

The Single Tax Review

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Current Comment

THE *Freeman*, in its issue of Sept. 20th, contains a reference to the Single Tax as "a special reform which has fallen, *for good reason*, into disrepute." We should be happy to know the reason. Maybe the defect could then be corrected.

THE *New York Times* said editorially in a recent issue: "To an old Welsh professor in a Scottish University the question was put, 'How will Lloyd George emerge from the Coalition—as a crusted (crusty?) Tory or as a flaming radical?' The quiet answer was: 'As the latter, you may rest assured.'"

There are those among the Single Taxers of Great Britain who have not lost faith in Lloyd George. They believe he is only waiting his opportunity to make the land question the leading issue in a new campaign. Evidently their opinion of him is very much that of the Welsh professor, who believes that a "flaming radicalism" is so much a part of his intellectual temperament that it is sure to find him, sooner or later, leading the forces pledged to a fundamental social change. All we can do is to wait. But what will his present day eulogists think of him then? What will the *New York Times*, for example, say of him when he proclaims, as he did in his Newcastle-on-Tyne speech, in March, 1903: "It is all very well to produce bills for the Housing of the Working Classes. They will never be effective until we tackle the taxation of land values."

Or this from his later Glasgow speech of Feb. 4, 1914:

"There is one deep, underlying principle of all sound, just, beneficent land laws in every land—that land in all countries was *created by Providence for the benefit of all those who dwell therein*, and that any privileges, rights or interests attaching for the time being, whatever their origin may be, to the ownership of land that are inconsistent with this great purpose, ought, in the interests of the community, to be ruthlessly overridden."

A MR. H. C. Van SWERINGEN is a realty operator in Cleveland. He is a member of the Plymouth Congregational Church of that city. He is fond of quoting from Scripture, and in a recent interview he says: "Sometimes the truth of one Bible passage appeals to me and sometimes another." But he says his favorite passage is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Mr. Van Sweringen will not think unkindly of us if we commend to his consideration certain other passages in the Bible. Mr. S. is a realty operator, and there is a passage in Isaiah referring to certain realty operations which the prophet severely condemns. Then there is another passage, "The

earth is the Lord's and shall not be sold forever." There are passages, also, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus useful as laying down certain considerations for men active in the real estate business. There is a part of this business which is essentially useful, but another part which is unsocial (and ungodly, too) in its results. We assume that Mr. Van Sweringen has a respect for these injunctions. He will find that many of them run counter to his interests as a realty operator. But their moral validity is no less on that account.

DR. FRANK CRANE says many a true thing day by day—of course among many other things not so true. This is due to the necessity of saying something every day. But the following is too good to pass over:

"The old belief in the government totem lingers.

The stubborn and bony fact in the case, however, is, as has been stated, that government—any kind of government—is impotent to do anything much besides meddling and making trouble."

This need not, however, make us blind to the fact that government can do something for us by getting out of our way. After fulfilling the few offices that are essentially the province of government it can do a splendid service by leaving other things alone. The fault of government is that it attempts to do things that it has no business to meddle with and leaves undone the things it should do—chief among which is to remove the impediments to the operation of natural forces everywhere at work in the economic world.

THE *New York Sun* says in a recent issue: "In many minds there attaches to the word subsidy an opprobrious association," and then defending the ship subsidy sapiently adds: "When New York recently suspended taxation to encourage building it subsidized that industry." That is, if you are taking something from somebody, you subsidize him by ceasing to take it. Thus the suspension of all burglarious operations by the house-breaking gentry would be a general subsidy extended to home-owners. Regardless of the validity of the argument for subsidies we protest against a misuse of the word which should cause the late Charles A. Dana to turn in his grave.

IT IS our painful duty to chronicle the sudden death of L. F. C. Garvin, of Rhode Island, on October 2nd, age 81. We print elsewhere a letter from Dr. Garvin which shows the generous spirit in which he welcomed the Single Tax party movement, in which however he could not join for reasons that seemed to him sufficient. We have lost a great and devoted soul.