

The Mail Bag

QUESTIONS ON TAXATION

Editor, Guide:—As I see several writers to your Mail Bag page refer to the writings of Henry George I would like some of them, yourself included, if they can answer some of the questions that occurred to me in regard to the single tax on reading his pamphlet "Protection or Free Trade." I was almost converted to support single tax until I read it, and though I believe with him as to the tariff and think a change from indirect taxation imperative, his plan to destroy the selling value of land suggests the questions, viz:—

1. As he says the tax (or rental) on land now believed to be owned privately is gradually increased "till it reaches as near as may be the full annual value of the land." Will that value be fixed by what the best, poorest or medium farmer can make it produce?

2. Will it be fixed by a permanent commission elected for that purpose?

3. Could they so fix it without knowing the needs?

4. Could they decide these unless his "standard" of living was fixed?

5. Would his class have an equal voice in fixing that "standard," as also that of other classes?

6. If not, would he be in the class Mr. George mentions on page 92, paragraphs 3 and 5, as begging "a spot to live on and enough of the produce of their own labor to maintain life," "necessarily a slave," as are most of the laborers of today.

7. Why should not manufacturers, merchants, miners, etc., be so "taxed" or have their profits and "standard of living" fixed in the same way? Also other laborers than tillers of the soil?

Counting Canada to have 480,000,000 acres of arable land, and \$5.00 per acre a fair tax, or rental as proposed by Mr. George, we find the income when all become thus productive to be \$2,400,000,000. While for a time this vast sum might be profitably spent in draining and irrigating land, building canals to develop electric power, applying this power exploiting mines, fisheries, etc., building every family a railroad, telephone and perhaps airship, harnessing the seas, etc., etc., could it be profitably used for all time? At the same rental United States would yield over nine billion dollars, but they must be collected and if not selling value would again develop. A man near Chicago cleared \$1,000 per acre on his land, while his neighbor could only make \$200. Would he not (secretly and gladly) pay that neighbor for his holding and let that neighbor manufacture?

W. B. HULL.

Ambles, Sask.

NOTE.—We will ask some of our readers who are students of Henry George to give definite answers to these questions. They are evidently asked for the purpose of bringing out light and should be answered in the same spirit. From the practical standpoint "single tax" should not be confused with the "taxation of land values."—Editor.

WHAT THE TARIFF COSTS

Editor, Guide:—In reply to Mr. Milliken's letter of August 14, when he says if a man has the brains of a monkey he could make a living off 160 acres. I also farm a section of land and would say that \$200 is not a starting point to the revenue that we are paying. The revenue we pay on the implements is nothing compared with what we pay on the crop that we raise. Last year was a poor year with us in this district, as we were badly frosted, but I threshed 11,000 bushels of wheat and oats. Now, let Mr. Milliken and Mr. Robertson do a little figuring and see how much I paid in revenue. Figuring it all oats at 15 cents a bushel, and it makes \$1,650.00. Now, what would you call this but revenue? And what would you say about a man who would not keep this \$1,650.00 at home? Surely you would say that he did not have the brains of a monkey. Now, to prove my statement I will send you the out-turn of a car of oats I shipped to Fort William and another I shipped to Minneapolis. These oats were raised in the same field and graded in Winnipeg 2

feet, tough. Yet when they got to Minneapolis they sold for No. 4 white oats and brought 57 cents, which netted me 33½¢, while the car that was sold on this side brought me about 26 cents. Now, who would not be a free trader with differences like this? I also shipped wheat to Minneapolis, which graded tough feed in Winnipeg and sold for 82 cents in Minneapolis. This made me 11 cents a bushel more than I could get on this side, after paying 25 cents duty. What do you call this but 36 cents revenue, and 36 cents on a car of wheat of 1,000 bushels is \$360. Now, I tell you, friend, when I figured up my last year's crop marketed on the other side I paid \$2,500.00 revenue instead of \$200. And as I bought a 25 H.P. gas engine and plows and separator and binder and mower I will let you figure the rest, as it makes me tired to think of it. Yet we have some of our farmer friends come out and tell us that we have not the brains of a monkey. Well, what I have to say is that we have not half as much if we let this kind of a deal go much longer.

CHARLES DENNIS.

Red Willow, Alta.

"DOING" EVERYBODY GOOD

Editor, Guide:—Few electors realize when they have marked their ballot for the prospective member, that they have actually given him a power-of-attorney to do absolutely as he pleases for the next four years at the voter's expense, and to fix his own salary. Can such a fat snap be imagined without being

how the Interests work was shown in the last South-Renfrew bye-election, when the "machine" of each party agreed to saw-off, by allowing the Conservative nominee his seat in the provincial House unopposed, if the Conservatives would allow the Liberal nominee his seat by acclamation for the Dominion House.

Can anyone advance one real sane reason why a candidate is forced to place a deposit which is confiscated if he does not secure the required number of votes? Such a condition is but an example of the way the two principal parties of Canada try to keep the field to themselves, as a few good men who are not capitalists might take a chance to run and give the voters the privilege of electing a MAN. The party in power rarely takes the initiative in putting through a reform, and then only when pressed by public opinion.

There is serious talk of the Western Provinces boycotting the Eastern manufacturers as they believe that the manufacturers are hiding behind the tariff wall. The Western consumer reasons that if he buys from the United States that he is more loyal than if he patronizes the East to fatten the manufacturer's unearned increment fund, even if the Conservatives would have him believe that it is disloyal to trade with the States. That something was needed to allay this feeling was shown by the excursion of the "Made-in-Canada" train through the Prairie Provinces. Why did they not also go to the coast? Was it because that B. C. is a Conser-



GIANT GALAPAGOS TORTOISE

Which scientists declare is over three hundred years old

realized? The elector may not know the candidate but may do as a certain farmer did at the last Alberta elections, ask the name of the Conservative candidate when he reached the poll. It takes a narrow-minded voter to admit such ignorance. Would you, in all common sense give an entire stranger whom you have never seen, whom you know absolutely nothing about, a power-of-attorney to manage your private affairs, pay him a salary and give him all possible latitude for graft and rake-off for four long years without the option of cancelling same at any time? That is what happens when a member is elected.

Each "machine" has a convention at which they select a candidate for the electors to vote for. The delegates are then whipped into line behind this party man and the voters imagine that they have selected their own representative for the House. An instance of

vative province, and did not need any inducements to protect their own natural products of fruit and lumber? It is not to be thought that the Western people were misled by this display, as they knew that the cost of the trip would ultimately come from out their own pockets.

By the way, was it accident or design that fourteen medical doctors were nominated for the Saskatchewan elections?

Why is there not a Bankruptcy law in Canada? The answer in plain and simple English is, that the banks and the wholesalers do not want one. Another evidence of the power of capital. At the present time there are thousands of Canadians working for a living wage who might be in a good business today if they had a second chance. They might be the proud possessor of a farm or a home of their own if it were not for the eternal follow-up system of the

capitalist class who have the law so in their own hands that the small debtor cannot get out from under for the term of twenty years, as that is the term a judgment is in force, and perhaps it may then be renewed. The debt with costs, interest and sheriff's fees must be paid, less the amount obtained by sheriff's sacrifice sale. At present it appears that the only safe way to provide a legacy for a family is to rent your farm or place of business, get your life insured, and own nothing. In connection with banks it might be mentioned that there is no exchange charged in the United States on negotiable paper such as cheques, and drafts, the banks looking to their loans for a revenue. In Canada every bank charges exchange, never less than fifteen cents on an item and usually charge one-half of one per cent. The argument which the banks use to support the charging of exchange is that they are "out" the use of the amount of the cheque or draft until they receive a settlement from the head office of the other bank, when it is noted that they have actually paid out for this item their own I.O.U.'s in the form of their own bank notes payable on demand. They are short-memoried enough to forget that they have a large deposit, \$1,004,857,000, in the current account's ledger for which they pay no interest whatever, and pay only three per cent. on the savings accounts, while they draw eight on all loans. It is stated and known by all bank officials that it is no more trouble to transfer \$500,000 than it is to transfer \$5.00 from one bank to another, so why the difference in exchange? Surely some regulation should be passed to govern this huge holdup by the banks in Canada. Ten cents per item will cover the entire cost of time, postage and stationery. We need cheaper money for farm loans. We need internal government elevators for storage purposes. We need government operated flour mills where the grain can be ground and shipped out in the form of flour, leaving the shorts, bran and screenings for the use of the Western farmers. Thus there will be no blockade. Such will never come without the electors taking the initiative and demanding it.

We want the "INITIATIVE" so that we can "start something."

We want the "REFERENDUM" so that we can abolish that which we do not want.

And we want the "RECALL" so that we can unseat any member who abuses his power-of-attorney.

It will be seen on every hand that the Interests are "doing" everybody good.

J. C. KNIGHT.

Drumheller, Alta.

PROTECTION HITS THE FATHER

Editor, Guide:—You ask for letters from men who can show how much the tariff costs them and would prefer to pay their taxes direct by the method of taxation of land values. In his speech of acceptance the Democratic nominee in the United States charged the high cost of living to the high protective tariff, while the Republican nominee points out that in free trade England the cost of living is relatively as high. That the cost of living is as high in free trade England is due to her land system. Where the land is in the hands of a comparatively small number of men, the rent or selling value of it is increased in proportion to the increasing number of landless men, so land values are highest where population is the thickest. It follows that rent being high, the products of these lands must be high or the tenants cannot well

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

This Department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.

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