

THE PITTSBURGH LEADER FOR THE SINGLE TAX.

For months past the *Pittsburgh Leader* has given a generous share of its columns to communications from Single Taxers and Socialists. The former have had occasional clashes with the latter, but have more than maintained their own. Among those who have contributed more than one forcible argument to the controversy are such well known Single Taxers as J. D. McDade, J. B. Sharpe, C. B. Powers, John A. McLaughlin, Henry Rawie, Dr. Burleigh, L. P. Custer, H. W. Noren, J. C. Barnes, Gunnar Nau- maun, and many others.

On December 15th the *Leader* announces its own acceptance of our principle in these words, commenting upon Mr. Carnegie's argument for the inheritance tax:

"The land belongs to the people, and the users of it should pay to the whole people the actual use value of it. Their profits from the use of it would be their own and they could do as they please with it without dodging the tax collector or perjuring themselves when he happened to catch them.

The income tax that Mr. Carnegie condemns would undoubtedly make many men liars and perjurers. But they are liars and perjurers now under the present system of taxation. They dodge the tax collector when they can and swear falsely when they cannot.

The inheritance tax would also be dodged. Instead of disposing of his property by will or under the intestate laws of the state the dodger would make both real and fictitious transfers of his property during his lifetime.

When the tax collector would call around after the panegyric had been delivered and the obsequies reverently performed he would find that the deceased died a comparatively poor man; that in the generosity of his heart and in his laudable desire to be his own executor he had in his lifetime put all of his property in the name of his wife and children.

But he could not dodge the land tax. He would have to pay that or the land would pass into the possession of some other man who would pay it.

And he would still have to pay his share of that tax even though he did not own a single foot of land. He could not live without using the land. He could not live without the products of the land. He might not pay anything directly into the common treasury if he owned no land, but he would pay to the man who did own the land, or to the man who supplied him with products of the land, who in his turn would have to pay to the owner of the land. The community would then collect from the land owner."

We congratulate the *Leader* and all those who have so energetically responded to the call for letters on their splendid work.

WHAT SINGLE TAXERS ARE DOING.

Hon. Herbert Quick, Single Taxer, novelist and ex-mayor of Sioux City in an interesting letter in the *Daily Tribune* of that place reviews the progress of our movement, and in conclusion tells his readers what some prominent Single Taxers are doing in the fields of political and literary activity. He also speaks of good work for Fairhope indicating that its success is all the more remarkable in view of the obstacles it must overcome. James A. Hearne however, has been dead these five years.

"I know of but one purely Single Tax paper in this country, the *Single Tax Review*, of New York, a quarterly. Louis F. Post, George's old right hand man, is a member of the Chicago school board, the author of the new and debated promotion plan, and editor of *The Public*, which is not a Single Tax paper, but "a journal of fundamental democracy," which never loses a chance to say something for the Single Tax. Henry George is dead, but there is a path worn by pilgrim feet to the grave in Greenwood cemetery, where rests the remains of the greatest teacher since Jesus. Tom L. Johnson is engrossed in practical benefits for Cleveland, and working for his faith as an ultimate object. John S. Crosby is practicing law, and making Single Tax lectures. Ernest Crosby is writing for magazines. John Z. White is lecturing on Henry George and related topics. Hamlin Garland is turning out a novel a year and getting rich—but he still clings to his radical notions. Edward Osgood Brown is on the bench in Chicago. Judge Maguire is practicing law in San Francisco, as is C. E. S. Wood, of Portland. Bolton Hall is writing books and selling suburban property as adjuncts to his big law business on lower Broadway. Henry George, Jr., is writing politico-economic books, and has given us a novel. Dan Beard is running a magazine. William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., sticks pretty close to the Single Tax. L. F. C. Garvin serves a term as governor of Rhode Island once in a while, all the time fighting Aldrich. Henry F. Ring, the author of "The Case Plainly Stated," is after Joe Bailey's scalp in Texas. Senator Bucklin is trying to redeem Colorado from the domination of the railroads and mining companies. Warren Worth Bailey is running the *Johnstown Democrat*. J. W. Bengough is drawing cartoons in Toronto. Robert Baker is trying to get back into congress from Brooklyn. James A. Hearne, author of the Single Tax play, "Shore Acres," has retired from his successful career as an actor. Augustus Thomas is America's premier playwright. Willis J. Abbott is on the Hearst payroll. An interesting article might be written on the Single Tax school of writers and artists. The important part of it all is that they each and all are centers of infection for the George philoso-

phy, while active along lines identifying them with the common life and thought of the time.

LET US GATHER FACTS.

What shall Single Taxers do to most rapidly and effectually advance their cause? After twenty six years labor in the work I am of the opinion that what is most needed to-day is accurate and reliable information concerning all the facts necessarily involved in proving our case.

The average person is far more likely to be impressed by a fact than by a principle. Nearly all can comprehend a fact, but not many an abstract principle of justice. Few care much for justice if they think it adverse to their own interest, and are indifferent to any reform in which they see nothing of personal interest to themselves or their class.

On the contrary, a fact, a business fact, impresses even the most stupid or selfish. If this fact shows a person at a glance that it is to his interest it should not exist as a legal or industrial fact he sits up and takes notice. From knowledge of a fact that is injuring him he is led to a knowledge of the principles involved. He will know why such fact exists to his injury and study the remedy.

In an argument in favor of Single Tax principles one needs facts to refer to as evidence and he needs evidence that they are facts. In twenty six years experience as a speaker and writer on this topic, I have observed that a well proven fact never fails to interest an audience and make clearer a principle.

Many facts familiar to economic students and of unquestionable reliability are received with skepticism by a majority of an average audience, unless absolutely proven when stated by documents then in the speaker's hands.

In addressing an audience of farmers or business men in small towns, a true statement of the relative values of their land-holdings and of their share of taxation for national, State and local governments is so utterly contrary to what they have always believed as to cause them to distrust the speaker's intelligence or honesty. Profoundly ignorant of city, mine, forest and franchise values, but with an exaggerated conception of the value of stocks and bonds, bank shares and money, as well as ignorant of the incidence and shifting of taxation, they consider farmers the chief owners of land values and that other classes of people own nearly all the personal property. While the speaker may know—or believe—that the Single Tax would shift much of public burdens from the country to the cities and from the poor to the rich, a bare statement to this effect is apt to be received with astonishment and derision until supported by the best of proof. Such proof given,

that audience is astounded and at least partly converted.

What we need is an authoritative manual of the real, the income producing values, of all the different classes of farm, city, village, mine, forest and suburban lands and of the wealth of the owners of each class, their annual incomes and ratio of taxes to income, together with the shifting or incidence of taxation clearly explained and proven.

Such facts are all strongly in favor of the rental value tax and appeal directly to the self interest of a vast majority of the people. Once convince the average man that he is being wronged and he becomes a fighter for the reform that will relieve him of the wrong's effects. He also learns for the first time to respect and demand just laws. How shall we gather the facts and have them compiled? I leave this for others to say, but all Single Taxers should help by investigation in their own locality. Perhaps a commission to apportion and direct the work would be well and another to digest and compile it.

W. H. T. WAKEFIELD.

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ANOTHER CURIOSITY OF TAXATION.

A gentleman by the name of Bradley, of Springfield, Mass., on refusing to pay a tax bill of \$3 for having the street in front of his property sprinkled, has been served with a peremptory summons. His house is bounded on three sides by woods and on the fourth by a brook.

Mr. Bradley cannot avoid the payment of taxes by "taking to the woods."

"OWNS" THE UPPER END OF MANHATTAN.

Mrs. Laura E. Keels, of Chicago, Ill., has set up a claim to about an acre of land running along the Harlem River from east to west. The grant came down through Governor Nichols and from the family of Thomas Dongan, Governor of the Province of New York in 1668. King James authorized the last grant.

Comptroller Metz says (he speaks sarcastically, no doubt) that he has nothing to do but to investigate such claims, and he will see if the lady has any right to the upper end of Manhattan.

Mr. Metz's jest is ill-timed. The title is quite as good as hundreds of others which are recognized to-day. Are not the greater part of the residents of New Jersey paying rent to a few others because Queen Anne (was it Queen Anne?) gave New Jersey to the Duke of Essex? Is it unreasonable to assume that perhaps Mrs. Keels claim is as good—that is, as valid in law and morals? Spencer told us that land titles were founded