

Correspondence

THE POLITICAL FARMERS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I have been wanting to express to you my special appreciation for your strong letter of protest against the suggestion made by Mr. James Malcolm that we should support the monstrous programme of President Roosevelt, and which appeared on page 59 of the April-March edition. I am today in receipt of a letter from Samuel Danziger in which he expresses the hope that the coming Henry George Congress in Chicago will condemn unequivocally the Roosevelt experiments. I agree with him entirely. I can testify that the self-respecting farmers of Kansas did not ask for the subsidies which they have been getting through the AAA, amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. These things were demanded by the political farmers who constituted the powerful farm blocs at Washington. I gasped when I read that these farm leaders received at St. Louis assurances that Mr. Roosevelt would, if elected, give them what they had asked for. And was again shocked in reading of his successive promises of favor to the special interests of the live stock men and the silver men. Lippman and the others are absolutely wrong in assuming that there is any genuine demand for collectivism or state socialism in any degree.

Of course, the farmers are lapping up the enormous subsidies that are being distributed to them but all they really wanted in the first place was relief from the fifty-seven varieties of taxes which oppressed them so heavily and which has had the effect of aggravating still further the artificially high price of farm land. Kansas is an enormously rich state and it is an outrage that government money should be sent here at the expense of the nation and for the express purpose of increasing the cost of living to the impoverished consumer. Incidentally, the spoils system, with its new army of Democratic office holders, has been multiplied many fold notwithstanding Mr. Roosevelt's bland statement at the Yale dinner that he did not differentiate between Democrats and Republicans! But that is another story.

Wichita, Kas.

HENRY WARE ALLEN.

CIVILIZATION MADE OUT OF RAW MATERIAL

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Every issue you publish a letter about changing the name "Single Tax." Henry George meant a license or permit for use of land, but, because he was dealing in economics, used the word tax or revenue.

The words, "liberty" and "freedom" have been misused till they are associated with infringement on the rights of others.

I am hoping, after this summer on bathing beaches and in camps, people will return to the city prepared to realize that civilization is made out of raw material.

So many generations have seen the finished product that they have never known the origin.

Lonsdale, R. I.

FLORENCE GARVIN.

HENRY GEORGE AND THE NEW MAGNA CARTA

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In the year 1215, one of the most famous of all English documents, the Magna Carta, was signed by King John. While it is true that this well known document has some genuine merit, in that it aimed to secure for the people constitutional guarantee of a number of fundamental rights, particularly religious and political, it has gained a reputation far from being deserved.

For example, the Barons and the Churchmen forced King John to exempt them from the duty of supporting the government out of the socially produced land values. The Barons owned most of the land, and government was instituted largely to protect the vested interests in land. It was therefore only just that the Barons and other land-

lords should maintain the government and pay for the privilege of monopolizing the earth and the natural resources. Indeed, this was the condition upon which most of the landlords had held their lands. But the revolt of the Barons put an end to this logical and scientific mode of land tenure, a fact, unfortunately, that economists and historians in general have completely ignored.

However, the Magna Carta has become synonymous in the minds of most people with the precious ideas of justice and liberty, and it is in this popular connotation that the phrase *Magna Carta* is here used.

It is a well known fact that ideals have played a most important part in shaping human destiny. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man, first promulgated by Akhnaton (Amenophis IV, 1400 B.C.), and centuries later by Jesus, has done much to inspire the world. The Code of Hammurabi (2,100 B.C.), the Decalogue of Moses, the Justinian Institutes, the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, etc., have called the world's attention to the need of legal and constitutional justice. The writings of the social philosophers, from Plato down, have inspired generations to visualize a social order nearer to the heart's desire.

The true Magna Carta—as synonymous with the fundamental principles of justice and liberty—was dramatized and vitalized by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty." Most of the myriad "glowing schemes of betterment" completely ignore the land question, which perhaps explains why they so often prove impractical and futile. Of George, it may be said, without exaggerated metaphor, that he reached up to the heavens and literally brought these ideals down to earth. At least, he promulgated a socio-economic system that would insure justice by granting to all mankind the equal right of access to the source of all wealth—Mother Earth. Equally important, his system would provide liberty to all on a common basis of equality.

Henry George's philosophy in itself may not be a panacea, but if any panacea exists, it must embody both justice and liberty. Since his philosophy aims to provide both liberty and justice, his socio-economic system can truly be said to incarnate the living spirit of the old Magna Carta.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

JOHN C. ROSE.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, SINGLE TAXER

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your last issue you quote Mr. Charles S. Prizer as writing with reference to your March-April number, that "Your quotation from alleged remarks of Abraham Lincoln on the land question is the most sensational news of the year." The quotations from Lincoln to which Mr. Prizer refers are the following:

"The land, the earth God gave to man for his home, sustenance and support, should never be the possession of any man, corporation, or unfriendly government, any more than air or water, if as much."

"A reform like this will be worked out some time in the future."

If your correspondent regards these quotations as sensational, what would he say of a proposition that Lincoln's views on this question were not merely those derived from observations of land speculation in his Illinois days, but were based upon an actual knowledge and belief in precisely what we know as the Single Tax philosophy? Or that his interest in what we call the Single Tax was so intense that he brought it up for discussion at one of his cabinet meetings. To what was Lincoln referring when he said: "A reform like this will be worked out some time in the future?" To nothing more or less than what we know as the Single Tax, unless I am greatly mistaken.

Whatever Lincoln's own observation of the land problem in Illinois and elsewhere may have been, the solution was revealed to him in a book loaned to him by Senator Charles Sumner, the great Massachusetts abolitionist. This book was Patrick Edward Dove's "Theory of Human Progression and Natural Probability of a Reign of Justice," published in Edinburgh in 1850.