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# COMMON SENSE

Published Occasionally  
For the benefit of those who have  
the courage to think

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## NEWS AND COMMENT



## GROUND RENT

BY

SAMUEL PETERSON



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"Give a man the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden; give him a nine-years' lease of a garden, and he will convert it into a desert."—ARTHUR YOUNG.

### A WORKING PROGRAM

The present system of taxation is almost universally condemned. The General Property Tax broke down fifteen years ago in Texas, failed to meet the general revenue needs and has been supplemented since by various and sundry taxes on business. The excuse for these burdensome occupation and gross receipts taxes is that we need and must have more money. The effects of these business taxes are added costs of production, checks on business and increased cost to the consumer.

In place of the "uniform rule" of taxing "all property" we propose the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution providing, that "all land" shall be assessed for taxation. We want to emphasize the fact that "no tax shall be imposed on personal property or on improvements in or on land." The proposed amendment will leave to the Legislature the power to impose an inheritance tax; income tax on natural persons and corporations other than municipal; and also very properly leaves to the Legislature the power to levy occupation taxes upon persons and corporations whose business comes within police powers.

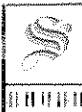
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## NEWS *and* COMMENT

Business men must be well educated in social and economic matters, as a large percentage of them have been attending luncheon clubs every week for years and listened to learned dissertations on current problems or exchanging views at side among themselves. Luncheon clubs have grown into national and international affairs. Their annual conventions command front page space, yet somehow in spite of all these continued activities business does not seem to improve nor is the individual business man surer of his place. As a matter of fact, it seems to be getting just a little harder to get by.

Roger Babson, in his address before the Associated Advertising Clubs at a recent conference at Atlantic City, said that "several hundred retail merchants in the United States would be better off as bricklayers and plasterers rather than to continue in their present positions." A good many of them probably wish they had a good trade but it takes long apprenticeship to learn a highly skilled trade, and even then there are many hazards for the skilled craftsman. Anyway, Babson's clever phrase carries no solution of the business men's trouble.

He is quoted further in a much more important statement when he said, "There are 1,500,000 retail merchants in the U. S.; 100,000 are prosperous, 400,000 doing fairly well, and the remaining million are struggling along." If the retail merchants of America serve a useful purpose as distributors, then something is radically wrong when two-thirds of them are at the margin of existence and less than 7 per cent of them working on a safe margin.

It would seem that something more is needed than Luncheon Clubs, "expert" advice, Chambers of Commerce and other such conventional boosting.

It might be well for this harassed business man to do a little thinking and figuring on his own account. Experts say that we are producing about 65 bil-

lions of wealth annually. Eight billions and more goes for taxes; nine billions goes for ground rent and five billions for interest. Here is one-third of all our total wealth produced paid before we have anything on which to live. This drain is too heavy. Producers and distributors cannot stand this drain of taxes and ground rent. What we really need to bring relief is to take more of this ground rent for public use and tax industry that much less. There is no need to give the arguments for this here. You can discover them if you look for and care to find them. Otherwise just keep on joining booster clubs and go broke.

The Manhattan Single Tax Club, 226 West 47th Street, New York, sends this information:

"We are still maintaining our activities here 100 per cent. As you probably know, this is the oldest single tax club in the world, founded by our beloved and revered leader, Henry George. It has, of course, been subject, like all human instrumentalities, to ups and downs, and is now, after many years of hard work, a very efficient, effective and active instrument. We have a very comfortable and completely equipped office in the centre of New York City. The speakers of our lecture bureau are busily engaged in teaching the American people what taxation really is, and how it ought to be administered. We keep a large amount of literature on hand that can be purchased, borrowed or read, and we distribute yearly a very large amount. This distribution is done with judgment so as not to waste our ammunition."

One of the lecturers for the Manhattan Single Tax Club is that veteran apostle of single tax, Louis F. Post, late Assistant Secretary of Labor of the United States. Texas would be fortunate if it could have Mr. Post tour the State this fall and winter.

The most significant move in a quarter of a century is the coming "International Conference on the Taxation of Land Values" to be held at Oxford, England, August 13th to 20th. Representatives will be there from almost

every country of the globe. The American liner "Manchurian" has been chartered to carry the big delegation from the United States. Argentine, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Australia, Germany, Hungary, Norway, and no doubt many other countries will be represented at the great conference. We hope that Texas will have a representative there, although we have no positive assurance now that she will have.

The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values of Great Britain is another example of persistent, intelligent work. This organization has carried on educational work for more than thirty years. There are many subsidiary organizations throughout the kingdom. To those who expect immediate returns England would have seemed hopeless as a field for single tax work, yet these sturdy, hard headed Britishers have maintained a continual fight for a just solution of the land question since Henry George first visited the tight little Island in the early 80's. Their unflagging work should be an inspiration to every hesitant and faltering single taxer in America.

### THE BRITISH RUBBER TARIFF

It was announced recently that President Harding would soon recommend that money be provided for an investigation into the possibilities of producing rubber in American territorial possessions. Back of this simple proposal lies a curious chain of circumstances. The United States consumes half a billion pounds of rubber annually, which is about seventy-five per cent of the production of the world. Seventy per cent of the rubber produced comes from possessions of Great Britain. A few months ago, about the time the negotiations for "refunding" the British debt were beginning to appear in the news, the British government clapped a graduated export-tax on rubber, ranging as high as twenty-three cents a pound. By a curious coincidence, as a financial writer in the New York World pointed out, the subsequent increase in the export price of rubber, when multiplied by the number of pounds of rubber annually consumed in the United States, gives a sum equal to the interest on the British debt, figured at 3 per cent.—The Searchlight.

## DIGEST BRIEFS

Those 50 Dutch farmers who have come to America to escape high taxes would probably go to the Great Dismal Swamp in order to get away from low, wet ground.—Nashville Southern Lumberman.

When it comes to increased taxation this proposed tax on wine and beer is about the only tax we can think of that will put the country in good spirits.—Manila Bulletin.

The idea of the subsidy is to pay our ships for bringing to this country what our tariff won't let in.—Dallas News.

Jack Spratt could eat no fat, his wife could eat no lean. You see, they spent their money for the jitney's gasoline.—Fresno Republican.

The tumult and the shouting dies, the captains and the kings depart; still stands thine ancient sacrifice, a taxpayer with a bleeding heart.—Baltimore Sun.

Too many patriots claim to be supporters of the Government when they are merely holding it up.—Oklahoma City Times.

Business is doubtless sound, as the experts say, but the sound is a little mournful.—Richmond News-Leader.

After statesmen have tried everything else, they give up in despair and do the sensible thing.—Bethlehem Globe.

Backbone won't get you anywhere, however, if the knob at the top of it is made of the same material.—Muskogee Phoenix.

CONSERVATIVE: One who believes in the things forced on the world yesterday by radicals.—Edmonton (Canada) Journal.

Instead of abolishing the \$2.00 bill how would it do for the Secretary of the Treasury to find some way to make it worth two dollars?—Boston Transcript.

Money has wings, but it is not a homing pigeon.—Toledo Blade.

Scientists say we are what we eat. Nuts must be a commoner diet than we had thought.—Greenville Piedmont.

Those Chinese bandits would make more if they came over here and operated in sugar.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

By raising the price of sugar the speculators were poaching on the housewives' preserves.—New York Tribune.

A concession in Turkey is a small body of oil land entirely surrounded with hot water.—Shreveport Journal.

# GROUND RENT

By SAMUEL PETERSON

What is Ground Rent? Well, here is an illustration instead of a definition. I have lately moved to a certain town, and desire to build a house. There are vacant lots here and there, and I finally form a preference for one. I go to the owner and ask him the price of the lot. He says, \$1,000. I have the \$1,000, but I answer that I don't care for the title, all I want is the exclusive use of the lot; I know that I can invest my \$1,000 so that it will, after paying taxes, etc., net me 4 per cent, or \$40 year after year; so I say, "I will pay you \$40 every year if you will let me have the exclusive use and control of your lot as long as I want it with the right to put anyone—to whom I will sell my improvements—in my place on the same conditions; if your lot becomes more valuable, I will pay more rent at the same rate of 4 per cent; if it becomes less valuable the rent is to be lowered to 4 per cent of its value; the value of the lot, or the amount of rent, is to be determined by what anyone else would be willing to pay for its use." After thinking a moment he says, "All right, provided that you pay all the taxes, at present \$10 a year, so that I may receive the 4 per cent as a net income from the property. Just so I get the \$40 a year, it makes no difference to me whether I get it from a piece of land or a sum of money."

Now, the amount I pay every year to the owner, together with the amount of tax I pay, is the GROUND RENT for that lot. It is the total amount I pay out for the exclusive use of that lot, whether I pay it to an individual or into the public treasury. It is the amount that lot, on account of its location and surroundings (and apart from any improvements on it), is worth to anyone.

Those who advocate the single tax say that instead of paying \$40 to the owner and \$10 to the State, the whole sum of \$50 should be paid into the public treasury. Their reasoning is that inasmuch as the value of that lot is due entirely to the people—the individual owner never having done anything to give it value any more than anyone else—the whole advantage OUGHT to go to the people.

I am not a single tax advocate; I am a "professor" and "professors" must not be advocates, though they may be exponents. However, we "professors" are most earnestly searching for economic principles, principles which, applied or operating in our social system, will be most conducive to the social welfare. And I want to ask—I am not advocating, I am merely inquiring,—what is the matter with the above principle? I am not worrying about the details at present; they belong to the art of political economy, and, as we all know, must be worked out by experiment and experience. I merely want to know if there is anything scientifically wrong with the single tax idea; does it, or does it not, harmonize with the fundamental principles of economics? If it does, then it is only a question of time and effort when the details of the system may be successfully worked out. If it does not, why not?

There have been conditions under which private ownership of human beings has been conducive to social progress; when those conditions changed the institution of slavery, by action of social laws, was forced to disappear. There was no destruction of social wealth, and the industrial processes of creating wealth continued better than before. One man served another after as well as before, only the relation was changed from one of ownership to one of contractual control. There is no doubt whatever but that private ownership of land has been of incalculable benefit to the race in its struggle for social progress. But the question is whether this condition will continue, or whether we shall reach a point where continued progress will demand a change from ownership to contractual control. The fact that our present high level of civilization rests upon private ownership of land is not conclusive; Greek philosophers believed slavery even more necessary to a higher civilization than it was to theirs.

I think it must be admitted that that system of land tenure—or relationship of the individual to the land—is the highest which allows the land to be best utilized. Under a system of contractual control, based on com-

petition, it would seem that the land must tend to get into the possession and under the control of those who could and would make the best use of it; just as labor now gets into the control of those best able to use it—not those who may have inherited it, as under slavery. I know there is a tendency now for land to get into the hands of those best able to use it, just as there was under the slave system a tendency for labor to get into the hands of those best able to use it; but does not the system of ownership hinder this process in the one case as it did in the other?

Of course the system of land tenure must have regard to the stage of social evolution reached. Higher forms of social organization are not only useless, but harmful, if introduced on lower stages of social growth. And right here is the point where single tax or land nationalization advocates should devote their efforts: to show that our country has reached, or is gradually entering upon, a stage where their system will be more conducive to social progress than the present system, to show that we have advanced to a point where a higher system is demanded. As for economists, it seems to me that their first duty is simply to determine whether there is a higher system, and, if so, what it is. Men devoting themselves to pure mathematics go on developing the abstract science and discovering principles regardless of whether these principles are of any immediate practical application; those working in applied mathematics, however, as they advance, find more and more application for these abstract principles, which act as guides. An army uses scouts in an unknown region to save it from wearisome marches and serious mistakes. So I believe it is the duty of economists, not only to study the phenomena of the past and present, but having done this, with the scientific basis thus obtained, to go on and discover principles that lie ahead. As to the time when those principles may find application in our social organization, that is, for the economist, a secondary matter.

Now, is our present system of private ownership of land the highest form, or is the system of land nationalization higher? To begin with all men were free: slavery came in when one man desired to direct the efforts of others—organization: in process of time it became possible to have organization—to have one man direct the efforts of others—

without slavery; and our present system with all men free is certainly higher than the slave system. To begin with all land was free—free from hereditary titles, or titles which could be transferred from one individual to another without the mediation of the social organization. In moving one to higher stages this freedom of the land was gradually done away with, the land was turned over into the permanent bondage of individuals, to do with as they liked, as with their slaves. Why should there not be a higher system on a higher stage of civilization—a system in which the land shall again be free, free to the possession and control of those who can use it best for the social good?

### LETTER TO A MERCHANT

This letter might have been written to any one of 5,000 hardware merchants and lumber dealers in Texas.

"Dear Sir: I am in receipt of yours of recent date in which you say that: While the benefits of single tax to the farmer and laborer are obvious you do not see the advantages to the retail merchant.

"Your letter head shows that you are a hardware merchant and that you run a lumber yard. From other sources I learn that the town in which you live is located in one of the best agricultural sections of the State, and that a majority of the farmers are tenants. Landlords spend as little as possible for improvements. Tenants spend practically nothing, so your books necessarily show that your country customers are nearly all owners of small farms.

"The first effect of single tax would be to wipe out landlords, and convert tenants into small farmers. Doubling the number of small farmers would double your country business.

"The second effect of single tax would be to promote improvements of all kinds, both in town and country. Money would seek investment in untaxed improvements while the increase of taxes on unimproved lands and lots would force improvement. The effect of both would be to increase your business in both hardware and lumber.

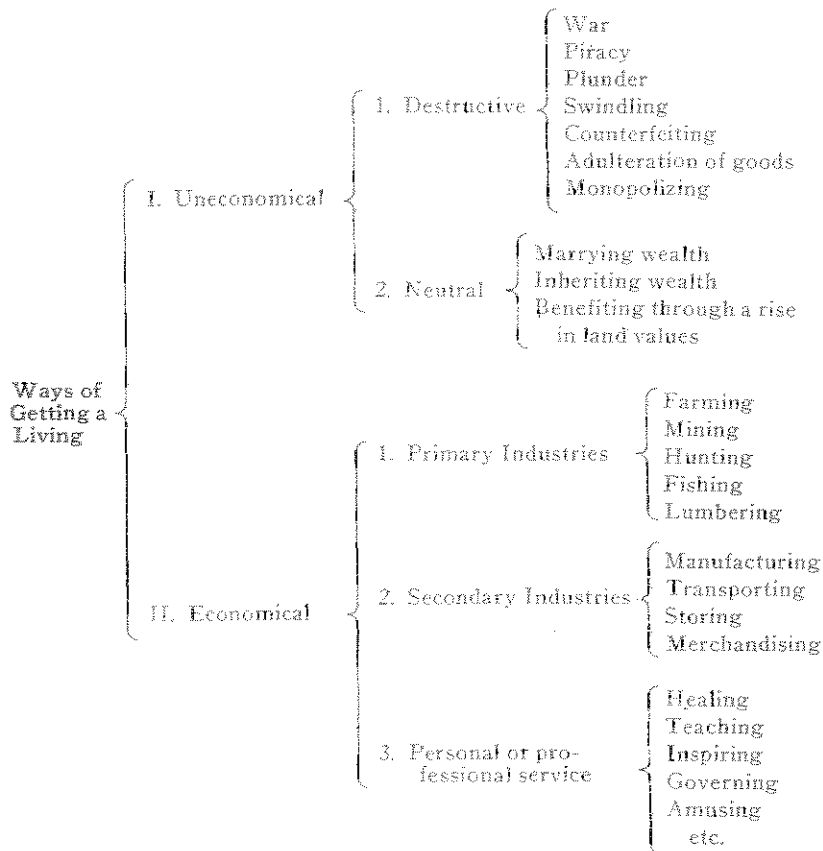
"In fact, for selfish reasons alone, aside from the benefit to the community, I do not see how you can afford not to be a single taxer."

"There are two things," said Socrates, "that the magistrates of Athens will be careful to keep out of our city, opulence and poverty. Opulence because it engenders weakness and effeminacy; poverty because it breeds baseness and crime. Both because they lead to revolution. One cannot exist without the other. They are the two extremes of one evil."

## A STUDY IN ECONOMICS

Some years ago Professor T. N. Carver of Harvard University wrote a little volume entitled "Principles of Rural Economics." It dwelt mainly on details of production and sale of farm produce and the little things that make for successful agriculture. However, the professor seemed to see a little beyond these details, as shown by the diagram given below. We are all interested in getting a living and trying to find out how to do it. We want to do it honestly if possible, but get it we must in some way.

By careful study of Professor Carver's diagram you will find that the great majority of people are using "economical" means of getting a livelihood. Our problem is how to do away with the "uneconomical" ways both "destructive" and "neutral."



If you are in dead earnest to help get better living conditions you will want to keep this chart as a reminder.

### EXEMPT ALL CREDITS

The cry is still going up against tax exempt securities. This plea is based on the theory that all wealth should be taxed. Occasionally we hear a more reasonable discussion that takes the ground that it is unfair to exempt some credits and tax others. Wealth should all be taxed or none. This theory approaches the crux of the question.

All know that credits are not wealth but merely an evidence of wealth. A note given for a hundred head of cattle has not added any wealth to the world. Bonds issued on the assets of a railroad or industrial plant are not in any sense wealth but merely the evidence that the corporation has wealth back of these securities so that on the theory that all wealth should be taxed the effort to tax credits fails.

However, the most important fact is that any tax on credits is paid by the borrower and the borrower not only pays the tax but also pays the cost of collection and more in addition. The only relief from the present situation is to enlarge upon our policy of tax exemptions. Texas could take a big step forward by exempting from taxation every item that is merely an evidence of debt.

Here is the list of credit items taxed as taken from the Comptroller's last report:

Money of Banks and Bankers.....	\$ 7,577,789
Credits of Banks and Bankers.....	4,933,878
Money of other than Banks and Bankers .....	9,211,420
Money on Hand or on Deposit.....	26,485,084
Credits of other than Banks and Bankers .....	34,793,776
Bonds and Stocks .....	1,470,110
Shares of Capital Stock Companies .....	1,855,698
State and National Banks.....	82,006,970
Total.....	\$168,244,725

It may be roughly estimated that the State, Counties, Cities and Districts collect about six million dollars a year from this source. While we are collecting this six million dollars in taxes how much additional interest are we paying because of these taxes? Only a few days since a prominent banker in answer to the question as to the effect of exempting bank stock and credits said that 6 per cent at the most would be the prevailing rate of interest. Many other bankers have said the same. It costs business in Texas at least twenty million dollars in added interest because we insist upon getting six million taxes from our banks and other owners of credits.

Who are interested in changing this? Do you think the bankers are? There are many individual bankers who would like to see business relieved of this load but they are estopped from saying a word. The very moment the banker would begin to talk about exempting capital and surplus of his institution he would be accused of selfish interests.

The same accusation would be brought against any money lender. Discussing this question last year with the president of one of the largest banks in the State he rather boastfully remarked that his bank paid nearly \$200,000 taxes in all, and when I asked him if the bank pays, he smilingly replied, "Well, our customers do."

This banker will remain indifferent unless aroused by a popular sentiment. As long as the State insists upon collecting these taxes he will collect them from his customers and rest easy. Why should he worry? Then he enjoys the satisfaction of being credited in the community with being a heavy taxpayer. There is a great deal of comfort to some to pose as a heavy taxpayer when it doesn't cost them anything.

The reason ideas die quickly in some heads is because they can't stand solitary confinement.—Associated Editors, Chicago.

A true conservative is one who can't see any difference between radicalism and an idea.—Baltimore Sun.

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municipal services and charge each rate (tax) payer with sections of equal value a uniform rate, regardless of the use made of them. A newspaper would not think of charging its advertisers according to the business derived. So why should local authorities rate (tax) according to a possible income? When a man buys a section he takes into account the number of people passing, which gives an index of possible customers for him. Similarly when he buys a space in a newspaper he takes into account the circulation or the number of readers' eyes scanning the pages of the newspaper. This is the index of possible customers to be obtained. In both instances, as in a theatre, he pays according to the site or situation. As in the paper and the theatre, temporary occupation does not confer permanent ownership, so the occupation of a section does not relieve a man from his obligations to the community for civic services; the unimproved value of a section being a reflection of these services, a rate (tax) thereon is fair and equitable.

Send your name and address and Common Sense will come to you regularly. Send the dollar if you can.

"If the size of fortunes is taken into account, it will be found that perhaps 95 per cent of the total values represented by these millionaire fortunes is due to those investments classed as land values and natural monopolies, and to competitive industries aided by such monopolies."—PROF. JOHN R. COMMONS.

Correspondent suggests that one way to send sugar prices down might be to send the profiteers up.—Pittsburgh Sun.

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## AMBASSADORS OF TRADE

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We used to call them drummers, then traveling salesmen, but now they are ambassadors. Of course, their primary work is still to sell goods for the firms they represent, but in addition to this they are news gatherers. They gather the news of business conditions, prospects throughout the country and freely exchange information with comments among themselves. They are loyal to firm, home town and State. They are for the most part young men, full of enthusiasm and ambition, dynamic forces to be used for trade expansion and efficiency in business.

Our cities have recognized the power of this industrious group and organized them for better work. Very naturally they must know the goods they sell and the goods of their competitors. They must know their firm and its methods of doing business; their home city and its facilities for handling trade. However, their interests are much wider than these. They gather every night in the hotel offices and hold an Open Forum on business conditions. They discuss international affairs, national, State and local politics, transportation, banking, organized labor and the farmer. They settle the fate of candidates even though they are divided as much in opinion as are the people who stay at home. If this terrific force of gray matter could once be centered on some one thing for the general good it would prove almost irresistible. Merely boosting one city only meets a similar force boosting another city. Growth in population does not necessarily mean prosperity. In fact, the larger our cities become the more intense the struggle. As one business man stated it tersely after years of boosting; he had accomplished two things, trebled his rent and brought in four competitors. As a matter of fact, our cities are becoming overgrown at the expense of our rural population. More than 51 per cent of the people of the United States now live in cities, and

it is worth repeating that the larger the city the harder the struggle.

It would be fine if these "ambassadors of trade" could get and keep in mind a few hard facts as taken from our census reports. They, as everybody else, know that the farmer is having a hard fight for existence. He is in a rebellious mood and determined to find the cause of his troubles or else he will quit altogether and let us go hungry and naked. Statesmen promise and are helping to get cheap money, but our farmers are already in debt to the limit.

Here are some facts that the boys on the road would do well to know, and use. There are fewer "owned farms" in Texas, free of mortgage debt, now than there were in 1890. In 1890 there were 119,000 "owned farms" or 94.3 per cent free of debt. In 1900 the number had increased to 125,000 but only 76 per cent of total of "owned farms." In 1910 there was still a slight increase to 128,000 although the percentage had decreased to 65 per cent. In 1920 we had fallen down to only 105,000 "owned farms" free of debt; 52 per cent only. This is a startling record and should make the leaders of industry take pause to find the underlying cause. It is foolish to draw an indictment against the farmers of Texas for idleness and indifference. They are just as anxious to succeed and provide comforts for their families as the most ambitious business man.

The statement as to the number of farms mortgaged does not tell the whole or the worst of the story. The amount of this mortgage debt is even more appalling. The average debt per farm mortgaged in 1890 was \$899. The average mortgaged debt in 1910 was \$2,984 more than 300 per cent increase. In connection with this statement as to increase in mortgage debt, we find that farm land values alone have increased from an average of \$4.70 an acre in 1900 to \$28.46 in 1920. It costs six times as

much for interest on capital value of land to own a farm in 1920 as it did in 1900. Another item that every business man should understand, and that is the relation of this capital value of land to improvements, implements and machinery and livestock. Buildings, implements and livestock are the active capital of every farmer, but they total but \$9.54 per acre as against \$28.46 for the capital land value. No industrial concern, wholesale or retail could long exist with that proportion of capital in land or site value to the capital used in business. The best authorities on business properties agree that improvement values to be profitable must at least equal the lot value. What would be the condition of agriculture in Texas if these figures given above were reversed, if the farmers of Texas averaged \$28.46 per acre in improvements, implements and livestock as against \$9.54 per acre in capital value of land? If such were the case there would be no farmer problem. The farmers would be home owners, in the main free from debt and there would be no tenant problem.

The tenant is here, increasing in number and growing poorer. Again taking U. S. Census Report, the percentage of farms operated by tenants covering 40 years is as follows:

1880 .....	37.6%
1890 .....	41.9%
1900 .....	49.7%
1910 .....	52.6%
1920 .....	53.3%

It will be seen that the increased tenancy parallels reduced farm ownership and the increased mortgage debt. These facts do not follow from overcrowding. Texas is barely scratched. There are one million families in the State. We could give a half acre of ground for a home site to each family in Texas in Bexar County, have one-third of the land of the county left for roads and highways. This would leave all the rest of the State for farming and business. This statement, though grotesque, is true to the facts. There is room and to spare for ten times the present population. As a matter of im-

mediate interest we ought to plan today for double our present population before another generation passes. He is a poor statesman who does not give thought and plan for the tomorrows.

Forty-five thousand boys come of age each year in Texas; 60 per cent of these are farm boys as that is the percentage of rural population. Of this 60 per cent or 27,000 boys more than 20,000 of them come from tenant families or those of mortgaged farmers. The more ambitious of these see little hope on the farm and naturally drift to the cities, but these are not the only ones coming to our cities. The mortgaged farmer when sold out comes to the city for refuge. The less efficient tenant, those at the margin, are also drifting in. Unfortunately these latter rarely make good workers. Most of them are good only for the odd jobs.

This is not a pleasant review but nevertheless a true condition and must be faced. What are we doing to remedy it? Nothing. More than once it has been urged that the State help finance the would-be farm owners. If we did not know the economic facts stand against this proposition we would have at least the experience of many places where this has been tried and failed. There are 240,000 tenant farmers in Texas right now. If we undertook to help 10 per cent of these a year it would reach into figures approximating war time expenditures. Then we must add to this percentage of tenant farmers a reasonable number of those more than 20,000 boys that come of age that must have a start. The still more important factor in such a proposition is that any effort on the part of the State to buy and distribute land would raise the price of every acre in Texas, that is already too high. This has been the experience whenever effort in this line has been made.

We commend these facts to the thoughtful attention of our business men. They would do well to make them the subject of the most serious consideration in all their organizations. These "ambassamodrs of trade" should know them and carry some message of hope

to every nook and corner of the State. Texas is rich in natural resources that should be opened to use and not to monopoly. Some change must be made and it should be made in such a way as to bring the least disturbance to social and business order. To those who understand, the simple way is through taxation but we rarely adopt the simple way until we have tried without success every artificial means to remedy an evil. We need a certain amount of revenue for State, county and cities and schools, and if this revenue were gathered wholly from land values and all products of labor whether personal property or improvements were exempted it would not be long before improvements and personal property on the farms would equal or double that of the capital value of land. Then we would have contented farmers and farms would be homes as they should be. The same would be true in our cities. More actual home owners with fewer heart breaking mortgage debts. Producers would be able to keep more of the wealth created and a just distribution would be automatic. This may seem a day dream but one that is confirmed by the facts and approved by reason when once understood. It means the elimination of slums in city and on farm. It means better schools, better roads, better churches and above all a better home life. Civilization itself depends upon a just remedy for the evil that now threatens it.

#### SINGLE TAX LEAGUE OF TEXAS

Organized March, 1916

##### OFFICERS

John W. Gaines,	C. A. Teagle,
Chairman	Vice-Chairman
City Nat'l Bk. Bldg.	Union Nat'l Bk. Bldg.
San Antonio, Tex.	Houston, Tex.

J. M. Penland,	J. B. Lewright,
Vice-Chairman	Treasurer
Waco Drug Company	434 Moore Bldg.
Waco, Tex.	San Antonio, Tex.

Wm. A. Black, Executive Secretary  
225 West Poplar Street  
San Antonio, Texas

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I pledge that I will contribute

\$..... a year, payable.....

This pledge to stand until the purpose of the League is accomplished or notice of withdrawal given.

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Signed .....

Street or Rural Route.....

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Singletax League of Texas  
225 W. Poplar Street  
San Antonio, Texas  
Wm. A. Black, Exe. Sec'y.

## *Try Judge McCloskey's plan for Saving Taxes*

AUGUSTUS McCLOSKEY

County Judge  
Bexar County  
San Antonio, Texas

June 7th, 1923.

Hon. Oscar L. Dancy,  
County Judge, Cameron County,  
Brownsville, Texas.  
My dear Judge:

In reply to your wire of June 6th I am attaching hereto a letter from our County Auditor showing the condition of our accounts as far as our roads are concerned. You will note that we have only issued since 1903, \$2,750,000.00 in bonds, of this amount we still owe \$2,003,350.55, and this is approximately our entire road indebtedness.

We have constructed 218 miles of hard surfaced roads out of Uvalde Rock Asphalt. In addition we have 480 miles of Gravel Roads in the County.

Our County has had a great deal of experience in Road building, with everything from Sand Clay to Rock Asphalt. Our Engineer has had a very wide experience and a wonderful training. After our various experiments we have found that THE Road for this climate is Rock Asphalt (Uvalde).

The big factor in a road system is maintenance. We have found that the maintenance of a Uvalde Rock Asphalt Road is almost nothing as compared with other materials that we have used. We have adopted the system of providing for maintenance of our roads by setting aside each year a sufficient amount to keep up any patching along the edges of the pavement and (by the way, 80 per cent of our maintenance is along the edges of the road, as we have no curbing) then either send two men and a truck to do the work or have some contractor do the work on a cost plus basis. In this connection will say that the Austin Road, one of the heaviest trafficked roads in Texas, is paved with Uvalde Rock Asphalt, originally put down in 1917, it has had slight repairs since then and last month we sent a contractor out to repair all worn or bad places on a cost plus basis. This bill was \$156.00 for the 14 miles.

Let me pass this observation based upon our experience. If we had all our roads paved with Uvalde Rock Asphalt, our Auto License Fees would be all the tax needed to maintain every road in the County, and we could reduce our tax rate from 62 cts. to 47 cts.

Last March when the bond market was good and we accepted a proposal to refund all of our bonded debt that was subject to a ten-year option and reduced the rate of interest from 5 per cent to 4% per cent and at the same time changed the form to a serial bond payable 1-30 each year. By doing this we will pay something over \$700,000.00 less in interest than under the original form of the bonds, to my mind a clear saving of over \$700,000.00. I may ask the taxpayers to vote another bond issue of the amount of that saving and put curbs on our most important roads.

Judge, when I say Uvalde Rock Asphalt, I do not refer to any particular Company, either contractor or producer. There are several Rock Asphalt mines in Uvalde County and there are several contractors who have laid the material in this County and are still doing so. As we lay 20 miles each year without a bond issue, I merely refer to the Rock Asphalt that is mined and shipped from Uvalde County. I make this statement so you will see that I am not boosting any particular concern but only a certain material which we think has enables us to build up the splendid road system we have and can be maintained at a cost of such a small sum that we can continue our program.

With my kindest personal regards and assuring you of my high appreciation, I am

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) AUGUSTUS McCLOSKEY,

County Judge, Bexar County.