

BECKWITH VS. NIGHTINGALE

EDITORS LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your March-April issue, Mr. C. H. Nightingale has a letter in which he complains that I am "never done attacking people." I have long enjoyed the sport of backing down such criticisms by opening the files of my papers to my critics and challenging them to find a single case in which I have departed from my rule to confine my criticism to principles and never to attack people.

In his letter, Mr. Nightingale undertakes to prove that, in the period following the death of Henry George, the movement did make an advance in the statement of economic truth, by repudiating George's teachings on interest. To make his point, however, he was obliged to misinterpret George by a misuse of a quotation from Book III, Chapter 3, Paragraph 16, of "Progress and Poverty." That it is a misuse will be seen from a reading of Paragraph 19, in the same chapter. George drew no such distinction as Nightingale alleges between interest on the "dead" capital and interest on "live" capital. What George did assert is that because of the interchangeability of the two forms of capital, the fact that Nature pays interest on "live" capital compels the market to pay interest on "dead" capital.

Mr. Nightingale thinks he has "flooded" me, with "Euclidian precision," in the round on land value. We who embrace the concept of rent "out of the West" (as it has been termed in the columns of LAND AND FREEDOM) contend that "land value" is a myth, since land has no value; that the value of land (so-called) is the value of the services available at the site; that the "investment value of land" is not the value of land, but of the government's license to collect rent at that point.

Here is the "Euclidian precision" with which Mr. Nightingale imagines he has disposed of this "Western" concept:

Brown goes to an island and makes a good living using a portion of the land. Jones follows and finds he can make only a poor living by using the other land available to him. The difference between these two standards of living is RENT.

Yet there is no social service rendered at these locations.

Note that it is expressly stipulated that there is no social service on the island. (Of course, with only two men there, no government exists and hence, no governmental service.) Thus, Mr. Nightingale has stipulated that there is no mail service, no police service, no telephone or telegraph service, no freight service to and from the island, no streets, no roads, no markets, no social dealings of any kind. These are ruled out, because there is no social service there. This means that these two men have no dealing with each other. This means that no more of the product of the island is used than these men can personally consume—all the rest goes to waste.

Since Brown cannot possibly use all the produce of his part of the island, he has no way to prevent Jones from sharing the productivity of that better part, except to personally stand watch for that purpose, since there is no police force. As Brown must sleep part of the time, he cannot keep Jones off, even if he wishes to do so.

How, then, can Brown have a higher standard of living than Jones? How could he have anything that Jones could not also have? The only way would be for him to work better—to be a better hunter, a better farmer, a better tailor, a better craftsman. In that case, the difference of their standards of living would be wages—or both wages and interest—and not rent.

Stockton, Calif.

L. D. BECKWITH.

EDITORS LAND AND FREEDOM:

Your last issue was a true reflection of our great movement to save civilization. It was full of the gospel that encourages us all, especially the article on Denmark.

St. Louis, Mo.

E. H. BOECK.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

A POPULARIZED version of Mr. H. Bronson Cowan's study of the Australia and New Zealand taxation system appeared in the April 15 issue of *Maclean's*, a leading Canadian weekly magazine, under the title "They Don't Tax Progress." Mr. Cowan's article, "Handicaps on Building," on the same subject, appeared in the March-April issue of LAND AND FREEDOM.

AN article on "The Present and Future of Agriculture," by John Harrington, worker in the Georgeist cause, appeared in *The Catholic Forester* for April, 1940. It was in the form of a reply to another article by J. M. Sevenich, who expressed concern over the present problems of agriculture—crop failures, low prices, mortgage foreclosures, and strikes. Mr. Harrington ably pointed out that the problem of the ownership of land and the collection of land rent was at the bottom of it all.

WE were glad to learn that Mrs. Ivy Akeroyd has safely returned to Australia, after her trip to the United States and England. The trip was undertaken last year, at the time of the Henry George Centenary, for the purpose of studying American and English methods of spreading the Georgeist philosophy, with particular reference to the Henry George School of Social Science. After her sojourn in the States, Mrs. Akeroyd bravely insisted on carrying out her schedule of a trip to England, even though the war had just broken out. A reception was held in her honor on April 29, by the New South Wales School of Social Science.

THE Decentralist Movement developed by Ralph Borsodi, Director of the School of Living at Suffern, N. Y., conducts forums in New York City every other Thursday, at the Labor Temple, 242 East 14th Street, at 8 P. M. As the discussions relate to the possibility of lower rents by rural settlement, the elements of the Georgeist philosophy are constantly brought into discussion. The next meeting will be held June 13.

GEORGE LANSBURY, noted British pacifist and labor leader, died in London at the age of 81. Mr. Lansbury gained a reputation for championing progressive causes, such as woman suffrage, tax reform, peace movements and labor legislation. He was friendly with Georgeist groups, and for years maintained a fine friendship with J. H. Bjorner, Danish Georgeist leader. Mr. Lansbury had come to the conclusion that the causes of war are economic. This was probably due in good measure to his Georgeist friendships.

WE must perform the sad duty of recording the recent deaths of the following of our friends: Prof. H. Conrad Bierwith, of Cambridge, Mass.; Arthur H. Sanborn, of Berkeley, Calif.; August Williges, of Sioux City, Iowa; Harry H. Willock, of Pasadena, Calif.; and Western Starr, of Washington, D. C.

LOUIS WALLIS addressed the Jersey City Rotary Club, April 19, on the subject of taxation. Of the seventy-five business men present, fifty-three signed up for the Henry George School course. Such responses are not unusual to Mr. Wallis, who explains his success as a result of emphasizing, before his main talk, that a School exists where business men may learn, free of charge, the cause of depressions.

OUR office has been honored by a visit from the nephew of Joshua Abraham Norton, the "Emperor of America" whom readers will recall from articles in the January-February and March-April issues of LAND AND FREEDOM. The nephew is Joshua Norton Singer, and he is a linguist, master chess-player, and philosopher. He remembers Henry George—he voted for him in 1886, and he believes that the Georgeist reform is badly needed today.

THE Single Tax Club of Washington, D. C., is holding its annual picnic and meeting on June 9. William W. Newcomb, co-author of "You and America's Future," will speak at the meeting on "Decentralization—a Georgeist Approach."