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Single-Tax Colony in Alabama Still Follows Henry George Theories

Established as Corporation in 1894, It Has Big Land Holdings, Leases Its Property Up to 99 Years.

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FAIRHOPE, Ala., April 7—

Here, on the east coast of Mobile bay, is one of three single-tax colonies that have survived from the days of Henry George. It was established as a corporation under the laws of Iowa in 1894. It owns one fifth of the land on which the town of Fairhope was built and considerable acreage in this vicinity.

All of the single-tax corporation's land is leased for terms up to 99 years and those who sign leases are free to develop the property as they choose within decent limits. The corporation pays all taxes to the city of Fairhope and the state of Alabama. The renters pay their own income taxes.

Henry George Theories.

The interesting fact about this single-tax colony is the persistence of its devotion to the theories of Henry George known to most Americans as a picture on a cigar box bearing the slogan "I am for men."

Henry George was born in 1839 and died in 1897, five years after the Fairhope colony was established. His great work, one of an infinite number of treatises, was entitled "Progress and Poverty," the bible of the single taxers.

Henry George believed that justice and expediency alike require abolition of all ordinary taxes because they violate the sanctity of private property whenever they exceed the cost of public services rendered. Ordinary taxes, he said, penalize property by reducing profits and wages and discouraging all enterprise of capital and labor.

A tax on ground rent takes for public use only that value which has been created by the public, was Henry George's main thesis.

Fundamentally, Henry George declared as a doctrine the equal right of all men to the use of the earth. It was not an original the-

ory but his precise statement of a method by which it could be enforced without increasing state machinery gave it new form. This he called the "single tax."

Land Value Tax.

The single tax is not a tax on land but upon the value of land. A tax on land would fall most heavily on farmers, but a tax on the value of land falls most heavily where values are greatest.

Henry George believed that the land of every country belonged of right to all the people of that country. He would have abolished all tariffs, protective or for revenue, and with the establishment of universal free trade he believed that the cause of aggressive war would be removed; universal employment encouraged and thereby the strongest guarantee of permanent peace.

Those who follow Henry George condemn the income tax as unjust because it falls upon a minority of the taxpayers. They say it is confiscatory because it does not provide equivalent services and is inquisitorial in practice, complicated, penalizes thrift and discourages the accumulation of wealth.

Although the world has moved away from that upon which Henry George looked in his life time, his theories are still highly regarded and benevolently followed by the Fairhope colony. Those who lease from the single-tax corporation point to the fact that its whole administrative staff consists of two men who draw between them \$7048.93 a year. The corporation office and administrative expense totaled in 1950 just \$1139.96.