

No kind of land can be assessed correctly till ready to be worked. How silly it is to try to get coal valuation that is not needed for use for twenty years. I cannot understand why any Single Taxers want to tax coal fields, instead of the bank-leave or royalty. I was raised over a coal field. Our farm was all underlaid with coal. You can bet that I would pay no tax on that coal field if government took the royalty. There would not even be a shell for me, all would be gone, just like the boy who asked for the core. He was told that there would be no core in that apple.

You raise it good and effective on the speculator when you take the royalty on coal, ore and oil. See "Boreman Busy" in last REVIEW, page 51.—CALVIN B. POWER, Fayette City, Pa.

#### THE TAX ON RENT.

##### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Certain missionaries to the Single Taxers wish to show them the folly of denying private property in land, and reveal the mistakes of Henry George who condemned private property in land in strong terms. He says, (Progress and Poverty, Doubleday edition, page 347) that the effects of chattel slavery are "trivial as compared with the forms of slavery which have originated in the appropriation of land." According to his definitions land is not and cannot be private property. He asks, (p. 332):

"What constitutes the rightful basis of property," and answers: "That which a man makes or produces is his own, as against the world. No one else can rightfully claim it."

Not even the State can rightfully take such property by taxation. Our missionaries do not urge that land be so held; they recognize the claim of the State to a tax on site rent.

Property must be wealth. Land is not wealth; it cannot be property. Among things that "cannot be considered wealth at all" are "lands, the value of which is but the result of the acknowledgment in favor of certain persons of an exclusive right to use." (pages 38-39.)

Mr. George always treats the value ex-

pressed in the selling price of land as wholly fictitious. Selling price is "rent capitalized" (page 166.) A fictitious value cannot be real property. Watered stock is capitalized income which is based on injustice. The "watered" value of stock often disappears from the market after the unearned income ceases, but no real wealth disappears, for no wealth was back of the "water." Just so the value of land titles may be destroyed without reducing actual wealth.

Land satisfies no human want until labor is applied; then land is opportunity, and can be nothing else. The origin of what we imagine is private property in land is the patent given to the favorite of a monarch, permitting him to collect rent from users. The right is bought as wholesale, so to speak, at a low price, and retailed at a high price. It is this legal power to retail opportunity that is bought and sold. As our missionaries agree with us that this power resides only in society as a whole, I as an unconverted heathen, remind them that their "private ownership," Henry George's plan of possession on payment of economic rent if any, and the present land system, are precisely the same, the differences in result resting entirely upon the amount of site rent collected by taxation. If a low tax means private property, and a high tax means common property, at what point does the change occur. Could 30% of rent in taxation be consistent with private property, and 31% be the amount that produces common property. Stated in this way, the agitation of our friends becomes absurd. Abolition of taxation and the substitution therefore of site rent, causes no change in titles. The remedy is therefore simple and conservative, although the effect is revolutionary, placing the producer, instead of the idle land monopolist, in possession of opportunity.—C. F. HUNT, Chicago, Ill.

#### MR. HALL AMENDS OUR "DEFINITION."

##### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Your definition of the Single Tax in the May-June number is clear and excellent,

notwithstanding the typographical error "rental land" instead of "rentable value of land," in the fourth paragraph, third line.

I would rather not say, however, "the payment out of this fund for functions which are supported and carried on in common." Ought not the statement to be: "for those things which being necessarily monopolies, belong to all the people, in order that all may participate in the benefit of the monopoly."

My own opinion is, that if men were able to earn to their full capacity and their entire earnings were left them, that they would have no more use for Public Schools or city libraries, and possibly for Fire Departments, than you have for a wooden leg. They would say "we can do these things ourselves better and more efficiently and to suit us better than any deputies are likely to do them for us; anyhow we are entitled to get our own experience by trying."

Apart from that I believe the principle of most of these governmental activities is wrong, in that they appropriate that which belongs to all for the benefit of a few, and that they tend to foster tyranny.

BOLTON HALL.

#### MOTHER JONES MASS MEETING.

A mass meeting in favor of government ownership of the Colorado coal mines was held at Webster Hall, 119 East 11th street, New York, on Friday evening, July 17th. About 600 persons were present in spite of the oppressive heat and listened to the eloquent addresses of the speakers with close attention and frequent applause.

Amos Pinchot, who was to have presided was prevented from attending by the very serious illness of his mother, but his speech was read by Benjamin C. Marsh. Mr. Pinchot referred to the refusal of the trustees of Cooper Union to allow the hall to be used for the meeting and said they were more interested in dividends than in democracy. He recited the situation in Colorado, which he referred to as a feudal State, and advocated government ownership of the mines.

John Brown, miner's organizer, from his

intimate knowledge of the conditions in the mines, told of the troubles of the past ten years in West Virginia and Colorado and stated that we were already in the early stages of a revolution and that it depended upon the intelligence of the people whether we were to come through it without blood to higher planes of civilization or to plunge into the depths of bloodshed and despair. Hugh Frayne, of the American Federation of Labor, followed with an appeal to the people to stand by the miners in their fight.

Meyer London in an impassioned address emphasized the land question as the predominant issue before the people today and advocated the government ownership of all mines.

Mother Jones in her usual witty manner brought down the house with her bright trenchant home thrusts. She took the platform amid such vociferous applause that it was some time before she could make herself heard. Then she reminded the audience that the master class had taught them to use their hands but it was about time they learned to use their heads. She asserted that we were in the ruthless hands of a military despotism. The militia she called uniformed sewer rats. The power of Rockefeller could not be imagined by the people. The head of the United States Government was at 26 Broadway. Senator Martine, of New Jersey, closed the speech making with a fervent plea for government ownership of all public utilities, which he said he had advocated for 40 years.

A series of resolutions were passed advocating the taking over of the Colorado mines by the National Government and copies were ordered sent to President Wilson and the Houses of Congress.

THE Fels Commission here and a committee in England of which Josiah Wedgwood, M. P., is chairman, is organizing a campaign of propaganda for the Single Tax in Mexico. Arguments for the Single Tax in Spanish are being prepared for the Constitutional leaders, and Gen. Villa has already indicated that he will welcome a hearing on the proposed measure.