

claimed for every man. But it is neither necessary nor desirable to add thereto "where, for whom, and on such terms as he sees fit." To enforce the right to work all that is needed is to give labor access to all unused natural opportunities. But every attempt that has been made in Colorado to take steps toward establishing the right to work has met with bitter opposition from the very interests that now claim to be standing for more rights than justly belong to the workers.

It is because available mining lands are monopolized that the miners' right to work is restricted. Because it is so restricted workers have no other means of resisting oppression than by banding together in such organizations as the United Mine Workers. Like all palliatives this plan has its weaknesses and its objectionable and unfair features. But it is unjust to hold the union workmen or union officials responsible for these. The responsibility lies with economic conditions that make combination necessary for defense of labor, and with the individuals who, as citizens, uphold these conditions. Such individuals can not properly complain when they find themselves injured by forces which their own acts have called into being. Upholders of monopoly do not seem entitled to sympathy when they suffer from the acts of labor combinations.

s. d.

### Getting the People to the Land.

A correspondent who speaks of himself as having been a "near" Singletaxer since Henry George published *Progress and Poverty*, but still doubts that the Singletax would secure "free access to land," writes:

All my experience and most of my observation and reflection confirm me in the belief that the great mass of men who want access to land for the purpose of working it, find no insuperable obstacle to earning and paying its price. Those who find difficulty in doing it are chiefly of the class that find difficulty in doing anything anywhere. On free land they would find the same difficulty in making a living that they find where they now are. The great difficulty is within, not without. I realize very vividly now, and realize its significance, in looking back to my boyhood on the land, that what the great proportion of the neighboring farmers' boys wanted was not "access to" but "exit from" the land. And repeated trial by benevolent associations seems to me to have demonstrated that few of the mass of the unemployed and unemployable can be gotten away from the city by any push or pull, and what few make the trial mostly return. Few of such men were ever present for the drawings of the public domain during the last score or two of years. At such distributions too, I believe, that the proportion of

genuine farmers, men who really wanted land to till and live their lives on, instead of to sell and make a speculation out of the "unearned increment," is small.

The fundamental error of the correspondent lies in his supposition that he is a "near" Singletaxer. He is very, very far from it. It may be doubted, indeed, if any one can be a "near" Singletaxer. The question is so simple and definite that he must be or not be. One who imagines himself a Singletaxer, but is not, will betray the fact by the strange and contradictory positions assumed. Our correspondent, for instance, seems to think the land to which men should have access is in one part of the earth, and the men who would have access to it in another part. Or that the men are afloat on the ocean, vainly seeking a means to reach the land. This thought appears in his reference to his "boyhood on the land," and to the efforts of well-meaning persons to get the unemployed in the cities to go on the land. The inference to be drawn from this is that these persons do not wish to be on the land, that they have no use for land. But is this a fact? Are not all these persons now using land? Will they not continue to use land as long as they live? When the correspondent quitted the farm of his boyhood days, was it not to change from that piece of land to another piece of land? Is he not today, though living in a city, as much dependent upon land as when he lived on a farm?

When Singletaxers speak of opening up land to use, or making land accessible, they do not mean that the people in the cities shall go on the unused lands in the country, to become farmers. It is not unlikely, indeed, that with the improvements in farming implements there may be fewer farmers than at present in proportion to the urban population. What the Singletaxer means is to have access to land, to all land, to any land, to the land that will at any given time best satisfy human wants. The relative desirability of land is now measured by its price; and the high priced land is not in farms. Men not only must have land, but they do have it; the difficulty is that they use it under unfavorable conditions. Owing to an erroneous system of taxation the men who use the land are obliged to pay the land owners for its use, and in addition they must support the government that makes the land valuable. This paying twice for the same thing constitutes a burden on production. Society endures it. The constant addition to the power of labor by science and invention enables men to live in spite of the handicap; but the bur-

den is so great that the weaker and the less fortunate fail, and become dependent upon their stronger and more fortunate brethren. These men who fail are not to be relieved by being put on farms, for conditions on the farm are as hard as anywhere else. They can be relieved only by making production easier.



It is not a question of getting access to the land. We are now on the land. We cannot get off of it. But we can make this occupancy harder or easier by law. At present the terms upon which industry occupies the land are very hard. The system of taxation in vogue, by laying most of the cost of government upon industry—and to that extent relieving the land-owner—encourages speculation in land. And land speculation, by taking large quantities out of the market, enables the owners of land that is used to exact an exorbitant toll for its use. Singletax, by shifting the cost of government from industry to land values, will force all unused land that has value to be placed on the market, which will cause a fall in the values of used land. Industry that is now able to pay inflated prices for land, and in addition support the government, will, when receiving the same land at a lower rate, be much more prosperous. And men who are now unable to make headway against adverse conditions will be set upon their feet. The solution of the problem of the unemployed is not to be found in sending him out into the wilderness and setting him at work for which he is not fitted; but in employing him where he is at work for which he is fitted. Our correspondent must dismiss from his mind the idea that land means farm land only. Land in the sense used by economists means the material universe outside of man. It means minerals, waterfalls, forests in a state of nature, and city lots. Since all opponents of the Singletax admit that it will reduce the price of land, and since all men are now on land and using land, does it not follow that land will be more accessible; and being more accessible will not this better the condition of the users?

s. c.



### Simplifying the Railroad Question.

One of the greatest obstacles to the solution of the railroad problem is a factor that is not ordinarily connected with it at all. That is the shifting of land values. Men commonly say a road should be run through a certain territory because it would "build up the country," and "make property more valuable." That is true in part. It

makes some kinds of property more valuable when the question arises as to what the rate shall be to pay for the road and to keep it running. No distinction is made between one property owner and another, or between property owners and non-property owners. Manifestly, the owners of property benefited by the road will profit at the expense of those who are not so benefited. This introduces another factor in routing and in operating the road. Instead of being built where it will best serve the whole country, it may be bent this way and that in order that it may serve the influential beneficiaries. President Ripley, of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad, instanced as an example of waste in operation the four and five duplicate trains on as many roads from Chicago to Kansas City, Omaha and St. Paul. Although the lines from Chicago to Omaha are closely parallel the whole way, the attempt to use one road to serve all the territory reaching the cities now served on the other lines by means of branch roads, would cause a shifting of values; and vigorous protests would follow. Each community wants the best possible service, without considering the general cost to the community.



If a way can be found to lay the cost of building and operating the road on the individuals whose property is enhanced in value by the road, the extension of railroads can be put on a legitimate commercial basis. In other words, if the owners of property especially benefited have to pay into the public treasury all the value over and above what comes to all property, there will be no sinister influence at work to divert the enterprise from the commercial needs of the community. Such a result can be secured by increasing the tax on land, irrespective of its improvements, until it has covered into the public treasury the whole value that the road brought to the land. This is demanded by the simplest dictates of justice, and by the far-reaching demands of expediency. Goods, houses, and personal property are not enhanced in value by the coming of the railroad. The road is a benefit to the owners of this kind of property, but they have to pay for the benefit to the owners of land, in higher prices and rents. And since the owners of the land can and do collect from the owners of other kinds of property a larger toll for the use of their property they should be required in their turn to give it to the agent that created the value, the public acting through the railroad.



The same logic applies to street cars, drainage,