

Henry George's Powers of Oratory

AT last, a stir at the back of the platform announced the approach of the speaker. Three or four men suddenly appeared from some concealed door and entered upon the stage. One of them, a short man with a full red beard, we recognized at once—"The Prophet of San Francisco" as he was then called (in fine derision) was not a noticeable man till he removed his hat. Then the fine line of his face from the crown of his head to the tip of his chin printed itself ineffaceably upon our minds. The dome-like brow was that of one highly specialized on lines of logic and sympathy. There was also something in the tense poise of his body which foretold the orator.

Impatiently the audience endured the speakers who prepared the way and then, finally, George stepped forward, but prolonged waves of cheering again and again prevented his beginning. Thereupon he started pacing to and fro along the edge of the platform, his big head thrown back, his small hands clenched as if in anticipation of coming battle. He no longer appeared small. His was the master mind of that assembly.

His first words cut across the air with singular calmness. Coming after the applause, following the nervous movement of a moment before, his utterance was surprisingly cold, masterful, and direct. Action had condensed into speech. Heat was transformed into light.

His words were orderly and well chosen. They had precision and grace as well as power. He spoke as other men write, with style and arrangement. His address could have been printed word for word as it fell from his lips. This self-mastery, this graceful lucidity of utterance combined with a personal presence distinctive and dignified, reduced even his enemies to respectful silence. His altruism, his sincere pity and his hatred of injustice sent me away in the mood of a disciple.—HAMLIN GARLAND, in "A Son of the Middle Border."

Sixth of Income Devoted to Taxes

ROGER BABSON, well known statistician, makes the following statement:

"One hour and twenty minutes of each business day—or one entire day a week—is demanded of every able bodied person in the United States to maintain government," says Mr. Babson. "That is the lesson of a recent analysis showing that one-sixth of our national income goes for taxes, Federal, State and local. The amount divides almost equally between national taxation and the expenditure for State and local purposes.

What wonder living costs are high when this toll comes out ahead of the productive capacity for benefit of the community. The actual taxation does not tell the whole story. Costs of collection, particularly under our system of Federal

taxation, sometimes treble the amount actually received by the government.

Because any one individual does not see the tax collector, he thinks perhaps that he does not pay, but he does pay just the same. Taxation costs represent an item of overhead in everything that one buys, consumes, or uses in process of working up to a finished product. The tax burden is inevitable. There are a certain number of potential labor hours represented in the individuals making up any community. The number of these labor hours which it takes to protect his property, make safe his home and educate his children are just so much taken away from the possibility of establishing that surplus of wealth upon which the community thrives.

The truth of this situation was perfectly clear in the old days when every man in the community was called on for five days' work on the roads a year in lieu of taxes and when the 'night watch' was maintained by periodic service of the townsmen. How would you like to go out and patrol a police beat one day each week, year in and year out? Or how would you like to take your turn as a member of the fire department one day in every six? This would be our lot if we paid taxes in the old way today. Or, applying it to road work—nearly sixty days' service on the roads would be required instead of five."

There is no doubt that present taxes are excessive and that the cost of collection is far too high. It must be remembered, however, that it is cheaper for the community as a whole, and for each member of it, to "club together" as it were, and have such services as policing and road-building performed by those who put in their entire time at the task, than for each man to attempt to do his own policing and roadbuilding.

What Mr. Babson does not point out, is that to a considerable degree the value of such services as policing and roadbuilding, is now paid for twice by the "consumer;" once through the various direct and indirect taxes, and again in the form of rent to landowners. For the value of land (or its annual rental) is largely the result of the performance of public services for the occupiers of sites. The Single Tax proposes that the cost of such services be paid for once only, by a tax measured by the value of occupying the particular sites benefited by the service. Then all these other taxes could be abolished and labor would again be able to store up a surplus.

Must Get Back to the Land Question — Lloyd George

MR. JOHN PAUL, editor of *Land and Liberty*, writing to Mr. A. J. Moxham, of this city:

Lloyd George, as you say, has been put upon the mourners' bench. The other day he met a friend of ours—a Member of Parliament—in the lobby and in the course of conversation our friend said, "Well, nothing has been done and nothing can be done." Lloyd George said, "That's true; we must get back to the land question." "In what way?" he was asked. He straightened himself up, looked all round about him, and assuming a look of righteousness that is all his own, replied, "There is nothing for it but the taxation of land values."