

## Open Letter to President Roosevelt

JOHN C. ROSE, OF PITTSBURGH, HAS ADDRESSED THE FOLLOWING  
LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT.

AS a good and faithful Democrat, you are no doubt a firm believer in, or at least an admirer of, the ideas advanced by Thomas Jefferson.

Permit me, therefore, to call your attention to several ideas which this eminent statesman and thinker firmly believed in.

In a letter written in Paris to James Madison, Sept. 6, 1789 (in Ford's "Jefferson's Writings," Vol. VI. pp. 3-4) Jefferson says:

"I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living; that the dead have neither power nor right over it. . . . This principle that the earth belongs to the living and not to the dead is of very extensive application and consequences in every country."

And to another letter written at Fontainebleau to Madison's father, Oct. 28, 1785, (Ibid, Vol. VIII p. 196) in which the great exponent of democracy says:

"Whenever there are in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for men to labor and live on. If, for the encouragement of industry, we allow it to be appropriated, we must take care that other employment be provided for those excluded from the appropriation. If we do not, the fundamental right to labor on the earth is denied."

The implications contained in these two extracts are clear enough. Moreover, we have almost the identical conditions which Jefferson referred to. We have both "uncultivated lands and unemployed poor." Conservatively speaking, at least half of our country is held idle and uncultivated, and we have at least 13,000,000 unemployed.

Jefferson lays down the rule of justice and equity, if not of law, that if government permits the monopolization of land and natural resources, and the people suffer unemployment as a consequence, as they most certainly do, then it is the duty of government to provide work for the expropriated masses. When government fails in this sacred duty, according to Jefferson, "the fundamental right to labor the earth returns to the unemployed."

You are, I realize, making an effort to provide work for the expropriated masses. But since you propose to defray the cost of employment out of taxes levied upon industry and business, you are thereby helping to impoverish labor. If you must give employment, or a dole, you should defray the cost from the unearned rent of land. This is the only sound way of charitably helping the poor.

But the natural and just way of helping the unemployed

is, as Jefferson suggests, to restore the earth to the people, for employment is ultimately nothing but the application directly or indirectly of labor to land.

By the phrase, "restoring the earth to the people," is not meant sending the people back to the land, or dividing the earth into parcels. It is only necessary to socialize the ground rent, to be used for all public purposes, and to abolish all taxes.

If you would carry out Jefferson's ideas regarding the use of the earth, you would do much toward materializing his dreams of an ideal democracy.

## Don't Laugh!

THE most striking evidence that has come to our attention of popular realization of a change in the old order is the following item, which appeared in this newspaper's columns of church news:

"Prayer for more bountiful crops for the farmer, usual to Episcopal services on Rogation Sunday, was modified throughout the Ohio diocese. Officials felt the appeal would not be in accord with the government policy of limiting crop production. So prayer was offered instead for improved means of produce distribution."

Are we going to see the time when the President of the United States will call on us to give thanks the last Thursday in November because the harvests were not so bountiful as usual?

*Cleveland Press.*

## Answers A Popular Need

HENRY GEORGE seems to answer a popular need today. The campus economists and the institute statisticians who have charted and formulated and made inexorable economic laws for years and years are no longer trusted by the man in the street. He knows that these academists have ignored human needs. On the other hand, the inductive and descriptive methods of laboratory science have become so deeply rooted in the practical American nature that the same man in the same street cannot help distrusting the pure emotionalists, the priests with vague utopias to offer mankind. Henry George belongs to neither category.

Writing of George in a preface to "Significant Paragraphs From 'Progress and Poverty,'" John Dewey said that "it is the thorough fusion of insight into actual facts and forces, with recognition of the bearing upon what makes human life worth living, that constitutes Henry George one of the world's great social philosophers." And Prof. Dewey's words express the spirit in which Prof. Geiger's admirable biography, critique and history of Henry George is written.

—WILLIAM SOSKIN, in *New York Evening Post*.

## Not of the Schools

IS a life of reading and writing, enlivened by organized athletics—a life in which all your bills are paid and everything is done for you, from making your bed to cooking your meals—precisely a life that develops the moral stamina and the mental hardihood of the pioneer? Somehow, one seems to remember that of half-a-dozen world-notable men thus far produced by this American Republic Emerson and Thoreau were in disfavor with their esteemed Alma Mater, William James lacked a college degree, as did Henry George; and Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman attained their respective summits without recourse to any institutions of higher learning whatsoever.

Editorial (Uncle Dudley) in *Boston Globe*.