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EDITORIAL

## THAT PUZZLE ABOUT SINGLE TAX.

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**A** NEWCASTLE, Manitoba, correspondent has forwarded to this office a clipping from the *Winnipeg Tribune* of last December 27th marking a letter signed W.D. Lamb, and entitled "That Puzzle About Wealth." Our correspondent accompanies the clipping with a few words that indicate he is puzzled.

Mr. Lamb starts with the unimpeachable declaration that "We must think correctly before we can act correctly." But no sooner is one raised to the heaven that such a declaration hoists one into, than one is dropped plump into the quagmire by this other declaration: "Political economy is the science of wealth distribution."

At this point one forgets all about the "puzzle about wealth" which Mr. Lamb's headline promises to tackle, that alleged puzzle being driven from one's mind by another "puzzle," a "puzzle" that forthwith obtrudes itself upon the mind. That second puzzle is: "Why does Mr. Lamb mutilate political science; why does he mention only one half of what the science of political economy is—"the science of wealth distribution"—and cuts out the other half, the first and most important half, at that,—"the science of wealth production"? Before wealth is produced, there can be none to be distributed. Political economy is the science of wealth production and distribution. Why does Mr. Lamb knock off the head of the definition, and leave only its nether extremity? Why; oh, why?

The convolutions of the rest of the article solve the puzzle. Mr. Lamb is an Occult Single Taxer. That's the Why.

But does the Single Tax require the shutting of one's eyes to the "production of wealth." Just so.

William Petty's statement—"Labor is the father of material wealth and the earth its mother"—approvingly quoted and even demonstrated by Karl Marx, the Single Tax theory seized, stretched it out of shape and beyond recognition, and

turned it into meaning that Land and Labor are all-sufficient.

The Single Tax knows “Land” and “Labor” only. It has no eye for anything else, least wise for the instrument that the father, “Labor,” needs wherewith to operate upon the mother, “Land.” Given “Land” and “Labor,” all else will come, reasons the Single Tax. Such a theory is of necessity compelled to exclude “wealth production” from the science of political economy. The instant “wealth production” is considered, the instrument wherewith to produce leaps forward demanding recognition. Seeing that the evolution of wealth production has developed the instrument, wherewith “Labor” operates the “Land,” to the mammoth size required in modern days, and now known as Capital,—seeing that, the pressure is all the harder upon the Single Tax to say nothing about “wealth production.” Mr. Lamb succumbed to the pressure. How severe the pressure is happens, curiously enough, to be illustrated on the very back of the page on which Mr. Lamb’s definition of political economy occurs. Exactly on the other side of the page is an extensive article entitled “European Investments in Canadian Industries” showing in detail that these “investments” aggregate \$2,416,732,871. That Europe did not send chunks of “Land” to Canada goes without saying. The “investments” are “instruments of production,” that is, “capital, thanks to which, as the article shows, Canada’s land is now teeming with wealth.

Political economy concerns itself with the science of wealth production and distribution. It teaches that the system of ownership of the things necessary for production determines the manner of distribution. It teaches that when the instrument of production was a trifling matter, then the ownership of land gave to the land owner the “crop,” turning him into an idle feudal lord, and the laborer into a sweated serf; and it teaches that in the measure that the instrument of production grew in magnitude, hence, also, in effectiveness, that new social growth became indispensable for father “Labor” to raise wealth from mother “Land,” and that whosoever owned that new growth owned also the product.

In short, the science of political economy teaches that wealth consists of useful things, the product of “Labor” upon “Land” assisted by Capital; that, at the capitalist stage, “Land” merges into Capital, with Capital as sovereign; and that the system of the ownership of Capital determines distribution—if privately owned, wealth distribution will be bountiful to the Capitalist Class; and niggardly to the Working

Class: if collectively, or Socialistically owned, the distribution will match the labor put forth in production;—hence, that whether under the Single Tax, or any other ingenious fiscal contrivance which leaves Capital in private hands, wealth is bound to remain the product of Labor and the reward of idleness.

“That Puzzle About Wealth” resolves itself into “That Puzzle About Single Tax,” which is driven to torture and falsify even the definition of the science of political economy.

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