

now reverse his proposed remedy and perhaps we may find the solution of the problem that really is confronting society. Abolish the taxation that is now burdening industry. Remove all taxes from machinery, tools, farm implements, houses, business structures, and all improvements; from food products, materials and merchandise of all descriptions; from incomes, thrift and production, and put it all on the value of land.

It is an axiom in economics that taxation on labor products is added to the price of commodities, makes them dearer, weakens the effective demand for them and thus tends to unemployment. It is equally axiomatic that a tax on land values (especially if the entire economic rent is taken) discourages only the holding of land out of use, and therefore makes for the employment of labor.

Labor employed will make effective the consumers' potential demand, will translate underconsumption into underproduction, and will put an end to all that now is troubling our industrial and economic structure. And as for "the displacement of man by machine" (the problem visioned by Mr. Edge), we will have to invent more and better machines to keep pace with the demand.

—OSCAR H. GEIGER in *Wall Street Journal*.

## Progress and Poverty

"FROM all parts of the civilized world come complaints of industrial depression; of labor condemned to involuntary idleness; of capital massed and wasting; of pecuniary distress among business men; of want and suffering and anxiety among the working classes. All the dull, deadening pain, all the keen, maddening anguish, that to great masses of men are involved in the words 'hard times,' have afflicted the world. This state of things, common to communities differing so widely in situation, in political institution, in fiscal and financial systems, in density of population and in social organization, can hardly be accounted for by local causes. There is distress where large standing armies are maintained, but there is also distress where the standing armies are nominal; there is distress where protective tariffs stupidly and wastefully hamper trade, but there is also distress where trade is nearly free; there is distress where autocratic government yet prevails, but there is also distress where political power is wholly in the hands of the people; in countries where paper is money, and in countries where gold and silver are the only currency. Evidently, beneath all such things as these, we must infer a common cause."

The foregoing words, describing world conditions of 1932 with uncanny precision, were written in 1877. They are taken from a book of which it has been said that no man can consider himself educated until he has read it. The book is "Progress and Poverty" and the author is Henry George. Until a few days ago I had never opened the book, though I had heard much of Henry George and the Single Tax. I found in the Carnegie Library of Barnesville a small volume of "Significant Paragraphs" culled from the original text, which I am now reading in its entirety.

One does not have to agree with Henry George in his conclusion that a Single Tax on land is the principal solution of our difficulties—though it is virtually impossible to resist his logic—to be deeply affected by his words. Whether or not his thesis is correct, Henry George's book proves its right to existence by the passionate, poetic expression of his love of humanity. His powerful description of suffering—needless suffering that could be prevented by the proper use of man's intelligence—and his eloquent plea for a better world, stir the reader to the depths.

On one point, certainly, there is no question but that he is right (our

depression is but another proof of his point): that the great enigma of civilization is the fact that "material progress not only fails to relieve poverty—it actually produces it." Review the history of America or any other industrial nation: is not depression as typical of our life as prosperity? Until the solution is found and the remedy is applied, civilization as we know it contains the seed of its own destruction, and the question is how many depressions can it withstand before going the way of Egypt, Greece and Rome.

While officeholders toy with relief, Henry George goes back to fundamentals. How is all wealth, in the final analysis, produced? It is the result of labor exerted on land. As a country grows and prospers, its land is got into the possession of men anxious to own the wealth to be produced on the land, until all the available supply is possessed. What of the men who come afterward, either by immigration or by birth? There is no land for them to exert their labor on; therefore the lucky owners of land allow them access to the land—for a price. That price is all the wealth produced by their labor on the land, except what is necessary to keep the laborers alive and contented. The land—the basis of all wealth—is in the hands of a few, and the many are denied the profit of their own labor on the land. Though individuals may overcome this difficulty by eventual purchase of land themselves, the same situation continues to prevail; ownership of land may change but the relative number of owners and non-owners remains practically fixed.

The remedy is the Single Tax, according to Henry George. Space forbids even a condensation of his argument here, and it should be read in the original words of the thinker.

Until an adjustment is made in our economic system so that the masses may have access to the land and may enjoy the fruits of their labor thereon, the Constitution of the United States may grant to all citizens the pursuit of happiness, but our social order denies them the capture of it.—BEN HARDY, JR., in *Barnesville (Ga.) News-Gazette*.

## Note to Our Readers

IN the last issue of LAND AND FREEDOM a news item of the activities of the Chicago Single Tax League was carried among a number of similar items relating to other organizations, beneath a general heading of the Henry George Lecture Association. Mr. Henry L. Tideman, the active secretary of the Chicago Single Tax League, asks that we correct any possible misapprehensions by informing our readers that the League is a wholly independent organization, not affiliated with, or subordinate to, any other, although cooperating heartily with the Henry George Lecture Association, whose president, Mr. John Lawrence Monroe, is also one of the directors of the League.

Readers of this issue of LAND AND FREEDOM who are unfamiliar with the refinements of interpretation respecting our principles which are discussed in this number should not allow themselves to be misled. The followers of Henry George are united in the belief that, whatever the exact economic phenomena of interest and rent, the values attaching to land are not the result of individual effort and should be taken for community purposes. Also that one human being has no greater right to advantageous locations than another, and that the man in possession of favored sites should pay to the community the value of that advantage. These are the fundamentals on which we are all agreed.

Again we favor our readers with an issue of forty pages, eight pages over the usual number.