

A Great Irish Land Reformer

THE entire soil of a country belongs by right to the entire people of that country. and is the rightful property not of any one class, but of the nation at large, in full and effective possession to let to whom they will, on whatever tenure, terms, rents, services and conditions they will, one condition being, however, unavoidable and essential, the condition that the tenant shall bear full, true and undivided fealty and allegiance to the nation and the laws of the nation, whose land he holds, and owes no allegiance whatever to any other prince, power, or people, or any obligation of obedience or respect to their will, orders or laws. I hold further, and firmly believe, that the enjoyment of the people of this right of first ownership in the soil is essential to the vigour and vitality of all other rights to their vitality, efficiency, and value; to their secure possession and safe exercise. For let no people deceive themselves or be deceived by the words and colors and phrases and forms of a mock freedom, by constitutions and charters, and articles and franchises. These things are paper and parchment, waste and worthless. Let laws and institutions say what they will, this fact will be stronger than all laws, and prevail against them—the fact that those who own your lands will make your laws and command your liberties and your lives.

—JAMES FINTON LALOR, in "*An Irish Commonwealth*."

A Tax That Does Not Discourage Production

THE land value tax does not discourage those who properly use their land; it only discourages those who do not properly use their land. It does not, like the income tax, penalize industry, but rewards it; and it does not, like the income tax, reward speculation, but penalizes it. Under it the monopolists of vacant land will be induced not to keep their land off the market but to put it on the market. Those who want to develop vacant ground, therefore, will be able to get it, not at excessive prices but at reasonable prices.

Cong. OSCAR E. KELLER.

WE regret to learn from *Land and Liberty*, of London, of the death of James Busby, of Glasgow, on March 28, at the age of 65. He was secretary of the Scottish League from 1907 to 1924. He was an earnest propagandist of the teachings of Henry George and understood the land question as did few men of his time.

"THE first thing a student has to do is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership (of land). Such an idea is quite unknown to English law. No man is in law the absolute owner of lands."

—WILLIAMS' LAW OF REAL PROPERTY.

CORRESPONDENCE

HENRY GEORGE'S FIGHT IN 1872

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I was associated with Henry George in that memorable Anti-Railroad Campaign in California in 1872 when we elected an overwhelming legislature and Newton Booth Governor. Later Mr. Booth became U. S. Senator, the first real reformer, I think, ever sent to that body.

That legislature enacted some very wholesome reform laws, notably the Australian Ballot. Stanford, Crocker and Co. bought the next legislature, and started to undo much of the good work done. I have often thought I would write up this campaign, and some day shall do so.
Houston, Texas. F. J. TRAPP.

BEYOND ALL DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The March-April number of *LAND AND FREEDOM* just received. The name could not be improved. Your reviews and criticism from the Freedom standpoint have a "sweet reasonableness" without malice, passion or partisanship. The confirmation of such minds as that of Prof. John Dewey shows that arguments from conditions as they are have little ground in reason or logic. Though the conservatives oppose the out-and-out Socialists they outdo the party socialists in their appeals to government for assistance, the difference being that the help is asked for a class and not for the whole people, as the party socialists demand.

How can we ever hope to get rid of a strong Socialist government when people are appealed to in this fashion?

Beyond all discoveries and inventions is the discovery of Henry George. In all the literature I have read there is little to be added. The arguments addressed to a man already convinced may be little needed. But there are different angles constantly revealed which need thought and art in developing and expressing. Only by practice can this be secured. This is the value of the work you are doing. When I read your periodical I rejoice at the voicing of my dreams you so eloquently express.

For purposes of education I am willing to cooperate with the party. I do not share the opinion that we must be workers "under cover."
Chicago, Ill. MORRIS LYCHENHEIM.

THE CHANGE OF NAME

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

It was indeed time you dropped the old name, Single Tax, having proved its inadequacy.

Henry George discovered the solution of the problems which, unsolved, would lead the world on the path to despair. But Single Tax is not an attractive label.

"Rent" is understood by all—indeed it is of compelling importance.
Sydney, N. S. Wales. ERNEST J. HAYES.

A FRIENDLY CRITIC.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I have very carefully read through the platform, and with one exception consider it as being the clearest, most concise and most accurate enunciation of the philosophy of land-value taxation that has ever appeared.

It is signally unfortunate, in my opinion, that the expression "private ownership of land" is a number of times used. I of course understand, and every other well posted land-value taxationist understands, that the expression "private ownership of land" *actually* means private collection and retention of the *public*-produced values inherent in land

possessing rental value. Clearly, it is a moral, as well as natural law, that this value should go to the public *producing* it, and never to private interests that do *not* produce it.

It is generally understood by well informed students of land-value taxation that land *titles* should not be disturbed. The people collectively are little interested in land titles, but civilization is *vitally* interested in the *honest* distribution of land-values to the communities producing them. I very much regret that the above distinction was not made absolutely clear in the new platform.

It is no exaggeration to say that, the Commonwealth Land Party becomes the only political organization in America, and perhaps in the world, whose fundamental principles embody the *only* possibilities of forever ending war, strife, economic maladjustments, and the fear of poverty consequent upon unnatural competition.

Little Rock, Ark.

K. P. ALEXANDER.

CATCHES THE EDITOR NODDING.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

At the foot of page 40 in the March-April issue, occurs this statement,—“Minnesota’s iron ore tax having been declared valid, Minnesota will now tax all of us for the benefit of her land-owners.”

While it requires considerable temerity to differ with the editor on a matter of taxation, it has seemed to the writer, after considerable study of the Minnesota law, that this is a tax on land-owners, rather than a relief. The only possibility of its being passed along to “all of us” arises from its being only 6% instead of 100%.

In the application of this tax the value of the ore at the mine mouth is taken as the starting point. From this is deducted all labor-values, so far as they can be ascertained. The basic value which is thus arrived at is the value of the ore in the mine, which value is taxed at 6%. Since the value of the ore in the mine is essentially a natural resource value, any tax levied on that value cannot be passed along, but rests with the owner.

What would be the result if operators sought to recoup the tax from consumers? Assume, for example, the value of the ore at the mine mouth to be \$20.00 per ton, and labor-costs \$10.00 per ton, leaving ore-value at \$10.00 per ton, the tax would be 60c. To recover this, the new mine-mouth price must be \$20.636, or about that, since the additional 60c would be added to the ore-value, bringing it to \$10.60, with the resultant small increase in tax. Whether the operators would be able to increase the price thus would depend upon competitive mines; and since the present price is probably “all the market will bear”, it would seem that recovery of the tax paid is improbable. However, if the principle were extended, and the present tax increased to 100%, recovery would be impossible, since every increase in mine-mouth price would be absorbed by the tax on ore-value, likewise advanced.

The application of this tax, also, conforms to the canons of land value taxation, in that it is highest on the most valuable ore, i.e., the cheapest to extract. The mine-mouth price, being approximately the same on ore from all mines, while the deductions for labor-cost are less at the more favorable mines, the ore-values are greatest at the latter, with a higher tax.

It is easy to lose sight of the distinction between this Minnesota tax and those of which the Pennsylvania coal tax is typical, which being levied on the value of the product with labor-costs added, becomes a part of the expense of doing business, and is thus collected from the consumer.

East Jaffrey, N. H.

GEORGE N. DUNCAN.

PERHAPS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am greatly pleased that so fortunate a change has been made in the party name at such an opportune moment. Never have I heard so many voters expressing disgust at the conditions revealed in the

two old political parties, nor a greater willingness to consider seriously any party or programme that offers a change toward sanity and honesty.

There are a considerable number of people in this section who are familiar with the principles of the Commonwealth Land Party and I am very hopeful that the new party will receive the support of many of them.

I shall do what I can to call the matter to the attention of the voters here by the distribution of copies of the Platform.

Superior, Neb.

E. BOSSEMEYER, JR.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

HON. GEO. M. FOWLDS, of Auckland, New Zealand, will visit this country in June of this year. He will be in Toronto about June 10th, and will visit New York in all probability, but if not will go through Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis to Portland. He will be glad to address Single Tax gatherings in any of these cities.

MISS GRACE ISABEL COLBRON and James F. Morton, Jr., were speakers at the recent Walt Whitman’s One Hundredth Anniversary Dinner at the St. Regis, on May 31st. Dr. Morris Lychenheim, another Single Taxer of Chicago, was a speaker at the Whitman Anniversary Dinner in that city.

THE *Liberator*, of Auckland, New Zealand, reprints from LAND AND FREEDOM the short article by Henry S. Ford, of Camden, N. J., on the subject, “Why the Single Tax Cannot be Shifted.”

L. CARL SEELBACH is now located at 409 Lafayette Building, Buffalo, N. Y. His card now reads “L. Carl Seelbach, C. P. A. and Staff.”

THE result of a Questionnaire conducted by the *Arbitrator*, of this city, is announced. Out of 250 responses over 37 per cent. declared for the Single Tax.

W. J. FLACY, author of *Constructive Democracy*, advertised on last page of cover in this issue, writes: “I feel that the new name of the paper will be beneficial”.

E. J. SHRIVER’s name is frequently seen appended to communications in the public prints on questions of interest.

WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS, of Toronto, an old subscriber, writes us, “I consider LAND AND FREEDOM very ably edited.”

E. J. CRAIGIE and H. E. Frick are candidates for Parliament in Adelaide, South Australia. Both are outspoken for the Single Tax and are making that the issue in the campaign. A vigorous canvass is being conducted. Mr. Craigie is editor of the *People’s Advocate*, one of the best papers devoted to our principles issued anywhere in the English language.

WE have received from Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown a reprint entitled “The Single Tax Complex,” which appeared in the April issue of *The Journal of Political Economy*. In this valuable essay Prof. Brown replies to the economists who are opposed to the Single Tax, taking up in detail each particular objection urged by these writers.

WE regret to learn of the death of Jonathan G. Wright, of Berkeley, California, who passed away on April 5th. Mr. Wright was a devoted Single Taxer. He came from England to Canada when a young man. Last December he celebrated the sixty-first anniversary of his marriage. His wife died the succeeding year. Until he had passed his 85th birthday Mr. Wright enjoyed good health and spent much of his