

two poles of society further and further apart. Does not this make palaces unearned at one end of society and slums unmerited at the other end?

While one end of society is thus getting wealth without work, must not the other end do all the work and lose the wealth. Does not this divide society into oppressors and oppressed, instead of brothers rendering service for service?

So long as we allow people to appropriate that peculiar value, which comes to the land from the presence of society, is not this part able to enjoy all the benefits of society without any of its burdens? Does not this mean that we impose all the taxation on industry, and at the same time compel the industrious classes to support the luxuries of the palace.

In the adjustment of taxation should we not place the burdens on the value of the land so as to remove the possibility of the land being used for extortion, and so that every one will be induced to do his best with his opportunities for the benefit of his fellows. Should we not strive to establish the relation of benefit for benefit, and remove for ever the relation of oppressor and oppressed?

—W. A. DOUGLAS.

The Rent Question Again to the Fore

THE rent question is again a topic of great interest in Washington. The Rent Commission, which was created during the late World war, when the influx of population caused crowded housing conditions, has been put out of action by the Supreme Court; new aggression by the landlords is again causing trouble; the President of the United States has recommended that some action be taken to curb the *merciless profiteers*; and hearings are being conducted before a joint committee of Congress to determine the cause of increased rentals and to provide a remedy.

The rent question, like every other question which has to be settled, must be analyzed and perfectly understood (diagnosed, as the physician would say) before an effective remedy can be prescribed, and the rent question is one of the oldest questions in the world, for, although mankind was not always conscious of this question, it dates back to the time when man first began building huts to live in. The rent question involves the driving of a bargain in which one man has something to sell which another wishes to buy; but in order that this bargain shall be free and fair there must be freedom of choice, freedom of action, on both sides. Now in the rent question, as it exists today in Washington and everywhere else, this freedom of choice on both sides does not exist. Some men, the landlords (Lords of the land), have something to sell which they may or may not sell, as suits their fancy; but the tenant *must buy*. There is therefore injected into this bargain an element of inequality, so that it is *not free*, and this element of in-

equality is caused by the recognition of private property in land. Now the rent question, involving as it does the question of private property in land, cannot be properly and finally settled until the land ownership question, which injects the element of inequality and monopoly into the rent question, is itself solved. That this question of land ownership is today a question at all is a *marvel of the ages* and a *crowning shame and disgrace* to our civilization, for this question of the ownership of land was settled four thousand years ago by the highest tribunal of which we can possibly conceive, namely, *God himself*, when he gave the law, the only authoritative law there ever can be on this question, to Moses on Mount Sinai, in these words: "*The land shall not be sold forever (in perpetuity) for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.*" (Lev. XXV. 23). Now if we accept this decision of the highest tribunal of which we can ever have any knowledge, and thereby eliminate from the bargain between owner and tenant the element of land ownership, we reach a plane of bargaining on which both owner and tenant are free and equal. The Single Tax is a *name* applied to an *idea*, which is the modern scientific interpretation of the law, or decision, handed down by God to Moses, whereby the element of monopoly is eliminated from land ownership, and the rent question is forever solved. This law is a clear concise statement which draws a line of demarcation between what logically constitutes property and what constitutes nature, between what a man may properly own and what he may not own because God owns it.

In application the Single Tax is childlike in its simplicity for it is placed in full and complete operation by simply exempting from taxation all property (improvements, that which is the work of men's hands), and taking over for public uses the entire value of land due to population. The bargain between owner and tenant then becomes a bargain for the improvements, (house or other buildings and their appurtenances and fixtures), without regard to the land on which these stand, which land is an inalienable inheritance of all the people from God, who owns it because He made it.

Now violation of law and court decisions implies a penalty, even though that law has only human authority; but violation of God's Law incurs a penalty which cannot be evaded, for God's Law is automatic in its action and carries with it its own peculiar and relentless sting. We learn from holy writ that God's chosen people were rebellious and stiff necked, and that they refused to obey His Law; and we are told that because they disobeyed the *land law* (the law of the Sabbaths) they were carried captive to Babylon for seventy years until the law of the Sabbaths was fulfilled, and then scattered over the whole face of the earth. This should have served as a warning of the penalty to all nations and peoples which

must come to all those who refuse to be obedient to that law; but has it? Every nation and every civilization whose name is found in history, but whose place knows it no more, has gone down because of violation of God's Law, for this violation is *sin* and the wages of sin is *death*, both to the nation and the individual; and the nations that survive today will go the way of the others unless they repent; for "not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled," even the law which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. "The land shall not be sold for ever (in perpetuity) for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." —HENRY L. PECKHAM.

The Schalkenbach Bequest

ROBERT SCHALKENBACH, whose death was chronicled in the November-December issue of LAND AND FREEDOM, has made munificent provision for the cause which enlisted the activity and devotion of so great a part of his life. The wording of the bequest in his will drawn up by his attorney, Frederick C. Leubuscher, is as follows:

"Being firmly convinced that the principles expounded by Henry George in his immortal book entitled *Progress and Poverty* will, if enacted into law, give equal opportunity to all and tend to the betterment of the individual and of society by the abolition of involuntary poverty and its attendant evils, I give, devise and bequeath all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, including lapsed legacies, unto John H. Allen, James R. Brown, E. Yancey Cohen, Richard Eyre, Walter Fairchild, Bolton Hall, Charles O'Connor Hennessey, John J. Hopper, Charles H. Ingersoll, Frederick C. Leubuscher, Joseph Dana Miller, John Moody, John J. Murphy, Arthur C. Pleydell, Louis F. Post, Lawson Purdy, Charles T. Root, George L. Rusby, Albert E. Schalkenbach, Samuel Seabury, Frank Stephens, and to such of them as may survive me and consent to serve, in trust nevertheless, to expend the same and any accretions thereof, in such amounts, at such times and in such manner as to the corporation hereinafter directed to be formed may seem best for teaching, expounding and propagating the ideas of Henry George as set forth in his said book and in his other books, especially what are popularly known as the Single Tax on land values and international free trade; and I direct that as soon after my decease as may be practicable, the said persons, or as many as may be willing to serve, shall form or cause to be formed a corporation under the laws of the State of New York, or if necessary, by act of the legislature of the State of New York, for the purpose of more effectively carrying out the above objects of this trust and shall transfer to such corporation all the moneys they may have received from my estate for said purposes. I direct that the Board of Trustees or directors of such corporation shall consist of twenty-one (21) persons, and that the

above named persons shall constitute the members of the first board, the places of those refusing or unable to serve to be filled by those consenting to serve, such board having the power of filling vacancies therein caused by refusal, resignation or death. Such board of directors may pay to one or more of the directors such compensation for services rendered to the corporation as it deems best. I also direct that the charter of such corporation shall empower it to receive gifts, bequests and devises for the purposes aforesaid."

This declaration which is at once a bequest and a profession of his abiding faith in the principles in which he believed, may serve as a model for similar bequests. It commits the trustees of this fund to no half-hearted acceptance of the principles of "that immortal work, *Progress and Poverty*." Robert Schalkenbach did not minimize the doctrine while living; and there is no uncertainty in the message that he passes on to us now that he is gone.

It is true that he differed with some of us as to methods, and differed strongly, for his was a positive nature. But he was large minded and tolerant; where differences of opinion existed they were free from personal bias, so far as he was concerned. He conceded the right of Single Taxers to work each in his own way, and he helped even the activities with which he was not wholly in sympathy. He claimed no infallibility for his opinions, and respected the convictions of others while holding tenaciously to his own.

It is characteristic of him that he should have selected as trustees to administer this fund men who have worked in different ways for the cause; they are representative of all the groups between whom sharp divisions of opinion and methods have arisen. It was his design to bring them together for joint effort in the common cause; the nomination of the trustees so selected was his great gesture of love and benediction to those who had worked with him, and at other times apart from him, since the days of '86.

All those designated as trustees by Mr. Schalkenbach have accepted. The place left vacant by the death of John J. Hopper will be filled by a committee to whom nomination has been assigned. A meeting of the Board has been held, fifteen of the twenty named being present. This is an augury that gives assurance of cooperation in the days to come.

It would be strange indeed if the great ideal Mr. Schalkenbach had in mind were unworkable. At all events, each member of the board will feel the obligation binding upon him to work for those things with which all may agree, in harmony with the spirit of the declaration as contained in the will. Without asking any one of them to abandon the work he is doing, without asking him to sacrifice a jot or tittle of his convictions as to method, it will surely be possible to unite on some programme in which all will agree. If not, then we are wholly unworthy of the truth it is given us to see.