

owning privilege. First we are arrested by the startling "jacket" of attractive design with the barred gate and "Strictly Private" lettered across the iron grating. To whomever was responsible for this, our congratulations!

And then the book itself with its fascinating history of landownership and the long tragic story of the alienation of the workers from the land.

Just a glance at the chapter headings reveals something of its contents: The Land of the Realm, How They Hold Our Land, Our Stolen Lands, Lords of the Land, Landholders in the Commons, Landlords in Local Elections, etc., etc. To quote significant extracts would be to quote the book itself entire, for it is the most thorough indictment of landlordism that has appeared to date. And no words are wasted. There are no superfluous sentences. The guns are turned upon the formidable fortress of landed privileges, and every shot tells.

The work will aid land restoration as no other work has done. There is no talk of the Single Tax, nor the taxation of land values—that is not Graham Peace's way. Nothing but a law of the Commons providing for the immediate collection of the full economic rent and the abolition of all taxation! And in doing this they will have the support of the best authorities on English law. Legally as well as morally the land of Great Britain is vested in the people of England and under the crown.

The Constitutional History by Stubbs says: "The king of Domesday is the supreme landlord of all the land of the nation; the old folk and has become the king's and all private land is held mediately or immediately of him." And Mr. Peace adds: "This, the central theory of English law, has not been changed through the centuries."

When the people of the United Kingdom realize that the whole question of unemployment can be solved by the restoration of an ancient right, how long will they hesitate? Conservatives may delay the day of resumption and salvation, but how long will they hesitate? Conservatism may itself be enlisted for the restoration of the land rights of the English people in accordance with the older laws that have never been repealed and today form the basis of English law.

Again, congratulations! This is one of the most telling books in all our literature. We owe Mr. Peace a profound debt of gratitude for a splendid piece of work superlatively well done, that will serve the purpose of educational and political propaganda up to the very time that shall crown the triumph of our principles. Not until that day will this book fail to serve us.

J. D. M.

*The Great Robbery, by J. W. Graham Peace, clo., 128 pp. Commonweal Press, price 3s 6d. 43 Chancery Lane, London, 2 W. C. England.

Correspondence

TUGWELL HODGE-PODGE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Prof. Tugwell believes that we can do better in the long run than continue a pattern of land settlement which is essentially "hodge-podge" provided we proceed "not by mandate but by providing new and better opportunities—renewed frontiers—within our borders."—*New York Times*, Jan. 14, 1934.

With all due respect to the Professor his problem can not be solved by buying out those able to subsist on marginal lands. It has no more chance of curing the disease that he knows exists than an opiate has of curing a broken leg. The hodge-podge Mr. Tugwell objects to is certainly an anomaly in a land so gifted by the Creator with every possible feature of topography and climate and which once could be used for nothing. This hodge-podge is not the cause of our distress. It is the inevitable effect. It could never have occurred if the land had not been given away or sold, first by the Crown, and then by the Colonial Governments, and lastly by the Federal Governments through its Homestead Laws. If such land had been retained by the

people through their governments, colonial, state, or otherwise, we would now be spared any problem of marginal cultivation. Under secure leases from the government no men would be forced to use lands which can provide but a bare subsistence no matter what the expenditure of labor or capital.

The cause is land monopoly. The best lands can not be had except at a price. Therefore they are in great part held out of use. They can not be forced into use by spending \$25,000,000 to buy out all the holders of marginal and submarginal lands. Production will be limited to the better lands but the hodge-podge will continue, the least productive of the better land now in use will become marginal land and real wages will be forced still lower. The reason is this; as the withholding of the better lands forced men to poorer lands and lowered the margin of cultivation so will the withdrawal of marginal lands force their users from employment at living wages to idleness at no wages at all. They must be supported by those employed and the necessary taxation will cause the margin of cultivation to rise so that lands once able to produce a surplus will now produce but a bare living. Methods of agriculture under this weight of taxation will be forced to deteriorate instead of improving. Look at India or Egypt. The owners of land out of use and the landlords of tenant farmers will not be affected except as the standards of living is lowered for they will continue to receive without returning goods or services. Real wages will be depressed because of the drain upon production to support non-producers.

Men do not choose the hardest way of doing things as Prof. Tugwell well knows. It is an axiom that man seeks to gratify his desires with the least effort. Thus inventions are made, new processes discovered, new lands opened. Therefore, since he sees the futility of overcoming this hodge-podge settlement of America by mandate and the necessity of providing new and "better opportunities—renewed frontiers—within our borders," why not force the frontier into use by collecting its economic rent for the people of the United States? It is useless to complain about the use of marginal lands when nothing is done to remove the cause, so give man a chance to work without paying tribute to some other man for the privilege and the necessity of planning will disappear with the opening of the new old frontier.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

JOHN LUXTON.

ASSEMBLE THE FACTS AND PUT THEM TO WORK

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

President Hennessy's idea regarding the assembling of data bearing on land speculation as the cause of depressions and panics is excellent.

Recently I have been noting the marked differences between the prices received at auction sales in foreclosures and the assessed value of the parcels sold. If these values are any criterion of real values then they are surely bargain sales. The liquidation of speculative values is inevitable and must take place before recovery comes. But evidence based on such transactions can hardly be regarded as convincing because it lacks the factor of mutual agreement between a willing seller and a willing buyer.

Perhaps my reasoning is faulty or my presentation weak, but I seem to have difficulty in establishing such convincing evidence. Quite lately instances came to my notice which for me at least provided convincing evidence, but I was not able to use it so that others would be convinced.

One dealt with a parcel of land recently offered for development purposes. It consists of approximately six acres located in a district the site value of which is the highest in the town. Assessments on adjacent land mostly improved bears at least some relation to its value for use but the particular parcel was assessed as pasture land. The owner kept a few highly bred dairy cattle and at such times as the weather would be injurious to such delicately nurtured creatures they were allowed to graze on this tract. The peculiarities of certain state laws were thus satisfied. The assessors were forced to value this tract,

surrounded and served by all the facilities of a modern city, as though it were an ordinary farmstead. Conversation with a town official brought this case to my notice. He could see certain injustices in the situation, but the idea that so simple an incident might furnish the key to the riddle of economics was in his opinion preposterous.

What kind of facts do we need? Can we find them in the projected programmes of slum improvement? Already the question of land values in relation to such projects is beginning to present a serious problem. And the haphazard development contains illustrations that will provide convincing evidence. Let us decide the kind of facts we need, assemble them and put them to work.

Brookline, Mass.

GORDON L. MACLAREN.

ARE THE ECONOMIC LAWS NATURAL LAWS?

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I deplore your constant use of the expressions "natural taxation," natural rights and natural laws. Henry George followed the 19th century style in using words. I have no doubt he knew exactly what he meant by them. An exact scholar would not be confused. But most of us are not exact scholars. The words nature and natural rights have a pernicious history in the English language, beginning even before the time of Rousseau.

I commend a study of the works of the late Prof. Irving Babbitt to land taxers in that connection. As a result of that history these words have about as many meanings as there are readers of them. They serve as a basis for the antithesis of exact reasoning, and often confuse the idea and furnish opportunity for dangerous misconceptions. Land reform is nothing more than the application of human intelligence and common sense to problems created by human experience. To call it "natural" might easily lead to the idea, so often conveyed by the word, that it is something extra human, or a supernatural mystery, which it is not.

Cincinnati, O.

F. B. MCCONAUGHY.

REPLY

Whether we choose to cite natural law in the movement of the heavenly bodies as furnishing an analogy, or whether we speak of the natural order as merely the sequence of cause and effect, makes but little difference. We need not summon Rousseau either in proof or disproof. His extravagances need not concern us. We assume a moral order in the universe; a physical law in the physical world; shall we then dispute economic sequence of cause and consequence? Shall we ignore also the lesson indicated when government is instituted and land values spring into being and are increased as the functions and services of government increase? If this does not point to a natural law, to which also the law of justice and morals is closely allied, we do not know the meaning of words.—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.

QUESTION OF NAME

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

From time to time discussion rages over whether Single Taxers are adequately named. This is doubtless important, but it seems just as important adequately to designate their opponents.

Multiple taxers is a term sometimes used. It designates, just as does the term Single Taxers. But it does not describe.

Multiple taxers believe in levying a number of taxes on every one. In addition, they believe in levying several other taxes, which will be passed to those on whom the first set of taxes are levied. As a corollary they propose exemption of land, so that the payer of the two above set of taxes will be required to pay a high price, and give a large mortgage and on which he will pay much interest, when he establishes his homestead. The mortgage and the interest constitute tax No. 3.

Each of us is therefore loaded up under three well defined systems of taxation.

Triple taxers might be fairly descriptive of the opponents of Single Taxers.

High taxers might be a broader, more readily grasped, and consequently more easily popularized term. By contrast, Single Taxers, standing for the extinction of the systems of the High Taxers, would become Low Taxers.

Madison, Wisc.

CRAIG RALSTON.

FROM A NEW ZEALAND VETERAN

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am much too busy to write you at length, but must say that LAND AND FREEDOM is always interesting, and with such an immense territory as your country comprises, you should have by this time a fairly large clientele. I am always wondering when the United States are likely to make an advance. It seems to me that your line of least resistance is the tariff. Woodrow Wilson was able to cut off 28 per cent of the American tariff at one fell swoop, imposing an income tax to replace the revenue. True, the war has given the tariff-mongers a chance of which they have taken the fullest advantage but the prevailing high tariff is working such mischief that it ought to yield to something like a strong attack, and even an income tax might be accepted by our men in the meantime, because it would be much easier to arouse opposition to that than to indirect taxation. However, I have never expected anything from the new Roosevelt regime inasmuch as Roosevelt, unlike Wilson, has come into power committed to nothing of a definite or tangible character.

In this country we are in the throes of industrial depression for some time now. To Henry George men the cause is quite clear, but it is wonderful how perverse men are, even those who affect an interest in social reform. The latest craze in this country is called the Douglas Social Credit Plan, but it is terribly respectable, and will soon run its course and go out of fashion.

Still, there are more Henry George men in this country now than ever before, and we keep on talking, writing—and hoping. Though we have no organization in this country to push electoral reform, most of Henry George's followers both here and in Australia are in favour of proportional representation, and for my own part I am convinced that it is of great importance for the reason that were the proportional system in operation, we would have continual representation in Parliament. The single-member electorate make minority representation impossible, unless by accident.

Wellington, New Zealand.

P. J. O'REGAN.

MORE OF NATURAL LAW

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

May I say a word of warning that the kindly article by Chester C. Platt, page 185 in the Nov.—Dec. issue, may be misinterpreted?

I refer to his comment at the bottom of the first column, page 186 where he speaks of the belief of Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown that "we make too much of the theory that there are certain natural laws sacred because really of divine origin." Then he adds: "Consequently it is said we are always seeking natural laws of economics and then trying to conform to them. I know that a large school of Single Taxers hold to this view. Mr. Beckwith of *No Taxes* says in a recent article"

"This, I know from experience, will be accepted as descriptive of the natural-law school to which I am proud to belong. One sure way to have weeds in a garden is not to have anything else there. In the absence of a correct statement of our position, this language in Mr. Platt's article opens the way to a gross misconception.

The trouble is in the word "sacred." Perhaps it must be admitted