists of the government ownership and operation of all the means of production and distribution and stigmatizes the socialistic philosophy as an attempt to solve our economic and social evils by resorting to artificial laws, whereas the Single Tax would destroy the causes of these evils by a return to the natural law of free access to the earth and free competition.

Finally, the platform contains a plank dealing with the present crisis, in which the party pledges its candidates to the support of the national government and any measures necessary in the prosecution of the war, but calls the attention of the government and the people to the Single Tax as a means of stimulating the production of raw materials, of raising revenues for the conduct of the war and the redemption of the nation's debt after the war is over, and of the imperative need of opening to the millions of soldiers and sailors, when they shall return from the trenches, the millions of acres of arable farm land, of which there are many million acres situated in New York State alone, and of thus avoiding the period of un-

employment, low wages and hard times which otherwise are likely to follow the demobilization of our armies.

The party hopes to force Single Tax onto the platforms of the big parties.—*Calumet Record*, South Chicago, Ill.

Militant Democracy and Fiscal Reaction

WHEN the fiscal history of this war-time comes to be reviewed, a singular and unworthy phenomenon will have to be recorded of the two great democratic nations of Anglo-Saxon America.

Beyond a few isolated cases in the western provinces of Canada, where a small levy has recently been made upon land held out of cultivation, the fiscal exemption enjoyed by property in land has been maintained. Indeed, in the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, where (particularly in municipal areas and for municipal purposes) the fiscal discrimination against the productive use of land had been removed a few years ago, advantage has been taken of a limited property franchise and the enforced absence of the virile part of the population at the battle-front to saddle again upon the user of land an unfair share of taxation. In Vancouver, improvements are again assessed, cautiously, it is true, at 25% of their value; in Edmonton, more boldly, at 60%.

Throughout the rest of Canada and the United States, the privileged fiscal position of inadequately used land has remained unshaken. Practically every useful or useless form and object of production has been loaded with direct, indirect and even duplicated taxation. But in the great world emergency and in the face of the supreme challenge to patriotism and conscience, the private ownership of the nation's natural assets has distinguished itself by no gesture of heroism or self-sacrifice. As we have shown in previous issues of the REVIEW, land-owning interests have not hesitated even to proclaim in the public press this profitable, if inglorious, exemption from national service.

It would be unfair to the perspicacity of our statesmen to suppose them blind to such a scandalous fiscal anomaly. But, assuming their perception of the situation, it leaves us the more difficult and unpleasant task of explaining their silent acquiescence in the iniquity. Not a single initiative of the most timid, tentative nature to remedy this injustice to the nation's economic and financial equilibrium and strength stands to the credit of our national government or of any one of the 48 State governments.

The connivance of all our legislatures seems, indeed, to be pledged to those favored financial interests which exploit this fiscal injustice. We cannot understand otherwise the impunity with which the "safety" of land investments from war claims and other fiscal obligations is featured so largely in the advertisements of leading real estate brokers. They make no effort to conceal the invidious fiscal distinction in their favor.