

rounded by a splendid company of university men, officials, publicists, and citizens. Twenty-six Spanish provinces were represented in this Congress. It is significant that a well known Spanish Republican, Senor Azcarrate, told a Madrid Single Taxer that nothing but the apathy of the Single Taxers themselves could prevent an early victory for the movement. And of such apathy there is no sign and little apprehension. The Congress at Ronda has demonstrated that our movement is a living force in Spanish affairs.

CORRESPONDENCE.

COMMENDATION FROM ENGLAND.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I am very pleased with your enterprise and the excellence of your special numbers that result from it; and yet more with the sanity and practical tone of your editorial comments, of which the last number is only one case. Your advice as to the Fels fund would have been of great value, and your dignified suggestions on page 69-72 deserve the most serious consideration. A more flamboyant style seems to appeal to taste in U. S. A., for a time; but serious consistent work gets as good a result there as elsewhere in the long run when the stampede has passed "like a motor car, with a noise of clanking machinery, a cloud of blinding dust, and a faint offence in the air as reminiscence."

Falmouth, Eng. M. J. STEWART.

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

If Mr. Lewis H. Berens had been familiar with my view as set forth with extreme care in "The A B C of Taxation", Chapter VII, on Private Property in Land, it is difficult to conceive how he could have written his criticism of my position in your May-June issue.

Mr. Berens truly says:

"If it be admitted that private ownership of land *as we know it today, with its claim to the private appropriation, or confiscation, of its rental value,* is just and

expedient, then, to my mind, the moral justification for the taxation of land values at once disappears."

Mr. Berens' qualification, "as we know it today" is identical with the mental reservation always held, as has been amply shown, by Mr. George, and to the statement so explained, we say amen and amen.

With this statement, that in the A B C of Taxation as above cited is in entire consonance. It is as follows:

"Henry George's proposal was to leave owners in possession of land, and to accord to that possession the legal right of physical dominion by means of a broad definition of the word, made to include the right "to buy and sell, bequeath and devise," or, in the usual form of the real estate deed, "to give, grant, bargain, sell and convey"—a right universally granted to ownership and property. . . . Title to the land itself whether its value is one dollar or a million dollars, is necessary to security of improvements. Title to the annual value of land—ground rent—is not necessary to the security of improvements, which would be equally secure whether one-quarter or three-quarters (or all) of ground rent be taken in taxation."

Mr. Berens quotes from Progress and Poverty that "the truth is, and from this truth there can be no escape, that there is and can be no just title to the exclusive possession of the soil." Surely Mr. Berens does not mean to subscribe to this statement, because exclusive "possession" is the very thing that Mr. George expressly conceded.

The statement taken from "Our Land and Land Policy" (1872) cited by the Editor on p. 233 of the Life of Henry George is as follows:

"It by no means follows that there should be no such thing as property in land, but merely that there should be no monopolization—no standing between the man who is willing to work and the field which nature offers for his labor. For while it is true that the land of a country is the free gift of the Creator to all the people of that country, to the enjoyment of which each has an equal natural right, it is also true that the recognition of private ownership in land is necessary to its

proper use—is, in fact a condition of civilization."

One Henry George said this; a hundred Henry Georges could not gainsay it. The truth of the statement is grounded in reason, science and fact. It can never indeed be overthrown without "a direct reversal of the progress of centuries"; until water runs up hill. To abolish private property in land would be to do the very thing that Herbert Spencer despaired of doing. To destroy the institution of land would be the very undoing of Mr. George's crowning achievement which was the harmonization of these two rights,—the equal right of all to land, the common right of all to the rent of land.

The alternative statement in *Progress and Poverty* (as above p. 233) reads as follows:

"The complete recognition of common rights to land need in no way interfere with the complete recognition of individual right to improve or produce."

But later Mr. George in the *Perplexed Philosopher* laid repeated stress upon his own statement that

"In truth the right to the use of land is not a joint or common right, but an equal right; the joint or common right is to rent."

Hence his final prescription was to make common property, not the land, but the rent of land.

The abolition of private property in land, tenaciously obtruded for a score of years, has so often proved a Waterloo as to suggest the tactical advantage of a change of base.

While the Single Tax Samson has thus been shorn of his locks and his hair kept short in the stern conflict of "disagreements," some Dead Sea fruits have been ripening in the field of political economy which can be only ashes to the taste.

For instance, Professor Seligman of Columbia University, in the eighth edition of his "Essays in Taxation," thinks himself justified in laying before his 183,000 students and emulators in the United States the following resume of Single Tax belief:

"Land is the creation of God Therefore no one has a right to own land When the change advocated is a di-

rect reversal of the progress of centuries, and a reversion to primitive conditions away from which all history has travelled, the necessity for its absolute proof becomes far stronger. The nationalization of land is a demand which in order to win general acceptance must be based on theories independent of the doctrine of equal right."

Professor Ely, of the University of Wisconsin, also has been favoring English farmers with his views in the following language:

"I have no sympathy whatever with the Single Taxer in this country or any other country. . . . No civilization has been built up in modern times upon anything else than the private ownership of the land; and if you remove that, as the Single Taxer proposes to do, it seems to me that you would remove the solid substantial foundation of modern civilization."

In view of these fresh instances, together with those referred to in my former letter in your March-April number, would it be a waste of time for Single Taxers to look to their reckoning, to make sure they do not sometimes stand in their own light. Why should not Single Taxers come out of their tents and let the walls of their temple rise upon the new foundation laid, level and plumb, by Henry George himself, instead of continuing to grope with Herbert Spencer for a corner-stone that he could not find?

If Mr. Berens will do me the honor to re-read the Chapter VII A B C of Taxation above alluded to, and grant a rejoinder in a future issue of the *REVIEW*, it will be no more than, as it appears to me, the supreme importance of the issue justifies.

C. B. FILLEBROWN.

BOSTON, MASS.

THE *Saturday Evening Post*, of July 12, contains a page article on Louis F. Post, the new Assistant Secretary of Labor, which is highly appreciative of the splendid abilities of this foremost Single Taxer. It says in conclusion: "He is a broad and able citizen, is Louis Freeland Post; and it is quite likely that he will be of service to the country in his new position."