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## TACTICS OF THE SINGLETAX MOVEMENT.

Condensed from a Speech of Henry George, Jr., in Congress, June 10, 1911, on the Wool Tariff. From the Record of June 14.

In the times of Alexander the Great the Macedonian phalanx was the invincible military formation of the world. It originated in Macedonia before Philip and Alexander, was greatly developed by them, and then was taken up by the Greeks. For centuries it swept all before it. This formation consisted of spearmen. They were heavily armored and carried great oblong shields to hide the body. They bore but one weapon—a spear 16 feet long. They formed in close order, shoulder to shoulder, their spears extending four, six, eight

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and even more deep. Those behind had their spears extended between those in front. They made one solid mass of moving armor and spear points; a formation at first 4,000 men strong, then 6,000, and at last up to 20,000; a great, slowly advancing wall, flanked on either side with armor and spears and likewise backed. Advancing over flat ground, this huge living military machine carried all before it until it tried to conquer Italy. Under Pyrrhus the phalanx went down into the dust before the free formation of Rome. The Roman soldier, carrying his lighter body armor, his smaller shield, his short double-edged sword, was quicker, more nimble, could move over the field in open or close order. But when he met the phalanx he had a new military problem on his hands; spears, spears, spears, a gigantic oblong of spears; whether in front, on either flank, or in the rear. They bristled like a vast porcupine. How was he to get within arm's reach of the body of the Greek soldier, for do this he must use his weapon—the short sword. Then was Roman genius called upon to invent a weapon that should destroy the phalanx. The weapon was produced. It was the pilum, a lance or short spear that could be hurled with great force and accuracy 50 feet or more. Each Roman soldier marked out an individual behind the wall of spears. Watching for an exposed part, he hurled the pilum. If a spearman fell, he made confusion and a breach in the line of spears. That was the Roman chance. The legionaries ran in between the points and with their swords had the spearmen, helpless in heavy armor, at their mercy. One such breach made, there was a wedge-like rush from the Roman ranks and the whole phalanx was destroyed. Thus was Pyrrhus vanquished. The Roman with his broadsword and his pilum became the world's master.

Mr Chairman, the tariff beneficiaries have been the economic and political phalanx for long years in the United States. They have formed one great compact united body. Realizing that they must stand together or be destroyed in detail, they have acted as a mass, their shields spread, their spears advanced; from time to time moving forward to new ground of vantage; making at all times a common bristling defense against all general attack. And so it has been until this Congress. In this special session the method of attack on the tariff phalanx has changed. The pilum has now come into use in this Democratic House. This wool bill which we are now debating; the Canadian reciprocity bill and the free-list bill which we have passed; the other schedule bills that may hereafter pass, are our Roman lances which we hurl at weak points in the tariff ranks. We break down the spears here, we break down the spears there, we make a breach and widen it with a rush, and then the cry in the tariff ranks is each for himself. Small and insignificant as these bills may appear, they carry destruction. Hurling by

the Democratic side in this Congress, the tariff army line will at points be pierced and breached, and the monopoly phalanx which, so long as it could stand intact, was invincible, will end in utter rout and destruction.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I have great joy in voting for this wool bill. I do not regard it as much of a bill, but since it unites the Democratic side in battle order it will do. My preference was to have free wool and free woollens, too. I would have liked the bill to declare for free trade in wool and woollens. But, thank you, I shall take what I can get. I believe that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Brantley) is perfectly right in stating that any tariff at all involves protection. I am against any protection whatever, and therefore, I am altogether against a tariff. I am against a tariff for revenue, for I regard it as one of the worst ways for raising revenue.

But, Mr. Chairman, suppose that we reach a revenue basis; suppose we cut out much of the tariff, how are we to supplement the revenue? I am a Singletaxer. I do not believe in taxes upon any kind of industry, or upon anything that comes from industry. I believe the whole burden of taxation—Federal, State, and municipal—should fall upon monopoly. I believe it should fall upon the mother of all monopolies, upon the earth; upon that value which comes to any piece of land not by reason of the toil of its owner—for all improvements should be exempted—but from the development of the community; from social growth and social improvement.

To tax land values alone is not a mere dream. It is not the utterance of a man so far in the advance of practical affairs as just to be listened to for a brief hour and then be dismissed. My colleagues, it is a principle that is now and here. It is claiming the grave attention, shaping the legislation, of the advanced nations of the earth. It is in the Orient; it is in the Occident; it is in the Antipodes; it is amongst the progressive people to the north of us with whom we are seeking closer ties; it has made a momentous, convulsive drive forward in Great Britain.

*Mr. Norris:* In fixing the value of the land for the purpose of taxation, you would not take into consideration any improvements?

*Mr. George:* As though it had no improvement on it; what it would sell for in the open market. That market price is the sum of advantages in the situation; if there be public streets or other public improvements, for instance; if there be improvements on adjoining lots—all such considerations enter into value.

Up north of us, in Vancouver, British Columbia, they have applied what is called the "single tax." So far as local revenues are concerned, it is a single tax; but it is not the single tax I am advocating, since it is very small in amount—not sufficient to check the great land "boom" now in progress there

in consequence of the exemption of buildings and all other improvements from taxation. As a result, Vancouver has increased in improvements faster than any city in the world. The increase in Vancouver's improvements during the last year was 87 per cent. There being no tax on buildings or other things a man might put on his land, industry and thrift are encouraged. Indeed, there is so much benefit from this policy that land values are rising. There is very active speculation in land. The advantages from the exemption of improvements are likely to be absorbed by land speculation. Against this the people of Vancouver will be compelled to defend themselves by increasing the tax rate on land values. But this aside, the idea of exempting improvements from taxation is spreading all through Western Canada. Wherever tried, it is working most prosperously. And nowhere in Canada, Australia, or anywhere else, is there the least disposition to go back to the old taxes. The people in Washington and Oregon, as you can find if you go out to those States, are looking with amazed eyes at Canada and her exemption of industry from any taxation. Attracted by that, many are going up over the border. Many more will most assuredly go unless those Western States shall adopt a similar policy of exempting improvements from taxation.

Some say the farmers would object to this single tax. This tax is upon land values exclusively. When you come to consider the values in a farm you find that they are largely betterments—improvements the farmer's labor has wrought. Exempting them, the value that remains to be taxed is very much shrunk up. Moreover, speculative value in the land would lessen. Indeed, speculative value would disappear with heavy taxation of land values.

The British budget fight, of which the world has heard, was nothing but a fight with landlords over a tax upon land values. As for the amount of revenue to be raised under this tax on land values, it was preposterously small. Why, then, all the opposition we have read of? Because the lords perceived in this small tax the thin edge of the wedge. Lloyd George and his progressive party were pulling down coroneted landlordism. The tax was small, but British privilege knew its import. The tax was small then, but it is going to be increased, not only as an Imperial tax, but as a basis for local revenues.

So here we have the way made clear to us. Why should we in this country not go to land values for all our revenues? We get part there; why not all? Abolish the tariff and other taxes on production and increase our present taxation on land values.

Is there in any part of the world a greater, more damaging, more damning kind of land monopoly than in this country? A steel trust has vast pos-

sessions. Those possessions form the very core of its monopoly. You will find the roots of most of the trusts in land monopoly. By "land" I do not mean mills, I do not mean railroad tracks, I do not mean anything made by labor. By "land" I mean that which nature offers to man before man has put his hand to it.

*Mr. Sherley:* In that sense, there is practically nothing; there is no value at all until he puts his hand to it.

*Mr. George:* I can have a vacant lot here in Washington, and it may lie just as it was at the time the Indians occupied it. I can sell it for a price. Yet not a stick or a stone has been touched upon it.

*Mr. Sherley:* Yes; it has a potential value.

*Mr. George:* It has an actual value, for value proceeds not only from labor, but also from a power to exact labor.

*Mr. Graham:* Mr. Chairman, in my State, in my section of it, hundreds of thousands of acres of coal rights have been bought up by combinations of capital, and much of the coal can not possibly be taken out, perhaps, for generations yet to come. On the other hand, some of that coal is being taken out from time to time. Now, the two estates in land are separable and are separated, the farmer owning the surface and all but the coal, which he has conveyed to the grantee. Is the grantee's estate there land, as you understand it, or not?

*Mr. George:* I should say that the whole earth is land, whether it be the surface or underneath, or altogether.

*Mr. Graham:* Would you tax the coal right to the person or combination of persons who owned it?

*Mr. George:* I should.

*Mr. Graham:* And so heavily that they could not afford to retain possession of it?

*Mr. George:* On its market value.

*Mr. Graham:* Well, they could not possibly use it for many years to come.

*Mr. George:* Very well.

*Mr. Graham:* How would you make a distinction in that particular acreage from which they were then removing the coal, from the other acreage from which they could not remove the coal for a long time?

*Mr. George:* You are asking me whether I should tax land that is at a disadvantage in production. I should, but not at the value of land having more advantage. That is, I should be governed by the one thing by which men are governed now, namely, the market price. If coal is actually underlying certain lands, but for one reason or another that coal can not be got out and mined, that land would have a distinctly low price in the market; whereas other land no richer in mineral, but more get-at-able, would have a high market price. I should assess the one kind of land low.

the other high. I should place each piece of land on the tax list at its market value, and then tax that value.

But, Mr. Chairman, this land tax does not mean merely a better way of raising revenue, a more economical way, a more direct way, a more just way. It means far more than that. It means the opening to use of vast quantities of land now shut off by speculation. There is no real scarcity of land anywhere. There is no scarcity even in the city of New York. With all its congestion it has been computed that there is land enough inside the corporate limits of the city to give to every head of family from one-eighth to one-quarter of an acre of good ground. I am not proposing to divide the land. I am explaining that there is no such thing as a scarcity of land. There is land enough, but most of it is held out of use. Why is this? Because the penalty of holding land out of use is so slight that men can pay the small tax and yet, owing to social growth and social improvement, and the consequent increase in value, realize handsome profits by the speculation. This is so in every State; it is so in every village, town, and hamlet of our country. Apply this tax and you tax out the speculators, you tax in the users, you produce a new order in the United States.

We have a landlordism greater than Great Britain or Germany or the Orient. We have the greatest landlords that have ever been seen. Should we meet this condition, should we apply taxation to land values so as to break down land monopoly, a prosperity will come such as will dumfound mankind and give to America the glory of carrying civilization higher than ever yet reached in the destinies of the race.

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## BOOKS

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### ECONOMIC HISTORY.

**History of Economic Thought.** A Critical Account of the Origin and Development of the Economic Theories of the Leading Thinkers in the Leading Nations. By Lewis H. Haney, Ph. D., Associate Professor and Chairman of the School of Economics of the University of Texas, Author of "A Congressional History of Railways."

Professor Haney attributes the beginning of economic science to the French Physiocrats of the Eighteenth Century; but he reviews the progress of economic thought through many centuries and in many countries. An excellent bird's eye view of the subject, and that is all that can be asked of a single compact volume, this book cannot be easily dispensed with by any person interested in political economy. Professor Ely has collaborated in its preparation, and the atmosphere of his influence is evident. But the

author's own individuality has not been submerged.

One of the great values of the book is indicated by the author's reason for prudence in prophecy. "It would ill-befit," he writes toward the end, "an account so full of recorded errors, to venture upon dogmatic predictions." Full of "recorded errors"! That is certainly a pat characterization of the economics of the schools, and quite significant of the confession some future historian of like candor will have to make of the economic "scientists" of to-day. But making predictions tentatively, the author awakens a hope that the scientific economists whose rejection of moral considerations have threatened to reduce the science to the level of business bookkeeping, have had their day and are about to drop down and out.

Although Professor Haney names the distinction between business economy and political economy as "public" economics and "private" economics, there is no ambiguity. "A closely related distinction," he says, "that between public and private economics, appears to be increasing. The growth of college courses and literature along the lines of private finance and semi-technical commercial subjects points this way. The term 'political economy' might almost be rejuvenated to designate public economics, the branch which would take the social view point. Private economics takes the individual view point in defining wealth, and income, and costs." Never was any immature science more wretchedly bedeviled than the science of political economy has been by scientists of the individual view point. Good riddance to such rubbish, and something like a cheer for the economic professor who predicts it, though only tentatively.

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## PAMPHLETS

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### The V. L. C. S.

A business only three years old. Pays 400 per cent on investment. Has 2,600 shareholders and a long waiting list! It sounds like a bunco game, but it is simply farming—Joseph Fels' gardening in the city of London. The Vacant Lots Cultivation Society has just issued its third modest little report, which, along with those for the two previous years, tells the story of a very wise object lesson in public economics in the guise of a most successful charity. Sixty-five acres of idle city land has been lent by the owners, and thereon \$25,000 worth of vegetables—and any amount of health and happiness—have been raised by 520 men and their families.

A. L. G.

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I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living; that the dead have neither power nor rights over it.—Thomas Jefferson.