

MR. J. W. BENGOUGH, of Toronto, having presented the Single Tax in a public address in Victoria in the way he prefers to present it, as the taking of "people value" while leaving undisturbed private ownership in land, has called down upon his head the criticism of Rev. Alex MacDonald, Bishop of Victoria.

Mr. Bengough is fond of laying stress on the fact that the Single Tax permits private ownership of land while taking the value that attaches, not to the land, but to the presence of people. While not desiring to quarrel with this mode of statement, since its literal truth is not to be denied, we are doubtful whether those who profit by the taking of economic rent will find it any more palatable. And this conclusion is brought out by the Bishop's criticism. He says:

But, you will say, Single Tax in itself does not involve the denial of private ownership of land. I will grant you this, for the sake of argument. But it involves the assertion of the community's right to take toll of the man who happens to own land, independently of whether it yields revenue or not, and to take such toll only of the man who happens to own land.

THE Bishop's contention that the Single Tax involves the taking of toll by the community from those who own land is an appeal to the ideal of justice which if he once gets the question straight in his head, will inevitably compel him to agree with what Mr. Bengough and other Single Taxers contend for.

The economic rent of land if allowed to remain untaxed is a private instead of a public toll—a tax levied by the individual upon community or people-created value. The Bishop will come to see that to speak of the Single Tax—a method of recovering this community-produced value for public purposes—as a "toll," is a misnomer. When it is allowed, as it is now, to go into private pockets, it represents a continuous toll or tribute on all the people. The Single Tax is the method of recovery of this natural fund by those who produce it and to whom—if any sacredness attaches to property—it should go.

The fact is, the Reverend Bishop has not examined the nature of land value or economic rent. Perhaps this is at the basis of much misrepresentation of our doctrines. Once the nature and genesis of economic rent are clearly grasped, the Single Tax, or the taking of economic rent, follows as a natural sequence.