

The Square Deal

WE CLAIM THE EARTH AS THE PROPERTY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE.

To the individual, the values created by his own industry, without taxation.

To the community, the values created by the community for revenue.

Vol. XXIX, No. 254

TORONTO, MARCH, 1932

50c. per year, 5c. per copy

Reform Proposed in Norfolk

The Norfolk County Chamber of Commerce have passed and published a number of resolutions dealing with assessment matters. One of these recommends that for the present a rate of four per cent. per annum should be levied on the unimproved value of land and that the rest of the required revenue be raised by a rate on other assessable values. (This would be an improvement in most cases, but would work badly in some municipalities where the present rate is above 40 mills—Ed.) The resolution continues: "It is submitted: that when this has been done, and the true assessable value of land throughout the province has been ascertained with reasonable accuracy, the application of the principle can be extended by increasing the tax on land value and proportionately relieving all kinds of industry of a large proportion of the burden which they now have to bear."

Another recommends the exemption from taxation of all forest growth, whether natural or artificially planted. "Considering tree growth in the same light as a farm crop—the latter is not taxed, then why should a timber crop be taxed?"

Thursday Evening Meetings

At recent Thursday evening meetings held at 68 King Street East, Toronto, the following were the speakers:

Feb. 11—Mr. L. B. Walling, who gave a review of Part One (Economics) of the book "Spiritual Law and Economics Harmonized," by Walter L. Sinton, San Francisco (1930).

Feb. 18—Mr. Charles Kerr. Subject: "What (Rev.) Mr. Hahn Did Not Tell Us" (at Massey Hall meeting, Feb. 14).

Feb. 25—No meeting, owing to Annual Meeting in same week.

March 3—Mr. E. J. Farmer. Subject: "The Servile State," commenting on the views set forth in the book of that title by Hilaire Belloc.

All these addresses proved most interesting and helpful, as did also the discussions following.

Toronto reader, have you a friend whom you would like to interest in sound economics? Bring him (or her) to the next meeting. It will do him good, and you too.

Thursday, April 7, 8 p.m.—Speaker, Mr. M. H. Van Valkenburg. Subject: "A Plan for Abolishing Poverty." A lively discussion assured.

The Gospel of Plenty

By A. C. Campbell.

I venture to suggest to my fellow-believers in the Single Tax everywhere that we have reached a turning point in our movement.

Until people's eyes were opened by the shock of the present depression, the first proposition of the Henry George philosophy was denied, or at least not accepted. That proposition is covered by Books I and II of "Progress and Poverty," which books deal with the problem of economic production. George held that this problem had been settled by the many inventions and other improvements made up to his day, there being ample means of production to meet the needs of all the people. To establish this view he had to meet and disprove the belief, current at that time, that as population increased production did not increase in proportion, so that, beyond a certain stage, poverty for some people was inevitable. George declared the very opposite, that, under free conditions, the greater the population the greater the possibilities of production. Progress, according to him, brought abundance, not poverty. He preached what I call the Gospel of Plenty.

While the great multitude of scholars clung to the old belief, they could not overcome George's reasoning, so for the most part, they let it alone but soft-pedalled their advocacy of the scarcity theory.

But now the fact of plenty is so plain that people do not need to consider theories about it. The sudden change from relative wealth to widespread poverty in the existing depression was like the effect of an earthquake or a conflagration, but people could see, without being told, that though the effect was the same the cause was quite different. The good old earth is still here, with all its stores of raw material and with all its forces of growth still working; and the machinery, methods and skill for the turning of raw material into products for human use are still available. Why then this sudden, widespread poverty? Besides, there is no real lack of anything; on the contrary there is an overplus of everything—too much food, too much clothing, too much housebuilding material, and all the rest.

Since George's time, when the electric light and the St. Gothard tunnel were among the wonders of the age, we have had the most wonderful half-century, in economic production, in all the history of mankind. If George, by force of insight, could visualize plenty in his day, surely any man with eyes in his head can

(Continued on back page)

THE SQUARE DEAL

A JOURNAL OF DEMOCRACY
Published Monthly

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ERNEST J. FARMER | Editors.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yearly 50c.
Half-yearly 25c.

Address all communications to

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TORONTO, MARCH, 1932

FOR A MORE BEAUTIFUL CANADA.

We are in receipt of an article from the Canadian Horticulturist Council advocating the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers to beautify our surroundings, with all of which we are in hearty sympathy. But one of the strongest deterrents to the beautifying and improving of property is our unjust system of taxation which assesses improvements of all kinds, so that the better a man does for his country the worse he is treated by the assessor. Beautiful surroundings will add to the charm of a neighborhood and will increase the taxation paid by the owner.

If a man keeps a vacant lot for a dump for dead cats and old tins, his assessment is kept low. Evidently in the eyes of the law, it is a deadly sin to do any useful thing with land and he is punished accordingly. When our system of taxation is changed so as to charge a man the same tax for holding land idle as for putting it to the best use, there will be no need to urge people to beautify their surroundings, and in addition the unemployment problem will be solved.

The Manufacturers' and Merchants' Federal Tax League (Chicago) have published a 15-page folder advocating the abolition, by 20 per cent. stages, of all taxes on buildings, improvements and personal property in Cook County, including, of course, the City of Chicago. To put over such a reform in so great a city, especially in one so crook-and gangster-ridden as Chicago, will be a herculean task; but Emil Jorgensen and his associates are men of such energy and ability that it cannot be pronounced hopeless.

Mr. George Cartwright writes from San Francisco to remark that Oregon fishermen are now required to affix a one-cent stamp to each deep-sea crab. He remarks: "This is done while the crab is still alive. The crab kicks about it and so does the fisherman."

"As a consistent supporter of a protectionist policy, I now have to confess to a great deal of disillusionment. I have no hesitation in saying that the tariff has not solved our industrial, commercial or unemployment problems."—Senator Reid in the Senate (Australia).

Too many women are the slaves of fashion, and too many men are the slaves of women, says Mr. Justice McCardie (our bachelor judge), to which we would add: All landless men and women are the slaves of the Land Lords.—*The Commonwealth*.

Report of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Single Tax Association of Ontario was held at the Headquarters of the Association, 68 King St. E., Toronto, on the evening of Feb. 23rd. The President, Mr. Charles Phillips, was in the chair.

The following Executive Committee was elected: Hon. President, Henry Knight (St. Catharines); President, Charles Phillips; Vice-Presidents, Arthur W. Roebuck, Ernest J. Farmer, Dr. Stanley T. Floyd; Secretary, Lorenzo B. Walling; Treasurer, Alan C. Thompson; other members, Fred W. Armstrong, Mrs. W. E. Barker, Miss Dorothy E. Coate, G. R. Hubbard, Mrs. G. R. Hubbard, Walter J. Ingram, Charles Kerr, Sanford Leppard, Mrs. S. Leppard, John Linden, John A. Martin, Dr. W. A. MacLaren, Miss M. Q. Ollerhead, Miss Janet Scott (Agincourt), W. A. Scott, Dr. Frank N. Walker, Wm. R. Williams.

A motion was passed designating the second Thursday evening of each month as the regular Executive Committee meeting night. Members please take note.

The treasurer reported total receipts of \$2,554.98 for the fiscal year ending Oct. 1, 1931, with disbursements of \$2,463.72, leaving a balance on hand of \$91.26.

Owing to lack of space, the secretary's report is being held over for our April issue.

Mr. M. H. VanValkenburg read a paper setting forth an elaborate scheme of a decidedly socialistic type for promoting general well-being; its discussion was deferred until some favorable occasion at one of the regular weekly meetings. (See front page.)

Mr. D. M. LeBourdais then addressed the meeting on the subject: "Why Aren't We All Single Taxers?"

Declaring that the present economic order had so broken down that it was obvious even to the stupid, Mr. LeBourdais asked why it was that so few people were concerned with finding a solution.

In attempting to find a reason for this public apathy, he advanced the theory that the longer a social or an economic custom or system has endured the more it is likely to be encrusted with tradition, and the harder it will be to change it.

As a contrast, he referred to the eagerness with which people accept, and even welcome, change in the field of what he termed our "mechanical civilization". "We hesitate," he said, "to buy a radio to-day for fear that to-morrow a better one will be produced; we trade in our 1931 car for a 1932 model while it is still 1931—and we are quite confident that the new one will be an improvement upon the old. No one prefers his grandfather's buckboard, but if any one suggests a social or economic idea that did not prevail in the time of one's grandfather, one is in danger of being denounced as a dangerous radical."

To-day there are over half a million men and women out of employment in Canada, he said; over three hundred thousand persons were put in jail in Canada during the past year; and in the mental hospitals there are thirty thousand men and women. These are all evidences of social maladjustment. What are we doing about it?

More than fifty years ago—when the world was passing through a similar period of depression—Henry George evolved an economic theory which, if it had been adopted, would very largely have pre-

vented many of the evils which now afflict the world.

Why has not Henry George's scheme been adopted? One reason, he said, was the inertia of people insofar as new economic theories is concerned, already referred to, but there must be some further reason perhaps inherent in the Henry George scheme itself. Mr. LeBourdais felt that the name "Single Tax" was an unfortunate one. People were not primarily interested in taxes, and he thought it a pity that a scheme which was in reality a social philosophy, should be handicapped by being characterized as merely a taxation scheme.

The speaker said he could not agree with some Single Taxers in treating Single Tax as a panacea for all our economic and social ills, but he did think that it was the logical first step in the transition from the present profit system to one based on production for the benefit of the community as a whole.

He said that he thought the attitude of some Single Taxers in their insistence upon individualism in opposition to co-operative effort was a mistake. The individual could not be isolated from the community. He said that he also felt that the hostility of some Single Taxers to Socialism was a further mistake. While the term, "Socialism," included a great many schools, there was no doubt, he thought, that, taking the world over, Socialism, meaning a scheme of production and distribution based upon the common good, was making greater strides than any other system of economic philosophy. He therefore felt that the greatest service that Single Taxers could contribute would be to help bring about the nationalization of land values as the first step in the transition from our present system to the Socialistic state which seems inevitable in the more or less near future.

Mr. LeBourdais' address provoked considerable discussion, including brief addresses by Mrs. Barker and Messrs. Farmer, Ingram, Kerr, Martin and Thompson. Along with considerable dissent from some of Mr. LeBourdais' Socialistic views, there was expressed appreciation of his main argument.

Man Friday's Revolt

In our November number we printed, from the pen of S. Danzinger, a story of the depression as it hit Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday, throwing Friday out of work and compelling him to live on the refuse left by Robinson's cat and dog. We are now pleased to present the sequel as related by John S. Codman, of Boston:

"Good morning, Master," said Friday. "it was truly charitable of you to let me have a place to lie down last night. I got no sleep, but I thought hard about my problem."

"And what did you accomplish?" responded Robinson Crusoe.

"Master," said Friday, "is it true that the principles of the Declaration of Independence have been accepted by us on this island and, therefore, that each one of us has a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?"

"Most assuredly it is true," replied Crusoe.

"And," continued Friday, "is it true that you and I as citizens of this island have equal rights and equal opportunities, and that our votes count equally?"

"Why, of course, my dear Friday, all of that is essential to liberty, and we should be thankful that

we live where true liberty exists and no one is a slave."

"I appreciate that, Master, but at the same time your title to the island gives you great power over me. I cannot work for myself anywhere on the island without your consent, and that consent you won't give because I can't pay you anything. Therefore, I am obliged to ask work from you, but all you offer me as a job is the carrying of your garb—"

"Friday," interrupted Crusoe severely, "it appears to me that your ideas are radical if not seditious. Are you criticising the institutions of your country? Do you intend to try and change them by the use of force and violence?"

"Oh, no, Master, certainly not! I believe in law and order and would make no change except through the ballot. But you know, Master, in your title to the island you hold a valuable privilege for which you ought to pay."

"Privilege! Nonsense!" burst in Crusoe. "Don't you know that a landlord has worries and responsibilities? Don't you realize that it is I who furnish the land for you to work on or, in other words, it is I who give you a job?"

"Yes, I understand, Master, but just now you won't give me a decent job with a living wage and you won't let me work for myself. Now I have a plan which will remedy this condition."

"I see," shouted Crusoe, "you intend to divide up the land, to deprive me of my property. Such a proposal is Socialism. No! it is worse. It's Communism."

"Oh, no, Master," returned Friday, with a slight smile. "I am merely proposing for our vote a practical measure. It is that land owners shall be required to pay to the community an adequate rent for their land, in return for the exclusive use guaranteed to them by the community. In our case, as you are the sole land owner, you will pay rent for the whole island to the community, which means to you and me jointly. We can use this rent for community purposes, that is for what we jointly desire to accomplish. And you see, Crusoe, that you will have to cultivate more of the land than you have been doing in order to earn the rent you will have to pay; and in order to extend the cultivation adequately you will have urgent need of my services. Then you won't be able to drive such a hard bargain as you did last night."

"How dare you even suggest such a proposal? And how dare you call me 'Crusoe'? Your plan amounts to confiscation of the value of my property. But fortunately confiscation of property without due process of law is prohibited by our Constitution."

"'Confiscation' is an ugly word," said Friday, quietly, "but with the present arrangement it is you, Crusoe, who can and do confiscate what I produce. And as to 'process of law' there will be no lack of it under my plan. You know that you and I together forming the whole community of this island, have the lawful right to levy taxes, and if you object to paying rent directly as rent then it can be taken instead as a tax on the value of your land properly assessed."

"And," continued Friday, "this island is not overpopulated. It only seems so because you won't let me use it. There is plenty of room for many more persons who can all have land to use, or good jobs, once your power to withhold land from use is ended."

"Neither will there be over-production when each gets what he produces, or its equivalent in wages, instead of piling up a surplus for you to waste or destroy. And when all are employed, who will fear the competition of foreign goods? They will only come here in exchange for what we produce, and if the foreigner insists on taking very little in exchange or in other words 'dumps' his goods or gives them to us, we shall be only too glad and can take life easy."

"Well, I have half the votes and I won't support your measure," angrily exclaimed Crusoe as he rushed away.

"But I have half the votes and will insist on my measure. Good-bye, Robbie."

And then Friday, with a broad grin, proceeded to plant his own crop and build his own house. And that was the end of depression and unemployment.

Death of Henry Knight

The death occurred on March 3rd, at his home, 6 Woodruff Ave., St. Catharines, Ont., of Mr. Henry Knight, Honorary President of The Single Tax Association of Ontario, who had just been re-elected to that office at the Association's Annual Meeting on February 23rd.

Mr. Knight had been in failing health for some years. He was born in England on May 7th, 1855, and came to Canada when a boy. He was the second settler at Burks Falls, where, with his brother, he engaged in lumbering, building up there a large and successful business. In 1929 he moved to St. Catharines, where he has since been living in retirement. Besides his widow, Mrs. Dorothea Egerton Knight, he is survived by one son, David Henry, now attending Bishop Ridley College, St. Catharines.

Mr. Knight, who was a liberal supporter of the Single Tax movement, well expressed his position on the land question in the following excerpt from one of his letters: "I am a staunch believer in the common right to God's Great Gift to mankind, the Land and the contents thereof. How habit, ignorance, and to some extent mercenary politics have worked together to deprive the masses of the people of the proper use of it, and produce Progress and Poverty growing side by side! I am an ardent believer in the teachings of Henry George, who shows the cause of the abuses that now oppress us, and in the means of cure he advocates."

The funeral was held from his late residence on March 5th, with interment in St. Catharines cemetery. Among the many floral tributes was one from The Single Tax Association, which organization was represented by its secretary, L. B. Walling, who was one of the pall bearers.

To the family and relatives of our late colleague *The Square Deal* extends its sincere sympathy.

The Gospel of Plenty

(Continued from front page)

see that, with production speeded up by a thousand new inventions and discoveries, the idea of scarcity of anything in 1932 is preposterous.

Manifestly and beyond question this is an age of plenty, the "Good Time Coming" to which generations of mankind have looked longingly forward, is

actually here. The followers of Henry George knew this fifty years ago, because they understood and believed the logical demonstration in two books of "Progress and Poverty." The most unobservant can see it to-day.

Henry George went through the labor of putting forward the impregnable argument that disproved the then universal belief in dearth as the inevitable outcome of social progress. It was on the basis of this proof of the existence of plenty that he made the investigation which revealed the central error of a privately-owned earth and enabled him to put forward the Single Tax as the first necessary step in course of remedies for the ills of society. We, his followers, could not follow this course in our practical work of making known his proposals. We had to leave out the long preliminary argument and state briefly, and as convincingly as we could, the existing wrong and our proposed remedy.

Now we can proceed differently. Everyone knows that plenty exists. Even the laborer who, unemployed, seeks a job or stands in the breadline demands, "Why should I want in a world of plenty?"

But we cannot assume that because overwhelming facts have demonstrated the truth of Henry George's opening words, therefore the common man will follow the further reasoning by which the Single Tax is established. Old habits of thought persist even in the face of new-learned facts. The gods of superstition have their temples, priests and worshippers long after they themselves have been repudiated. The man in the breadline is convinced that plenty exists, but it is not easy for him to reason correctly from that fact while holding his place in the line.

We have the new and unexpected advantage of declaring our faith to a world already converted, as by a miracle, to the first principle of that faith. I propose that we use this great opportunity. If we can make the people see clearly that plenty is the natural condition of a progressive age, we shall be able to lead many to understand that the Single Tax is the natural remedy for existing ills. I propose that we preach The Gospel of Plenty.

Secretary Addresses Meeting

On the evening of Feb. 17th, Secretary Walling, of the Single Tax Association of Ontario, addressed a meeting at the residence of the Misses Janet and Margaret Scott, R.R. 1, Agincourt, taking for his subject "The Farmer's Economic Problem."

The meeting was arranged by Miss Janet Scott, who is doing a splendid work in teaching the principles of the Single Tax to the young people of her neighborhood. About 20 were present, a fair proportion of whom were young people.

In a letter to the secretary, Miss Scott writes: "Again let us express our appreciation of your splendid address given here at our home. It has created a great deal of interest and we feel sure it will prove to be the beginning of a clearer understanding of Land Value Taxation and all it involves."

Editor's note: We would recommend to all readers of this paper, in Toronto and vicinity, who have the accommodation, the holding of such neighborhood parlor meetings. The Association has a number of capable speakers, one of whom would be available at any time to address such a meeting.