THE NEBRASKA INDEPENDENT

MARCH 24, 1904.

The Philosophy of Freedom

An Open Forum for Single Taxers

FARMER AND SINGLE TAX. The editor of The Independent asserts that the reason why farmers do not take kindly to the single tax is cause they do not as yet realize that because it will destroy the value of society produces a value, as well as their land, and this value is about all the individual. they have left after years of hard toil.

This is true not only of the farmers, but of most land owners, especially owners of small estates. It is difficult to show these good people that destroying the individual value does not destroy it. We use the word "destroy" wrongly. True, the single tax will take from each individual his social product, i. e., the land value, thus lowering the selling price of his land, but the fact that all such land will yield annually to each community a large revenue, proves that the [tax, the farmers and small home-ownvalue has not been destroyed, but socialized. Indeed you can no more destroy the value of land in a growing community than you could destroy gravitation. Both are in the nature of things.

Let the farmers and small home owners consider who would be the gainers, were all land values socialized; that is, were ground rents collected from each according to the value of his land, and then redistributed back to each pro rata. Those who would pay the largest taxes would be those who are today receiving the largest amounts of the social product annually-such as the Standard Oil company, with its vast land values in pipe lines, men owning valuable coa! fields, or other mining properties; railroads with their valuable fran chises; choice city lots, more valuable than whole counties of farming land. The owners of such properties are today paying smaller taxes in proportion to their wealth than are the farmers; but under the single tax they would pay by far the largest taxes of any; and it is right that they should. since they are receiving annually vast amounts of the social product. They have grown rich by absorbing social and she will have no incentive to product. It is because they feed continually upon social product that disappear. makes each a monopoly.

The farmers and small home-owners are clinging desperately to a system of taxation that robs them of



| much that they are producing by their individual labor, and of nearly all that they are producing socially, be

Because the farmer is not robbed of his entire social product, as is the landless man, he clings to his small land value in his little farm. But this system is so enslaving to boin labor and capital that under it wages and the profits of capital can never rise to all that they really earn.

Students of Henry George know that so long as the social fund is so unequally distributed just so long will wages be low, and business depres sion increase.

The truth is that under the single ers would receive far more land values than at present. Then people are generally so constituted that they cannot comprehend that they possess ownership of land values, unless it takes some tangible shape, as in their particular farms.

This is the result of hundreds of years of individual land value ownership. When we have had fifty years of social land value ownership each one will readily comprehend that his share is an equal pro rata part of the whole, however great it may be. In such a social state, there will be a community of interests-a common brotherhood in which men will no longer worry for fear they cannot find work to do at good wages, or that old age may leave them homeless.

There is still another reason why the masses fear this change in taxation, and that is because politics are so corrupt at present that they fear the social fund will not be equally distributed even were it fairly collected; but it is the grabbing through special legislation of the social fund that is the cause of political corruption. Tax away from monopoly what she is receiving of the social product, bribe the political boss, and he will

Were each farmer to receive his share of the annual ground rent-the social product-of his community, be will receive far more than he gives. His taxes would be about one-third less than now. That would represent what he gives the community; but his social benefits would be two-thirds more than now. This would represent what he would receive, such as better schools, better roads, threecent fares, lower freights, low telegraph or telephone rates, cheaper coal, light, and if halionally introduced cheaper prices for almost every manufactured article. These advantages would increase the power of his earnings from 10 to 17 per cent. Thomas G. Shearman, after years of study upon the subject, stated it as his conviction that to remove all taxes from everything but land values, and tax them so lightly as to collect only one-half of the social product, would result in raising wages 50 per cent! Think of it! Labor unions conduct costly strikes at great suffering for a rise of 10 per cent. If they would but study this question, they would soon vote a new system of taxation into being, that would raise their wages 50 per cent and end commercial depressions; for as Mr. Shearman so well said, wage-earners rarely save their wages. A rise of 50 per cent means a home market that would set all wheels of industry in motion, and keep them so.



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cago, 111. Please mention The Independent in cour reply.

Mr. Shearman also showed that today the farmer was being taxed on his land values nearly as much as he would be under his plan, but that mcnopoly was escaping this tax almost entirely. Tax its social privileges at their full value it would soon cease to be a monopoly.

True, under the single tax the farmer would not be able to sell his land men freely testify to his unusual skill for a large lump sum. Neither would any one else, so he would not have to pay a large sum for homes for his children. The conditions would be so hanged that only those who realize how differently men act and appear under hardships and privations from what they do when they have leisure and plenty-only those who dwell in loving thought upon this great scheme of justice can fully appreciate all that prepared treatment free, with full di- the single tax has in store for hu-

But we should not view this subject wholly from that of personal gain, but look rather at the justice of it.

What the individual produces belongs to him. What society produces

propose a single tax upon land values as a substitute for custom house taxes and all other kinds of taxation." Then in the third column he says, "Had Mr. George's system of taxation-internal taxation upon wealth-been practical and," etc. One who assumes to interpret for your readers as Mr. De Hart does should know at least the meaning of his terms and that Henry George's proposition of a single tax upon land values did not propose a system of taxation upon wealth. Plainly it is my opinion that Mr. De Hart does not know the meaning of the word wealth and if you would have your readers credit you with having a clear understanding of Henry George's philosophy such articles as this would not find a place in your paper, without at least an editorial expression from you as to it.

DANIEL KIEFER. Cincinnati, O.

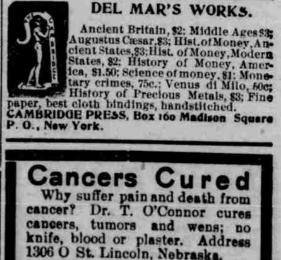
(The Independent has said a thousand times, more or less, that it does not hold itself responsible for the views of correspondents. It is an open forum. It allows access to its col umns to every man who honestly believes he has something for the benefit of mankind. It never will adopt the policy of the plutocratic dailies and shut out from discussion every- Imperial Hernia thing that it does not itself fully approve. The Independent is not infallible. Neither is Mr. Kiefer. If in a few weeks, without inconvenience Mr. Kiefer had read in The Indepen- or loss of time in bed. Send for circulars. dent anything except the single tax matter he would have no trouble ir finding out whether its editors were in favor of a protective tariff or not. Ed. Ind.)

Prof. Gray of Chicago university has issued an order that any student in the classes of his department of political science who reports outside anything that he says shall be summarily dismissed from the department. Perhaps Prof. Gray has in mind what happened to Prof. Bemis and several other teachers in the Rockefeller institution. Yet President Harper declares that Rockefeller never interferes with the professors there. Perhaps he will not interfere when he gets his temple built on the Neoraska university campus.

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