

## Clarence Darrow at Henry George Congress

I WANT to say that I think you people all know that I have been a Single Taxer ever since I read Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," and that is nearly forty years ago. I have not been a constant attendant at Henry George meetings. I never hear anything new. I am not like the Christian that goes every Sunday to hear of Jesus Christ being crucified. Of course the Single Tax is not only a political question. It is a religious question. Anyone thoroughly converted to the Single Tax wants to have you tell them the old story.

Nobody created the earth as far as we can find out. Nobody can leave the earth. We all came from the earth. We all go back to it in spite of some people who think they are going to fly with wings. There is nothing more to it. Of course the earth is stocked and bonded to death by the pirates of the world. The Single Tax is the only tax I know anything about that would help the people instead of harm them. It would be easier for a man to have a home; it would be easier to have a place to do business; it would blot out all the eye-sores that are the product of land ownership.

If we had Single Tax, we could get a piece of land to put up a building on, four to five hundred feet long instead of four to five hundred feet high. We could get rid of all the high buildings. We would live on the earth instead of in the air. And we would not have to pay any man for living on the earth, unless we had officials who were too crooked.

The trouble is men have to be crooked these days. The man who will not be, would not get any place and so we have to have graft. Land graft comes out of the land. Of course the landlords have lost in all these troubles we are going through. If they could even mention taking land rents, it would not take very long to recover from the mischief done.

I want to talk about politics. I have been terribly interested for the last year in the president, Mr. Roosevelt. He was a man who was the only candidate who seemed to have any vision or who cared anything about the common people. The folk who make laws represent somebody, and that somebody is the same old thing, the man who has more than he needs. Mr. Roosevelt seemed to be an intellectual man. He was a wide reader. Single Tax and socialism were familiar to him. This was his opportunity. No doubt he had the feeling to do something for the common people. We were all hopeful. I'm getting over it and it is pretty nearly time we did get over it unless we can see some change which is not apparent now.

I think there are a very few people who would not agree with me. I don't want to be misunderstood about it. I am very sorry that I have the doubt and misgivings that I have about Mr. Roosevelt. But I think it is the duty

of the voters to keep the officials posted as to the stand of the Single Taxers whose number is not so very large, but have a considerable influence in the Democratic party. I do not know an organization that would have more influence than the Single Taxers.

Mr. Roosevelt knows just what the situation is. He knows there are very few people in the United States who understand the problem. He knows that the great mass of people are desperately poor, because some of them are so enormously rich. And he knows perfectly well that so long as a few have too much, the rest have to be left behind. I do not think there is any question about what he wants to do or tries to do. But he has gone down to Washington surrounded by all the parasitical influences and is taking a course that is diametrically opposed to any reform that might be started. I have not the slightest personal interest in him except wanting to help. I was alarmed some time ago when he gave out part of the programme. He is going to make people better off by destroying what has been produced.

Can anything be sillier? If I were looking for a man who worked for the sake of working, I would be looking for an idiot. This country does not need work. It needs some kind of an equitable distribution of the products of work. I have tried to avoid work all my life. I never saw a man who worked that had anything, unless he worked the people who worked. And everybody knows this,—that you cannot make the poor richer unless you make the richer poorer—not by main force.

If I could get this audience—all of you—to do as I wanted, I would want you to let him know that the people of the United States do not approve of what he is doing. I suppose the farmers think they want work. They have never had anything else. I think that in all my experience in political life I never heard of anything so truly absurd as helping the people by killing pigs and destroying crops, by paying the farmer not to toil, paying the farmer not to work his land. Only one part of the South has sense to protest and that part is the mules. There is no virtue in waste. There is virtue in relieving the poor and helping them, but there is no possible place where you can find virtue in waste.

Now let us take this question: Farmers are told if they bring in little pigs three months old, they can have twice what they are worth. They brought in every little pig they could find, and squeezed the grease out of them, to keep them from becoming a nuisance. They had to go into another county. Perhaps they have had to bury them. But no pig could be eaten. These poor little pigs never had a chance to get a real good drink of swill, out there with their throats cut. It is a mute tendency with the pig that I do not have to share. And within a week from that time Mr. Roosevelt says he is going to raise ninety million dollars to get food for the poor; of course it might have been billions. Ninety million dollars to buy

this same kind of pig, after their throats have been cut and they are rotting on the ground.

If he gets any sane ideas it will be because the people will tell him. The farmers have got too much wheat? Well, I haven't. You haven't. The poor of America haven't. If they have they can send it to the poor of Europe. If we could only trade. They have got too much wheat. What are they going to do with it? But the farmers make too little out of wheat. They might pay me for not producing. What is this for? To bring high prices. They kill the pigs to bring high prices. I buy pigs. I buy bacon. It does not help me any. Nor anybody who uses it. I buy wheat in the shape of flour. And nobody in this administration is considering for a minute the consumer. We heard considerable about the revision of the tariff during the campaign. Has anybody mentioned it lately?

Already we are taking every move substantially that the protectionists of this country have followed for so long—only more directly. You wouldn't find the Republicans sharing in killing pigs and letting them rot, and the next week asking for ninety million dollars to buy more to give to the poor. There are hundreds of people in this country who need cotton and can't get it. We have got too much. Was there ever a time in the world when people had too much? Never. Will there ever be a time when people will have too much? Man can create out of his imagination so many wants in a week that you cannot supply them in a year. Everybody in this world is in debt to everybody else. This is the shabbiest, poorest, stingiest world I ever lived in.

I wonder if there is anybody in this audience who has too many clothes? And yet the whole world is in want. Suppose we had freedom of trade. Now we cut ourselves off from every country in the world, and then burn our produce. I know of only one Democrat who believes this. As for Republicans I don't know. I don't associate with them. But suppose we had freedom of trade. Most of Europe hasn't any wheat or much of it excepting Russia. In all Asia there is nobody who eats wheat. They can't afford it. The Chinese have rice. And what is it that the Chinese make that we can use? Why not trade with them? Why not open foreign ports to the things we have got to sell?

We still have in the Democratic party a few healthy people who are not protectionists. They believe in buying and selling. In the course of civilization, free trade has done everything to make the world civilized.

I don't know what is coming next. There has never been such a foolish proposition as this. If we are going to wait for our prosperity until we can make a scarcity, we are not going to have any prosperity. There are thinkers in political economy. And if there's any principle that has been thoroughly established many times in this country, it is the principle of free trade, trading with your neighbor. I will be willing to burn wheat or corn when you can pro-

duce evidence that everybody has all he wants. Winter brings millions of unemployed. It is not work people want, but *wages* and *things*. We cannot get it without some change of policy. You cannot buy clothes. We have taken care of that. You cannot buy wheat. You cannot buy pigs, because they have destroyed a generation of pigs.

Let's consider the moral effects of such destruction. Is this intrinsically wise,—destroy it so you can toil all over again? If not scarce enough, we will destroy another generation.

So far I have seen nothing proposed that reaches the real problem. What is the real cause? It is not over-production. It is under-consumption, brought about by monopoly. If we don't destroy that, we do nothing. The Single Tax Clubs and this kind of meeting ought to make themselves heard.

## What Is The Single Tax?

HENRY H. HARDINGE  
AT HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS

WHAT is the Single Tax? It is a tax on land value and on that only. What then is land value? It is not a thing—it is a social phenomenon; it is unlike every other value. It has none of the qualities of physical property. It has neither length, breadth nor thickness. It has neither form, color, weight nor dimensions. It cannot be detected or sensed by any of man's five senses but land, that is the earth itself, can be seen, smelled, tasted, felt and heard when the wind blows through the trees or lashing waves assail a rocky coast. It is not capital, although it is capitalized into unthinkable sums. It is not labor—it does not work. It is not wealth, although it has made many undeserving people wealthy.

It is not industrious—it involves no effort—it is wholly inactive. It cannot be eaten like food, drunk like water, worn like clothes, or lived in like a house. It cannot be made by an individual as can a log house or a chair. It is a distinctly social quantity. It cannot be increased or diminished at will as can an industrial product—it is wholly unlike anything and everything created by labor.

It does not employ labor, pay wages, or produce wealth. It is a product of law and has no existence outside of the law and organized government.

It cannot be consumed, burned, blown up, buried, dismantled, worn out, repaired, helped or injured as can any industrial product. It cannot be bent, twisted, abused, insured, injured or abolished short of the abolition of society itself. It is quite unique, distinctive and separate from all other values, and it can be estimated without asking the land owner any questions. Yet it is as impalpable to feeling as to sight. It is an impersonal, invisible institutional value, and its private appropriation amounts to private taxation.