

**ANSWER**—I do not favor the idea of setting aside certain classes of property to be taxed for certain purposes, as this would be unjust discrimination. Taking land values only will reduce the price of unused vacant land. The owners of same would be obliged to either cultivate their land or sell it to some one who would. If California would exempt from taxation all improvements on land and all kinds of personal property and place all the burden of taxation on land values it would, in my judgment, double the population of California in from three to five years. It is people that California wants—not idle acres.

**QUESTION**—Do you favor classifying property according to its earning ability and taxing it in proportion to that ability? Give reasons.

**ANSWER**—I favor classifying property according to its earning ability if by "property" the Commission means property in land earning ability as the real test of land values. Only 27% of the tillable land of the United States is farmed (Gov. Report). If that is true, and I do not question it, hardly fifteen to a possible twenty per cent. of the tillable land of California is farmed. The balance is held out of use for speculation. Were all of our taxes raised from land values, it would force this idle land into use.

**QUESTION**—Do you favor a system of indirect taxation for city and county governments, similar to that now used by the State? Give reasons.

**ANSWER**—I do not believe in indirect taxation for any purpose. Indirect taxation is a method by which the burden of the expense of government is placed upon the poor, "a system of getting the most feathers with the least squawking," because the average man does not know when or how he is being robbed by indirect taxation. When taxes are direct, the people know what they pay and why they pay it.

---

## TWO BLADES OF GRASS

(For the Review)

By GEORGE WHITE

There are two propositions, different and antagonistic, often presented to the farmers of the United States as desirable and to be adopted by those who work on farms and those who can affect legislation designed for the benefit of agriculturists. The first is that farmers should be more industrious, more skilful in their art, in order that production may at least be doubled—two blades of grass being grown where only one has previously appeared. The second is that farmers can and do already grow more than they can sell at a profit: that there is a manifest difficulty about marketing products; that, out of the final consumer's dollar, often only thirty-five cents is obtained by the producer. The first proposition is a favorite with the railroad people, interested in transportation. The second is stoutly maintained by many farm paper editors.

As to the first proposition it is apparent that it is for any community highly desirable that those who set themselves apart to render service by agricultural pursuits should be industrious and skilful. The larger the productive return for their efforts, the larger amount of products will there be for use. It is unthinkable that it would be good policy for farmers to be lazy, careless or lacking in skill. Moreover, whatever the general condition of farmers may be at any time and place, in regard to access to markets, cost of supplies and taxation, it is plain that that individual farmer who is the most industrious and skilful will have the best chance of being prosperous.

The second proposition is sound enough in itself, but there is one consideration which should not be lost sight of. Any improvement in marketing conditions, any increase generally in the proportion of the consumer's dollar which farmers can get, any general advantage which can come to farmers by means of legislation designed to assist in farm financing, must, by a natural law, finally tend to be swallowed up in land or location values. Good markets, prompt and full payment for crops, low interest rates on long time farm land loans—all will, as have the extensions of railroads and the improvement of highways, come to be measured and discounted in land values. Those who exert themselves on farms, as to be distinguished from those who own farms or sell or rent them, will in the last case be no better off than at first.

Without saying that there should be no improvement in marketing or financing conditions for farmers, then, it may be pointed out it is for the best interest of the whole community that available agricultural land be adequately used, with skill and with persistent industry, and the individual interest of every working farmer must be along the line of the greatest production, let general conditions be what they may, so that the "two blades of grass" proposition appears to be well worth attention.

In other words a broad distinction may be made between suggestions for individual and for general benefit and improvement. The one may be worked out, although everybody cannot be skilful and industrious to the limit of human capacity. The other can amount to little if not accompanied with some radical change in our institutions. General improvement or advantage is very much of a will-o-the-wisp, so far as workers are concerned. New roads and bridges, better schools and fire protection, lower rates for public service—the thousand and one improvements that are agitated for or afforded—all simply tend to enlarge land values at favored locations, all tend to accentuate the demand for and the speculative withholding of locations from use. "The margin of cultivation," instead of being raised, is left stationary or depressed. The net results—general prosperity—finally coming to the public, or to farmers or workers as such, are not increased, and cannot be increased by extensions of improvements and still further progress in what looks like advancement.

Prosperity depends (wages and interest depend) upon "the margin of

cultivation," rising as it rises and falling as it falls. The problem is how to raise the margin? That is vastly more important than how to make public improvements and extend the functions of government.

---

## RELATION OF NATURAL LAW TO DEMOCRACY

(For the Review)

By LAURIE J. QUINBY

This article may not be considered entirely germane to the purposes of this periodical. But it is written by one of our sterling Single Taxers of Nebraska and it is so well expressed, and is so admirable an example of *multum in parvo* that we cannot refrain from giving it space. And after all does not the Single Tax include that philosophy of natural law and democracy of which the method itself is but their expression in government?—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

First, let us understand what we mean by natural law; then, what we mean by democracy.

Every student of the phenomena of Nature, whether his studies lead him into the realm of hidden things or out into the open field, concedes that Nature in all possible aspects is governed by absolute law. There is positively nothing left to chance. Every fact fits into some other fact. Phenomena fit into phenomena. Everything is the result of something. Nothing comes of nothing. Every act is a justification of another act. All is merely adjustment. These facts the student soon learns, and these facts prove to him the everlasting presence of changeless law. This is his foundation for the conviction that every deed is absolutely governed by law.

What these laws are, at least as they relate to human conduct, is not left for anyone to determine as a fixed rule for anyone but himself to follow. I cannot set down an arbitrary statement of a moral law and charge you with its violation. Therefore is the wise charge, "Judge not." What the law is, you, for yourself, must discover. Though it take you a thousand lives and eons of time, no one shall interpret this law for you. If your intelligence cannot perceive it, then its adjusting penalties you shall feel. If you are too blind to see the briars, then your bleeding feet shall smart until your awakening intellect shall perceive the law.

Not for nothing was it said, "I come not to destroy, but to fulfill the law." Not until the law shall be fulfilled shall there be peace.

Let us not always, either, think of Nature's laws as meting penalties only. They mete good for good as well as ill for ill. As there can be no such thing as vicarious atonement, neither can there be a realized happiness unless a legitimate price be paid.

These conclusions arouse the mind to considerations of democracy, and