

WHO WILL BE THE LOSERS

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

It is often spoken of as a matter of complaint that men's pecuniary interests largely determine their attitude towards the single tax, socialism and other proposed political and economic changes. But that this should be so is as right as it is natural, and may be claimed to arise from a kind of instinctive perception on the part of the common people that any fiscal measure which would further their interests is likely to be just and right. In the nature of things injustice is for the benefit of the few; the many prosper only by justice.

The difficulty of realizing off-hand how very few can be the gainers even pecuniarily by an unjust system, is well illustrated by the great number of farmers and wage-workers who are led to imagine they profit by the tariff. But these mistaken citizens are to be blamed, not for voting according to their supposed interests, but for thoughtlessly accepting the dictum of monopolists as to what their interests are. The people are not mistaken in assuming that whatever will increase the general returns for their labor, in field and factory, in mine and forest, at desk and counter and wherever useful service to society is rendered, is by that token a fair and equitable thing to be done. But they are constantly and systematically misled regarding the tendency of certain means as favorable or otherwise to this end.

Those who hold to the doctrine of Henry George that the common right of all men to the use of the earth should be maintained by appropriating ground rents for public purposes, would gladly consent to put this plan to the test of its profitableness to all wage-workers, most capitalists and the great majority of land owners—regarding the latter two classes of course with reference to numbers only and not at all to amount of possessions.

As to the first class, the landless workingmen, probably there will be no serious pretense from any quarter that they would be losers by such an exemption of improvements and products as would cheapen all necessities of life, or by such a taxation of ground values as would force into immediate use all land now capable of yielding ground rent and destroy all motive for holding out of use any land not yet so capable.

Proceeding then to the capitalist class it will be necessary first to explain that the word capitalist is here used in its economic sense, of owner of wealth used in producing or procuring more wealth, and not in its popular sense of owner of monopolistic privileges valued among the millions of dollars. In the capitalist class, economically speaking, would be included all owners of live stock, implements, machinery, buildings and raw materials of manufacture, from the carpenter with his outfit of tools and the small farmer with his half dozen cows, up to the proprietor of the great mill or factory plant with employes numbered by hundreds. Who of this class would be losers by the removal of the burdensome taxes that now discourage the production of wealth, or by the stimulation of such production through taxing into use all the lands, mines and other natural sources of wealth of which society now has need? Would the increase in wages caused by the new demand for labor hurt the capitalist? Certainly not; since the returns to true capital—not monopoly—would be correspondingly increased. True capital is but "stored up labor;" and its returns, whether in interest on money or profits of trade or manufacture, always are and necessarily must be high or low when and where wages are high or low. Would the cheapening of products through the great increase of production injure the capitalist? Obviously not, as long as exchange is free and human desires are unsatisfied. The more and the cheaper, the better for all.

The only capitalists who would lose by the immensely increased wealth production resulting from the single tax would be the few who at present enjoy special legal advantages over their competitors, in highway privileges, mine or timber ownership, tariff protection and the like. These few would lose, not as capitalists, but as monopolists, to the general gain in which they themselves would fully share.

Finally, who and what proportion of present land owners would lose by the single tax? Not the modest home owner whose house is worth twice or thrice as much as the lot on which it stands, and is now taxed accordingly. He would gain as an owner of real estate in addition to his greater gain as a worker. So with the working farmer, whose improvements and movable capital in most cases amount

to several times the unimproved value of his land. The ordinary farmer would gain as a taxpayer, would gain as a capitalist, and most of all as a workingman; for the returns to labor on the farm do and always must increase or decrease in direct proportion with the returns to labor in mill and mine. So again we find that the only land owners who would lose are those few monopolists whose interests as landlords, highway lords, coal barons, iron kings and the like exceed all their other worldly interests. These few rule the world now through their power to legally appropriate wealth that other men produce, but in numbers they are insignificant. They work their will with legislatures and courts but at the ballot box they are too few to count. The people's elected representatives are their obedient servants, but the people themselves—when they will—can abolish the privileges and end the evil domination of these industrial Caesars without revolution, without confiscation, without disturbing reorganization of present industrial methods and with no curtailment, but a vast extension of the field of individual enterprise and achievement.

What is really expedient for the people is right; and, conversely, what is right is really expedient. Contrary to the ordinary opinion, the converse is the more practical and available form of the proposition, because while the human intellect often fails in judging of expediency the human conscience, however its voice may be smothered or falsified in verbal interpretation, speaks to the secret soul the clear truth of righteousness.

GEO. B. ROUNSEVELL.

Cuba, N. Y.

I hereby offer eighty-four millions of dollars reward for an argument against the single tax that was not used with equal force and effect in favor of African slavery. Being thoroughly familiar with every argument used in each case, I run no risk in making this offer.—W. H. T. Wakefield.

WOMEN AND ECONOMICS

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

The time has gone by among rational people in which a woman who is interested in anything but embroidery, mending stockings or the latest novel is "out of her sphere." The "new woman" is better than the old one and with their interest in public questions women have not lost, but gained in womanliness.

Every girls' college has courses in economics and women are learning that if they would keep up with the times at all, they must have an intelligent opinion upon such questions as the tariff, taxation and the functions of government. They must know that socialists and anarchists are not the same thing, neither are they men who go about the country with a bomb in each pocket with which to kill the government officials should occasion offer. Intelligent women, as well as intelligent men, should know that the single tax is not a scheme to deprive men of the land, but to restore it to them; that it is not simply a rational and wise system of taxation, but a means by which equal justice can be secured to all.

No one, either man or woman, can live without using land, because from it come all material things. Our food, clothing and shelter can come only by applying labor to land, and women as well as men must have these. Not only have women the same desires and needs as men, but they must produce things to satisfy these desires or accept them from others who do produce them. Every woman, then, should be a "working woman" just as every man should be a "working man." As has often been said, there are but three classes of people—workingmen, beggar-men and thieves.

If this be true—and it surely is—is it not the duty of every woman to study economics carefully and conscientiously that she may know how wealth is produced, why some people have so much and others so little, what is rightfully private property and what is not, and other similar questions? She should be able to see that there is a reason for the large army of the unemployed constantly menacing the country; that with the large areas of unimproved land everywhere about us—land waiting only for the touch of man to bring forth enough to satisfy the needs of every human being—and labor equally idle, begging for a chance to work and produce wealth—she should be able to reason that something is wrong; that there is a barrier in the way which must be removed if we would prevent the great poverty and destitution everywhere about us.

Women are said to be more tender-hearted than men, yet the majority of them are satisfied with giving their

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old clothes to those in want or in belonging to various relief societies. Can they not see that charity not only does not abolish poverty, but increases it?

Free the land and thus make it possible for everyone to earn a good living and charity organizations will die a natural death.

Under free conditions women need not marry for a home, but will be able to support themselves. Wives are today virtual slaves to their husbands because they are not financially independent. A large number of women are dependent upon some man for support, a condition which is degrading to both parties.

What we want, and what we must have if we would save our country from destruction, is a clear understanding of human rights and equal justice, for women as well as for men. We must not only believe, but obey the law of equal freedom which makes no distinction with regard to sex, color or nationality. Every human being has the same rights as every other human being and one of these rights is to the use of land because of our equal right to life and the necessity of land to life.

Let women, then, study social questions seriously for their future welfare depends upon the right solution of them.

FLORENCE A. BURLEIGH,
Germantown, Pa.

We preach a religion sublime, we practice a religion condoning injustice and fraud, then we pray for the coming of the kingdom.—Single Tax Pastor.

CONCERNING MINISTERS

(Written for Henry George Edition of The Independent.)

Having been a minister since 1886 and a single taxer since 1887, permit me to say a few words about the effect the single tax will have on the ministers—whose general conduct I have watched more closely for some time.

The application of the single tax will remove from their path—along with many other temptations, common to all men under present conditions—the temptation either to keep silent or to take the side of the rich and mighty on the great moral-political questions that arise from time to time—a temptation to which so many now succumb.

Being like the rest of men—economically independent—they will not act cowards or traitors for fear of losing their positions.

Characteristic of the present state of affairs is the counsel I once received from an old, experienced and "successful" member of the ministerial profession. Said he: "If you want to be a successful minister, you must leave reforms severely alone"—an eminently sound advice, which, by the way, I have not followed.

AUGUST DELLGREN,
Minneapolis, Minn.

It is estimated that the cost of assessing and collecting the single tax would not exceed one-fourth of one per cent, but the cost under the present system exceeds twenty per cent. This saving would far more than support public schools.—W. H. T. W.