



Born 1916 in Seattle, Washington, Dr. Busey spent nineteen years until 1946 in Alaska, with interruptions

for travel, study and three years' war service, when he taught foreign language classes. Now an associate professor at the University of Colorado, he was formerly at New Mexico, and at the Wyoming and Ohio State Universities. In order of experience and preference, his subjects are comparative government (particularly Latin American); international relations, organisation and law; political geography; U.S. national and state government and politics; general social science; political theory. Dr. Busey has contributed articles and reviews to a number of publications; his "Substance of Tyranny" appeared in our June-July, 1954, issue. He is married and has one child.

Wanted—A Freedom Party

By JAMES D. BUSEY, Ph.D.

THE time was about November 1935. The place was a room in the Anchorage Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska. I was nineteen years old, and the man with me was Donald MacDonald, Alaska pioneer and engineer, known to many as the "father of the Alaska Highway."

The United States territory of Alaska is in many ways an unusual place. For one thing, unlike almost any other colony on earth, Alaska is trying fully to join the mother country—and, unlike almost any other colonial power on earth, the United States is trying to keep Alaska out of full membership in the Union.

For another thing, Alaska is full of independent, unusual individuals. Donald MacDonald, a lean and grizzled man who kept pacing back and forth in the small room and growling about "fundamentals" and "basic factors" and "land" was obviously one of these.

His talk seemed all backwards. No great conflict between labour and capital? Both in disharmony with some third element? State intervention little different from private monopoly? The company town and socialism essentially equivalent? What strange talk was this? I had just returned from a year of college in the States, and had heard nothing of this sort.

By 1939 I had finished college work for the Bachelor's degree, and had found no college student or instructor who could successfully criticise or refute the basic proposals of Henry George. Also by that time, I had read and had time to understand the thinking of Henry George, and had decided that there was a great deal of truth to the ideas he proposed.

Advocates of land-value taxation, unlike the promoters of any other movement that hopes to get anywhere, hold to the quaint notion that there is no need for them to organise politically. Their view is that education alone will do the trick. The fallacy in this theory is that 90 per cent of the population is too busy, too lazy or too illiterate to be reached by any sort of education, but that a very large proportion can be reached by political organisation and political propaganda.

Very few Americans have read even the meagre writings of General Eisenhower, but somehow the Republican Party hangs on, though precariously. I don't think Mr. Macmillan is terribly disturbed over the failure of some Englishmen to read all of Mr. Churchill's *History of the Second World War*. I doubt that many Communists have ploughed through the three dreary tomes of *Das Kapital*, but the Communist Party manages a certain appeal in many parts.

Because single taxers have a bashful quirk about organising politically, it was not until 1939 that I knew there was another soul on earth, aside from Donald MacDonald and myself, who favoured the views of Henry George. In late 1939 I read a Henry George School advertisement in the *New York Times*. I blinked, gulped, and in a state of what must have amounted to semi-shock realised that we two were not alone.

At that time I was teaching elementary school at a mountainside gold camp called Independence Mine, Alaska. After hearing from the New York school, I hurriedly organised a class among something like a dozen husky hard rock miners. I guess the class did them some good. Of course we'll never know what happened to these men, or to the ideas they took from the class, because in the United States there is no non-educational organisation of kindred minds to which to turn. So I turned out my miner students, convinced, enthusiastic, and forgotten.

Then came the war and Army service; and in 1946, after nineteen years as a resident of the rugged territory of Alaska, I began graduate work in the States. Like the United States Congress, I seem to have turned my back on the colony that clamours for statehood, and is full of free thinkers like Donald MacDonald. But I have not forgotten many ideas learned, nor things experienced, in that northern, very un-Malthusian land.

For one thing, I remember people who had secured homestead land for a fee that amounted to ten cents per acre, and who had a few years later sold the same land

for a huge return. I remember joking with one of these speculators, and calling him a parasite. In response he sold me a small lot, 50 x 100 feet, for one dollar, insisting this would change my mind. An airfield was later built nearby, and I sold the lot, without improvements, for \$475. This experience did little to change my mind regarding the validity of the Henry George thesis!

Some may explain my continued adherence to most of the tenets of Henry George by the fact that I have been trained in political science, and not in economics. However this may be, nothing in my academic training, and no contacts with friends and colleagues in economics, have shaken my confidence in what I regard as the basic concepts of (1) land-value taxation; (2) free trade; (3) liberty in association; and (4) social responsibility. The first of these was particularly brought to public attention by Henry George. The other three were the contributions of a host of great thinkers, among whom Henry George was one.

Despite my continued acceptance and endorsement of these principles, some terribly serious concerns have occurred to me over the years, and these I wish to state forthwith:

1. I am very upset over the semi-idolatry of Henry George which is a feature of much of the single tax-freedom programme.

2. Because Henry George spoke eloquently for liberty, and because he rejected the theory of labour-capital cleavage, and perhaps because in the modern day there may be some comfort in receiving the support of business, there seems to be a tendency among some of us to advocate a sort of Herbert Spencerian, anti-social, anti-labour, pro-business policy which would abolish labour unions, eliminate publicly supported education, stop garbage collection and mail delivery, and turn off all street illumination. What is forgotten is that George spoke of liberty in association, and, that much of his writing, especially in *Social Problems*, bristles with a sense of social responsibility.

A rejection of excessive state intervention is not tantamount to an embracing of a sort of Darwinistic survival-of-the-strongest doctrine. If Land Libertarians are going to sound like the Voice of Business more than the voice of all producers, they might as well close up shop right now. In 1957, wide popular appeal among the exploited and the downtrodden of the earth is not secured by making noises like the National Association of Manufacturers or the Federation of British Industries. If it is important to the more doctrinaire among us, there is nothing in the Henry George point of view to warrant an alliance between Land Libertarians and the citadels of privilege.

3. In my judgment—to repeat what our friend, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, said about the Republicans — Land Libertarians need to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the twentieth century. In 1957, unlike 1879, an economic argument does not have to open with a refutation of either the good Rev. Thomas Malthus or of the wage fund doctrine. I have often wondered how many

people must have abandoned “Henry George” classes before they had gotten around to the half of *Progress and Poverty* which is really important!

4. Far more important than all this, I maintain that Land Libertarians must organise politically. An International Liberty Party must be formed. Without political organisation, this “movement” must continue to be obscure and miniscule. No version of *Progress and Poverty*—original, abridged, or super-condensed*—will get to more than a small fraction of the population, but political organisation, political campaigning, and political propaganda, can reach great numbers.

Untold millions of poverty-stricken, hungry, ignorant, disease-ridden, vermin-infested people are blindly groping for sunrise or hoping for death. In the midst of brutality, war and squalor, communism is accepted by some because it talks through political organisation to deprived people. How much stronger would be an International Liberty Party which would offer a political programme of security and freedom to the distressed population of the earth!

If Land Libertarians stood for nothing more than land-value taxation, a political party among them would be as futile as the Vegetarian Party of the United States, which maintains only that folks should eat lettuce and spinach—but says nothing about the tariff, or taxation, or foreign affairs, or labour problems, or federal-state relations, or admission of Alaska as a state, or civil rights.

In my opinion, however, the four principles I have mentioned—i.e., land-value taxation, free trade, liberty in association, and social responsibility—are sufficiently broad to form the basis for an international political movement.

As poor compensation for the space which LAND & LIBERTY has so kindly offered me, therefore, I propose the formation of an International Liberty Party as the most evident answer to poverty, tyranny, and war.

*A “super-condensed” version prepared by Dr. Busey was published as a 16 pp. pamphlet by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation last month—price 15c. a copy.

NATURAL RIGHTS

To the editor of *Land & Liberty*

IT IS right that every man should support himself and his family. He should not need state charity. Nor should he have to contribute to support others. The Government should not extort “charity” from him, to give to other people. Yet state charity for some there must be. How to do this without “pinching” from the individual? Single-tax holds the answer. L & L should ram home the fact that every natural feeling that the ordinary decent man has is *RIGHT*. The Single-tax alone shows how we can square man’s natural feelings with the demands the state now makes upon us.

Enfield, Middx.

W. J. CADMAN.

[We agree. Readers are invited to submit articles on this theme for publication. They should be slanted to the new reader. Maximum length, 800 words. One side of paper only, well spaced and with wide left hand margin, please.]