

rent, would be sufficient, but this is too long. When you speak of "land" the average stupid or indifferent person thinks instinctively of worthless or half worthless land. To the unthinking the word "land" suggests area and not a socially created value.

John Stuart Mill said that the "law of rent" is the *pons asinorum* of political economy. If that be true, how much more is it true of the Henry George doctrine. Our equal right to the valueless land is not impaired by present legislation. "Anybody can get it but nobody cares to work it," and with this wise observation the thoughtless voter dismisses the appeal that the land party makes to his vote.

Even in England, where the evils of a wicked system of robbery and plunder should be plainly apparent, the average Englishman, like his American cousin, imagines that land is something far removed from London and the large towns. Most people do not know that there is a monopoly of civilization by those who are privileged to own the land where civilization is. That taxes could be abolished and government made to pay for itself is a much stronger argument, and far more convincing than the plea to exempt industry from taxation, because the former points the way to abolish privilege, and tax exemption seems to confer it.

We seem to overlook the fact that the great mass of mankind know nothing whatever about the fundamentals of economic science. They see no reason why they should substitute one tax for another. All taxes are bad, but one tax is most unjust, they say, because they imagine that we would place an unequal tax on some while exempting others. They are like the socialist in confusing capital with monopoly, property with privilege and wealth with rent.

The article from J. W. Graham Peace in your last issue concerning the Labor party is most illuminating. The Labor party in England, like the "Progressives" and "Radicals" here, is afraid of the ignorant votes. They want immediate results and as a consequence get no results at all.

A thousand good wishes!  
Denver, Colorado.

JOHN B. MCGAURAN.

#### FROM A VETERAN IN THE CAUSE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am feeling the weight of years accompanied with the anxiety of earning a living for myself and wife, and cannot hope for much more of the pleasures of life, excepting the enjoyment it gives me to fulfill the promise I made to Henry George that as long as I lived I would do what I could for the restoring to the children of men their natural birthright in the land.

I often wonder what it is in the nature of the human race that makes mankind so stupid. I have been reading history back a thousand years before Moses and cannot find that the natural rights of man were ever nationally recognized.

What we need more than anything else is publicity. How to get it is the question. So far the most promising way to me seems by way of the Commonwealth Land Party. It will continue to gain friends.

Had I the means that some of the Single Taxers have I would keep advertising it through the pages of the prominent papers and magazines, by sign boards, etc.

With prayers that you may be spared many years to lead the good work,  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

W. F. MERCER.

#### THE RUSSIAN LAND QUESTION.

EDITOR OF LAND AND FREEDOM:

In regard to the land policy of the Russian Government, it is fully indicated in the provisional constitution adopted by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918. That the framers of the constitution considered the clause dealing with the land the most important part of the document is evident from the fact that it is placed immediately after the preamble and declaration of rights. The clause is

as follows: "Chapter Two (a) For the purpose of realizing the socialization of land, all private property in land is abolished, and the entire land is declared to be national property and is to be apportioned among husbandmen without any compensation to the former owners, in the measure of each one's ability to till it."

A question might be raised in regard to the injustice of taking the improvements without compensation; but the majority of the landlords were reactionary and monarchistic and were generally plotting for the overthrow of the government. It has long been the practice of governments to confiscate the property of those adjudged guilty of treason. At a less turbulent time this point might have received more consideration. The constitution has been amended, but this provision still stands. The opinion seems to be general in Russia, that the real worth-while results of the Revolution are the abolition of monarchy, and the nationalization of the land.

Until recently the peasants were required to pay a general property tax in addition to the land tax. At the last session of the All Russian Congress, a law was enacted known as the Single Agricultural Tax Law. As I understand it, this law relieves the peasants from all taxation except the land tax or rent. The city or town dwellers still pay the general property tax. The peasants constitute about 85 per cent. of the population, so it may be considered a pretty close approximation to the Single Tax. It is reasonable to expect that the city dwellers will soon make a demand to be placed on the same footing as the peasants.

Another provision of the new tax law leads one to think that the Russian law makers may not be so ignorant as those of some other countries who consider themselves much wiser. Economists have reasoned that a stable government might issue a paper currency without a gold reserve or any other form of guaranty, except that it would be received in payment for taxes, and that it would not depreciate as long as the total amount issued in one year was not in excess of the tax budget. The currency would be destroyed when received by the government in payment for taxes and a new issue made. The Russian government has adopted this device. I understand that tax certificates are being or will be issued which will circulate as currency and be received in payment for taxes of all kinds.

One of the saving graces of the government here, is that it is not afraid to try experiments. There are no sacred business and vested interests that must be handled as carefully as bird's eggs. The eight hour work day is general and I have heard of no strikes of any importance since I have been in Russia. If a man is dissatisfied with his job he has the land to go to.

With 85 per cent. of the programme of the Single Taxers realized, with cooperative stores in all parts of the country, and cooperative production by artels encouraged, and free trade spread over a greater extent of territory than was ever known before, I think that the stability of the Russian Government, and the ultimate prosperity of the country are pretty well assured. There are many annoying regulations in force, such as requiring travelling permits to ride on the railways, the prohibition of the possession of fire arms by anyone who is not a member of the Communist Party, etc., but what has been gained acts like a cloak of charity in covering a multitude of sins.

Kemerovo, Siberia.

W. A. WARREN.

#### SHOULD REACH EVERY VOTER IN THE LAND

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I think we all realize now more than ever in the history of our propaganda that LAND AND FREEDOM should reach, if it were possible, every intelligent voter in the land.

Lakewood, Ohio.

J. S. PASKINS.

#### MINNESOTA'S MINING TAXES

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Henry George taught us to define our terms and then hold fast to the facts. It may well be to do this regarding the Minnesota Occupation