

As to your statement that the Committee of 48 knows perfectly well that the Single Tax is the only just system of taxation and that therefore we should say so and not lend our support to treating any other tax question seriously, permit me to say that the unwillingness of many Single Taxers to treat anything seriously except their own pet hobby is their greatest handicap. Any sincere Single Taxer will admit that the Single Tax in its entirety cannot be established and has no chance of being established for generations to come.

To work in the direction of Single Tax is one thing but, in the meantime, to deny that any other tax question should receive serious consideration simply shows a lack of courage and unwillingness to face present-day issues in an intelligent humanitarian manner and indicates an attitude of "the public be damned," at least until the Single Taxers can have their own way, which is neither statesmanlike nor justified.

J. A. H. HOPKINS.

REPLY

We have called this reply to Mr. Hopkins "A Necessary But Disagreeable Task" because we like him and believe in the sincerity of his intentions. We regret the necessity of replying because the time we have might better be given to constructive work than to controversy that must be largely wasted so far as the great public is concerned. Mr. Hopkins, however, has made the task necessary.

First we deny, and we think our readers will agree, that there is anything in the article which is "scurrilous," or that can properly be called "mudslinging." Mr. Hopkins is not ignorant of the use and meaning of words. It is neither mudslinging nor scurrilous to charge with ignorance a man who shows a lack of understanding on any subject. Most men are ignorant of economic knowledge, and if such ignorance includes the Committee of 48, to call attention to it is to render a distinct public service. This is almost imperative in view of the fact that they occupy the position of public educators. This they do by virtue of the leadership to which they aspire. Because of this we have a right to judge them by the most exacting standards.

The statement that we have perpetrated a deliberate falsehood in accusing them of lacking the courage of their conviction, is a more serious accusation. Let us see if our assertion is warranted. It seems to us that we must choose one or other of these explanations—either they are ignorant of the subject of taxation, or possessing some knowledge on the subject are unwilling to stigmatize a proposed method of taxation for what it is—a contemptible swindle, advocated by men who want to shift the burden from their own shoulders to the backs of the wage worker and housewife. To make the operation more complete they omit from the imposition of the Sales Tax all stocks, bonds and securities, in which their class (we are speaking now of Jules Bache, Otto Kahn and others) are peculiarly interested.

We are violating no confidence when we say that Mr. Hopkins confessed to us that he was a Single Taxer. Not

that this means anything. Mr. Hopkins probably thinks he is. But so many people nowadays say they are Single Taxers without meaning anything in particular that we are becoming somewhat critical. But if Mr. Hopkins is a Single Taxer he knows a better substitute for the Sales Tax. But he says nothing about it. Even in the platform of the Committee of 48 a glimpse of it appears. And Mr. Hopkins has attracted around him as his political associates quite a number of well known Single Taxers. We would like to ask if these gentlemen were consulted before this Questionnaire was sent out? If not, why not? What is the use of having associates without association and comparing of notes?

We find that this Questionnaire is sent out by a new committee of the Committee of 48, and that they are called the National Bureau of Information and Education, with J. A. H. Hopkins as chairman of an Examining Committee, and two other names, F. A. Pattison and Samuel Sweet. We learn from the Questionnaire that a Sales Tax or "turn-over tax is advocated by many well informed thinkers." And then we are told that securities would not be liable to this tax, "for the simple reason that business could not stand this." This is practically an endorsement of the Sales Tax and not a Questionnaire at all.

And therefore we repeat that the committee sending out this paper are ignorant or worse. The "worse" involves the alternative that knowing the truth they lack the courage of their convictions. The suspicion that they want to draw a red herring across the trail will obtrude in spite of the effort to keep down the suspicion.

Again we ask, what are these Single Taxers doing on the Committee of 48 among those who are demonstrably so sadly in need of information that they start a nation-wide symposium on the Sales Tax?

It is all vastly amusing. If they know so little of the subject that they cannot make up their minds about it (for the Sales Tax is after all a very simple matter) then they are surely in need of education, and are a committee of 48 futilities.

Mr. Hopkins, confessedly a Single Taxer, as we have said, now calls the Single Tax a "hobby," and then gives it as his opinion that the Single Tax cannot be established for "generations to come." He says that is the opinion of Single Taxers. We are curious to know if the Single Taxers associated with him on the Committee of 48 have told him so. We are not a prophet, and we do not know if it is so. But we do know this. If those who call themselves Single Taxers do not help to make and keep it an issue it will then be postponed for a longer time than that indicated by Mr. Hopkins. But even so, while we are waiting for the Single Tax why should it be necessary to resort to a swindle like the Sales Tax?

We respectfully submit that the concluding paragraph of Mr. Hopkins' letter reveals a state of mind that is not reassuring as to his intelligence. To urge that tax questions other than the Single Tax should be faced in a "humanitarian" spirit would sound like snivelling hypocrisy in the

mouth of a Jules Bache. In the mouth of Mr. Hopkins it has no pleasant sound. For this juxtaposition of the Sales Tax with the word "humanitarian" is an incongruous association that is probably typical of the confusion that reigns at headquarters where the Committee of 48 do their thinking.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER.

The Relation between Private Land Monopoly and War

WE have all heard many so-called economists speak of "over-production," and that it is necessary for us to obtain foreign markets to dispose of our surplus products in order to maintain "prosperity." How is it that we have anything to be sold abroad when so many of our industrious people are in want of the necessities of life? Has the fact that men have not access to the land and other natural resources on equal terms anything to do with this accumulation of surplus products of labor?

So long as men are prevented from having access to Nature's bounty except on the condition that they surrender a large portion of what they earn to the landlord they are forced away from the land into some other employment which they think more profitable. Thus many men, women and children are employed in the manufacture of articles which they may need themselves but cannot afford to buy, and as they make more than the rich can use there arises this so-called "over-production" of these articles, which is really "under-consumption."

To keep money in circulation it is necessary to induce the rich to part with some of their money, but as a well-to-do family uses but little more of the necessities of life than a poor family, it is necessary to create artificial wants by encouraging the manufacture of all kinds of luxuries and unnecessary "gimcracks" like expensive clothes, jewelry, toys and other useless things. This finally results in an "over-production" of these articles, so that the surplus must find an outlet in foreign markets. The production of these useless things represents an enormous economic loss to all countries engaged in their manufacture, for evidently something is wrong when in any country a few of its citizens are over-supplied with luxuries while the many are in want of the necessities of life. This system, however, is encouraged under the foolish idea that it "gives men work," while, as a matter of fact, from an economic point of view, these men might just as well be employed moving a pile of stones from one side of the road to the other, back and forth, instead of breaking the stones to make a better road. It is not work that men need, but that they should get what they earn from doing useful work.

As this same system of forcing men away from land and Nature's bounty goes on all over the world, surplus products of the same kind are created in other countries, and soon it becomes necessary to secure foreign markets, either by grabbing land in the shape of colonies in foreign parts, or else by securing a "sphere of influence," or "mandate."

To do this it becomes necessary to have a Navy and an Army, and all the money and labor spent on these is another economic waste on a still grander scale, but this method of disposing of surplus products can give no ultimate relief and will only result in a bitter commercial competition that will end in war, for with modern machinery surplus products will be accumulated much faster than the foreign markets can absorb them, but until this point is reached there will be more or less of a "boom" in trade and in consequence of which ground rents will steadily rise until finally all markets become glutted, manufacturers cannot produce at a profit, wages are reduced, shops shut down, men are thrown out of employment, and we have one of those well known financial depressions, strikes and riots take place and the Army is needed to preserve "law and order," the law made and the order established by special privilege.

This special privilege, which is international in its scope and knows no flag or country, soon scents danger to itself, but instead of removing the cause of the trouble at home by removing the barriers which now prevent man from gaining access to natural resources on equal terms to all, the cry is raised, "An enemy abroad has done this, our foreign trade is in danger," and to keep the attention of the people away from a recognition of the true remedy, this special privilege, whose interests are identical in all countries and opposed to those of the producers, does not hesitate to plunge headlong into a foreign war in order to prevent necessary reforms at home, and under the cover of the excitement and confusion of war there is little wonder that the Lords of the Earth and Finance emerge from the war more firmly seated in the saddle than ever before and more strongly entrenched and fortified in all the strategic economic positions in the world.

War is the price the world has always paid for special privilege and the price it shall always pay, while the special privilege for which this senseless, wasteful, inhuman and bloody price is paid, is the robbery of the masses and their enslavement by the private appropriation of ground rents which belong of right in the public treasury by a law of Nature, just as true and universal in the economic world as Newton's law of gravitation is true and universal in the physical world, and any so-called civilization that defies this law must sooner or later face the sentence "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." SINBAD THE SAILOR.

LABOR demands, too, are more and more aimed at the fundamentals of production and trade, involving a radical change in the relation of mankind to the land, and in labor circles considerable interest is being taken in the International Single Tax Conference to be held at Ruskin College, Oxford, in August. Lloyd George's pre-war efforts for the taxation of land values did much to popularize the Single Tax, whether he liked it or no.

—*Commerce and Finance*, N. Y. City.