

The Philosophy of Freedom

An Open Forum for Single Taxers

Ask Your Candidate

Editor Independent: If there is so much corruption in our present party system of government, as each party charges against its opponents, then ask your candidate why he does not support the method of direct legislation by means of the referendum and the initiative, so that the people can vote on measures, irrespective of party affiliations or entanglements? When people can vote on measures on their respective merits, then bribery and corruption will have lost their efficiency and consequently will cease.

If the gerrymander is such an evil as the politicians represent, ask your candidate why he does not support a system of proportional representation by the grouping of constituencies and the Hare-Spence system of voting, so that gerrymandering will be an impossibility and there may be some chance for representation according to the beliefs or desires of the people?

Also ask your candidate why he does not say a word about our present method of taxing industry. A great deal is said about the taxation of the companies, a matter of no great consequence; but the taxation of industry is of the first consideration for the welfare of humanity.

If your candidate does not know, then call his attention to the following facts:

The land speculator escapes all the time with a single tax on the value of the land, but the settler who clears a farm and thus converts barrenness into fertility first pays a land tax, then a clearing tax, a fencing tax, a house tax, a barn tax, an implement tax, a drainage tax, a tax on his orchard, his well and on every other improvement. The better he does for the country the worse the country does for him. The man who gives a life of toil to improve and enrich the country is taxed as we tax dogs and whiskey as though he were an evil to be suppressed, while the man who makes no improvement, who adds nothing to the wealth or prosperity of the country, is treated as though he were a blessing to be encouraged and supported. By placing taxes on industry and thus keeping down the taxes on the idle land, we discourage the improvement, we place a penalty on the employment of labor, we encourage the dishonest way of gaining wealth, we thus enable speculators to gain fortunes. Thus by our taxes we divert one man's energy into another man's barn. We fatten the bugs and starve the bees.

We do worse than that, if worse is possible. Let a town grow and with

every increase of the population there inevitably comes an increase in the value of the land. The best lot in this city has reached a value of \$4,000 per foot frontage, equivalent to \$1,740,000 per acre. A hundred years ago this land had no value but with every addition to the population it has kept advancing to its present figure. Year after year the people have been paying a higher and higher figure for the opportunity to do business on that site. Every decade the obligation of the people has grown larger and larger. The more the occupants have paid the more they have had to pay. Thus as the owner of the land grows to greater fortune occupants are crushed down and kept down by an obligation increasing at such a rate that it matters not how much men improve their methods of production, the mass of the toilers must inevitably be kept close to the home of penury. From this system of taxation come booms and bankruptcies, inflations and depressions, extortions and spoliations, the home of leisure filled with overflowing luxury, while the house of industry is blighted with poverty. Society is thus split in twain, one part must toil like slaves to do everything for the maintenance of the whole. By thus placing men in unjust relationships one to another, the one part degrades, despoils and impoverishes the other part. We lift extortion into the palace and crush honesty into the hovel, and thus render our civilization in one most important respect a lamentable failure.

Ask your candidate to let party differences have a rest for a little while and give some heed to this, the supreme question of the day.

Ask him why it is that while New Zealand, Australia, British Columbia and Manitoba have done something to relieve industry from its excessive taxation, the government of Ontario, so progressive in other respects, has not taken the first step in this reform.

Ask your candidate further why he is silent as a tomb-stone as to the iniquitous law which allows land of two acres and more to be assessed as farm land. In this city a number of very wealthy men own about 800 acres, assessed at an average of about \$700 per acre, equivalent to less than \$2 per foot front, while the land occupied by the laboring classes is assessed from \$10 to \$30 per foot.

Every candidate should be asked what his intention is as to this iniquitous distinction; the rich man's acre taxed low, the poor man's cottage taxed to the hilt.

The assessment act allows any municipality, if confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the electors on the roll, to exempt any manufacturing establishment for a period of ten years from taxation. This law means that the industry inside four walls can be exempted, but the industry outside the four walls must be taxed. Ask your candidate why industries should be thus divided in the arbitrary fashion, so that some may be exempted, as all industry should be, while other industry must be taxed.

The same act allows the exemption of buildings erected for the storage of ice; but if a building is used for the storage of dry goods or groceries or of a family it must be taxed. When the assessor finds two men erecting buildings he asks from the first: "What are you going to do with this building?" "To store ice," replies the man, "God bless you," replies the assessor, "good and wise citizen, great shall be your reward. You shall escape taxation. It is the ice houses we want." To the second man he puts the same query, "What are you going to do with this building?" "To shelter my family, of course." "Oh, oh," replies the assessor, "you should not do that. We must tax you. You should not have built a home. You should have built a refrigerator."

Insist that your candidate shall explain why homes should be taxed and ice houses be exempted.

Let two men come to this city each with a hundred thousand dollars. You ask the first what he is going to do with his money. "To establish an industry," he replies. "I will employ labor, erect buildings and every working day produce something to add to the prosperity of the country." Very well, then the law replies: "According to your improvements shall you be taxed. You ask the second man what he intends to do and he replies: "My intention is to get some land and hold it till the increase of population adds to its value and thus I will gain

riches without producing riches." "Very good then," replies the law, "your taxes shall be kept low." Thus the law piles the taxes on industry, thus discouraging production and encouraging extortion.

Do not fail to ask your candidate what he intends to do about this iniquitous discrimination. Does he propose to continue the laws that quench prosperity and encourage adversity? Or will he favor a law to remove taxes from improvements? Or allow municipalities local option in taxation?

J. B. VINING.

Cleveland, Ohio.

New South Wales' Experiment

That a tariff is not essential to progress, the recent history of New South Wales conclusively shows. In 1896 that colony adopted progressive free trade. Duties were to be gradually reduced over a period of five years, when, in 1901, only those on tobacco and liquors should remain. The deficiency in public revenue was met by a land tax, a crude and partial application of Henry George's plan, supplemented by an income tax.

The effect was startling. The decennial census of 1901 showed great gains in population for the free trade colony, while her sister colony, Victoria, separated only by a river, and enjoying a highly protective tariff, had actually lost ground. Sydney, the capital of the former colony, gained 102,000, or 30 per cent, while Victoria's capital, Melbourne, had gained but 3,000, or a trifle over one half of one per cent.

For every vessel docked and repaired in the protection colony, there were seven in her free trade rival, and there were four times as many deep-sea ships in the harbors of the former colony as in those of the latter. The census also showed one third more men engaged in manufacturing industries in the free trade colony than in the colony enjoying a protective tariff. Wages averaged a little higher in New South Wales, while the cost of living was one third less. This was equivalent to more than 50 per cent greater wages.

The farmers flocked across the river, content to pay the land tax, knowing when they paid this tax they got off much cheaper than in Victoria, where everything they used for consumption or for the farm was heavily taxed by the tariff of that colony. The progressive element of New South Wales is now demanding, as a further installment of the land value tax, that it be increased to three pence in the pound. When it is considered that up to 1891 Victoria had the greater population, these results are seen to be phenomenal. No wonder the plutocratic agencies worked to secure federation of the colonies to check the growing contrast. But it is probable that the little leaven in New South Wales will leaven the whole commonwealth.

So long as America has a tariff at all, there will be interested persons seeking tariff favors. All tariffs are robbery. The only difference is in the degree of the robbery; and equity admits of no degree. One robber party is enough.

A. FREELAND.

Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.

The Voter's Duty

Oh, voter, what is your duty, and what do you say?

Will you sell for a pittance your power and right?

Or let others control you? Just do as you may

But never join boodle or ring—in the fight.

If they give you a dollar, they make hundreds thereby.

If they vote you as partisan, then some one will sigh,

For "rings" and corruption can never be trusted

And no evil thing, by them, will be busted.

Now voter, just think, it's all up to you,

Be careful and honest in whatever you do,

Your country is calling you now into view.

Your ballot is gone, and oh, at great cost

If ringsters corrupt you, or by them you're tossed

Into hard-wagon, and then—surely bossed.

Now vote for the people and vote for yourself,

And keep clear of boodle, corruption and pelf.

—Horace Wadingham Calhoun.

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