

The professor says that "owners of factories patronized" George, for "he offered no disturbance to their economic operations." This sounds like a sneer, but perhaps Prof. Beard did not mean it that way. A few factory men had mind enough to understand George and the heart to follow him; but, on the whole, factory owners are not readers and thinkers in economic science. Those who heard of him were mostly prejudiced against him because of his free trade views. Many never heard of him at all; others set him down as a "fanatical agitator."

But, it is fair to ask Prof. Beard, why should disturbance be offered to factory owners? Legalized special privileges which may have been given to them should be withdrawn. George's philosophy calls for that kind of disturbance, but we certainly cannot wish to get rid of factories or interfere with their honest operation. Are they not desirable? Do we not want freedom to produce wealth?

We suspect that Prof. Beard's chief difficulty in understanding Henry George is that he has the Marxian conception of capital. When he uses the term Capitalism, the professor is thinking of various forms of legalized monopoly such as in land and franchises. He bunches everything together as capital that has exchange value. That is the confusing practice of socialists, and is unscientific. Real capital as Henry George defines it is a product of labor, and its private ownership is natural and harmless. Legislators should leave it severely alone. It is only legalized monopoly that needs "disturbance."

Prof. Beard says that "the Single Tax creed bore little fruit in legislation." To that it may be replied that the Single Tax creed is more intent on abolishing a host of bad laws than on making new laws.

George's teaching has gained considerable standing in collegiate circles, and is steadily influencing thought. It is also perceptibly modifying taxation practices in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, South America, western Canada, and some portions of the United States. His ideas are under discussion in every session of the British Parliament.

Impatient souls often exclaim against the slowness of George's thought in winning general acceptance; but, on considering the powerful monopolistic interests it threatens, Single Taxers are usually encouraged. The idea, while radical, may be introduced without serious shock or panic. Men of business whose production interests exceed their monopolistic interests will gradually come to see that they must turn to Single Tax for their own safety. Organized laborers will be driven to the wall unless they break the bonds of land monopoly, as the more intelligent are coming to understand.

"IT is the thorough fusion of insight into actual facts and forces, with recognition of their bearing upon what makes human life worth living, that constitutes Henry George one of the world's great social philosophers."  
—JOHN DEWEY, Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University.

## Norman Thomas Says Things

NORMAN THOMAS, Socialist candidate for President, has been saying things since his nomination which shows him to have a better grasp of economic principles than the Republican or Democratic nominee can boast, though we suspect that Hoover really knows more than his platform. In his column in the *New Leader* he writes as follows:

"Seventy-five per cent. of what President Coolidge had to say in condemnation of the McNary-Haugen bill would have come with good grace from a militant free trader. It sounds like amazing hypocrisy coming from a staunch defender of high tariffs who has just signed a bill subsidizing the American merchant marine. Yet the President is not consciously hypocritical. Subsidies and special favors to business men do not look to him like subsidies and he is not aware that he has provided sharp arguments against his own closest political friends and supporters."

And he goes on further:

"Finally it is to be observed that agriculture has been the victim not only of a faulty credit system but of inflated land values. Very earnestly do we ask you, the farmers of America, to consider whether you may not have been mistaken in thinking too much in terms of profits to be derived by sale or rent from an increase of land values and too little in terms of the reward of your own arduous labors. Mr. W. H. Kaufman of the state of Washington has recently reminded his fellow farmers that the equivalent of stock watering has been practiced on a large scale under our present system by farm owners. The unearned increment which society creates and individual owners take does not become a blessing simply because in some cases it does not go to one family like the Astors but to a multitude of smaller owners. Working farmers like city workers have need to face this problem of land values and their control by a just and equitable system of taxation which should fall on land rather than improvements.

In this connection we may find help in solving the serious problem of tenant farming which is increasing steadily. Rentals are based on swollen land values. Farm tenants in America, unlike farm tenants in other countries, have no security of tenure and no claim on the improvements these may have made save as leases may provide. Herbert Quick is authority for the statement that not the patient workers in the tobacco fields in Connecticut but land owners and land sellers have got the lion's share of such profits as have been made out of the tariff on tobacco leaf.

In short, no system of tariff or subsidy, direct or indirect, can help the men who raise our food unless we inquire into the question of land values. Here we have only space to remind you that the prosperity of all workers whether in field, factory or office depends upon the end of special privilege and the extension of a wise and sound plan for adding to the wellbeing of individuals by social control in the interest of the workers rather than of the owners."

And he says, recognizing the importance of the removal of tariff barriers in the interests of world peace between nations:

"In the long run what is desired is lower tariffs on all sorts of goods. Good will, prosperity, even peace among nations, depend, in part, upon a careful lowering of those

economic barriers, which now divide them, with due regard for the workers in the period of readjustment. The relative prosperity of America has not been chiefly due to its protective system—every little tiny country in Europe has that—but to the fact that within our own boundaries the people of the United States have the greatest free trade market in the world.”

He also says: “None of our hesitant liberal friends have advanced one single reason for believing that the Republican or Democratic Party can be made the effective weapon of any sort of struggle for the things that most liberals profess to desire.”

The Socialist Party has done itself credit in placing in nomination for the highest office a man of liberal and advanced ideas and a good deal of real economic knowledge. Single Taxers unattached to any party can do nothing better than to give him a whole-hearted support.

We who are not prepared to go the way of socialism, who are disciples of the new *laissez faire*, who believe in the natural law of competition, can afford to ignore these considerations for the time for the sake of the candidate's clear-cut utterances on the tariff and land question. The plank of the Socialist Party platform which reads “Appropriation by taxation of the annual value of all land held for speculation,” is altogether meaningless and would prove utterly futile in practice, but it is a gesture and a recognition of the importance of our question. It may indicate the entrance of the party into a new and promising field in which it will rally to its ranks the liberal forces of the country. For almost the first time in any presidential campaign we wish well to the party and to its splendid standard bearer. For he not only feels and cares, as did Debs of revered memory, but he seems to *know*, and the union of knowledge and heart may mean a new era in politics.

## A Maine Editor Endorses the Single Tax

ONE theory that will not die is “Single Tax.” And that means tax on land values only. There must be value in the theory, because year by year it rather more than holds its own; maintains “house-organs” that put forth modestly but persistently its arguments to the public; gathers its advocates and maintains its position. Here and there as in certain cities in Pennsylvania, its practice is adopted in an amended form that is satisfactory because it works.

The arguments are so varied and extensive that no one can put them in a brief statement. Henry George wrote a great book on this subject. It has never been demolished as an argument. We merely sketch a single phase of it as to rent. Rent is paid for two services—use of building and use of land. Political economists do not call the part paid for the house “rent.” It is interest on invested capital of the owner. But what you pay for the land is

not the same. The land does not wear out; it does not grow old. It does not lose values; often it gains values. There is no depreciation on the land, in places where rent is commonly paid, such as towns and cities.

When a landlord buys bricks and mortar he buys produce, that cost labor and expenditure. When he buys land, he buys a privilege of charging you something for occupying it. It cost nobody anything in the first place, as did the bricks and mortar. No toil entered into its making. So when the landlord buys land, he buys a privilege of collecting from you.

This is a fundamental of the Single Tax argument and is rather hard to get past, without showing your coat-tails.

Now how does the Single Taxer propose to lower rents? It seems too simple. That is why people do not take very much to it. They propose to lower rents by taxing this land and not taxing the bricks and mortar. The land tax is a tax on a privilege or franchise conferred by society. The tax on bricks is a tax on toil.

The friends of this theory of taxation say that it works like a charm because the taxation on land values does not add to the rent—it lowers the rent. If you tax tobacco or gasoline (which is a better example) the price goes up. We are paying 22cts, for gas in Auburn and they pay 18 in Boston. There is a four cent tax in Maine. Every time I buy 25 gallons of gas, I pay one dollar to Maine roads and some other things, which are less essential; and which could be named easily, if we pleased.

But if we tax valuable land, will any less land be used? Not so. When anything lying idle waiting for prices to advance is taxed at its potential values, the first thing the owner does is to make it earn something. He puts it to use.

Here in Lewiston, we have had great stretches of land lying around idle, being owned by a wealthy corporations which can assimilate the taxes into other rents. Try to buy a piece of this land and you are asked a price for location—said location being in a community of 50,000 to 60,000 with water works, street railroads, schools, orderly law. This land did not establish these improvements. It has never shared much in the costs. It can afford to pay taxes because it enriches itself on the enterprise of others.

—Editorial—Lewiston (Maine) *Evening Journal*

PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY, speaking at a League of Nations Union Meeting at Matlock Bath, on Thursday, said: “A great many of the boys who join the O. T. C. (Officers Training Corps) do so with the idea of living a life of sacrifice for their country.”

This we believe to be the case. When the boys grow up they may learn that their sacrifice was for the Land Lords who claim to “own” *their* country!

—Commonweal, London, Eng.