

The Philosophy of Freedom

An Open Forum for Single Taxers

"From a casual reading of my work the free thinkers realize that I am not an orthodox, and call me their own; while on the other hand the religious orthodox take me in the spirit rather than the letter, and they write encouragingly, especially sweet old ladies. Then of course there are the single tax people, who own me, for I'm for single tax heart and soul."—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

OVERTAXED FARMERS.

Editor Independent: There is probably no greater objection to the single tax than the belief that it would fall heavily on the already "overtaxed farmers." At the same time some of the most sincere and intelligent single taxers are farmers; still that does not prove that the single tax is either right or wrong. Even although there may be ten honest, sincere and intelligent people opposed to the single tax for every one in favor of it that does not prove the question.

The farmer produces the raw material, and in some instances the finished article for our food, clothing and shelter, and the Old Testament tells us that "Even the king is supported from the land" and while the question of taxation was being discussed in the New Testament time a decision was given to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The king and Caesar in our time is recognized as government, and society acknowledges that governmental servants are as worthy of their hire as others are. Where there is no government or bad government the avaricious owners as much as the most industrious. Where there is no government land has no selling or rental value. And where there is bad government the tendency is for the producer to produce and have nothing, and the non-producer to have without producing. Through bad government the producer is frequently relieved of the product of his labor either directly or indirectly through unjust taxation. Where there is good government, but very little governmental exercises required, land has very little selling or rental value, which may be very readily seen in farming districts, in such districts government has given little value and should receive very little tribute in taxes either local, state or nation. Take on the other hand a large city where governmental operations are in evidence at every move you make, here government has given great value to land by public improvements; one square inch of land in the center of the city will bring as high a price in the market as a whole acre of good agricultural land in many counties in the United States so that if the single tax proposed to tax land by the acre, it would come severe on the farmer, but as it proposes to tax land values instead of land it is evident that the revenue under the single tax would be drawn largely from cities and justly so, because it is land that government gives value to and not buildings or stocks. It is not infrequently that a farmer has three or four times as much money invested in buildings, stock and improvements on land as he has in land, whereas city property tends in the opposite direction, and having to a much larger extent received its value from government, it should pay a proportionately larger share of the taxes, including state and national.

ANDREW HATTAN,
Schenectady, N. Y.

Literature explaining the single tax idea mailed free on request. Address F. H. Monroe, president Henry George association, 356 Dearborn st., Chicago.

FERGUSON'S REJOINER.

Editor Independent: The marked copy containing Mr. Bailey's article reached me today.

I wish he would read Progress and Poverty and find out what Henry George says the "law of rent" is. Henry George indorses Mill and Ricardo, but does not say anything about seven-tenths of the land being unoccupied. Does not Mr. Bailey understand that I said, if you confiscate rent, i. e., rent as defined by George, our condition would be worse than cottiers or metayers? They were supposed to have enough left them for a living. Yet I know men that farmed land to poor that they could not get a living from it.

To my mind money and transportation are of as much importance as is land.

I am sorry he misrepresented me; I am bad enough without that. He placed in quotation marks the fol-

lowing, "the people will continue the vicious in power."

What I said was, "The vicious will hold most of the offices in the future just as they have in the past."

The people, i. e., democrats and populists, do not intend to elect the vicious to office, but that does not say that the vicious will not seek the office and be elected.

Isn't it funny that while Mr. Bailey hit me so hard all along, that he forgot to tell us what unimproved value is? E. W. FERGUSON, Jr.
Hartington, Neb.

WAKEFIELD SURPRISED.

Editor Independent: I have read with much surprise and some indignation your two editorials in The Independent of 11th inst. on "The Single Tax," in which you assume that single taxers are either opposed or indifferent to public ownership of all public utilities, including railroads, and differ from populists and democrats (Kansas City platform) on the money question. Such misrepresentation is expected from plutocratic journals, but not from those professing reform tendencies.

Nothing is nor can be better known than that the philosophy of freedom (single tax) aims at the elimination of every possible form of special privilege or private monopoly, whether in land, taxation, transportation, money, street railways, water and lighting plants, or otherwise.

Surely, you read the special edition or our last national platform to little purpose, or any of our standard books, to receive such an impression.

The fundamental principle of the single tax economy is "No public business nor functions in private control; no private business in government control."

While the single tax includes abolition of land monopoly, it does not exclude abolition of all other forms of monopoly, but distinctly demands it.

We lay most stress upon land and taxation for the reason that nearly all other monopolies will instantly disappear when their base in these two fundamental wrongs is knocked from under them, and because until it is, all other methods of curbing monopoly are utterly vain and worthless.

While we demand public ownership and operation of all public utilities, we believe this can best be secured—most quickly and cheaply—by treating all rights of way (franchises) as a land value, taking in taxation all earnings above operating expenses, current interest, repairs, etc., on actual plants, or tangible personal property (products of labor) which would squeeze out every drop of water, leaving only actual property to be purchased.

I will treat the money question in a separate article.

W. H. T. WAKEFIELD,
Mound City, Kas.

(Certain it is that neither of the editors had any thought of misrepresenting either the single tax or single taxers, and, with the knowledge of honestly trying to see the light (or "the cat," whichever it is), the editors have no honeyed phrases to make on account of any indignant subscriber.

Doubtless Mr. Wakefield is better acquainted with the single taxers of the world than either of the editors, but they certainly know single taxers who, holding to a strict construction of the philosophy, are opposed to the public operating a railroad through government, or owning any part of a railroad further than to take the full rent, value of the right of way. They would construe the operation of a railroad as coming within the inhibition—"no private business in government control." Some of them would favor a public roadbed and lease it to private companies formed for the purpose of operating railroads.

So long as men must pay this "economic rent" only by converting man-made goods or human energy into coined money, and then turning the coined money over to the taxing power, the editors believe the money question paramount until settled on a scientific basis. Taking economic rent will not abolish the monopoly possessed by the national bankers and gold bullion gamblers.

Mr. Wakefield's plan of squeezing the water out of railroad values is feasible, doubtless, but what equity is there in taking "economic rent" from the farmer and allowing him all he can make as wages and interest on his capital invested in improvements, while a different rule is followed for the railroads? Necessarily, under Mr. Wakefield's statement, an arbitrary rate of interest would be fixed upon

in calculating "current interest" and the road would be rent free until that rate was satisfied. How would that seem to the farmer who was haled out or the victim of hot winds, when he discovered that it would take all his surplus over a bare existence to pay his "economic rent," or, perhaps, he might have to borrow of the money-mongers?—Associate Editor.)

Co-operative Land Buying

Land speculators have long since learned that they can buy land for less dollars per acre when taken in large bodies; farmers and home-seekers are just beginning to find this out. In the last few weeks several parties of land buyers from Iowa have gone together and bought large tracts along the Republican river; when a contract was made for the purchase of the land, they divided it up to suit themselves and had deeds made accordingly.

The following tracts offer an excellent opportunity for several home-seekers to go together and buy either of these tracts, or all of them. It will enable them to get some good land very cheap.

The first is a tract of 2,115 acres, nearly all fenced; 1,050 acres under high state of cultivation, 1,100 acres of very best alfalfa land; some timber; the Republican river runs through this land; 4 wells and wind mills, tanks, cisterns, etc. Three sets of improvements; two miles from McCook. Much of this is good hay land. Price, \$18 per acre. This piece is known as No. 1026.

Another tract of 1750 acres deeded land and 640 acres of school land leased; 1,400 acres of alfalfa land—some now growing; 400 acres in cultivation; nearly all fenced; good improvements; 600 acres of good hay land, now ready to mow. This ranch is in the Republican valley, 15 miles from McCook and between two railroad stations. Price complete \$19,000. This is No. 1027.

Also an 800-acre tract, nearly all fenced; 700 acres alfalfa and sugar beet land; 200 acres cultivated; nice grove, plenty of hay land. This would make two or more splendid farms; two sets of improvements; two and a

half miles from town. Price, \$9,500. This is No. 1028.

It should be remembered that the sugar beet factories at Grand Island, Ames and Norfolk last year made thorough tests of that soil for sugar beet raising, which proved successful. There is a large acreage of sugar beets in Red Willow county this year and the prospects are bright for a sugar beet factory at McCook in the near future. This together with the alfalfa industry insures a bright future for Red Willow and surrounding counties; and values are sure to double in a few years.

For full information regarding the above land or any other land along the Republican river write to Weber & Farris, Lincoln, Neb.

The principal reason why the single tax has not long since been much more widely understood and adopted is that it has not been brought to the front sufficiently. Agitation of any sort is what is wanted. There never need be any fear from misrepresentation. Error cannot long stand in the light of truth. No matter what sort of names are called. No matter who may misrepresent. If the single tax is talked about so silently it is certain to grow. When things are said which are not true there are always those who will look into the subject and the truth will be brought to the light.—Cleveland (O.) Recorder.

Three million houseless, homeless, hopeless tramps in America under 30 years of the highest protection in our history.

Read "Progress and Poverty," the greatest book on political economy ever published. Reads like a romance.

God gave the earth to all the people, and not to some of them. The privileges should be for all of them, and not bartered off to some of them. That, gentlemen, constitutes my political economy, my politics, and (I say it reverently) my religion. And it is, I believe, the religion that Christ taught the people many years ago.—Tom Johnson.

Independent School of Political Economy

ANOTHER DONATION.

Editor Independent: Please enroll my name as a member of the Independent School of Political Economy. Enclosed find stamp, for which send me "The Open Door," by Laurie J. Quinby.

The books that I rent of The Director you may consider sold if I like the book for a reference book.

I am going to donate to the school Henry George's "Land and Labor Question."

If every paper of any account would establish a school of economics the republican party would go like a snow-bank in a hot day in August.

IRL DEAN.

Marion, Ia.

HISTORY OF MONETARY SYSTEMS.

Editor Independent: Enclosed please find draft for balance of account, which we trust you will find correct and for which please send us an acknowledgement. We have received instructions from Mr. Del Mar, who is now on his yachting trip, to open the fall campaign with as large an ad. in The Independent as the sale of the book will permit. He also requested us to ask you if you had a copy of his "History of Monetary Systems" and if you would like to review it in the columns of The Independent.

CAMBRIDGE ENCYCLOPEDIA CO.
Box 160 M. S., New York.
(We have not had Mr. Del Mar's "History of Monetary Systems," but would gladly review it. Several of the "school" desire to read it.—The Director.)

THEODORE ROOSEVELT THE CITIZEN.

Jacob A. Riis, who has been called by President Roosevelt "New York's most useful citizen," is very busy just now in getting together material for his book, "Theodore Roosevelt the Citizen," which is to be brought out by The Outlook company. To a friend who recently asked for information concerning the work, Mr. Riis wrote: "What can I say about the Roosevelt material, except that it will deal with Mr. Roosevelt as a citizen and as a friend from the standpoint of a friend? I am busy gathering the material now, but it is not easy, because of the people I want to reach being scattered here and there. However, I shall get what I want. It will be my

summer work. I shall do nothing else except keep up the war to reform the House of Refuge."

WEALTH OF NATIONS.

Director I. S. P. E.: In glancing over The Independent of May 26 the second time I find your offer to distribute argument for referendum and initiative and imperative mandate by Quinby for postage, please forward me a copy unless all are gone.

A member of the "school, I have forgotten the name and cannot find the paper, made inquiry concerning Smith's "Wealth of Nations." I can give the address of a person who can furnish it or you may publish it if you like: Mr. H. H. Timby, Conreaut, O.; price, \$1.75; 1 vol.; or best English edition, 2d hand, 2 vols., 88 pp., \$3.50. E. W. FERGUSON, Jr.
Hartington, Neb.

ELY'S OUTLINES.

Director I. S. P. E.: Find enclosed P. O. M. O. for \$1.25 for which please send me Outlines of Economics, by Prof. R. T. Ely, which you recommend in The Independent of May 21. I would like to keep the book, as it takes me a good while to read such works. I can't rush them through like a novel, and after a day's work a man goes to sleep over them in the evening, so that Sunday really affords the only leisure to devote to them.

I got Mill's Political Economy from the library not long since, and although I found it most interesting, I was not a quarter through it when the fortnight allowed was up, and I had to return the volumes, but intend to get them again in the winter when the evenings are longer, and labor not so pressing, so I would like to have the "Outlines" as my own property, then I can read them over two or three times, and thereby, as it were, establish pigeon holes in my head, in which to properly arrange subsequent acquisitions in the same line. Am 63 years old and have done considerable desultory reading, Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Lubbock, Babbie, Draper, Carlyle, Emerson, etc., together with the general run of the better class of fiction, but I'll stop; I see I'm getting garrulous—men of my age are apt to have that failing—and I know newspaper men have no time to spare. JOHN D. EDWARDS,
Baden Station, St. Louis, Mo.