

surrounded and served by all the facilities of a modern city, as though it were an ordinary farmstead. Conversation with a town official brought this case to my notice. He could see certain injustices in the situation, but the idea that so simple an incident might furnish the key to the riddle of economics was in his opinion preposterous.

What kind of facts do we need? Can we find them in the projected programmes of slum improvement? Already the question of land values in relation to such projects is beginning to present a serious problem. And the haphazard development contains illustrations that will provide convincing evidence. Let us decide the kind of facts we need, assemble them and put them to work.

Brookline, Mass.

GORDON L. MACLAREN.

ARE THE ECONOMIC LAWS NATURAL LAWS?

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I deplore your constant use of the expressions "natural taxation," natural rights and natural laws. Henry George followed the 19th century style in using words. I have no doubt he knew exactly what he meant by them. An exact scholar would not be confused. But most of us are not exact scholars. The words nature and natural rights have a pernicious history in the English language, beginning even before the time of Rousseau.

I commend a study of the works of the late Prof. Irving Babbitt to land taxers in that connection. As a result of that history these words have about as many meanings as there are readers of them. They serve as a basis for the antithesis of exact reasoning, and often confuse the idea and furnish opportunity for dangerous misconceptions. Land reform is nothing more than the application of human intelligence and common sense to problems created by human experience. To call it "natural" might easily lead to the idea, so often conveyed by the word, that it is something extra human, or a supernatural mystery, which it is not.

Cincinnati, O.

F. B. MCCONAUGHY.

REPLY

Whether we choose to cite natural law in the movement of the heavenly bodies as furnishing an analogy, or whether we speak of the natural order as merely the sequence of cause and effect, makes but little difference. We need not summon Rousseau either in proof or disproof. His extravagances need not concern us. We assume a moral order in the universe; a physical law in the physical world; shall we then dispute economic sequence of cause and consequence? Shall we ignore also the lesson indicated when government is instituted and land values spring into being and are increased as the functions and services of government increase? If this does not point to a natural law, to which also the law of justice and morals is closely allied, we do not know the meaning of words.—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.

QUESTION OF NAME

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

From time to time discussion rages over whether Single Taxers are adequately named. This is doubtless important, but it seems just as important adequately to designate their opponents.

Multiple taxers is a term sometimes used. It designates, just as does the term Single Taxers. But it does not describe.

Multiple taxers believe in levying a number of taxes on every one. In addition, they believe in levying several other taxes, which will be passed to those on whom the first set of taxes are levied. As a corollary they propose exemption of land, so that the payer of the two above set of taxes will be required to pay a high price, and give a large mortgage and on which he will pay much interest, when he establishes his homestead. The mortgage and the interest constitute tax No. 3.

Each of us is therefore loaded up under three well defined systems of taxation.

Triple taxers might be fairly descriptive of the opponents of Single Taxers.

High taxers might be a broader, more readily grasped, and consequently more easily popularized term. By contrast, Single Taxers, standing for the extinction of the systems of the High Taxers, would become Low Taxers.

Madison, Wisc.

CRAIG RALSTON.

FROM A NEW ZEALAND VETERAN

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am much too busy to write you at length, but must say that LAND AND FREEDOM is always interesting, and with such an immense territory as your country comprises, you should have by this time a fairly large clientele. I am always wondering when the United States are likely to make an advance. It seems to me that your line of least resistance is the tariff. Woodrow Wilson was able to cut off 28 per cent of the American tariff at one fell swoop, imposing an income tax to replace the revenue. True, the war has given the tariff-mongers a chance of which they have taken the fullest advantage but the prevailing high tariff is working such mischief that it ought to yield to something like a strong attack, and even an income tax might be accepted by our men in the meantime, because it would be much easier to arouse opposition to that than to indirect taxation. However, I have never expected anything from the new Roosevelt regime inasmuch as Roosevelt, unlike Wilson, has come into power committed to nothing of a definite or tangible character.

In this country we are in the throes of industrial depression for some time now. To Henry George men the cause is quite clear, but it is wonderful how perverse men are, even those who affect an interest in social reform. The latest craze in this country is called the Douglas Social Credit Plan, but it is terribly respectable, and will soon run its course and go out of fashion.

Still, there are more Henry George men in this country now than ever before, and we keep on talking, writing—and hoping. Though we have no organization in this country to push electoral reform, most of Henry George's followers both here and in Australia are in favour of proportional representation, and for my own part I am convinced that it is of great importance for the reason that were the proportional system in operation, we would have continual representation in Parliament. The single-member electorate make minority representation impossible, unless by accident.

Wellington, New Zealand.

P. J. O'REGAN.

MORE OF NATURAL LAW

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

May I say a word of warning that the kindly article by Chester C. Platt, page 185 in the Nov.—Dec. issue, may be misinterpreted?

I refer to his comment at the bottom of the first column, page 186 where he speaks of the belief of Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown that "we make too much of the theory that there are certain natural laws sacred because really of divine origin." Then he adds: "Consequently it is said we are always seeking natural laws of economics and then trying to conform to them. I know that a large school of Single Taxers hold to this view. Mr. Beckwith of *No Taxes* says in a recent article"

"This, I know from experience, will be accepted as descriptive of the natural-law school to which I am proud to belong. One sure way to have weeds in a garden is not to have anything else there. In the absence of a correct statement of our position, this language in Mr. Platt's article opens the way to a gross misconception.

The trouble is in the word "sacred." Perhaps it must be admitted

that those who do not understand our position might naturally guess as Mr. Platt did, that this idea is involved.

And yet what one of them ever referred to those who believe in the law of gravity as being influenced by any regard for things that are sacred because really of divine origin?" Who ever heard of a mathematician who accepts the law of square or cube root being described as being bound by reverence for sacred things?

That Mr. Platt's reference to sacred things "really of divine origin" was not a mere slip of the pen is indicated by the fact that he follows it up by a reference to another school of thought which, he says, thinks this belief "entirely inconsistent with modern evolutionary philosophy."

There is no need to take space here to explain what we mean by natural laws. Suffice it to say that, if the reader has a clear conception of what he means by the law of gravity, by the law of the lever, by the law of cube or square root, by the law of expanding gases, by the laws of refraction and other laws in nature, he is prepared to understand what we mean by the eighteen natural laws of economics which I include in The Economic Code.

To those who say that these laws are only tendencies or probabilities, I reply: Very well, no matter! Whatever your law of gravity is, that is what these laws of economics are. We are not the least concerned with your hair-splitting about these laws; for when you are all through and agree as to what they are, then that is what our laws of economics are; for all we claim is that economics is a science as exact as any.

The explanation of natural law found in Dr. Schilpp's "De We Need a New Religion?" is very satisfactory. He says that by natural law we mean the way we find upon careful observation and scientific analysis that nature behaves under this or that circumstance, or this or that condition.

Stockton, Calif.

L. D. BECKWITH.

OUR LAND GRABBING FOERFATHERS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Everybody, with the probable exception of Prof. Ely, knows that land speculation is the root of many unmitigated evils, too numerous here to mention.

But how many students know that in one case at least, the lust for land and speculation was productive of some good?

It will astonish many to learn that land speculation played a contributing role in bringing about the American Revolution. (I here consider the American Revolution as coming under the category of "good," although, I confess, I am well aware of the fact that the American people have failed to make use of this "good.")

But be that as it may it seems that the Mother Country was becoming jealous of her expanding offspring, and sought to curtail the growing power of the Colonies. Accordingly, the British Government, by a royal proclamation of 1763 ("Acts of the Privy Council," Colonial Series, The Unbound Papers, London 1911, VI, 513-8) forbade any governor "to grant warrant of survey, or pass patents for any lands beyond the heads or sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the west or north-west; or upon any lands whatever, which not having been ceded to, or purchased by us . . . are reserved to the said Indians, or any of them."

This proclamation was particularly offensive to the Virginians, who not only actually owned immense tracts of land, but held large charter claims to lands beyond the limits defined by the royal proclamation. Perhaps, this helps to explain the fiery enthusiasm with which Virginia entered into the spirit of the revolution.

By way of parenthetical interjection, it may be said that instead of owing a debt of gratitude to the Fathers of our Country, we owe them nothing but severe malediction for, with the exception of such thinkers as Paine, Franklin, Jefferson and a few others, the majority of the

revolutionary leaders were land speculators and slave holders, Washington being the chief culprit among them.

It seems to me that we American people have expiated long enough for the sins of our Fathers, so that the time has arrived for another revolution—this time, a bloodless socio-politico-economic revolution which shall restore the land to the people via the socialization of the economic or social rent of land.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

JOHN C. ROSE.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Prof. Tugwell wrote the biography of Henry George for the Encyclopedia of Social Science and succeeded in doing this without letting a word escape him that indicated an opinion concerning the work of the man whose history he was recording. That such an opinion, if expressed, would not have been complimentary may be inferred. It is a pity that he did not speak out. The followers of Henry George could not help but feel toward condemnation from such a source like Whittier in his poem, "The Exiles," where the tolerant liberal, Macey, responds to a clerical bigot's threat to curse him:

"Curse, an thou wilt" said Macey,
"But thy blessing, prithee, spare."

Detroit, Mich.

SAMUEL DANZIGER.

CALIFORNIA AWAKENS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Initial steps have now been taken toward organization of campaign committees under the general title of "Tax Relief." One committee has been formed for Northern California and one for Southern California. The committee for Northern California has as its president Edward D. Vandeleur, who is president of the Labor Council of San Francisco; Edward Pomeroy, treasurer, and S. Edward Williams (83 McAllister St., San Francisco), secretary. Its vice-presidents are George Creel, Andrew Furuseth, Edward L. Hubbard, and Jackson H. Ralston.

In Southern California the president is George W. Patterson (2422 N. Alvarado St., Los Angeles); secretary-treasurer, A. J. Samis (1945 Lamba St., Los Angeles), and its executive committee consists of the above, with Jackson H. Ralston, R. E. Chadwick, Laurie J. Quinby, Paul Scharrenberg and Edward D. Vandeleur.

The advisory committees of the two organizations include: Louis Bartlett (ex-Mayor of Berkeley), John Beardsley, Judge Rube W. Borough, J. W. Buzzell (Secretary of the Los Angeles Labor Council), George Cartwright, Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Calkin, William L. Chitty, George Creel, John F. Calton (President of Los Angeles Labor Council) George F. Dyer, Harry H. Farrell, Andrew Furuseth (President International Seamen's Union), Hamlin Garland, T. Perceval Gerson, O. C. Heitman (President San Diego County Labor Council), Adolph W. Hoch (President California State Federation of Labor), Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Hoffman, Dean Glenn Hoover, Robert L. Hubbard, Dr. Charles James, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. King, Robert G. Loucks, Albert B. Nordskog, John C. Packard, Alice Park, Lona I. Robinson, Albert C. Rogers, Frederick W. Roman, Dr. E. P. Ryland, Paul Scharrenberg, George Winfield Scott, Harry See, George J. Schafer, John I. Siebert, Upton Sinclair, E. M. Stangland, Lincoln Steffens, S. S. Taber, Dr. Lincoln J. Taft, Clarence E. Todd, F. G. Volkers, H. J. Voorhis, Elsie J. Webster, Samuel S. White, S. Edward Williams, J. Stitt Wilson (former Mayor of Berkeley), Col. C. E. S. Wood, David Woodhead, Fred Workman.

Petitions asking that the amendment referred to should be placed upon the ballot at the election in November of this year have been prepared and are being circulated as rapidly as possible in various portions of this State. There is, however, an urgent necessity for a number of active friends to engage in this work everywhere in Cali-