

local real estate board, whose members are large advertisers, who do not care to have the delicate question brought to the notice of the public. We admit that. Still, it hardly excuses the *Enquirer* editor. Under our present revenue system, land speculators would capitalize the improvements and sell them before they were paid for, leaving the public, to be taxed on their shelter, food, clothes, etc. It is an old and wicked game which no editor ought to help.

WANGANUI, New Zealand, by a popular vote of 2,280 to 1,733, has abolished all taxes save the one on land values for municipal purposes. This doubles the tax on land values. The city has a population of 25,000. The Waterside Worker's Union took a leading part on the side of taxing land values only. In Te Kuile, a smaller town, where the land value tax system had been in use for three years, enemies of the system made a strong effort to return to the old system of taxing improvements, but were defeated by a popular vote of 407 to 111.

THE sanitary inspector for Edinburgh, Scotland, reported in July: "In the course of house-to-house visitation the floors and bedding were in 323 instances found in a dirty condition. The number of cases of over-crowding which came under the notice of the department was 1,062, and of these 683 were houses of one apartment, 364 of two, 14 of three, and one of four apartments. The four-apartment house was occupied by 20 persons. In a number of the one apartment overcrowded houses as many as ten were found in residence, while in one of the two apartment houses, as many as sixteen persons were found."

We feel toward such reports much as we do about the numerous statistical bureaus at Washington, which are constantly sending out inane bulletins, at great expense to the government. These figures tell nothing we did not already know or could not surmise accurately from prevalent conditions. And so, in Edinburgh, where cruel landlordism forces up rents and depresses wages, it does not need sanitary inspectors and tables of statistics to let us know that there must be over-crowding of a most distressing kind in the poorer quarters. The statistics never lead to anything. The government employes who grind the statistical mills seem to have no expectation that anything ever will be done to remedy things. What good are the statistics?

New York Socialists See the Land Question

THE Socialist Party of New York has nominated Norman Thomas for Mayor. It is gratifying to find the following plank in the platform of the party.

"Economy is not parsimony. It is a false saving that is at the expense of service to the people. It is true economy to eliminate waste, graft, and inefficiency. To that

we pledge ourselves. In the levying of taxes we believe that the State and city as representing the people are especially entitled to claim the rental value of land—a value created by the community rather than the individual owner. Therefore we favor a plan similar to that in successful use at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, for progressively putting a higher burden of taxation on land than on buildings and improvements to the land."

CORRESPONDENCE

ANNA GEORGE WRITES ENTERTAININGLY
OF HER TRIP ABROAD.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I have just returned from a trip to Europe and wish I could make a real report of the progress of the Single Tax movement over there, but as I was on a combination joy ride and college extension course with my two daughters, my S. T. contacts were merely social, with the exception of the one meeting which took the form of a dinner given by the London group. Engineered by the two standard bearers, Fred'k. Verinder and John Paul, it was a delightful affair and a red letter occasion to me—although my enjoyment of it was marred by the fact that I had to make a speech, which I seemed utterly incapable of concentrating on beforehand so that I heard myself saying a bunch of things I hadn't expected to say and I afterwards realized that I'd left unsaid many things I'd meant to say. But it was sweet beyond words to meet again friends of my early youth who had come to my father's call; sweet to meet others whom I had heard of but never seen—and others still who were new to the cause.

The "feeling" of that meeting was like that of the old days and I believe there must have been others present who experienced, as I did—a revived enthusiasm and a desire to dedicate themselves anew.

It was a personal loss to me and a disappointment to all who know Richard McGhee's power and eloquence that he was not able to be at that dinner—due to the fact that he had not fully recovered from an operation. But a few weeks later we went to visit him and although he was in a "nursing home" and was supposed to be very much of an invalid—he showed his old "pep," talked to me like a dutch uncle and made me then and there change my itinerary. As I have Irish blood in my veins, I could hardly be expected to admit to him that he proved to be entirely right,—but nevertheless I shall be eternally grateful to him for making us cut out a visit to the English lakes in favor of York. For in that wonderful little city we were met by four Disciples, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Sorenson, Fred Sherron and Ashley Mitchell, who took us in tow and showed us the fascinating town and the amazingly beautiful Fountains Abbey, while, at the same time, they gave us an idea of the splendid type the Yorkshire Single Taxer is!

In Birmingham we saw the family of the dearly beloved Thos. F. Walker.

To my deep regret we were unable to accept an invitation to visit Col. and Mrs. Josiah Wedgewood but we did go for the week-end to the delightful home of Ex-Bailie Peter Burt near Glasgow. There, on Sunday afternoon we met, over the tea-cup, a few of the enlightened from that wide awake group of Scotch Single Taxers.

I was amazed and delighted to find the wide spread recognition of Henry George as a writer and thinker in England. So much better is he known there than in his own country! Everyone there seemed to have read him or at least to have heard of him. I had a long talk with a little old cobbler in the "smallest shoe shop in London." After rather skillful manoeuvring on my part, our conversation carried us to the discussion of the Taxation of Land Values.

"That's the idea of Henry George!" said the shoemaker. "I've always wanted to read his book." (Next day he had one.)

At a luncheon at Lady Nancy Astor's, I sat beside Lord Robert Cecil.

"Henry George—of course I've read his books—but a long time ago. Rather radical, aren't they?"

"Rather conservative," I replied "if one understands the real meaning of the term 'private property.'"

While he, busy man that he is, might not feel he has time to read 568 pages of economics, he perhaps will take time for 214 pages so I shall send him a copy of the abridgement of *Progress and Poverty*. I had given my last copy to Lady Astor—who said it was a book she had long wanted to read.

But it was on the continent that I got my biggest thrill and not from already made Single Taxers but from potential ones. At Geneva there are groups of students old and young who are endeavoring to understand and bring about peaceful international relations. One of these groups is the College federation under the able guidance of A. E. Zimmermann. Here I met youngsters from America, England, Germany, France, Denmark, Poland, Sweden, Japan, India, etc., etc., while unfortunately no one that I talked to seemed to be an out and out Single Taxer—they are all groping for a solution to the war problem and hoping to find a way to bring about a proper economic adjustment. I sowed a few seeds there and am now sending across to some of these boys, copies of the *Abridgement*. I am more firmly convinced than ever that *we must get hold of the young, groping, flexible minds*. We have simply got to catch 'em while they're young—and learn 'em in the way they should go—and as soon as I get rested up from this holiday trip—I intend to roll up my sleeves and go to it!

I thought I was a free trader when I left these shores—but now that I've returned I'm a *ferocious* one. The customs business is so SILLY that I wonder when we will ever grow up and develop a sense of humor! But it took all my own sense of humor to prevent me from growing belligerent on the N. Y. dock, when, after declaring my own purchases and paying a heavy duty on the same, I saw passengers whom I knew to be Protectionists, and who had bought five times what I had, sail by the customs officials without paying one cent of fine! Golly! Los Angeles, Calif. ANNA GEORGE de MILLE

TAXATION AND THE FARMER

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas had an article on taxation entitled "Overtaxing the Farmer" in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of August 7. After discussing the findings of a taxation survey made by the United States Department of Agriculture in Tipton, Miami, and Monroe counties of Indiana he declares that "virtually every survey made anywhere shows that an unjust share of the country's burden of taxes is being carried by agriculture and that this has been increasing." He then says that taxes per acre on farm real estate have increased 159% in Kansas from 1910 to 1923 while selling value has advanced only 35%, that taxes on farm lands and farm property are 140% higher throughout the United States than in 1914 while the selling value of farm products has increased less than 60%. He makes no attempt however to show just what percent of the increase in taxes is borne by the land and what percent is borne by the buildings and other improvements.

Now a man who is vitally interested in agriculture and rural conditions of life, as we assume Senator and Editor Capper is, ought to have a pretty thorough understanding of the underlying causes of this unjust burden on the farmer. But has he? He admits that the present system of taxation is unfair. He says that the farmer can not "pass on" his taxes as the merchant does by adding them to the price of the goods but never a word about the landlord who passes his taxes on to the merchant and to the farmer as well as to the ultimate consumer, in increased rents.

He asserts that we have allowed an inefficient and destructive system of taxation to become firmly rooted in American life. What does he consider an equitable taxation system? Merely one based upon the axiom that "taxes should be levied according to ability to pay." He proposes such taxes as a tax on gasoline, a personal property tax, a

gross production tax on oils and minerals, a tax on non-essentials such as tobacco and commercialized entertainments, and a state income tax.

His remedy then is to relieve the farmer of an unjust share of taxes by levying more taxes, all of which will fall upon the farmer as much as on anyone else. Tobacco is taxed already so we may assume that the Senator means additional taxes laid by the State. If such is his idea then two items that are very much used by farmers will cost more to the farmers, that is, the weed, and gas for the tractor, Ford, and gas engine. How in the name of common sense will the farmer receive any benefit from the means proposed? The Senator admits that we must meet the question squarely because taxation is one of the great economic problems of the United States, but he shows clearly that with all his knowledge of farmers' problems he is all at sea as to the remedy for the wrong he condemns. Is it possible that he has never studied the principles of the Single Tax? Or is he just unwilling to know the truth?

He closes his article with a plea for economy in government and a demand that taxation be distributed according to ability to pay. What a howl he would set up if a tradesman used that idea in charging his customers. It is about time that we began to revise our opinions of certain Senators from the West who up to now have been posing as citadels of liberal thought.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

JOHN LUXTON.

KNOWLEDGE THAT UNFITS FOR "PUBLIC SERVICE."

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

How true it is, that knowledge of the Single Tax unfits a man for public service. More truth, as you say, than La Follette ever dreamed.

Many is the time I have thought to myself, "What would I do if I were elected to such-and-such an office on a regular ticket?" I have felt almost foolish at the thought. I would be so out of place that I wouldn't know what to do. My knowledge surely has unfitted me for that kind of public service. But how different it would be to be elected on a Single Tax ticket! Union, N. Y.

C. LEBARON GOELLER.

THE NEED OF FLYING FIELDS.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Commander John Rogers, with whom I was in constant service night and day before he left on the trans-Pacific Aviation flight to the Hawaiian Islands, told me before he left that I had done my part to make his flight a success, and I replied, "I wish you and all the officers and personnel great good luck." As I write the U. S. Navy and Army Aviation Radio Headquarters here in the Appraisal Building here have no news of the missing men. I trust the next few hours will find them located—and safe.

All cities need "flying fields" but many report that the state of their finances "will not permit them to meet the almost prohibitory cost of the land desired nor approach the required land rental of the land-owners." How this barrier is erected against every department and activity of civilized life! Los Angeles, Calif.

WALDO WERNICKE.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

MISS LILLIAN CARPENTER, sister of our own Corinne Carpenter, was present and gave an organ recital at the National Association convention of organists which met in Cleveland on August 3.

THE *Wide World* recently published as its leading story, "The Land Sharks," by Hugh Rane. It is significant that writers of fiction are turning to this topic for material.