

spawned in Central Europe by the Lake Dwellers, four or five hundred generations ago.

But, someone else has seen the star. Out in Fort Wayne, the local housing authority has discovered that through the use of inexpensive factory-made, demountable houses it is possible to provide adequate shelter for the underpaid, homeless families of that city. Their plan should interest all followers of Henry George. The land speculator receives no profit, and the home is tax-exempt, and a rental of \$2.50 per week gives the family a four-room cottage, with all necessary conveniences. The manner in which sites are obtained is unique. The housing authority purchases city lots at \$1.00 each, giving the owner the option to repurchase his lot, at the same price any time after the expiration of one year. Owners of hundreds of unsaleable lots have welcomed the opportunity to relieve themselves of the necessity to pay further taxes on these lots, until there is a market for them. Presumably, the real estate boys out there are having a good chuckle over their cleverness in getting the State to carry their speculation for them, but the State will have the last laugh, for few, if any, of these lots will ever be repurchased by any individual. Every family domiciled in one of these demountable structures removes one prospective customer from the real estate market, thereby lessening the probability of future sale of our vacant city lots. As the economy of this method of housing becomes apparent, other cities will institute similar programmes, and a greater number of families will be provided for.

The Fort Wayne Project is, however, merely a beginning. The demonstration they are providing will receive the attention of all prospective home owners. The bulk of our home builders are those men whose salary permits them to buy and pay for a \$1,000 lot and a \$5,000 dwelling. When they discover that they can obtain a better dwelling for \$2,500 and can erect it upon an acre or two of land for a few dollars per year, there can be little doubt as to what their choice will be. City lots will then become a drug on the market, but our good old Single Taxer will say, "What is the difference, rent will go up in the country and absorb any expected gain." Is this true? Have you given any thought to the matter? Is there or is there not sufficient land lying within commuting distance of our present centers of population to give several times the number of families who might wish it a small subsistence homestead of this kind? If there is such a plethora of sites, how will the few that are put into use be able to demand increased rent while the remaining sites lay unused and vacant?

Erie, Michigan.

ROBERT L. MCCAIG.

COMMENT ON ABOVE BY HENRY J. FOLEY

Editor's Note.—A similar letter was written by Mr. McCaig to Mr. Henry J. Foley, wherein was added the statement that in the Fort Wayne project they are using small demountable structures upon tax exempt lots. Mr. Foley comments as follows:

In the first place, if the Fort Wayne programme is to build on "tax exempt lots," that is in violent opposition to the entire plan of Henry George. All the taxes would have to be collected on improvements and on production, a worse condition than now, when at least some of the government expenses are paid by land rent.

I doubt if the demountable structure would ever be possible on a large scale in our civilization. Organization and centralization are the natural progress of mankind. It means society. The demountable structure is a return to the civilization of the wandering Arab and the American Indian, and to their life of hardships.

There are many hundreds of thousands who could never leave their present locations to settle in outlying territory. I am a teacher, and I could not adopt the Fort Wayne programme unless I left my job and started life over again, with nothing to start on. Whereas, if Single Tax were put into effect I should have absolutely nothing to do differently except to keep all my salary to live on, instead of seeing it melt into house taxes, income taxes, sales taxes, and a hundred other taxes.

Even if the entire population lived in demountable houses, we still could not get the Single Tax until we could secure laws to collect land rents instead of taxes, which is exactly what we shall have to do with or without the demountable plan.

The only problem before Single Taxers is to induce government to live on the rent of its land instead of on taxes; and the only way in which we shall ever put over this programme is to let the people know that the collection of land rent by individuals is robbery, that the collection of taxes is an additional robbery, and that this double robbery is the plain and sufficient explanation of poverty, unemployment and depression.

New York City.

HENRY J. FOLEY.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Our committee on National Organization was organized to unify the Single Taxers of the country to get a measure of Single Tax in one state with a united force.

What have we got?

The committee selected Michigan without asking the Single Taxers of the country their opinion of the best state, though they would be asked to contribute to the work. The people of Michigan can make the necessary change in their tax laws for taxing land value more but only with the approval of the legislature. This should exclude Michigan as our field of team work.

Now there is a group of Single Taxers in Ohio that propose to launch a campaign in that state though the constitution of the state expressly prohibits the use of the initiative for the Single Tax. I am not a lawyer but it appears to me they would be compelled first to repeal this prohibitive clause to get a land value measure on the ballot. So we will be wasting our time and funds in these two states.

For years we have repeatedly had a land value tax measure on the ballot in California. The previous highest vote for it was 160,000. In 1938 this was increased to 372,000 though there were 24 other measures on the ballot. The people there are more social minded and this makes it a good state for our measure. Then the state sends to each voter the amendment with the sponsors' reason for it and the opponents' reason for its rejection. What has been done there is a distinct advancement and it is important we continue to build on it until we complete the structure. The landed and other privileged groups there fear it as nowhere else and they must have a reason for their fear. This fear by its opponents should cause us for the same reason the greatest encouragement.

There should be no retreat from California!

St. Louis, Mo.

E. H. BOECK.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your last issue is a letter from L. D. Beckwith, in which he makes an attempt to defend the ethics of interest. As he carefully abstains from any definition of interest and has never at any time given the law which fixes the rate of returns, it is not easy to tell what he is talking about. I have in my possession an article by him in which he repudiates the definition of interest, "as the payment for the use of borrowed wealth," stating that, this was usury and unjust. Yet in his letter he states that if an infant is left sufficient wealth and it be loaned on interest, he might live to old age without working, for the interest he receives comes out of the use of his capital, though it is without any labor of his; yet if he owns the capital he is entitled to the interest. He also hazards the guess that the division between labor and capital, after rent was paid would be fifty-fifty. Still he gives no hint of any law governing the division.

Now for the ethics. He admits the Bible condemns interest, but he says that the Bible is not a textbook of science. In other words God who ordained the laws governing the distribution of wealth arranged them so as to conflict with his laws of justice and righteousness as laid down in his book. Beckwith evidently does not under-

stand that the distribution of wealth is a matter of morals and answers the question "Who ought to get it?"

The Bible teaches us that the fundamental law of society is "Thou shalt not steal." It was given to Adam and Eve in Eden and amplified at Sinai, for the ten commandments simply apply the principle of respect for the rights of others, both God's and man's.

What is stealing? It is the taking of the things which belong to another without his consent and without a fair equivalent.

According to Beckwith it is quite ethical for any one who can get a surplus, no matter how obtained, to collect a return from the labors of others, in perpetuity by lending on interest, and he calls his philosophy a science. And claims to be the only true and scientific Georgeist in the world. Funny, is it not?

The cause of interest is the fact that wealth saved can buy land that will yield the purchaser a net revenue over all taxes on it.

And so long as such unearned incomes are for sale, the wealth by which they can be bought will command a similar return. When we collect all our ground rent for public expenses there will be no incomes obtainable without labor. Thus the laws of economics will be found to harmonize with the ethics of the Bible, as in fact they must, as they arise from the same source and authority.

Toronto, Ont.

ALAN C. THOMPSON.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Never were words more truly spoken, than was stated in your Jan.-Feb. number on "Some Thoughts on Organization." In the early days of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, some of our bright men who were seeking political preferment decided to join the major political party organizations to "work from within" and there were many who did. As soon as a comfortable berth was secured they did not hesitate to oppose any stand that would really advance the cause of the "Land for the People," for fear it would hurt them in their affiliation and security in the organization to which they were indebted for their jobs. I could mention at least ten names of men who were rewarded by being made candidates for various elective offices, who represented to their party leaders that they could be assured of the votes of members of the M. S. T. Club, not only for themselves but also for the entire party ticket.

Of course, there were many members of the M. S. T. Club in those early days who were averse to any alliance with these plunderers. The sole and only purpose for Single Taxers to enter politics should be to battle for the "Land for the People" and to advocate taking the entire rent of land and the abolishment of all taxes. But no alliances with any political organization.

New York City

M. VAN VEEN.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Reading Van Doren's "Life of Benjamin Franklin," I am so much struck with this passage (p. 705) that he gave to the French people when about to return to the U. S. A. after his long sojourn in France, who inquired about America, that I think you can perhaps quote it in your next issue. "The chief resource of America is cheap land, made so by the vast forests still void of inhabitants and not likely to be occupied in an age to come. Not till the lands are taken up and cultivated and the excess of people who cannot get land thrown out of employment would there be any great poverty in America. For the present, labor was still well paid. Skilled artisans could make a good living and provide for children and old age. Farm laborers could save their wages and become farmers."

New York City

CHARLOTTE SCHETTER.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The job for Single Taxers is not to quibble over what will happen to interest or other side issues but to concentrate on pushing the Single Tax on the location value of land.

It is evident from reading the papers that the people are at last becoming tax conscious and I think now is the time for Single Taxers

to form a letter-writing corps and write letters to the papers telling the advantages of Single Tax.

New Bedford, Mass.

R. A. SCOTT.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

THE contention that the political method is the wrong approach to our Single Tax reform took an awful jolt when the Mooney decision in California was made. John Public was well educated in regards to the details for more than a dozen years, but until political action seated a governor who would perform the necessary act, nothing was done. The old boy could have remained there forever waiting for the education of the public to free him.

Trenton, N. J.

THOMAS J. PURVIS.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

ANOTHER of the "Old Guard" has passed to his reward. George R. Macey, prominently identified with the Single Tax movement ever since "Progress and Poverty" was first put on the counters of book-stores, entered eternal rest on January 27, 1939. He had passed his 90th birthday. He resided with his daughter, Mrs L. Marian Kapp of 155 Lockwood Ave., New Rochelle, New York, who survives him. George R. Macey ever remained a loyal follower of the Cause. It was he who first induced Henry George to publish his works in such form as to enable the multitude to obtain the books cheaply. As a result Mr. Macey organized The Sterling Publishing Co. at 77 South Fifth Ave. (later to become known as West Broadway) in the City of New York. The Sterling Publishing Co. made the books available at 25 cents the copy. They also published many tracts and pamphlets. Not long after, John J. Lovell became the publisher of George's books at the popular price of 10 cents each. George R. Macey was the Candidate for President of the Board of Aldermen in the early 20's Campaign of the Commonwealth Land Party. For many years the Editor of LAND AND FREEDOM appreciated and had the benefit of George R. Macey's acute power of discernment, and his co-operation in the work on this publication. Also, theirs was a friendship covering many years of active work in behalf of the Single Tax. Mr. Macey was a close friend of the George family and particularly of Richard, who was Henry George's second son.

WE wish to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from our old friend and faithful correspondent, Mr. Frank G. Anderson of Jamestown, New York. Mr. Anderson is one of the "old war-horses, who saw the cat" long ago and took an active part in the campaign of 1886. Though on his next birthday he will be eighty-two years young, he is still "on the job." Among his converts to the Cause, he numbers his son-in-law, Mr. Ernest C. Kessler, who has recently shown his interest by writing a letter to the Mayor of the City of New York, a copy of which we received from Mr. Anderson, as follows:

February 15, 1939

Honorable Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia

New York City

Dear Sir:

I was very much interested last week to listen by radio to the panel discussion that you carried on with members of the Brooklyn High School regarding the housing problem. Their questions were very interesting and showed a real interest and serious thought regarding the matter. However, I was very much hoping that one idea would come out of this, but this did not seem to appear.

For many years I have been a firm believer in the Henry George Doctrine of Taxation known as the Single Tax and, of course, you are very familiar with this and very likely familiar with the personal life of the great man Henry George. In the writer's opinion, our present system of taxation has developed into more or less of a grab bag plan, simply putting taxes on where it is most easy to procure them. Regardless of the fact that many of our great men in this