

Sample Shots

★ WHEN JOHN KIERAN, walking encyclopedia of "Information, Please," writer of the widely-syndicated newspaper column, "One Small Voice," and author of the foreword to the recently-published Classics Club edition of Progress and Poverty, proposed in his column a few weeks ago a kind of "single tax" which was about as different from Henry George's idea as could possibly be imagined, he brought upon himself an avalanche of letters which, according to his later columns, continues with but little abatement.

It has been the privilege of the editors of THE FREEMAN to read copies of many of these letters to Mr. Kieran. They are so numerous that to publish them all in THE FREEMAN is out of the question; space has been found for two, however, which will serve to convey the idea that Mr. Kieran's mail of late has been anything but dull and uninteresting.

My Dear Mr. Kieran:

As a long-time disciple of Henry George, I want to thank you for your kind words in regard to him in your recent "One Small Voice" article on taxation.

I am in agreement with you as to any one tax, unless of the worst possible kind, being better than the multitude of imposts which we now levy. Not only would it save a lot of trouble to the taxpayers but, since every separate tax must be assessed and collected, the boiling them down to one tax would save an immense sum which is now spent in doing this work many times over. That was one of the good points about Henry George's plan.

But the thing which most appealed to me in the taxation of land values was the fact that, unlike all other taxes, it imposed no burden on the production of wealth, and that while all other taxes, to a greater or less extent, checked and hindered wealth production, Henry George's plan positively encouraged it.

But, today, with our need for a tremendous revenue, the rent of land would fall far short of yielding enough, so resort would have to be made to something else. So there is your chance, but *first* we should collect the whole of land rent. Justice and common sense both demand this.

Yours sincerely,

Philadelphia

HAROLD SUDELL

Dear John:

I will admit that any system of Single Tax might be better than this stupid, voluminous, time-consuming, aggravating bookkeeping, certified public accounting system and records, with snoopers, semi-snoopers, blackmailers, etc., tax system we now have, not to mention tariff walls between

nations, instead of free trade, with their tendency to make wars between nations, etc.

Do come across, John, and state openly:

Is there any reason why the land values created by the community should not be taken by the community for community purposes?

Tell us, John, why, when a man improves his land, whether farm land or city land, by putting a house or a barn or a factory upon it, giving people jobs, he should be punished by increased taxes as long as the improvement stands. Is there any sense in that, John?

Even a criminal, when caught and punished, is told to go and sin no more. But the man who makes an improvement on his land is punished by a tax each and every year, until he pulls the improvement down and leaves an empty lot or an abandoned farm. Is that not true, John?

John, you have seen the building skeleton at Broadway and Murray Street looking into the Mayor's office, just a few blocks from your office. It has been standing, grinning for years at the Mayor and passersby, waiting for someone to pay the owner of the land a tremendous price for its use. Have you thought about that, John? What have you to say, John? Many of the plots of land throughout the city stand empty, the buildings pulled down to save taxes, and the plots look like abandoned ghost towns—what have you to say about that, John?

No, John, no one can convict you of treason to the Single Tax or anything else. Take that from me as a lawyer, John.

Your admirer,

New York

HARRY WEINBERGER

"The utility, the vitality, the fruitage of life does not come from the top to the bottom; it comes like the natural growth of a great tree, from the soil, up through the trunk into the branches to the foliage and the fruit. The great struggling masses of the men who are at the base of everything, are the dynamic force that is lifting the levels of society. A nation is as great, and only as great, as her rank and file."

WOODROW WILSON, "The New Freedom."