

to the *philosophy* of Henry George. I have won befuddled Single Taxers themselves to the philosophy of Henry George.

A prominent representative of The National City Bank of New York, in a private letter, writes: "I read George's 'Progress and Poverty,' which is the Bible of the Single Taxers, when George ran for Mayor, and was impressed by it . . . until I came to realize that as an actual fact real estate has very little unearned increment. The theory is kept alive but I think it has receded rather than gained ground since that time." He speaks about land as wealth, about rent arising from land and buildings, and jumbled everything together as "real estate."

An editor of national reputation writes: "What you suggest is something like what we used to call the Single Tax, as a remedy for the evils of these times. For many years I contributed more money than I could afford to the Single Tax Association, helping to keep a lecturer in the field. Apparently the association has gone by the board. I still think there is something to the theory."

Would the way to "perfect freedom" have been obscured for these men, had the philosophy of Henry George been preached, as was the Single Tax, which has come to be widely recognized simply as "another *tax* idea?" I could quote from a long list of similar expressions.

In this issue, without correction or objection, you quote Dr. Copeland's statement that "The Single Tax is the natural law of taxation." Yet, is not *any* tax, any *form of taxation*—a man-made contrivance for continuing the iniquities which George hated with righteous hatred—a violation of *natural law*?

You comment at length upon Mr. Ingersoll's campaign for governor of New Jersey, in which, however worthy his intentions may be, he stultifies the philosophy of Henry George, by identifying a shifting of twenty-five per cent of taxation of the State to land values, or its reduction by that much, as the Single Tax.

Why adopt the technique of "Taxationists"—a mere shifting, reduction, of taxes—when it is the entire abolishment of taxes that we wish to accomplish; when we have an uncompromising, refutable truth to oppose against them?

I would not deny that some people arrive at a perception of the philosophy of Henry George from thinking upon the "tax that is no tax," but, to the mention of the Single Tax many question: Oh, that's the tax scheme they tried in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc., which proved a failure?"

They do not, nor cannot, say that to a direct presentation of the Georgist philosophy, as I conceive it, and as I have repeatedly presented it, for instance:

God made all the land there is—at least, no *man* made it; population as a collective group made all the land *value* there is; and men and their labor made all the wealth there is. Yet, legally, we let individuals claim to own God's earth, we let them appropriate to themselves in rent and selling price, the population's land value. In consequence, we compel the confiscation of individual wealth through taxation, to provide the public improvements and services which individual enterprise, make all the value any land has; and worse, we let these individuals keep other people off the earth by knowledgeing their claim, by acquiescing in the appropriation, and submitting to the confiscation.

"How many times must this be said?" Should we not begin boldly to say it, and forego the confusion which the Single Tax creates in the minds of so many?

Eugene, Ore.

W. R. B. WILLCOX.

REPLY

This expresses so well the views of many of our friends that we are glad to give it space.

To begin with we think Mr. Wilcox and those who share his views are needlessly concerned as to the embarrassments imposed on us by the name Single Tax.

The name is defective, it is true. But so is every other name so far suggested. The difficulty seems to be inescapable.

It may well be doubted whether it is possible after fifty years to change the name of a movement—of any movement. And any name we can think of requires the same kind and degree of explanation and elaboration that the word Single Tax demands. Its understanding requires an education in a new philosophy of economics, in a new understanding of life, of society and its functions. No name is inclusive enough to confine all it connotes. No label can enumerate all its content. That is the defect of the name Single Tax, but it is the defect of any other name that might be or has been suggested.

So much for the defects of the name—now for its advantages. It is the name we are known by. Quite a large proportion of the people know that the Single Tax is what Henry George proposed in "Progress and Poverty" but which turns out to be no tax at all. On examination they will discover this; to them at least the name after a while will not seem of any great importance.

Then the name has this advantage. It defines the method. It was the name adopted by the French physiocrats for the somewhat analogous system they proposed. Besides it is *single*, entailing the abolition of all other taxes, and on examination will be found not to partake of the character of a tax at all.

But *in form* it is a tax. By the people, for the most part, it will be known as a tax in form. And assuming it to take legislative shape it will be known as "Tax Bill, Number so and so." We do not think that the name creates confusion in the mind once the mind is squarely directed to it. The instances quoted by Mr. Willcox of the somewhat muddled inquiries of his two correspondents are not to be attributed to the name but to something entirely different.

We think it is clear why the followers of Henry George grow impatient with a name that seems to confine their speculations to a tax problem. The implications of his teachings are so far-reaching, so embracing, that the name Single Tax or any other name is wholly inadequate. In the Henry George School under the direction of the late Oscar Geiger the use of the term was infrequent. It was used only when necessary, and it often is necessary.

Can one, after all is said, confine any philosophy to a name? The wise Goethe said that the highest cannot be spoken in words. More truly, a great philosophy cannot be defined in a single term. Democracy, for example, defies definitive interpretation. And an all-inclusive name for any philosophy, including the philosophy of Henry George, seems impossible, or at least is not forthcoming. So we are compelled to use the name that has been thrust upon us. Let us use it only when necessary, and then with caution and reserve, remembering it is a condition and not a theory that confronts us.—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.

NEWS NOTES AND PERSONALS

MRS ELIZABETH N. PHILLIPS, of Clarendon, Va., writes: "The current number of LAND AND FREEDOM is the best I have seen. I am preparing to set all things aside soon and devote myself entirely to our cause. I have never been in a better position to do it and the time has never been so ripe for action and results. I am deeply shocked and grieved at the death of Oscar Geiger. But it is very heartening to know of the excellent spirit of determination shown by those associated with the School." Mrs. Phillips, as many of our readers know, is the inventor of "The Landlord's Game" placed on the market several years ago.

THE *Standard* (Single Tax) of Sydney, Australia, tells us that Rev. Dr. Norwood, of London, was a recent guest of the Henry George League of Sydney, and stated in his address that he was without equivocation a believer in the doctrines of Henry George. He had believed in them since boyhood. His address evinced a hopeful outlook for the future and Dr. Norwood has traveled extensively.

WE have received Number 7 of the *New Zealand Commonwealth*,