

Taxing Land Values

WHEN the question for taking land values for public use is up, three general conditions are involved.

First, is the consideration that the owner of land is a trustee, having no moral right to continue holding it if he does not use it well, and, therefore, that he cannot complain if he is so heavily taxed on its value, that he must either use it well or give it up.

Second is the consideration that the value which attaches to his holding, simply as a holding, is a profit wholly apart from the profit attaching to its use, the latter being earned and the former unearned by him.

Third is the consideration that this value, unearned by him, is earned by the community wherein his holding lies. It is the financial expression of communal growth, communal progress, communal advantages, in so far as access to his land is necessary for their enjoyment.

Upon these three considerations the value of land belongs in justice to the community, as a whole, and not to land owners as individuals. It is a value that rises and falls with communal growth, and not with the so-called owner's industry. It is a value which depends upon and belongs to the community of today, and which, therefore, no government of the past could justly sell or give away in perpetuity. It is a fund which comes to the land owner, not as owner or user, but as a trustee for his community. To the extent that he is allowed to appropriate this value in addition to the value of his own earnings, to that extent are the rest of the community deprived of their earnings.

The attempts of governments, now gaining headway, to recover land values by means of taxation, are in the direction of justice not against justice. This will more clearly appear, the more the subject is discussed.

Nor do they intend to "destroy the basis of property and society," as beneficiaries of the "unearned increment" of land assumed—not of just property, nor of democratic society. If persisted in and extended they will save democratic society by eliminating the essential virus of all privilege, and make property secure by basing property rights upon usefulness instead of exploitation.—The Public.

FARMERS BUY AUTOMOBILES

If civilization has been featured by the age of horse and steam power, it is now embellished with an automobile age. The marvelous discovery and application of electrical power has developed the telegraph and telephone. Electricity is also utilized in mechanical traction in propelling street cars, interurban railways and driving horseless vehicles. Half a century ago if one had predicted that vehicles would be driven over the streets of cities and rural highways without horses it would have been considered a mechanical impossibility, but today its wonderful realization has made it cease to be a novelty.

Farmers, when automobiles first made their appearance, regarded them as toys and luxuries of the rich, and considered the intricacy of their mechanism would debar them from general use. It has taken years of automobile construction to develop a perfect and durable machine suitable for business as well as pleasure use. It is the business feature of automobiles that appeals potentially to the patronage of the farmer. Agriculture is a practical business and farmers as a class have eliminated luxuries from their profession.

The bulk of automobiles in operation in cities are in the luxury class, as they are maintained only for pleasure riding. It is one of the most spectacular features of the city boulevards to see the hundreds and thousands of automobiles passing in an almost endless procession, filled with people out for a pleasure ride.

There is nothing too good for the farmer, and he only has to be convinced that a machine has some practical utility to become a purchaser. Distances are great in the country, and it is often a trying day's work to drive the family carriage to town. Horses are almost as valuable as motor cars, and the farmer needs their services in agricultural operations, and as a matter of economy finds the auto-

mobile a good investment in saving both time and the wear and tear of valuable horses. First the residents of cities and villages used the automobile, but today they are in use by many of the most progressive farmers for both business and pleasure. The farmer does not drive his machine with the reckless speed of the city operator, and accidents are almost unknown among rural automobilists. The saving of time and the small operating expenses are increasing the popularity of motor vehicles as a part of farm equipment.—Farmers and Drivers Journal.

SOME GOOD THINGS

"The Land Reformers' Handbook," by Joseph Edwards, London, England, contains some real good things, e.g.:

"I wonder sometimes what truth there is in the bald statement of the American statesman (or was it a member of our own House of Lords?) that 'the laws of every country are quite good enough for the damned fools who live under them and allow them to continue. There is at all events much food for reflection in the statement for many of us in this country.'"

"One man, in one year, as I have understood it, if you lend him earth, will feed himself and nine others."—Carlyle.

"Dick Turpin is blamed—suppose—by some plain-minded person for consuming the means of other people's living. 'Nay,' says Dick to the plain-minded person, 'observe how beneficently and pleasantly I spend whatever I get!' 'Yes, Dick,' persists the plain-minded person, 'but how did you get it?' 'That question,' says Dick, 'is insidious and irrelevant.'"

"Morality knows nothing of geographical boundaries, or distinctions of race."—Herbert Spencer.

"What gives reality to ownership, what makes it a valuable and precious thing to many people, is that we have hitherto associated with it the power of guiding the destinies of the estate, of superintending its development and improvement, and, above all things, the right to select the persons to be associated with the proprietor in the cultivation of the soil."—Lord Lansdowne, 14th August, 1877, in House of Lords.

"You, who shall liberate the land will do more for your country than we have done in the liberation of commerce."—Richard Cobden.

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The right to select involves the right to reject. With Lord Lansdowne & Co. selecting persons to occupy the land of England and Sir Thomas Shaughnessy & Co. selecting persons to occupy the land of Canada the question naturally arises—What is to become of the rejected? Verily, those that own the earth own the people that live on the earth.—F. J. D.

"A human being is the only animal that pays rent."

If the advocates of good government really wish to succeed, let them help to abolish the causes of involuntary idleness and poverty. Make the masses of the voters prosperous and independent of the few offices to be doled out to political partisans, and there will soon be an end to the evils which the "Good" reformers are trying to cure.—Boulton Hall.

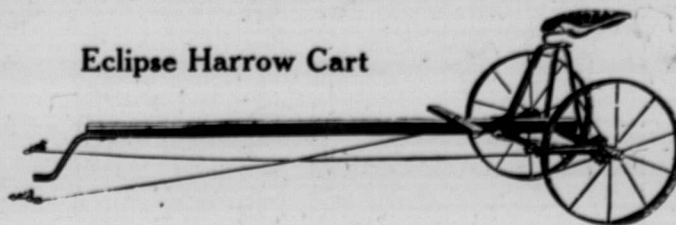
The profit of the earth is for all.—Eccle.

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