

Located there the home owner will find that he can, if he will, raise many garden products, but he will also find that as no land is kept back from use by land speculators the farms and truck gardens will be much nearer the users of their products. He will find that he can readily and cheaply supply himself with these necessities, all of which have been raised on land that does not need to pay extortionate rent to land owners.

He will buy whatever he needs from stores which pay very moderate rents and no taxes. What a delightful country it would be if such a condition of life for all could be attained. Is it not worth while to spend a few minutes to see if it is possible that it may?

The world is a great storehouse of natural resources useful to man. There is enough and to spare for all. Fertile soil, timber, stone, minerals, oil, but all monopolized by land owners who exclude all others but themselves from the possessions of these good gifts of God to men.

It is not the niggardliness of nature that makes life hard and uncertain, but the folly and selfishness of man.

For is it not foolish to take our common inheritance, the earth, the prime necessity of our existence, and let a part of our people own it and permit them to give it to their heirs and assigns forever and make all other tenants and wanderers over the earth resting only where the services they may be permitted to perform obtain for them a temporary home?

Is it not foolish to gather together in cities, to work in offices, factories and mills, making and distributing useful products, and to pay out wages and profits to idlers for permission to use the land made valuable by our own work?

But it is not only the foolishness but the selfishness of the people that permits these conditions. Land owners desire a continuation of their monopoly of land. This is understandable. Notice how they avoid any reference to the Single Tax, especially when remedies are proposed for social troubles. Interrogate the leaders of public opinion, our social, business and political leaders, and see how unanimously and with what resignation they assure us that these troubles are beyond them and therefore unsolvable. And so they are to many of them without doubt, for all knowledge of the subject of the distribution of wealth is denied them from the fact that they have never taken the trouble to learn anything about it. Their whole attention is centred on the problem of how to get theirs. They are familiar with the phrase Capital and Labor, and display their total ignorance of economic thought every time they use it. For there are three elements in production, not two, namely: Labor, Capital and Land.

Labor is the human element.

Capital is the wealth produced by labor and used to produce more wealth.

Land is the gift of God to the human race. The natural element on which man expends his labor and from which he produces wealth. To ignore land is to ignore God!

To treat it as private property is to ignore His law, for He has said: 'The land shall not be sold forever.'

As a protest against present conditions and as the expression of a desire that our legislative body in Trenton shall, during the coming winter, seriously consider the relation of the people to the land, we ask your vote for the Single Tax Party candidates."

Look! Listen! Shudder! The Tort Feasor!

All you in California, who'd take the rent of land,
Who prate about the rights of Man, now look and understand.
A Mr. Ralston tells us to eschew such sort of stuff.
Go leave the landlord with his mug deep in the public trough;
And let the little children starve, and let the state decay,
And let the speculator go unhindered on his way.
For if his game you seek to block, beware of dire things!
Of old the Pterodactyl flew, a shape with dreadful wings.
But there is something worse than this in its ferocity—
No Boojum and no Snark is half so terrible as he.
And Mr. Ralston tells us, "Look, listen and beware!
The tort feasor is after you—he'll get you by the hair."
And who is Mr. Ralston who utters this complaint?
He knows a lot of things that are and then some things that ain't.
He says a very solemn thing in such a solemn way—
Perhaps its mostly hokum—that's not for us to say
But all the burden of his song appears to be about
Is—some dreadful fate will catch you

if
you
don't
watch
out!

THE EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:—

We are informed that notwithstanding many defeats, diminishing favor from the voters as measured by percentages; growing distrust on the part of the electorate of the Single Tax idea—as so many on the ground allege—the Great Adventure proposition is again to be pressed upon the voters of California.

Stated in a few words this proposition contemplates that thru taxation the State of California shall take for public purposes at once, or practically so, the entire rental value of the land of California. I undertake to say that such a scheme from purely a Single Tax standpoint, whether immediate or spread over a number of years, is just about as immoral as our present system of taxation, and would not advance the cause in which we believe.

Why do I say this? Let us analyze the situation.

Land values to the economist represent the sum of the benefit arising to the community from the growth of civilization, including all advantages accruing from the existence of city, county, State and national governments. As the common product of innumerable agencies, no one agency of government has a right to more than its share, ordinarily to be measured by its needs economically determined.

This rule the Great Adventure absolutely violates. Its bald idea is that the State of California for itself and for its agencies shall take to itself this entire community value.

Conceive the State of California a self-governing island,

independent of our national government or other intimate association with the United States, what land value would it possess? Cut off from its relatively untrameled business intercourse with the rest of the United States, perhaps with a tariff levelled against her, with customs and other barriers at her frontiers, with any permanent immigrant compelled to forsake his country and leave his flag behind him, land values would sink, who can say how low? Certainly fifty per cent. would be gone. Thus we may reasonably believe that the existence of California under the National Union accounts for not less than one half of her land values.

The Great Adventure proposition thus resolves itself into this: Not alone shall California take for the use of the State the land values the State has created, but it shall take the other and perhaps the larger part created by the United States. Poverty is not properly to be abolished by taking that to which you have no title.

It may be said that the California landowner has no right to the part which properly belongs to the United States and that the State can well take it. The answer is not so simple. As between a landowner who has not created a value and a State which has not created but takes it from the National Government, there are no contrasting moralities. Both are wrong. Both are immoral.

But you say: Even so, less harm is done by the taking of this land value by the State than by leaving it in the hands of the landowner. There is a legal doctrine that there can be no contribution between tort-feasors,—in effect that the court when all are wrong will not and cannot admeasure between them. So it is between the landlord and the State in the supposed instance. There is no court of ethics to admeasure their respective degrees of guilt for taking what neither owns.

It cannot be argued that no harm will result if the State does take that to which it has no title, for the landowner was in essence doing no more. Suppose the State to receive, as it would under the Great Adventure plan, twice the revenue to which it has a clear title. Will it divide the surplus between the people, and if so on what principle? When the time comes, as it must, when this distribution ceases, will it have no accounting to make either in one sense to its citizens or in another sense to the remaining citizens of the United States, whose wealth it has disposed of? Will its wrong doing have no retroactive effect?

Or suppose the State expends in public works or public enterprises the surplus moneys to which it has no right, are its difficulties to be any less or materially changed in character?

But what has California a right to take from its landlords? There is one certain minimum. This is, enough economically to carry on the operations of its necessary agencies. The maximum California should take we simply do not know and cannot answer today. It may be no more

than the minimum. Only practical experience after we have taken the minimum will determine. Really in a practical sense we do not know the meaning of taking "all rental value." This represents a vague idea which will grow in clearness doubtless as we approach it. At present it is a mental abstraction perhaps never capable of absolute determination, and only offering a working hypothesis argumentatively.

Perhaps all the past eight years the voters of California have in their souls felt that the taking of all land value by the State for itself was ethically and morally as sound as the thing it was designed to supplant. May not this account for the growing unpopularity of the Great Adventure scheme?
—JACKSON H. RALSTON.

REPLY

We publish this letter partly in justification. Not in justification of Mr. Ralston, but of ourselves and the REVIEW. When our readers wonder at the sharp criticism of former "leaders" that appear in these columns we want them to have before them such self-revelations as this communication from Mr. Ralston. We want them to feel the same indignation we feel, and where they are inclined to condemn us for too great a severity of criticism to wonder rather at the veil of charity with which we sometimes seek to cover, because of old associations and old friendships, those who are betraying a great principle.

Mr. Ralston has long been identified with the Henry George movement. He was a member of the Fels Fund Commission. Poor Joe Fels! This Commission Mr. Fels organized and financed with the declared intention of "getting the Single Tax in some one state in five years." It would have been a shock to him to know that one of the influential members of his Commission was opposed to getting the Single Tax in any one state in any number of years!

We have listened to a variety of arguments against permitting the voters of California to express their opinion on the Single Tax at the polls. First, a campaign of education was necessary before submitting it—just how long a period of education was left delightfully indefinite. Next, that the affirmative vote had declined; next, that a measure for local option had received many more votes; next, that the voters were frightened about Russia, and that therefore it was impolitic at this time to tell them that the land was the gift of God to all mankind; again, that Luke North (lonely and heroic figure!) was not immaculate in his personal habits and attire. The last argument was profoundly effective with the ladies of both sexes in Los Angeles and New York. As an argument against the taking of the full land rent in Oregon it will apply quite as well, for the equally heroic and self-sacrificing leader of the Oregon forces, J. R. Hermann, is no Beau Brummell either.

But while these singularly forcible arguments against the resumption of Man's birthright in the State of California followed one another in rapid succession, it was