

Letters From The People

Suggestions For Single Taxers

Lexington, Ind., Nov. 9.—To the Editor of The Independent: If you will kindly give me space I would like to have a word with single taxers. It is my opinion that it would be necessary to reduce the legal rate of interest on money and all evidence of debt before the single tax plan would operate successfully and justly. Many farms are mortgaged for more than the appraisement for taxes. Reduce the rate of interest on the mortgage and double the tax on the land and the farmer will have a balance in his favor. I suppose that the several states when fixing a legal rate of interest have reckoned a higher rate on account of the tax to be paid on money and other evidences of debt.

There is another item of expense that the single tax plan might greatly reduce, that is in making an assessment of all property once a year. It is not necessary to appraise land more than once in four years and it requires less than half the time to appraise the land that it requires to assess the personal property. The single tax plan would save the taxpayers seven-eighths of this expense. Still another item—we might reduce a part of the work and expense of the county treasurer and auditor.

I would like some one who is well informed to make an estimate of the benefit the single tax would give the taxpayers along the lines I have mentioned.

H. C. GUYUN.

When Justice Reigns

South Omaha, Nebr., Nov. 25.—To the Editor of The Independent: I have just finished reading the issue of The Independent of the 23rd, and want to compliment you on the high standard of your editorials in that issue. I was especially interested in your editorial, "The Role of Charity." With some of your conclusions, however, I take issue. Possibly it is true that "the poor will always be with us" in the sense that there will always be derelicts on life's sea. Those who from mental incapacity or physical deformity are unable to perform their allotted task in life. And for these as civilization advances the community or state will care with the same tender regard that the loving father and mother cares for the helpless infant. That poverty and want in the accepted sense of the word is necessary or that it will always exist I do not believe. Year ago I read Henry George's masterpiece from a master mind, "Progress and Poverty," and I remember that he exploded the old fallacy of the inherent selfishness of humanity as thoroughly as he did the Malthusian theory of the pressure of population against the means of subsistence.

Since that time I have observed with more or less care all classes of men, and I believe that only as men become imbued with the customs and ideas of their environment and the teachings of a false system of economics do they become selfish and careless of the rights of others. A vast majority of men, even in this sordid commercial age, would rather do a kindness than an injury to their fellow men. And it is only as they become immersed in the struggle for existence that they forget that they are in a measure responsible for the welfare of their fellow men. In the life of a nation a century is as a day. And viewing the future in the light of the past it seems to me the optimist can see a brighter day when poverty, want and crime will be minimized, if not eliminated, and when justice, charity and brotherly love will be the rule and not the exception. Eighteen centuries ago the Carpenter of Nazareth gave this commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy strength and thy neighbors as thyself." And when the Christian world understands that this means not a passive love that will prevent one from willfully injuring another, but an aggressive love that will resent an injury to one's fellow man with the same vehemence that we resent a personal injury. Then will the cause of humanity and justice advance with great strides.

J. W. JORDAN.

Democracy vs. Aristocracy

Eagle Pass, Texas, Dec. 1.—To the Editor of The Independent: In reply to Herbert Bancroft's letter published in The Independent of November 23, I will say that I am not surprised that men can be found who favor government by aristocracy. Mr. Bancroft is opposed to our present

form of government and would wipe it out and substitute a monarchy or an aristocracy instead. Mr. Bancroft asks:

"Would not aristocracy solve the negro problem in this country?" I answer no. If it had not been for the aristocracy there would have been no slavery, and no negro problem to solve. The only solution of the negro problem offered by the aristocracy is some method by which the constitution of the United States can be evaded or trampled upon.

Again Mr. Bancroft asks: "Can any one dispute that democracy and the denial of equal rights to the negro are incompatible?" Of course they are incompatible. Genuine democrats do not believe in depriving the negro of equal rights and protection under the law. They approve social equality, but they have no sympathy with the tricks, devices, fraud and farce by which negroes are often denied equal protection under the law. A government of the people, by the people and for the people is the only government based on "divine rights."

L. J. MURRAY.

Socialist Statistics

Reading, Mass., Dec. 4.—The trouble with our socialist friends is that they see things that never happen.

A socialist organ which just came in says editorially that in a short time "we will be confronted with 10,000,000 unemployed." I suppose it does these calamity howlers good to howl and it doesn't do the rest of us much harm. Our friend Obenchain tries awfully hard to make out a case for himself but fails entirely. He has published no proof whatever that the middle class are disappearing; not a bit, nor can he. The statistics which appeared in The Independent of November 9, disprove the socialist contention absolutely. Why Sanill in his "Socialist Almanac" admitted that the middle class were not disappearing in "numbers" but were, he said, in "quality."

If manufacturing plants increased much faster in the two decades from 1880 to 1900 than from 1870 to 1880, which they did, that is only another proof that that part of the middle class is increasing faster now than thirty years ago. And mark you this great increase of the middle class has taken place at a period when this nation was receiving an average of more than 400,000 immigrants annually, 95 per cent or more of whom were "working people" i. e. not middle class. I mean during the past ten years.

Now then, the real question or rather the two questions at issue, is the middle class disappearing and is it true that the workers receive only one-fifth of what they produce? I challenge Obenchain or any other socialist to prove either contention.

When Mr. Obenchain talks about our being able to produce six yards of cloth or shoes or anything, when we could only produce one before he seems to imagine that that is all there is to the story. He forgets that we are able to produce more and more, not because we do more and more work, but because we have better machinery and better organization. That is, the inventors and organizers make it possible to do this. And it is the genius of the few that makes possible cheaper production. Capital doesn't receive any greater reward today, dollars for dollars, than it did fifty years ago. On the other hand, labor is paid at least 100 to 150 per cent better than fifty years ago.

In 1837, '57 and '73 we had an unemployed problem the like of which we will probably never see again. Yet the whole stock in trade of the socialist is long drawn calamity howl, to-wit: that everything is getting worse.

According to the "socialist statisticians" labor receives one-fifth or 20 per cent of what it produces, while capital receives four-fifths or 80 per cent. Of course no well informed man believes any such rot, even the New York Worker, the leading socialist organ of this nation replying to an assertion of this kind in the Chicago Socialist said that it was foolish to talk such nonsense, that it simply wasn't true. Perhaps our Texas friend can convince this socialist editor that he is an ignoramus but he won't be able to convince anyone else. Let us see your statistics Friend Obenchain and let us see you demolish those that I have furnished.

It may not do our friend any good to publish more farm statistics but it may throw a little more light on the subject. We find on

page 217 Abstract of United States census for 1900 the following:

Year.	No. of Farms.	Year	No. of Farms.
1900.....	5,737,372	1870.....	2,659,985
1890.....	4,564,641	1860.....	2,659,985
1880.....	4,008,907	1850.....	1,449,073

This shows that the number of farms increased from 1870 to 1900 by nearly 3, 100,000 or a greater per cent than the increase in population. Also we find this:

Year.	Farm Value. (All property)
1900.....	20,439,901,164
1890.....	16,000,000,000
1880.....	12,000,000,000
1870.....	11,000,000,000
1860.....	7,000,000,000
1850.....	4,000,000,000

The census states that the 1870 valuation should be one-fifth less than figures given, etc. See page 217. Or less than 9,000,000,000 in 1870 against nearly twenty and one-half in 1900, showing again that value of farm property increased faster than population. We are not talking about the farm children that are employed in the month of June when the census is taken.

And this reminds me that about every socialist organ in the nation has published it that there were 1,750,000 "little children employed in the mills and factories of this nation in 1900," whereas there were less than 285,000, which is about as near the mark as a socialist writer ever gets.

However, come on socialists with your wonderful statistics and let us see whether you are bluffing or not.

F. G. R. GORDON.

How Trusts Should Be Fought

Mill Creek, Pa., Nov. 14.—To the Editor of The Independent: The socialists and single taxers have a hearing in your columns. I may not see it as they do, but your columns are open to me also. So far as trusts, monopolies, combinations to fix prices and rates and crushing of competition are concerned, I'm with you against them. We must buck their lines as a team. What's the use of one member of Yale's team bucking into Harvard's whole line? The government is our team. The only one we have. The only one that extortion would stop to say good morning to. We can get a hearing from any big combine only through congress. How they do kick against all organizations but their own! "Come one at a time, shippers and consumers, we can swallow you as fast as you can come, but don't come in a bunch. Don't organize. Don't stick together. Don't support a paper that will tell on us, that will expose our methods. It's not legal. It's not constitutional. You have no say so collectively—as a body. We are organized but don't you dare to organize. We won't listen to your representatives even though he be the president of the United States. Japan listens to him. Russia listens to him. All the nations of the earth consult him, but our business is none of his business." How mighty is concentrated capital!

We neighbors used to go "gigging" in olden times. Say five of us. When dividing time came the fish were piled in five lots or piles. One man turned his back. Another put his stick on a pile and said, "whose is this?" The man with his back turned said "Smith's" "Whose is this?" pointing to another pile "Jones." And so on till all fish were divided. But finally Mr. Stout—a great big fellow—able to lick any two of us, moved into our midst. The first time he went fishing with us he carried the fish bag and when we came to divide the fish he commenced by putting his hand into the fish bag and handing us such fish as suited him. He objected to publicity. He wouldn't let us know how many or what-sized ones we had caught. Stout swore he could lick any man who would insinuate that he hadn't divided the fish fairly. There was one fool and coward in our crowd. He took side with Stout. That left us four to two. Three of us tackled Stout and one the fool. Stout, after he was licked, whined that "three to one wasn't fair play." But since the fight we have had fair play in dividing the fish and everybody knows it. Stout was a poor "gigger." The laborer, the farmer, etc., caught most of the fish. We fought Stout as an organization. He wanted to lick us one at a time.

"A government of the people, by the people, and for the people" is the way to divide the fish. Not a government of the people by the trusts for the trusts.

What a political cyclone we are having in Pennsylvania! If the democrats get to building partism out of the debris they will spoil all. The advantage taken of partisan feeling by corrupt politicians, should increase the independent vote and keep it like greased lightning, quick and powerful.

JAMES G. CORBIN.