I have just returned from Colorado where I attended a meeting of
the Intermountain Single-Tax Association. I had wangled the invitation
by claiming residence between the Rockies and the Appalachians. And
if that wouldn't do, I could claim that a small fraction of my State
lies between Scottsbluff and the Pine Ridge. That makes it Inter-
mountain.

Joking aside, what really qualifies me to be a member is that I
am willing to be a member. We accept everyone we can get. In fact,
we will even accept anyone who might disagree with us. It would save
us a lot of bother for the rest of our lives if they could find a flaw
in our reasoning.

Some of our members object to the name "Single-Tax" since it is
not an accurate complete description. (Since a tax on bare-land
speculation is not a tax at all, how can it be called a Single-Tax?)
Shucks!! Right now, I can't think of any organization with a short
name which is completely descriptive. Not even my Church qualifies.

In common with all other people who believe they have a message
needing to be told, single-taxers are in search of expressions which
might help to illustrate how we think of the world as it is, compared
to how we believe it ought to be.

Humankind cannot live on the Earth without improvements. The
more improvements that you or Joe or Moe might build, the better the
world is for me and everyone else to live on. The mutual use we make
of each other's improvements is part of the gains we all make from
what we call the division of labor.

An expression used at our Colorado meeting caught the fancy of
someone and yielded the suggestion that it be published in our house
organ. The expression was: "Double-barreled scorched-Earth tax
policy." It seemed to be a fair description of a major result of
most of the system of taxes and subsidies currently in use in most of
the world.

The tendency to increase the tax burden upon any improver in
proportion to his improvement is one of the gun barrels that tend to
cause a scorched Earth. It inhibits improvement.

The other barrel is our tendency to feel that we must not
burden the non-improver with taxes.

The usual argument in support of the second barrel is that he is
not making money and therefore should not have to pay. The single-
taxers, however, know perfectly well that if the owner did not at
least believe that he were making money holding land idle, he would
not hold it idle.

The result of using such a double-barreled gun is that the whole
Earth is held in a lowered state of improvement compared to what it
should be. The reduced improvements result in an over-all reduced
habitability of the Earth for everyone.

While the community cries about needing new revenue sources,
here is at least a third of the most valuable land held idle or nearly
idle for speculation right under our noses. I happen to be one who
speculates in bare land, but you and I would both be better off if
I could build on it.