

remember that this labor must be paid for, and that the government's only source of revenue is taxation. While those who find employment under such conditions will have more to spend, those who pay the bills will have less."

"Ground rent is the result of high commodity prices, not the cause. Rent is high because prices are high; prices are not high because rent is high."

"Rent is a civilized population consequent. It belongs to those who create it."

Here is another welcome pamphlet of thirty-odd pages, "Taxation and Starvation," which includes a marshalling of facts and arguments under sub-heads. The author is Eugene W. Way, of Seattle, former member of the Washington State Legislature and of the Seattle City Council for two terms.

Because of the array of significant facts presented it is well adapted for propaganda, and we do not believe any one can read it without arriving at definite conclusions as to what is needed to be done. The author says many interesting things and puts them forcibly. Here is one:

"We maintain the best schools and colleges in the world. Our percentage of illiteracy is remarkably low. But we have not yet learned to outlaw poverty in a country that boasts of having within its boundaries the greatest and most diversified fields and mountains of natural wealth known to civilization."

There are many valuable tables that should prove useful to our writers and speakers. It is pointed out, for example, that the population of 1930 was a little over five times what it was in 1850, but that land values were over fifty times as great as they were in 1850. The reader will learn that one-eighth of the value of all lands in the United States is within the limits of New York City. And much more he will learn.

The author wastes little space in enforcing his points. He fortifies these with citations from authorities, brief paragraphs that he who runs may read. On the whole an exceedingly valuable pamphlet which we take pleasure in recommending.

J. D. M.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### TAXATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Taxation will doubtless be the major subject before the several State Legislatures when in session next winter. Public revenue laws are most important, due to their effect upon the economic and sociological interests of all citizens. When taxes are high every one suffers. When taxes are collected chiefly from labor (which includes farmers) and the products of labor and capital, the first to suffer are the farmers and other workers. The next are business and industry.

Consumers cannot pay taxes and buy goods with the same money. The farmers and other workers constitute the bulk of consumers everywhere. When they are not prosperous no one prospers. Since all taxes are paid by consumers of goods and services, and each pays in proportion to his or her ability to buy, regardless of any law that can be made, why is it reasonable, just or good business to impose an additional multiplicity of taxes upon the consumer?

The only form of taxation that does not have to be paid more than once is a Single Tax on land values or other form of privilege. Such a tax would not and could not penalize or discourage industry or business. It would stimulate and foster building and improvements everywhere. Farmers and every one else could and would build more and better houses and other buildings without fear of the assessor or tax gatherer. They could and would buy more goods and services because they would cost less and they would not be a burden after they were bought. It would be a direct tax, an honest tax, *our public product*.

Every tax dollar that is now paid comes out of "the good earth"

and has been juggled and manipulated all along the way to the public treasury. Why not collect that tax dollar directly from the land value before any one has a chance to mistreat it? Nearly 70 per cent of the tax dollars that are now paid into the public treasury are spent for functions of government that would not be necessary if our system of taxation was changed from what it is to what it should be. The property tax costs too much to collect, and so does the sales tax and service tax. The assessing and collecting of a Single Tax on land values, irrespective of all improvements, need cost nothing.

When we cease taxing the other fellow and adopt the policy of paying all our public expenditures with money derived from the earnings of the public, and from that only, we shall have more and better farmers more and better business, less unemployment and surplus, and incidentally more and easier money with which to buy more goods and services which will require more labor and capital. When labor and capital are both busy, depression and hard times need not be feared.

Aberdeen, S. D.

CHARLES J. LAVERY, M. D.

### SEES A NEW SLANT ON OUR QUESTION

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Many of the articles recently appearing in LAND AND FREEDOM by leading Single Taxers dealing with industrial conditions and the present business depression display a marked contrast to the average run of childish prattle found in the public press or broadcast over the radio. On the other hand, many of our Single Tax writers sometimes wander from the paths of sound reasoning when they should know better. A common error which many of them, along with socialistic and other radicals, fall into is in assuming that the problem is entirely one of distribution or division of wealth. This is quite evident by the oft-repeated statement that there is plenty of wealth if it was only properly or justly distributed. "We have solved the problem of production," they say; "it is now up to us to solve the problem of distribution." Now if they mean by this that we have provided ourselves with any means to supply our wants, in other words to produce all the wealth we need, this last statement would hold water, but when they mean as most of them do, that we are or have been producing all the wealth we need to supply our wants, they err greatly. The facts are we have at no time produced a sufficient amount of wealth to give everybody what they are entitled to, considering the means at our command. The problem then is one of increasing production as well as seeing that the results of it are justly or equitably divided.

If this is not true, then we would not be justified in our content that unused valuable land be taxed into use, for if there is plenty of wealth being produced there would be no need for forcing more land into use. It would only result in adding to the supposed danger of overproduction. As a matter of fact the Single Tax, by forcing unused valuable natural resources into use and making it possible for millions of people to find steady employment—which, by the way, would include those who now live off the labor of others—would in all probability result in doubling our present output of wealth. It is only by greatly increasing our output of wealth that we can hope to solve this bread and butter problem. The notion that all that is needed is to equitably divide what is being produced is utterly absurd. If all wealth were equally divided everybody would still be miserably poor in this world of goods. Over half of what is commonly called wealth isn't wealth at all, as every Single Taxer knows. Land values are not wealth in the strict economic sense of the term, yet they represent at least 50 per cent of what is termed our national wealth. Under present conditions it is doubtful if our per capita of real wealth in this country exceeds \$1,000. Surely no one will contend that we should be satisfied with this showing.

How often do we hear it said, and I regret to say even by Single Taxers, that it is simply a question of wage earners not being able to buy back what they produce. The inference being, of course, that they have produced plenty but their wages are not sufficient to buy back the wealth they have produced. Now the facts are that they have