

place to place, and ultimate causes which are constantly functioning to close the door of opportunity to workers, to reduce the rewards and increase the hazards in the performance of the service functions of production and distribution. Of these two kinds of causes, the former, which is relatively unimportant, has practically monopolized the attention of the students of the problem and of economists and politicians who are actively interested in ameliorating conditions. The methods actually employed and those commonly suggested, both to relieve the suffering caused by unemployment and to combat its contemporary and proximate causes, generally ignore the ultimate causes. Nay, more, they commonly tend to increase the hazards and curtail the natural rewards for the performance of the service functions, while reducing the risks and increasing the rewards for the successful performance of the parasitic function of absorbing community produced wealth.

RECAPITULATION

To recapitulate:

1. Relief is inadequate and, even with the most intelligent and sympathetic administration, tends to detract from the self-reliance and self-respect of its recipients.
2. Heavy public expenditures to be paid for by taxes on productive enterprises and its products will only result in a temporary appearance of prosperity to be followed by a still worse depression.
3. Restricting production and artificially maintaining prices, while at times highly profitable to the small minority who have the legal privilege of exploiting the natural resources and consequently the labor of the country, are total failures as methods of providing the jobless with opportunities to engage in useful industry.
4. High taxes on labor products and incomes, high land values as reflected in increased ground rents and royalties, and the heavy toll of the rackets have increased the cost of commodities and services and have reduced the opportunities for honest, productive work.
5. The above indirect costs would be reduced by lowering all taxes on labor products and service incomes and increasing the taxes on land values.
6. A reduction in the cost of products would increase demand and thus stimulate production and distribution, and so provide jobs for the unemployed.

WHY NOT TRY THE ECONOMIC METHOD?

The methods of organized charity and of political interference with the performance of the service functions having failed to solve the unemployment problem, is it not advisable to consider trying the economic method? Relieve industry and its products from taxes and tax the idle land into use, and involuntary unemployment on a large scale will tend to become as rare as yellow fever. The mosquito which infects the body politic with the social disease of involuntary unemployment is our system of taxing industry, thrift and enterprise, thus confiscating for community

use a substantial and steadily increasing percentage of the natural rewards for the performance of the service functions, while permitting land owners to collect and retain the community produced wealth of ground rents and royalties, the total of which is constantly increasing, and in exchange for which, land owners, as such, perform no service.

WARREN S. BLAUVELT.

Your Work and Mine

ADDRESS BY BOLTON HALL, OCT. 12, 1931, AT THE SIXTH ANNUAL HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS AT BALTIMORE

WE have been divided—divided between those who, headed by the London *Land and Liberty*, advocate the "step-by-step" method of restoring the land to the people, taking a penny in the pound at first, and those "one-steppers" who, with the *Forum* of Stockton, Calif., ask for the immediate collection of all rents of land apart from any improvements to be used for all public expenses.

We must not forget that the great obstacle to our immediate success is ignorance and indifference. Anyone who brings attention to the right of the use of the earth is helping both methods. Besides that, each person must work in his own method. If we could not do that, the most of us would not work at all.

We have been handicapped by putting the financial or tax side of our moral reform first. The masses do not even know what their taxes are, and do not realize that they pay almost all of the taxes.

For myself, I find a new inspiration in saying that the land belongs to the people morally, and even legally, and that we should take its rent instead of taxes. Everyone can understand that, and it raises no difficulties of what taxes are or who pays them. This is the simple presentation.

Production is simply the application of manual or mental labor to land and other natural resources. A house, for example, is merely land changed in form. The bricks are clay, the mortar is limestone, the cement is clay and silicate—all burned with coal. The wood is trees, the metal is ore. All materials come out of the land, and if we check or stop the production of any of them or the exchange of any of them, building is checked. The same with machines and the materials that are worked up by machines.

Is not then waste land one of the greatest wastes—whether it be the poorly worked farms, idle water power, or ten-thousand-dollar buildings on million-dollar sites?

Every year the necessity grows for more expenditure of tax money; every year the State is compelled to assume new duties. Concomitantly with this there is a vast increase in the value of land, caused by the increase of population and of accessibility of the land. Every increase in the population, every road, every church and school—in short, every advance, whether social, mechanical, educa-

tional, political, special or general, raises the value of some land.

But we now allow nearly all of this to be appropriated by private holders, and private with-holders, of the resources of the earth. At present, this causes speculation and results in the with-holding of much land from its best uses.

To cure this, there need be no disturbance of land tenures. It is necessary only to require each holder to pay fairly for the particular privilege he holds. Why not avail ourselves of the value created by the public for the public expenses?

Among our own people there is another obstacle to our success: the preposterous claim that we have made little progress in these fifty-two years! The reason that eyes are shut to the advances we have made is mainly that some of us see the Poverty, but unconsciously do not want to see the Progress. We have some method of our own to which we are attached, and at which we work devotedly, believing that ours is the only method, and that anyone who is not helping us at that is not helping at all.

Or we think accordingly that the other methods must have been without results. We think that the truth we have to publish is so evident that men have only to understand it in order to embrace it. Neither of those thoughts is correct. That was the tragedy of Jesus' life: that he saw so clearly that if men would only love one another, armies, kings, courts, crime, involuntary poverty, and all other evils that afflict mankind, would disappear. That the rulers knew this, too, was exactly why they crucified him.

To me, it is marvelous that we have gotten so far. Think: the agitation for equal rights for women began with Mary Wolstoncraft, and after all these years it is still to be won in most of our countries and is nowhere complete! It was two hundred and fifty years ago that the agitation against chattel slavery began—an abuse that affected only a few million people—and we have not got it abolished yet! Even we Americans have it as peonage and as the enforced, unfair and unprofitable labor of convicts.

But the injustice that we attack now affects every man, woman and child. We attack the longest established and universal wrong in the world, for if slavery was the sum of all villainies the private appropriation of land rent is the fundamental iniquity.

We are all of us a little blind to something, and it ill becomes us to condemn our brothers who are blind to something else. One of the wisest things that Jesus said was "Judge not that ye be not judged;" to which we might have added, "for your judgment will probably be wrong."

Nevertheless, this despair keeps us from our best work—we think our influence is so small that it is not worth while for us to strive for the main object.

We must not blame men for their blindness. If they knew better, they would do better; light may have been held up to them, but they being blind did not see it. We and our fathers, who have failed to educate them, are as

much responsible for that as they are. Their eyes are not yet opened, or, at least, they are like babies who can not distinguish what they see. We can not be angry at one another for childish failings when we learn in our hearts that we are all children of one God. Well, we are all children in some respect. One is ignorant or unreasonable, another unsympathetic, but maybe the unreasonable one is loving and the cold one logical. Anyhow, each is doing the best he can as far as he has got, morally and intellectually.

The foundation principle of business, of political economy and of religion, is that we are of one flesh. Our interests are inextricably bound together, so closely that a killing of a kinglet of whom most of us had never even heard precipitated a war that affected our fortunes, our families and our lives. It must be so; no one does any good that is not for everyone, no one can do any evil that does not hurt mankind. We have heard that we are in the hands of God; in truth we are the hands of God.

He who created the world made it that way; made it so that it develops itself, or rather that we develop it; so that the Kingdom is really at hand to him whose eyes are open to see it; yes, so that the economic millennium will come even if we do not work, but it won't be our millennium when it comes.

As I went to Portsmouth Harbor I saw the Eddystone lighthouse, which has been an inspiration to me because of Jean Ingelow's beautiful ballad of Winstanley. Winstanley was a ship owner, and the poor drowned sailors who went on the submerged rock made his heart sore, so he resolved to build a lighthouse. Everyone laughed at the absurd idea of building where no foundation could be had. But Winstanley devoted his life and his money to that one thing; and year after year at each flood tide he followed in the beams he had laid at ebb tide. At last he got a foundation on the Eddystone Rock.

Winstanley set his foot on shore;
Said he, "My work is done—
I hold it strong to last as long
As aught beneath the sun.

"But if it fall as fall it may,
Borne down in ruin and rout,
Another than I shall build it high
And brace the girders stout—

"A better than I shall build it high,
For now the way is plain,
And though I were dead," Winstanley said,
"The light shall shine again.

"But if it fall, then it were well
That I should with it fall,
Since for my part I have built my heart
In the courses of its wall."

Again, Olive Shreiner tells of the hunter who caught one glimpse of the bird of Truth and followed it over moun-

tains. He scaled height after height, only to see other mountains beyond.

At last he came to a sheer wall of rock and climbed, painfully hewing the steps as he rose, with sweat and groans. At last, gasping for breath, he reached the top, only to find another height in front. But his last words are: "Where I lie down worn out, others will stand young and fresh. By the steps that I have made they will rise; by the stairs that I have built they will mount. They will never know the name of the man that built them; at the clumsy work they will laugh; when the stones roll they will curse me—but they will mount by my steps; they will rise on my stairs; for no man liveth to himself and no man even so much as dieth to himself."

The Single Tax in Perspective

A PAPER READ BY BENJAMIN W. BURGER, LL. M., AT THE HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS, BALTIMORE, OCT. 12, 1931

(Continued from Nov.-Dec. Number)

MOST of us have neither the patience nor the ability to study and master the laws that govern our physical or economic wellbeing. The chief preoccupation of our lives is its continuance. The stern business of making a living is so desperate that few can devote thought to matters of economic law which governs us.

The first qualification the student of economics must possess is a scientific attitude. He must be free from bias and inherited opinions lacking in scientific validity. As Professor Harry Gunnison Brown writes (*Economic Science and the Common Welfare*, page 8):

"The student of economics needs most of all an enthusiasm for science. He must avoid prejudice in his thinking; he must learn to think clearly; he must acquire information of scientific value and use it logically. Finally, he should have a deep concern for the common welfare."

It was Tolstoy who wrote that the Single Tax must first be understood to be accepted.

Aye, there is the rub. The Single Tax must first be understood. It can be understood only by those who are well grounded in economic fundamentals. What are those fundamentals?

First and foremost I place a recognition of the fact that we live upon a planet which has none of the characteristics of private property. The student of economics, in a word, must be carefully orientated or adjusted to his environment. It must be emphasized again and again that all our food, clothing and shelter come from the earth; that we are forever chained to it; that in no manner can we ever get away from it.

It is not without significance that Henry George, after stating the problem he was about to solve, devoted the next forty-two pages of "Progress and Poverty" to the definition and comprehensive explanation of the terms he was going to use.

We who have studied the Single Tax are prone to assume

that our listeners recognize their relationship to the earth as we do. What is so obvious, we believe, as the equal right of every man, woman and child in and to the land on which and from which all must live, and back into which all must go? Here we make our great error.

Have you ever considered that it is the obvious things in life that escape you? I can best illustrate that by a story told me many years ago by a prominent New York lawyer who ran for Governor in that State. He said to me:

"When I was a boy, going to school, I would play a game with another boy. We would take out our geographies and open to the map of Africa or Asia, or any of the five continents. I would say to my friend: 'I am looking at a certain word on that map, see if you could find it.'

"The second boy, with pencil in hand, would carefully look over the entire map, mention one by one the smallest towns on it, and finally give up in disgust."

It was the big word, Africa, or Asia, or Australia, written across the map which was in the mind of my friend.

So it is in economics. The obvious things are not perceived by the multitude. We, who have studied the Single Tax fifteen or twenty or twenty-five years, see them and assume that our hearers likewise see them. We are in error.

Test out the next non-Single Taxer you meet. Ask him what are the things he considers most important to sustain life. He will mention air, water and food. He will recognize his right to air and water without paying rent to an air lord or a water lord, but he has never given thought to his equal right of access to land, the source of all his food, clothing and shelter.

Ask him what he understands by the term "employment." The chances are about a thousand to one he will fail to perceive that "employment" is nothing more nor less than the use of land.

Here we might take a page from the more advanced religious movements of today, which studiously avoid attacks on the old religions and content themselves simply with presenting their new ideas, leaving it to their listeners to perceive the superiority of the new over the old. Those little palliatives and makeshifts such as state housing, compulsory unemployment insurance, shorter hours, etc., spring from a mind which has failed to grasp fundamental economic principles.

After showing the novitiate his utter dependence upon mother earth, we will then be in a position to discuss with him our third proposition, namely, that all mankind has an equal right to live.

Our fourth proposition, namely, that economic rent is produced collectively, not individually, and therefore belongs to the people collectively, will be more difficult to prove. So distinguished a citizen as ex-President Coolidge fails to comprehend this; otherwise he would not have written as he did of the Wendel family, who accumulated about \$75,000,000 worth of choice New York real estate principally land values: