

I have noticed this resemblance mentioned in the article before. The first time was when I was reading an article by Ford in the *Liberty* magazine a few months ago. I no longer have the copy and can not remember the exact words, but one of the sentences was to the effect that in the future we may devise a tax system that will eliminate depressions and solve our unemployment problem.

The sentence came as a surprise to me, but since I have reviewed Ford's ideas I see that they do not conflict in any particular that I can find with George's.

Georgetown, Ill.

ALVIN TESTOR.

### THE CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN

EDITOR AND LAND AND FREEDOM:

I write this note so that the readers of LAND AND FREEDOM may be brought up to date on the California situation.

It will be recalled that a sufficient number of signatures were procured to secure the presentation under the initiative to the voters of California of a constitutional amendment which would cancel recent sales taxes, prohibit their future imposition, and transfer within a period of five years all taxation upon improvements and tangible personal property to land values. This amendment may be brought before the people of California at a special election which the Governor of California may direct to be called, or in default of such direction, must be presented to them at the general election in 1936.

The present unsettled question is, at which election the amendment will be voted upon. If Upton Sinclair had been elected governor, there would have been little doubt that the amendment would have come before the people probably in June or July of the present year. Merriam, however, was elected. His general attitude has been hostile to the amendment, and it seems now fair to believe that he will not order it to a special election but that the contest will be deferred until November, 1936. The delay is not in all respects unfortunate. We have an extended opportunity in which to carry on the discussion and familiarize the people of the State with our ideas. In addition, certain immediately pressing questions as to the present State deficit will be cleared up and the issue simplified. From all this we shall expect in the end to be the gainers.

Meanwhile, we are gratified to note that one reason why our statesmen at the capitol at Sacramento entertain manifestly a wholesome fear of what the result will be when the amendment comes up to be voted upon by the people. They are therefore disposed to postpone as far as possible what to them seems to be the evil day.

I cannot refrain from once more calling the attention of all sympathizers in the country to the fact that this election will be the most important one, as well as the most promising, so far in the whole history of our movement, and to urge upon them that they do everything in their power to further its success. Their influence in the work they may be able to do in California, although they are beyond its jurisdiction, can be made to start effectively upon the final result.

Palo Alto, Calif.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

### ABOUT BEING SAVED

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The comments on the Henry George Congress by the editor of LAND AND FREEDOM meet with my enthusiastic approval. I attended the previous Chicago Congress and at about the close of the meeting, stated from the floor that I had no interest in attending meetings whose members devoted most of their time to reading Single Tax papers to each other, and to the discussion of Old Age Pensions, Unemployment Insurance, Money and other social questions, important as they may be.

In my opinion there is only one reason for a Henry George organization and that is to make practical plans to promote his idea until it becomes a realized social fact.

Single Taxers are not as dumb as Mr. Frank Stephens would have

us believe, and it appears to me that lack of progress is due to the fact that so many of us are really following the suggestions of Mr. Stephens and debating with anyone on any subject. It is difficult to become a Single Taxer without doing a little thinking and like those who acquire wealth quickly we just automatically know everything.

We should of course, try to keep reasonably informed on all public questions, but having made up our minds to what we want it is suicidal to let anything divert us. But Single Taxers chase every social rainbow, municipal and state ownership, proportional representation, money, old age pensions, unemployment insurance and what have you—all good—all desirable. Did you, however, follow the courses of the women who wanted to vote and the prohibitionists who wanted a dry earth? Did you know any of them debating birth control or the Einstein theory with all comers? You did not. These groups knew what they wanted and as they say in golf, they swung on the ball and "followed through."

After one becomes a Single Taxer, there are just two questions:

1. How to get Single Tax?

after which

2. How to apply Single Tax?

The country is full of individuals and little groups scattering little seeds from hell to Wisconsin and back again and collectively have they raised a garden? They have not; not even a hill of beans. Gardens are not raised that way. When it is desired to raise a garden, a spot is prepared, seeds are planted and that spot is weeded and cultivated.

I believe it possible for us to really make a successful garden if the Single Taxers of the country will select some State, any State, as the "spot" and then give that spot everything WE'VE got in money, energy and thought. It might take ten or fifteen years or more to really produce results, but what of that? Isn't it better to look forward to possible success in twenty years rather than to wander along for another fifty years and get nowhere?

In connection with how to apply Single Tax, it's simply impossible to understand Mr. Stephens, as this question was answered hundreds of years ago. I don't know when, and it's answered thousands of times every day; it's answered every time a landlord and tenant agree on a lease. Everytime a ninety-nine year lease is made for a new office building, the tenant agrees to pay the specified annual rent for the use of the particular "site" to be used, and the abolition of taxes and the collection of land value rentals by society is as simple as that.

There really isn't very much excuse for an old timer in Single Tax to answer the question "How shall we assess the rental value of land where collection of economic rent has ended selling values?" by saying, "Let us be elected first and we'll find out what to do about it afterwards."

The questioner answers his own question if he would but consider this part of it "when collection of economic rent has ended selling values."

When the State has collected economic rent that has ended selling values, that is Single Tax, and why ask any question concerning how to do something already done. It is surprising that a practically minded S. T. like Mr. Stephens should be thus caught in a maze of his own making.

What we need is what the women Suffragists needed, voters. The way to get Single Tax voters is to teach people about Single Tax. They can understand Single Tax and they can't understand these other things which apparently no one understands, and they don't care anything about them anyway.

People can understand "A steady job and increased purchasing power." That's our gospel and our text; let's stick to it. You may have all the intellectuals who can discuss money intelligently and disagree about it, but as for me, I should like to help cultivate a "spot" where a Single Tax garden will be the desired end. Let's abandon our narrow, localized ideas and agree on a "spot." I'd

work as hard and do as much for California, New Jersey or Delaware as for Michigan if we were all agreed, but the idea of filling a gun with bird shot and shooting straight up in the air never did appeal to me. Some day this kind of shooting might get a bird, but?

Detroit, Mich.

A. LAWRENCE SMITH.

### SAVING THE LANDED INTERESTS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

It is interesting to note that so many young men who are active in the "New Deal" so-called, are large holders of valuable real estate—Vincent Astor, A. Averill Harriman, William H. Vanderbilt, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. and Jr., Lew Douglas, etc., etc.

Here as in England, the landed interests are willing to try almost any new experiment even though it uses up half of their income so long as it does not in any way endanger the security of large land holders. Perhaps this is not done consciously; but sub-consciously or unconsciously these men are certainly looking for their own interest. Even the men upon whom it would seem we ought to rely are wandering off after strange gods.

The Single Tax is the most radical and at the same time the most conservative of all reforms. It is in line with American thought and traditions; leaves rugged individualism a permanent factor in American civilization as it has been in the past; believes in and advocates individual initiative and the right of the individual to keep his own earnings and to transfer them to his children; and at the same time it will accomplish everything that the New Deal is trying to accomplish without all this complicated mix-up and hubbub which has put the average business man in a position where he does not dare to make a move for fear it may be the wrong one.

I was extremely sorry to hear of the death of Oscar Geiger. Our movement has been fortunate in attracting men who have been willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause.

Fort Atkinson, Wisc.

CHAS. B. ROGERS.

### ALL SINGLE TAXERS WILL NOT AGREE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

It was only after I had read Mr. Luxton's comments that I gave serious consideration to the article by Mr. Stephens in the Nov.-Dec. number of LAND AND FREEDOM.

I. Mr. Stephens quotes Socrates, "The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms," and regrets that no one of five well-known Single Taxers could define Wealth, Money, Interest, Utility, Value in terms that the majority would accept. Mr. Luxton's comment is, "When one considers that man is a biological entity the fact that not one of five prominent Single Taxers could agree upon certain definitions is not to be wondered at. Mr. Stephens expects too much of the human race."

In the same paper, however, Mr. Luxton complains of communists and socialists on the ground that they "change the meanings of terms many times in a single discussion" and asks, "How on earth can one convince such folk?" Moreover in Mr. Luxton's argument on money and interest I find little of anything more than an insistence on the definition of the terms. He concludes with another reference to communists and socialists, "We should not permit them to stray from the field when discussing these topics." How stray from the field? I ask. The answer comes in Mr. Luxton's own words. They "change the meaning of terms many times in a single discussion?"

I find myself in hearty agreement with Mr. Stephens as to the need for accuracy in the definition of such terms as he gave. Personally I shall hold myself more strictly to account than I shall those with whom I disagree. Accuracy of definition is fully as important for thinking as it is for arguing.

II. I find myself also in sympathy with Mr. Stephens in his feeling that if President Roosevelt had Single Taxers in his brain trust

they would find great difficulty in advising him. But immediately I have to part company with him, for if they did not pass out of the picture almost immediately, I believe they would find themselves in the category to which Mr. Stephens assigns Champ Clark, William J. Bryan, Ramsey McDonald, Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, and Newton Baker. In passing I must be pardoned for saying that I do not like the tone of voice in which I picture Mr. Stephens assigns these gentlemen to their class.

III. I am greatly surprised, however, at the assumption that land will have no selling value under the pure Single Tax. Mr. Stephens makes the assumption and Mr. Luxton says that all Single Taxers are agreed as to that. I am not in agreement, and I claim to be a Single Taxer.

In support of my position I quote from "Progress and Poverty," Book VIII, Chapter II, about a page from the end.

"When the common right to land is so far appreciated that all taxes are abolished save those which fall upon rent, there is no danger of much more than is necessary to induce them to collect the public revenues being left to individual landholders."

In this Henry George at least recognized the possibility of something being left to the landholder in the nature of selling value. I am of those who believe that he thought this to be desirable as well as possible. I believe he meant exactly what he said when he said, "Let them buy and sell, bequeath and devise." Land should be worth at least enough to bring in a year's taxes in case of refusal to pay.

I am not so rash as to predict the conditions that will obtain under the full Single Tax. At the same time I do indulge in speculation and imagination as to what will come to pass. I believe that most, perhaps all, Single Taxers hold that the private and individual possession of land is a necessary condition for the highest civilization. I want to suggest the possibility at least that the retention of a selling value to land may be a necessary cog in the social machinery to render to the individual the things that are the individual's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Chicago, Ill.

HIRAM B. LOOMIS.

## NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

E. H. BOECK of St. Louis writes: "Your comment in the last issue of LAND AND FREEDOM points out how impractical it is to have these annual gatherings of Single Taxers when the money they cost could be spent in more practical ways." James B. Ellery of Gloucester, Mass., comments as follows: "I agree with you fully in what you say regarding the Henry George Congresses. Does the money they cost advance the cause as a whole?" E. W. Doty of Cleveland also endorses our opinion, and says: "Some of the papers belonged to a chamber of commerce or rotary meeting. Some of our Single Taxers need to be taught what the Single Tax is and what it is not, especially what it is not."

M. V. WATROS, a new subscriber from Fairhope, Ala., writes: "I knew Henry George well. My most treasured possession is a copy of 'Protection or Free Trade' which was presented to me by Henry George himself."

CHARLES G. MERRELL of Cincinnati, O., has an interesting letter in the *Cincinnati Post* and draws the editor's fire who says partly in reply: "Now that all land has been taken up, there are some who contend dolorously that the passing of the frontier has taken with it the opportunity of individual advancement; that American progress must necessarily slow up." And hasn't it.

THE Henry George League of New Jersey held a largely attended dinner on the evening of December 6, in the Down Town Club of Newark. About 150 were present. Dr. John Dewey, while chiding