

“Cast Aside the Automobile Enthusiast”

Class Conflict, Tax Policy, and the Preservation of Nature in Progressive-Era Oregon

WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT that rural and urban Oregonians will disagree about environmental matters, that those who live in the country will rely on the exploitation of natural resources while those in the cities will see in those resources an intrinsic value, or a means of recreation and respite from society. This battle is not new, but it has changed significantly since the early twentieth century, when those who envisioned a tourist economy based on scenic splendor and the preservation of game species were opposed in their efforts by both farmers and fisherman *and* urban trade unionists. Both groups were hostile to proposals that would keep natural resources out of production for the benefit of the idle rich, those who they sometimes labeled “automobile enthusiasts.”

The effort to develop a tourist economy flew in the face of working-class and populist ideas about nature and labor, ideas that were deeply rooted in American thought. Following classical political and economic theorists such as John Locke and Adam Smith, American workers stressed that labor was the source of all value and that producers deserved the fruit of their own labor. They interpreted “labor” as work done by people with their own hands, directly producing the goods that society needs. Excluded were those people who organized production, distributed its product, or provided the loan capital to finance industrious activity. Farmers and urban workers had long inveighed against bankers and railroads for extortionate rates that deprived producers of their well-deserved reward and, in the same vein, had



Among an April 25, 1914, crowd of volunteer Columbia River Highway roadworkers from the Portland Realty Board and Ad Clubs is one protester who viewed roads as gifts to the wealthy. On the left side of the photograph, toward the back of the crowd, a person holds a sign that reads: “I WON’T WORK/TO HELL WITH GOOD ROADS/WE DON’T OWN AUTOS.”

protested land monopoly. In the early twentieth century, Oregon producers — trade unionists in particular — applied these “producerist” beliefs in a wide-ranging effort to derail the effort to use state power to adopt a tourist-centered economy.

The labor movement in Portland and Oregon has often received short shrift from historians, who tend to measure it against the radicalism of workers in the Puget Sound, particularly as expressed by shipyard workers and their trade-union allies in Seattle during the general strike of 1919.¹ If historical attention is drawn away from dramatic strikes, however, and pointed toward persistent political efforts to pass radical tax measures at the ballot box, the Oregon State Federation of Labor (OSFL), with which most Oregon trade unions were affiliated, looks much less acquiescent in the development of corporate capitalism. Oregon trade unionists embraced the single tax, which would have levied the same high tax on all land whether it was in productive

use or not, forcing land speculators to either develop their land so they could pay the tax or return the land to the state. In a series of initiative campaigns to enact some version of the single tax, labor leaders elaborated a full-fledged moral critique of inequality and capitalist power, one that stressed the right of all workers to enjoy the fruit of their own labor. Critical to the effort was the alliance between the OSFL and attorney William S. U'Ren.

Born in Wisconsin, William U'Ren hailed from a family of skilled workmen and devout Methodists. While in San Francisco, he read *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George — a printer who had moved to San Francisco from Philadelphia in 1858 — and instantly became a convert to the cause of the single tax. Once in Oregon, U'Ren moved in populist and laborite circles, and he worked assiduously in Oregon politics to overcome the stranglehold that corporations had over the state legislature. His efforts led to the rise of “direct democracy,” which provided the electorate with the initiative, referendum, and recall — sometimes termed the “Oregon System.” U'Ren viewed the initiative as the means by which the people would enact the single tax, a reform that was a critical part of lower-middle-class radicalism in Portland.² His strongest allies were the leaders of the OSFL, which supported, funded, and ran a series of initiative measures to enact some version of the single tax between 1912 and 1916.

The objective of the single-tax measures was to encourage landowners to either develop their productive capacity or let their land return to the state for appropriation and use by productive settlers. It was a radical assault on land monopoly. During the campaigns, labor leaders took every opportunity to denounce rural landowners such as Frederick Weyerhaeuser and urban speculators such as Henry Pittock for keeping resources out of production and thereby impoverishing wage-earners, who suffered from low wages and periodic bouts of unemployment. U'Ren and OSFL leaders Otto Hartwig and Eugene Smith, like Henry George before them, drew on a belief held by most Americans that nature should be used productively.³ Some Americans, including Thomas Jefferson, stressed the benefits that market production would provide a growing population, and they criticized Indians for keeping land out of intensive cultivation, a practice that inhibited progress. But U'Ren and the OSFL also drew on a radical version of that broad liberal tradition. Workers and small farmers had inveighed against their social betters since before the American Revolution, denying that ownership and monopoly over resources provided a legitimate source of profit and wealth. Manual labor was the source of all wealth, they insisted, and the producers deserved the fruit of their labor.⁴

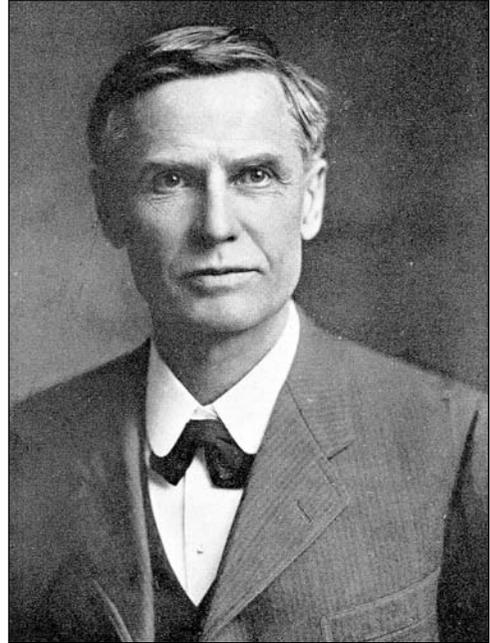
The movement was grounded in natural law: the wealthy had perverted divine intent through iniquitous laws and tax policies. The single tax prom-

ised to fix all that. By ensuring that resources would be put to productive use, it would restore natural law. And even though the law had redistributionist objectives, the single tax did not necessarily require a large state apparatus for a more egalitarian society to develop. The Oregon single-tax movement was one of the last political movements led by trade unionists to stand so squarely on a producerist foundation.

The Progressive Era was also a time when some prominent people wanted to expand and mold the state in their own image. Many highly educated Americans — including Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service and president of the National Conservation Association — saw in the power of government an ability to regulate the exploitation of natural resources, all in the interest of sustain-

ing use across the generations. Others sought to preserve a pristine nature that would provide a refuge, where those wearied by the pace and ethic of urban capitalism could restore their spirits surrounded by inspiring natural scenery. All of these reformers sought to use government to limit the productive use of some natural resources. While U'Ren and the labor movement were actively supporting the single tax, Oregonians such as timber industrialist Simon Benson and Oregon State Game Warden William L. Finley envisioned a consumer-oriented economy, one in which a preserved nature would provide opportunities for restorative leisure. Using tax revenues to pay for the paving of the Columbia River Highway beginning in 1913, the advocates of motorized leisure led the way toward developing state power to protect natural resources from productive exploitation.

Wealthy sportsmen pressured state officials and lawmakers to establish a Game Commission, which planted hatchery-raised game fish in rivers and lakes where wealthy urbanites spent time amid the splendors of nature. Game wardens were hired to restrict the access of local producers to fish and animals through licensing laws and closed seasons. This was not a uniquely Oregon experience. Across the country, wealthy urban sportsmen organized



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A friend to organized labor, William S. U'Ren was the guiding force for single-tax initiative campaigns in the Progressive Era.

and used state power to preserve fish for sport, turning rural productive use of natural resources into an illegal activity — poaching. Recent studies of this conflict challenge any attempt to portray progressive state-building as a simple reflection of democratic sentiment in which the will of the people was rallied against the interests of the wealthy.⁵

In Oregon, the battle between urban sportsmen and farmers, loggers, and commercial fishermen played itself out in a different context, one in which urban workers engaged in a final battle to ensure that working people received the fruit of their labor. The producerist sensibilities of labor's commitment to the single tax likewise stimulated trade-union support for the Oregon State Grange in its opposition to scenic highways. Like rural workers, urban trade unionists protested the uses of state power that prevented workers from benefiting from the productive exploitation of nature. Never was this more apparent than in 1915–1916, when the effort to secure tax revenues to pave the Columbia River Highway occurred at the same time that the OSFL made a huge effort to enact the People's Land and Loan Measure, a variant of the single tax, through the initiative process.

This article explores the way in which Oregon trade-union activists expressed an understanding of the proper role of nature while at the same time a modern conservation movement was beginning to consolidate itself in state agencies. Theirs was a radical critique of capitalist power and worker poverty that did not depend on the development of a large state apparatus but, rather, on producerist natural-law solutions. These understandings mirrored the frustrations of rural people, particularly the farmers who were organized in the Grange. The battle they waged against game laws was expressed in the same kind of anti-elite sentiments that they and the Oregon State Federation of Labor wielded against the state highway commission and its efforts to build scenic highways. It is this set of issues that points out just how contested efforts to preserve nature in Oregon were in the early twentieth century.⁶

THE SINGLE TAX was Henry George's response to a basic question about nineteenth-century capitalism: How could such a productive social system leave so many workers mired in poverty? His answer stressed the monopolization of natural resources — most importantly, land — by speculators and monopolists. Arguing well within the intellectual tradition of worker producerism, George objected that landlords received the product of labor through rents even though they did not produce anything. Moreover, as the population grew and as labor became more productive, the cost of land increased, preventing workers from buying their own farm or city lot or sticking them with escalating rents. In both cases, landowners benefited

from the labor of others, siphoning off money that otherwise would have gone to provide a living wage. For twenty years before publishing his well-read *Progress and Poverty*, George had witnessed the monopolization of land by ranchers and railroads and the increase in unemployment and decline in wages experienced by urban workingmen. Focusing on land monopolization, he explained why the West had failed to develop into a republican society — a society characterized by relative equality and individual independence — which so many migrants expected to establish. “The wide-spreading social evils which everywhere oppress men,” George reasoned, “spring from a great primary wrong — the appropriation, as the exclusive property of some men, of the land on which and from which all men must live.” From this single “injustice,” George argued, flowed all social evils, including those that “condemn the producer of wealth to poverty and pamper the nonproducer in luxury, which rear the tenement house with the palace, plant the brothel behind the church, and compel us to build prisons as we open new schools.”⁷



*Henry George responded to poverty in California by assaulting land monopoly. George’s single tax, developed in his widely read *Progress and Poverty* (1882), inspired William S. U’Ren and his allies in the labor movement.*

George’s analysis borrowed extensively from a literal understanding of John Locke’s statements about the origins of property. In his *Second Treatise on Government*, published in 1690, the philosopher stressed that it was labor that transferred a portion of nature from the common stock of humanity, a gift by the divine to all people, to an individual’s property. George put it this way:

The laws of nature are the decrees of the Creator. There is written in them no recognition of any right save that of labor; and in them is written broadly and clearly the equal right of all men to the use and enjoyment of nature; to apply to her by their exertions, and to receive and possess her reward. Hence, as nature gives only to labor, the exertion of labor in production is the only title to exclusive possession.

Following Locke, George accepted that productive use was the foundation for the creation of legitimate property out of nature; but like other radi-

cal Lockean, his analysis did not end with the *origins* of property. George made labor and productivity and the legitimacy of property they conferred a *process*, not something that merely happened at an original moment in some distant time. Everything stemmed from the divine gift to humanity. George asserted:

The Almighty, who created the earth for man and man for the earth, has entailed it upon all the generations of the children of men by a decree written upon the constitution of all things — a decree which no human action can bar and no prescription can determine. . . . natural justice can recognize no right in one man to the possession and enjoyment of land that is not equally the right of all his fellows.⁸

The single tax would put history back on the right course. By putting a uniform and substantial tax on land whether it was improved or not, the single tax granted the use of land to those who were willing to farm it, build a workshop or factory on it, or otherwise use it productively and for the market. Only those users would be able to pay the rent to the state. Through this simple mechanism, producers would be returned to their intended station, gross inequality and poverty would be abolished, and the virtue of the republic would be restored. A spur to productivity, George's remedy promised to increase employment and raise wages while it provided workers with an alternative to urban wage labor. It aimed to fix capitalism and restore opportunity without requiring a bureaucratic and interventionist state.⁹

By socializing rent and land values, the single tax threatened to overturn the basis of much wealth in the countryside, where timber and railroad companies had monopolized huge swaths of idle land, and in the city, where landlords held vacant land speculatively or charged excessive rents from working and business people. With a single tax, workshops and factories would grow in number, which meant more jobs and less unemployment for urban workers. In the 1880s, George and his panacea caught the imagination of many Knights of Labor, who saw the single tax as one of the chief means to overcome "wage slavery."¹⁰ During the Progressive Era, it took on renewed salience among West Coast workers, but nowhere as extensively as in Oregon.¹¹

OREGONIAN SINGLE-TAX ADVOCATES Alfred Cridge and William U'Ren and labor leaders such as Otto Hartwig, Clarence Rynerson, and Eugene Smith took it as axiomatic that labor "is entitled to all it produces." As the editors of the *Oregon Labor Press* put it: "It makes no difference whether the man is a ditch digger, a bricklayer, a farmer, a merchant, or a banker; what he produces belongs to him."¹² Proclaiming the labor theory of value, they declared that something had gone terribly awry. To right the wrong,

to transform a system that was unnatural and unequal into one that was compatible with natural law and equality, U'Ren and his allies in the trade-union movement made numerous attempts to enact the single tax. Their working relationship solidified in 1910, when Oregon reformers benefited from the financial backing of soap manufacturer and single-tax advocate Joseph Fels, who sent W.G. Eggleston of California to organize the campaign. Forced to fight off measures that would have limited the use of the initiative, referendum, and direct primary, Eggleston and other reformers agreed that the time was not propitious for a conclusive battle over the single tax and instead decided to push a measure that would grant counties the power to impose one if they chose.¹³ The success of that campaign emboldened the reformers to push for strong statewide measures in the years to come.

Those campaigns witnessed a fuller development of the producerist message of both U'Ren and Oregon labor. In 1912, the Graduated Single Tax League of Oregon put on the ballot a measure that would impose a graduated tax on large landowners. The leadership of the League was comprised of long-term single-tax advocates U'Ren, Eggleston, and H.D. Wagnon as well as William Daly, president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, and H.J. Parkison, editor of the *Oregon Labor Press*. The measure would not put in place a pure single tax, but it did get to the heart of the matter by proposing to use tax policy to eradicate large speculative holdings, specifically those held “by railroads and other franchise corporations; by the land speculators, including the great landlords in Portland; and by the owners of valuable water powers.”¹⁴ The measure suffered a substantial defeat. Two years later, a similar cadre of activists placed a homeowners’ tax exemption measure on the ballot. Along with a companion measure that would have greatly increased taxes on large landholdings, the proposed law would have exempted from taxation the first fifteen hundred dollars of personal property and improvements on land. The sponsors of the measure revealed their sense of disinheritance when they claimed that “too many [workingmen] are wanderers on the face of the earth and ‘aliens in the land of their birth,’” and they presented a vision of a transformed Oregon as “a great Commonwealth, where every man shall build him[self] a home and rest beneath ‘his own vine and fig tree.’” Class resentment characterized much of the argument, as working-class “homemakers” were deemed worthy of the kind of tax breaks that had long been “enjoyed by the owners of money, bonds and diamonds.”¹⁵

A second defeat did not discourage labor leaders. In 1916, the Portland Central Labor Council and the Oregon State Federation of Labor wrote and sponsored the strongest effort to use the instrument of tax policy to remake western society and return to producers their rightful status. Once again, they proposed a tax on the rental value of land, and they were careful to include

within that definition all natural resources, including “timber of natural growth” and water power “before being severed, removed, or withdrawn from their natural position.” It was the most complete attempt to apply the tenets of producerism to the natural environment. Officially titled the Full Rental Value Land Tax and Homemakers’ Loan Fund Amendment — commonly known as the People’s Land and Loan Amendment — the measure aimed to establish a state-loan fund, administered by the State Land Board, that would provide those who had nothing “but their labor and character” the resources to improve land.¹⁶ Here the single tax not only aimed to put idle land into production, but it also was intended to establish working people as independent producers.

Hope and expectations ran high. Eugene Smith, president of the Portland Central Labor Council, believed that the loan fund would put banks out of business. U’Ren, who during the campaign compared “private ownership of ground rent” to slavery, predicted that the fund would liberate each man to choose to be his own employer. If passed, the measure would “make Oregon a state of free men, instead of a state of hirelings and renters who depend altogether on the permission and successful enterprise of others for opportunity to earn their daily bread.” William Daly, city commissioner and former OSFL president, spoke to the radical objectives of the measure when he asserted that it would “broaden the field of opportunity for every industrious man to make a living for himself and family, even under our vicious competitive system.” Prominent labor activists from outside Oregon praised the measure as well. Frank Walsh, chair of the controversial United States Commission on Industrial Relations, wrote that passage of the measure “would be the first practical step toward the abolition of involuntary employment and the most direct blow at the social crime of poverty which could be delivered.”¹⁷ The more conservative Sam Gompers, long-term head of the American Federation of Labor, was equally sanguine about the initiative, calling it “a splendid measure” that promised to “afford the self-reliant, self-respecting working people of your state a ready opportunity to employ themselves.” The single-tax measure, Gompers concluded, would “restore to the people that which in reality belongs to the people.”¹⁸

Such hopes were dashed on election day. Voters responded to the arguments of opponents who had labeled the measure an example of the worst kind of “freak” legislation, which aimed to take from property owners and give to the thrifless. They sent the initiative to a solid defeat, with support from a quarter of the voters in Portland, where support for the single tax had been relatively strong.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the single tax would reverberate in trade-union circles until the end of the decade in the form of resolutions passed in central labor councils and state conventions.

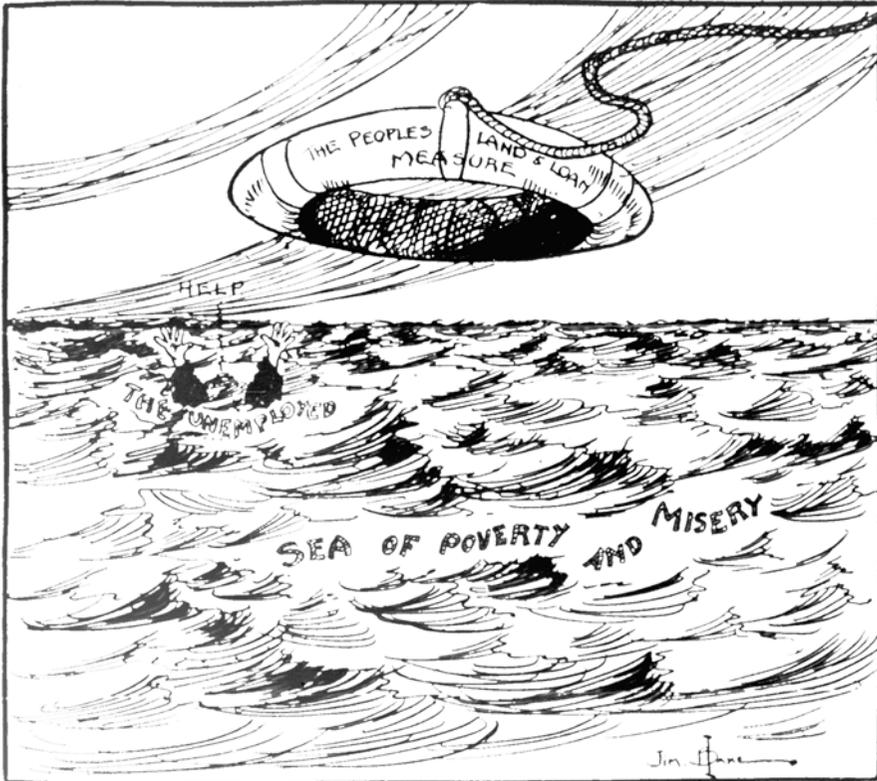


Opponents of the single tax often referred to it as freak legislation, associating it with cranks. This cartoon is from the third edition of a lengthy pamphlet, "Single Tax Exposed," published in 1912 by Charles H. Shields, secretary of the Oregon Equal Taxation League and head of the Anti-Single Tax League of Washington.

THE FIGHT FOR THE SINGLE TAX holds our attention for its moral vision, for the radical rejection of unemployment and poverty that its supporters made, and for the passionate desire to see the construction of a more egalitarian and just society. It was this commitment that explains why the resources of organized labor were used to put variants of the single tax before the voting public. What is more, this moral vision guided the Oregon labor movement to far more than tax policy; it provided a language and ready-made understanding to oppose efforts by the wealthy to use the state to preserve nature in the interests of elite tourism.

There is nothing exceptional in this posture toward nature, and recent historians have demonstrated that Americans have privileged productivity over preservation at nearly every turn. More and more productive users have competed for the ear of judges, who have sanctioned uses of rivers that violated traditional subsistence strategies in the interest of progress and industrialization. Factories dependent on waterpower, for example, gained the right to dam rivers at the expense of fishermen and others who relied on unobstructed rivers for their livelihood. While this pattern was established first in New England, it would be applied throughout the West, where water

HELP HIM TO GET OUT



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This editorial cartoon, which posed the single-tax measure as the solution to urban poverty and unemployment, ran in the July 1, 1916, Oregon Labor Press.

was a scarce and precious resource. The tendency of westerners to assume that resources must be put into productive use was so strong that advocates of national parks found it necessary to argue that the landscape they were protecting had no productive potential.²⁰

The Oregon labor movement, in expressing a belief that natural resources and land should be put to productive use, was operating well within the boundaries of a broader consensus. With radical fervor, they equated the conditions of land monopoly with slavery and charged that it was a violation of natural law. Labor activists claimed that “artificial scarcity of land produces artificial slavery of man” and characterized wage labor as “wage slavery.” Cognizant of the difficult road ahead, especially as electoral defeats of single-tax initiatives mounted, they compared themselves with the abolitionists of an earlier era. Abolitionists, the *Labor Press* noted in July 1912, “were victims of bitter persecution and even suffered violent deaths,” though they were fight-

ing against a system that “we now know . . . was fictitious wealth based on a law-made privilege. . . . So it is with land held idle for speculation.” One *Labor Press* writer reminded readers: “men with honest money [had] bought and sold slaves” even though they lacked the “moral right” to do so. The end of slavery had brought forth a revolution in understanding that was just beginning with regard to the “moral right of men to speculate in land.”²¹

More than anything else, single-tax advocates stressed George’s theme that the land and its resources were a birthright given by God to producers, and they quoted chapter and verse to ground the point in Biblical authority. *Ecclesiastes* advises that “the profit of the earth is for all,” and *Isaiah* condemns land monopoly: “. . . woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.” Written into the proceedings of the 1916 convention of the Oregon State Federation of Labor was God’s commandment to Moses: “. . . the land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.” Labor leaders stressed time and time again that the Creator had bequeathed the earth to all humanity and that the monopolization of land by speculators was a betrayal of that divine promise.²² So did correspondents to the *Labor Press*. Ami Wright of Astoria asserted: “. . . the earth was made for all, and the monopolization of it is not only wrong and wicked, but, as many of us Catholics believe, a mortal sin.” Like George, Oregon supporters of the single tax saw land monopoly as inconsistent with natural law. The editor of the *Oregon Labor Press* claimed: “It isn’t reasonable to believe in the wisdom of a Creator who would approve our present land ownership system.”²³

A POEM WRITTEN by a supporter of the Land and Loan Measure in 1916 suggested that a *yes* vote would restore the proper relationship between creation and humanity: “Here in Oregon . . . all the people — everybody — no man more than another — shall have opportunity to dwell and make a living on the good earth — the kindly soil that God has given us.” William U’Ren linked contemporary wage-earners with the pioneer generation: “. . . every pioneer baby that comes into this world today has just as good a right to the things that God has here as I did when I was brought across the plains by my father years ago.” The goal of the single tax, he told the 1911 OSFL convention, was to ensure that “every man and every woman [have] an equal opportunity in this world’s natural resources.” Speaking before the Portland Central Labor Council on behalf of the Land and Loan Measure, U’Ren spoke of a “natural right, to use any vacant land.” An early version of the measure, one that was unanimously adopted by the Central Labor Council, held that “all men and women are equally endowed by the

Creator with certain inalienable rights.” Included among them was a right “to the ownership by actual occupation and beneficial use of so much land as is necessary for his or her home and from which to make a living by his or her labor . . . without paying ground rent or tribute in any form to any person.” By ensuring that taxes would be raised “from the things that God makes as distinguished from the things that man makes,” single-tax advocates believed they would restore the producers of necessary goods to their proper station. Workers stood to earn good wages, as employers would no longer be able to maintain an industrial reserve army of the unemployed, which land speculation had consistently fostered. As U’Ren put it, workers would be secure in the knowledge that “there is another job the minute you quit or lose the one you have.”²⁴

The same principles were applied to the use and possession of “natural” resources. Single-taxers condemned monopolists for tying up land, forests, minerals, and water. As Harry H. Willock put it,

they put under lock and key by various legal devices the fair surface of the earth . . . and when their desire is surfeited with plenty they withhold what they cannot use for themselves and extort from their brothers and sisters a cruel price of their very sustenance.

Some of the worst excesses of corporate greed were attributed to the power of land monopoly; the same could be said for the repression of the labor movement. A correspondent to the *Labor Press* explained oil and coal magnate John Rockefeller’s role in the Ludlow massacre: “He owned the land. The rest was a matter of course. . . . Women and children were being shot down to protect the coal barons in the monopoly of the earth in free America.” Labor activists envisioned a new social order based on the socialization and full-bore productive utilization of natural resources. As H.J. Parkison explained, “we reward the men and combines that hold out of use our natural resources and charge us for permission to use what God created,” though it was evident that “with a little common sense applied to the enormous water power the Almighty bestowed upon Oregon, we would have light, heat and power supplied at such a low rate as to be lower than the wildest dream of any agitator.”²⁵

While the single tax was devised to address problems that afflicted urban workers the most, its emphasis on unused land led its advocates to view other matters such as forest management through the same lens. Advocates included “timber barons” along with “the land speculators, the landlords, the real estate agents . . . [and] the owners of big business” as the chief opponents of single-tax efforts such as the People’s Land and Loan Measure.²⁶ The *Oregon Labor Press* was pleased to quote extensively from a report by Herbert K. Smith of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor,

especially those portions that distinguished between the original intent of nineteenth-century land law to “distribute the public lands in small tracts as homes for freeholders” and the resulting pattern of land monopoly in the West. Much of the land was turned over to large timber companies such as Weyerhaeuser; but the large firms, Smith concluded, were “cutting little of their timber.” Instead, they aimed to “reserve to themselves those incalculable profits which are still to accrue with the growth of the country, the diminishing of the timber supply.” Finally, Smith pointed out that the same timber companies that protested Gifford Pinchot’s policy of conservation in the national forests because it would tie up natural resources “are themselves deliberately tying them up far more effectively for private gain.”²⁷

USING THE SINGLE-TAX PRINCIPLE of taxing unproductive land, labor activists emphasized the productive use of forests. In 1910, the OSFL adopted a resolution denouncing the timber industry’s effort to gain tax exemptions for land that was not under production. The resolution, introduced at the annual convention in Portland by H.J. Parkison, warned that

such exemptions would enable the timber trust and barons, land speculators and tax dodgers to hold out of use vast areas of land and to dodge all their taxes . . . thereby adding to the tax burdens of industry and creating a landed aristocracy more oppressive than existing in today in Great Britain.

Further, the OSFL denounced the general policy of exempting cutover lands from taxation as “an attempted fraud on the people,” and suggested that

if the owners don’t want them [cutover lands] there is no law that compels them to keep the title. Turned back to the state the people can let them alone and the timber will grow just the same. When it becomes more valuable for homes than timber the people will have the value, and when or if that timber grows to maturity, the people can have it all.

Instead of exemption, labor leaders believed that higher taxes should be imposed on the logged-off lands of the “timber trust,” which would “fling that stump land open to the workers at government prices, or less.”²⁸

Taxing the monopolistic holders of land and other natural resources had other purposes as well. In August 1910, great fires hit millions of acres of forestland in Montana, Idaho, and Washington, killing eighty-five people and destroying entire towns. In response, the timber industry proposed a general tax levy to establish and sustain a fire patrol to protect standing timber. Labor activists agreed that the problem could be solved by taxation, but big timber’s proposal infuriated the editors of the *Labor Press*: “The idea that the timber is the people’s when there is some expense necessary

to preserve it, and the timber trusts' when it is to be sold, don't go."²⁹ Such resources are gifts from a benevolent creator, they argued; the forests were public resources both when it suited timber companies and when it did not. Instead of a general tax levy that would inevitably be imposed on the industrious by threatening to take the "farmer's cow or workingman's kit of tools," the *Labor Press* called for the timberlands in question to be assessed at their "real" value and then taxed to cover the cost of fire protection.³⁰

Labor officials articulated similar notions about property rights over water resources, particularly regarding streams suitable for generating electricity. In 1916, the same year the OSFL would place the People's Land and Loan Measure on the ballot, the organization publicly opposed any effort by the state government to give away "in perpetuity any lands which control water power sites in the state," and they urged officials to keep those that remained in the public domain under "the control of the people."³¹ As was the case with other natural resources, the OSFL assumed that monopolistic control by private interests would inhibit development and full employment, and their solution was bound up with the single-tax formula of taxing unproductive nature. An editorial in the *Labor Press* predicted that taxes on the "water power coming from the sides of Mount Hood" could fund state government as well as the schools. Turning to a familiar line of argument, the editors asked: "Why should not the holders of this wealth created by the hand of the Almighty pay the full annual rental value of it?" Taxation of water power sites to their full developed value would chase the speculators away and ensure that the "natural gift of the water of Oregon falling down hill should not be allowed to be tied up and held idle." This became official OSFL policy in 1916, when the annual convention declared the organization "unalterably opposed to the exemption from taxes of water power or any other natural resource."³²

AS TRADE-UNION LEADERS embraced a producerist understanding of land and other natural resources throughout the 1910s, some prominent members of the business community sought to apply tax revenues and technical expertise toward the protection of nature from economic productive development. This effort, which drew on divergent motivations and took different forms, had the potential to draw opposition from both rural and urban producers. Regardless of emphasis, men such as William L. Finley, the game warden, or Simon Benson and John B. Yeon, who advocated building the Columbia River Highway, envisioned a nature that would be appreciated by wealthy tourists. The state agencies associated with both projects came under fire from organized farmers and workers and, in the case of scenic-road building, occasioned a joint political effort by the Oregon Grange and the Oregon State Federation of Labor.

Game laws had been on the books in Oregon since the 1870s, but it was only in the early twentieth century that sufficient resources were put into their enforcement. In 1905, the legislature provided for a State Game Fund, which would pay for the enforcement of game laws through selling licenses to hunters and collecting fines from violators. Six years later, Oswald West established a State Board of Fish and Game Commissioners with the full authority to use game-fund revenue to protect and propagate fish and game as it saw fit. Finley, an active supporter of wildlife refuges, was hired as the first state game warden the same year, marking a new and active era for game management in the state. The new commission immediately took steps to increase the supply of game for sportsmen, including the establishment of a state pheasant-raising farm near Corvallis, a project that received the support of the Oregon Game Protective Association and the Portland Gun Club. The establishment of the Game Commission and the fuller organization of Oregon sportsmen went hand-in-hand. In 1913, Finley took on the responsibility of editing and publishing the *Oregon Sportsman*, which connected the commission with its chief constituency, urban sportsmen. A year later, the politically astute Oregon Sportsmen's League, a body dedicated to influencing game legislation, was organized. In the years to follow, a steady correspondence between the state game warden and prominent Oregon sportsmen would ensure that the advocates of gentlemanly hunting would have an affect on game policy.³³

The Game Commission developed hatcheries and planted the young fish in rivers and lakes across the state, many times in habitats where they were alien species. In 1914, the *Oregon Sportsman* covered a packhorse trip led by Finley to release hatchery-raised fish in the previously fishless mountain lakes in the Three Sisters in central Oregon. It was the spectacular nature of the scenery that had motivated the wardens to stock the lakes. Here was a land, the editor wrote, "that will inspire awe in those who love the grand," with its "snow-capped mountains, small glaciers, deep canyons, rugged lava floes, and hundreds of wonderful lakes." The only thing missing was an abundant supply of game fish. Stocking the lakes improved nature, the *Sportsman* argued, making it more idyllic and worthy of preservation. The remoteness of the lakes made preservation likely, but they were also suitable for people who would best appreciate them and who possessed the means to get there. The *Sportsman* recommended that the prospective "angler, hunter or tourist" rent out pack animals and "devote the summer to it."³⁴

Finley stocked these and other lakes with a certain kind of tourist in mind. Few but the self-employed and economically prosperous could afford to take such extended amounts of time from work; and, as long as these areas remained remote, the stocked trout would satisfy gentleman sportsmen



William Finley, a long-time wildlife advocate, used his position as state game warden and as editor of the Oregon Sportsman to promote Oregon as a tourist destination for wealthy sportsmen.

who came from across the country. The editor of the *Oregon Sportsman* boasted: “. . . our snow-capped mountains, our magnificent forests are attracting tourists from all parts of the world who come to fish, hunt and enjoy outdoor life in Oregon.” In appealing to sportsmen, Finley and other game-oriented officials around the country embraced a form of elite consumption that they believed would reinvigorate the nation’s best men while indirectly providing subsistence to locals.³⁵ This was a problematic proposition, for the Fish and Game Commission was open to the charge that “fish and game propagation and protection is a fad for the benefit of the few.” In defending the work of the commission, Finley proclaimed: “. . . hunting and fishing are inviting features for a desirable class of tourists who have money to spend and money to invest.” Tourists spend their money in “railroad and stage fares, at hotels

and farm houses, in the employment of guides, hiring horses, purchasing equipment, supplies and numerous other items. This money goes directly into the pockets of our citizens.”³⁶ For those who thought in producerist terms, Finley must have sounded like he was promising that Oregonians would make money out of nothing.

THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE STATE now had an interest in regulating its product, and that meant restricting access to the planted game fish. Closed seasons, limits on catches, and restrictions against commercial fishing in tidewater areas all impinged on the traditional habits of rural producers.³⁷ The result was constant conflict, and frustrated game wardens found themselves at the mercy of local juries and justices who failed to impose state penalties on local poachers. Finley understood the problem as a matter of principle. As he put it in the *Oregon Sportsman*, “. . . it is difficult to make these people understand that the state owns the game; that is, that the game belongs to all the people and that each individual cannot kill game when and where he sees fit.” Finley characterized rural people who ran afoul of

the new laws as “a class of careless, shiftless people who, because they have homesteaded the land in the wilderness, believe they have inherent rights on their own property, as far as the game, the streams, and the forests are concerned.”³⁸ Finley attempted to rearrange the moral universe understood by producers, equating sloth with the subsistence and market uses of nature and virtue with those engaged in leisure.

Complaints against the Fish and Game Commission came chiefly from rural producers and their allies. U’Ren protested on behalf of commercial fishermen against the Fish and Game Commission’s 1912 resolution to lengthen the distance from Willamette Falls, where net fishing would be prohibited. Access to fish at that important location would be hotly contested for years.³⁹ But resistance was not merely ad hoc and local. Granges brought their complaints to the commission, and the Oregon Grange publicly opposed its existence. In 1914, the legislative committee and the convention of the Grange resolved in favor of “the abolition of all fish and game laws of the State, and enactment of stringent trespass laws, and that all farmers and stockmen be authorized to make arrests for the violation of the same.” Further, they agreed that “all fish hatcheries [should] be discontinued.”⁴⁰ Opposition to the state’s assertion of power over hunting and fishing was centered on the farmers of the Grange and commercial fishermen; they were rarely joined by urban workers. That would not be the case when it came to road-building.

It was lumbermen Simon Benson and John B. Yeon, as well as Sam Hill of the Northern Pacific Railroad — men whose earlier efforts had been engaged in the expansion of the productivist empire — who used their influence to get Multnomah County to build a scenic highway through the Columbia River Gorge. “There are thirty Switzerlands in Oregon,” Sam Hill boasted, and if the proper steps were taken “we will cash in, year after year, on our crop of scenic beauty, without depleting it in anyway.”⁴¹

A few years before, Hill had taken good-roads advocate Samuel C. Lancaster to Paris for the First International Road Congress and guided him on a tour of carefully engineered highways in France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. They returned to the Pacific Northwest determined to build a world-class scenic road through the Columbia River Gorge, one that would blend nature and the automobile into a harmonious unity. Lancaster later recalled:

instinctively there came a prayer for strong men, and that we might have sense enough to do the thing in the right way . . . so as not to mar what God had put there. . . . In that [gorge] to the east were hidden waterfalls and mountain crags, dark wooded, fern-clad covers and all else that a wise creator [*sic*] chose to make for the pleasure and enjoyment of the children of men.⁴²

Such opportunities still remained outside the reach of most workers. As late as July 1915, there were fewer than eight thousand cars registered in Multnomah County, and it would be several years before the automobile was an object of mass consumption.⁴³ For the moment, at least, driving trips along Lancaster's scenic highway promised enjoyment by the few — a fact frequently noted when workers discussed the matter, especially when the initial funding ran out and scenic highway boosters put a bond measure on the county ballot in April 1915 to pay for paving roads.

The labor critique of the bond measure was wide-ranging, blending class resentments with charges of corruption and class indifference among the members of the State Highway Commission. In spring 1916, the *Labor Press* charged that Oregon needed to “cast aside the automobile enthusiast, and the globe-trotter, and consorter with royalty, and get engineers in charge of her road building.” Because of the influence of certain carefully positioned individuals and “paving companies that hope to fatten at the public trough,” the paper charged Oregon road-building was “a farce, a debacle too tragic to be a job. It has been more like a plucking of the innocents than anything else.”⁴⁴ Distrust of the contractors was a constant staple of trade-union resistance to the Columbia River Highway midway through the decade.

Most attacks on the road at some point, however, expressed producerist class resentment, particularly by focusing on the road's leisure-class connotations. The *Labor Press* denounced the highway as an attempt to pay for “a scenic road, built for pleasure seeking autoists, with the money of the men and women who are too poor to own an automobile.”⁴⁵ “A Worker and Taxpayer” echoed these sentiments in a letter warning that passage of the bond measure would impose on laborers yet another “tax burden for the benefit of automobile industry and luxury-loving class, who will be most delighted with having him support their little game, and will keep him busy, ‘digging up’ for many other scenic highways yet to be built.” The writer bemoaned the additional expense of paving with asphalt, which was required because of the inability of “macadam roads to withstand the traffic imposed by the automobiles.” Instead of imposing burdens on the general community, the writer urged that the automobile “bear its fair proportion of the cost of highway construction.” Another letter-writer was offended by the paving of this particular road, noting that along the eastern end of the road there were “not more than six farmers, so that portion of the road is to be simply a speedway for the idle rich.”⁴⁶

It was this last point that got to the heart of the matter as far as the labor movement was concerned, imbued as it was with the producerist assumptions of the single tax. Far from opposing automobiles, labor leaders supported the building of roads. As Eugene Smith put it, “every adult in Multnomah

County, excepting imbeciles and pessimists, is a good road enthusiast." It was a simple matter of priorities. Whereas Yeon and Benson favored "first the scenic highway," the Central Labor Council favored "first the roads that will bring the producer, working in the soil, nearer to the producer working in the factory, store, shop and mill." In a similar fashion, the *Labor Press* announced that it was "opposed to the building of scenic highways, at least until we have plenty of good roads for the purpose of lessening the cost of bringing farm produce to the cities." Many road supporters had charged that the laborite opposition was grounded in an unheeded demand that workers receive a minimum of three dollars a



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Simon Benson, as both a private citizen and member of the State Highway Commission, advanced the building of good roads, but he was often the target of groups such as the Grange and OSFL that opposed using tax dollars to build scenic highways.

day for their labor; so after the bond measure passed, Yeon invited Smith and Clarence Rynerson, the new editor of the *Labor Press*, to watch workers building the road. The two men reported back to the Central Labor Council: "Camps of the men working on this road are clean; the food is good, and the cooking is excellent." But they took care to point out that "this does not alter our opinion that good roads should be built first for the use of farmers and community rather than pleasure drives for tourists."⁴⁷

For these labor leaders, road-building was connected to the relationship between human beings and nature every bit as much as it was for Benson and Yeon. Instead of focusing on a road's potential to reveal nature's grandeur, however, they believed it should aid in the more efficient exploitation of

its resources by producers. The 1915 election for the paving bond measure was held just as the Central Labor Council was beginning to move forward with the Land and Loan Measure, and some laborite writers made a direct link between the two issues. John Bump's poem in the *Labor Press* joined the chorus of protests arguing that the expensive paving project was a burden on workers, who would be forced to pay off the bonds with taxes "so that automobilists may save their tires, and Oh! and Ah! about our scenery in greater comfort." For Bump, the problem was broader: tourism was linked to land monopoly, and the elite road policy enabled land speculators to

further inflate the price of land.
And make it harder for a poor man to get a home.

Without the Land and Loan Measure, Bump concluded,

the increased value given the land by good roads will be
more than reflected in its price.
And land will be harder to get than ever.

The *Labor Press*, while admitting that the Columbia River Highway opened grand scenery, viewed the road-building effort through a single-tax lens. The road's purpose ensured that it would never enhance economic development and more intensive use of land by small producers, the paper argued, for "very little of the land adjoining the highway can ever be tilled. It is a scenic road pure and simple and should the abutting land ever be cleared and tilled, the scenery would be spoiled and the object in building the road defeated."⁴⁸

Some single-taxers had long seen a link between road-building and the interests of land speculators, even before the bond measure election of 1915. A few years earlier, Alfred Cridge, a long-time radical anti-monopolist who claimed to be the state's first advocate of direct democracy (a position he took in 1884) had argued that the land along good roads was not available to "the landless and homeseeker" because they were "held for speculation." The solution, Cridge offered, was to "place a graduated tax on the land exclusive of improvements, and build your good roads with part of that tax." That would

bring the great idle land holdings into market at reasonable rates, encourage men to go upon the land and settle the labor question by taking men out of our cities to build the roads and the homes, and the land grabber will not drive them back to congest the labor market and line up in front of charity kitchens.⁴⁹

Leaders of the Oregon Grange viewed road-building through a similar producerist lens. Long-time State Master C.E. Spence, a strong supporter of

the single tax, speaking before the 1914 annual session of the State Grange, denounced the “leisure class who wish to ‘See America First’ . . . who are carried away with the idea of a pleasure road. . . . These people are willing to bond the present and future; in other words, place a mortgage on the homes of all the people to gratify a desire for joy riding.” Spence focused particularly on self-interested parties, including road machinery agents, the owners of automobile factories, and paving companies, who sought to benefit themselves as Oregonians incurred more and more debt.⁵⁰ A year later at the Grange convention, Spence lamented that “the speedway, the automobile, and bond issues seems [*sic*] to have become a mania with the American people that is sadly overdone.” In front of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, he made a plea for “good roads for the farmers instead of scenic highways for joy riders.”⁵¹ Spence was a long-time acquaintance of William U’Ren, and his strong support for the single tax was unusual among farmers, but his ability to speak a producerist language was not.

Three years earlier, in 1912, A.I. Mason, a member of the executive board of the State Grange, had appealed to members of the Portland Central Labor Council to support a good-roads initiative that would have de-emphasized scenic highways. He wrote:

We feel confident that you do not want to mortgage yourselves and posterity in order to build Pacific highways and boulevards paralleling our railroads in order that a few pleasure seekers may enjoy themselves while we farmers are compelled to haul our produce over rough roads leading in to the market centers upon the various railroads of the state, and you should bear in mind that the cheapness of hauling our produce to market should cheapen it to the consumer.⁵²

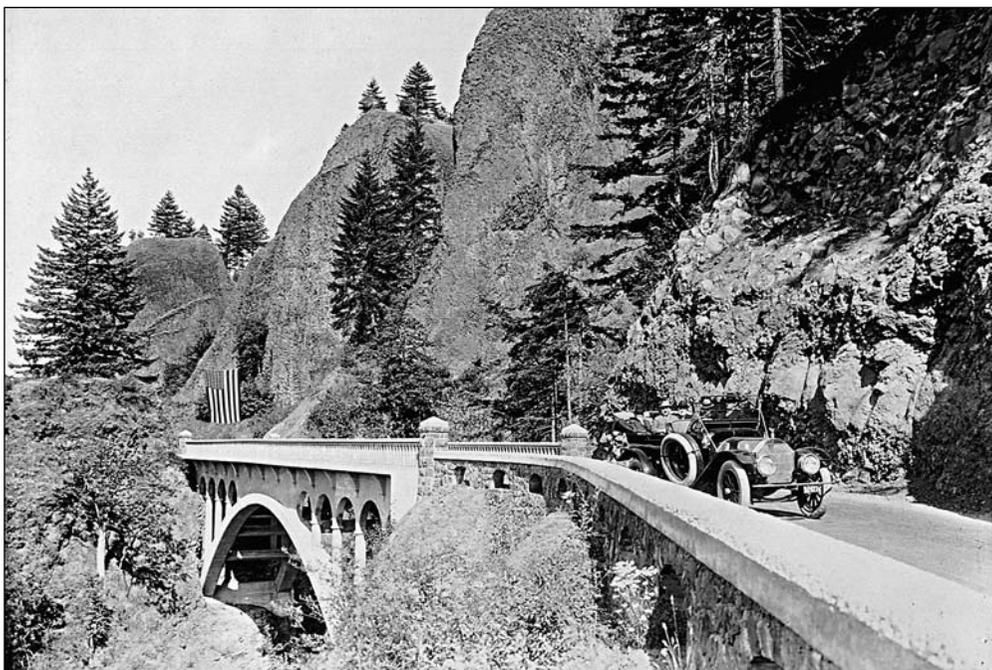
IN 1911, THE GENERAL SESSION of the State Grange had opposed any attempt to build “a state highway out of the general tax fund to be continuous across the state . . . until the roads of our state leading from the farming communities to the markets and shipping points are permanently improved.” H.G. Parsons, who served as an OSFL delegate to the State Grange in that year, addressed the conflict over road-building in the state. “The fight is between the farmer and the auto people,” he told the OSFL convention in 1912. “The former wants roads so they can get their produce to market, while the latter wants one road across the state so they can ride fast in an automobile.” At the same gathering, OSFL president William Daly urged workers to support the Grange bill and warned them that it was likely that a “wealthy group of citizens will submit a plan for good roads with the object of developing a magnificent system of boulevards or speed-ways of doubtful benefit to the general public.” The convention adopted a resolution, introduced by Grange

leader C.E. Spence, supporting the Grange bill. In 1916, OSFL President T.H. Burchard urged union men to support any good-roads measure endorsed by the Grange and the Farmers' Union.⁵³

Although the 1911 meeting of the OSFL had adopted a resolution introduced by Grange leader A.I. Mason calling for increased "state aid in behalf of permanent improvement of our public highways," the Columbia River Highway experience led the two producers' organizations to grow increasingly wary of state power in this matter. As early as 1914, Spence called for the abolition of the State Highway Commission, which he charged had "refused to aid any roads but the Pacific Highway and Columbia River road."⁵⁴ The following year, the workers of the OSFL adopted a resolution, introduced by Spence, denouncing the policies of the scenic-road advocates who dominated the Highway Commission. The resolution condemned the commission for emphasizing "scenic highways and boulevards" instead of those that would "put the farmer in close touch with the trading center and enable the producer and consumer to reach each other quickly, inexpensively and easily." Distinguishing between "the scenic road [that] advertises the state" and the road that "develops its resources," the resolution called for applying of "the old adage 'business before pleasure.'" It renounced state aid as "a detriment rather than a benefit" and, "in the interests of the producer and consumer, and especially in the interest of the rural communities," called for the commission to "be abolished and forgotten." Authority over the matter should be returned to the counties.⁵⁵

In 1917, the Grange led the opposition to beat back a six-million-dollar bond measure that it feared would increase the authority of the State Highway Commission and its propensity to put tourists and joy riders ahead of producers. Advocates of the measure argued that the bonds would pay for a network of roads that would draw rural and urban people more closely together, encourage agricultural development, and "exploit Oregon's natural attractions, her beauties of mountains and dales, her lovely lakes, her interminable forests and her miles of coastline summer resorts will become better known, more accessible, and assist to make Oregon the playground of America." To accomplish that, proponents added, the measure would ensure the building of three highways "across the Cascade mountains and a like number to the coast."⁵⁶

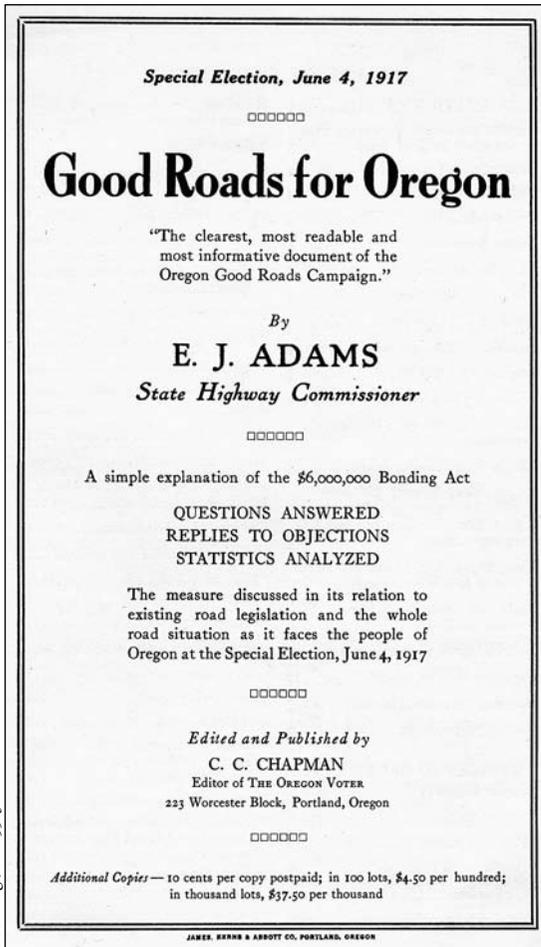
Opponents of the measure — including the Grange's C.E. Spence, Walter Pierce of the State Taxpayers' League, J.D. Brown of the Farmers' Union, and Otto R. Hartwig of the OSFL — made the distinction between unnecessary scenic highways and those that aid "the farmer and producer in getting his produce to market, and thereby decrease the cost of living to those in the congested centers and automatically assist the producer." The bond measure



Samuel Lancaster and friends travel on the Columbia River Highway in about 1916.

was doubly troublesome — opponents believed it would put “scenic roads and automobile pleasure drives” that would “benefit a small portion of our population” ahead of market roads, and the bonded indebtedness itself was described as the “modern method of holding the producing masses to continue its labor for the favored few.” Opponents charged that the measure was born at “a magnificent banquet . . . in Oregon’s most palatial hotel, the Benson,” to which “a few members” of the legislature were invited. At this meeting, “was born the dream of the road enthusiast, who would bond the pavement and future, for hard-surface pavement over which to drive his car.”⁵⁷

Though opposition to scenic highways and the state highway commission were not dependent on the single tax, as the Grange’s opposition to the tax demonstrates, they were framed within the same producerist understanding of nature that the single tax rested on. The linkages between them were made visible as William S. U’Ren began positioning himself as a candidate for governor in 1914 in an attempt to build support for the Land and Loan variant of the single tax that would be on the ballot in 1916. U’Ren took positions that reflected the producerist hot-house atmosphere of Progressive Era Oregon. Most importantly, he took on the question of road-building, proposing that a “state highway system of hard-surface paved roads” be sup-



Defenders of the State Highway Commission and its proposal to have the state issue bonds to finance road construction argued that a good road system would improve connections between farm and city and provide scenic roadways.

Grange never endorsed it, for farmers were wary of a tax policy that would rely solely on revenues acquired from land values.⁵⁹ On developing a road-construction policy that would put consumer and producer in closer contact, however, both groups could agree for the moment. An expansion in road construction would weaken the control of a great monopoly — the railroad — in the marketing of crops; depriving the monopolistic nonproducer of profit was perfectly in line with the tenets of producerism as interpreted by both urban and rural manual workers. And to achieve that goal, the two

ported by a graduated inheritance tax on estates appraised at more than \$50,000. Rather than impose burdens on future taxpayers for the benefit of the few, U'Ren envisaged a road construction program paid for by the wealthy. Moreover, the plan would address the problem of unemployment, the reduction of which was one of the chief objectives of the single tax. U'Ren's platform called on state highway officials to “hire for road building every citizen of Oregon who is in need of unemployment and demands the work” and to pay the workman wages “at least sufficient to care for and educate his family as desirable citizens of Oregon.”⁵⁸ For U'Ren and his supporters among the Grange, and especially in the OSFL, road building was inseparable from the other grievances of working people in Oregon.

OPPOSITION TO the State Highway Commission and the control of elites over highway funding drew farmers and workers together in ways that the single tax could not. Despite Spence's strong support for the single tax, the

producerist groups came together in support of what they called “market roads,” which they believed the Oregon Highway Commission had little interest in building.

Rather than developing a clear “producer’s” political program, the Grange and the OSFL spoke a similar language that led both organizations to oppose the efforts of prominent leaders to reorient state policy toward a tourist economy. That language focused on the proper use of nature. Understanding their opposition to these measures furthers our understanding of plebeian progressivism in Oregon and reminds us that some progressives were interested in diminishing the power of the state, especially when it seemed to be used for the benefit of a small group of well-placed people.⁶⁰

Class resentments exploded in Progressive Era Oregon, as workers and farmers mounted a protest against the growth of the state that was grounded in the radical version of the American culture’s general embrace of liberal capitalist society. But these values regarding nature were not set in stone. In the years to come, the opposition of trade unionists to the wealthy would take a new shape, and the increased ability of the OSFL and the Grange to agree on tax reform would require that labor leaders drop their attachment to the single tax and support the initiative measures supporting an income tax that appeared on numerous ballots in the 1920s. In those same years, trade unionists would drop their assaults on scenic highways, finding that they had benefits after all, and would develop an approach to nature that was more consistent with an economy that was increasingly oriented toward mass consumption.⁶¹

NOTES

This article is adapted from *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910–30*, by Lawrence M. Lipin, forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press. For more information, please visit <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/>. The author is grateful for the helpful criticisms given by Robert Johnston and the two anonymous reviewers for this journal.

1. Carlos Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885–1917* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 16–17. Gordon Dodds — in *Oregon: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 139–43 — portrays Portland’s Central Labor Council as prone to radicalism in the

World War I era, which probably reflects the growing numbers of shipyard workers. Dodds claims that most “members of the AFL were not radical” and ignores the ways in which Oregon trade unionists repeatedly used the initiative process to challenge corporate domination. In *Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 435, Dorothy O. Johansen and Charles M. Gates minimize the degree to which the initiative stimulated class politics in this period, a position convincingly challenged by Robert D. Johnston’s recent work, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon* (Princeton, N.J.:

Princeton University Press, 2003).

2. Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1960); John L. Thomas, *Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Adversary Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1983); Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, chap. 7–9, 11; and Robert C. Woodward, “William S. U’Ren: A Progressive Era Personality,” in *Experiences in a Promised Land: Essays in Pacific Northwest History*, ed. G. Thomas Edwards and Carlos A. Schwantes (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 195–205.

3. To that extent, recent work by William G. Robbins and others provides the larger context in which they operated. See Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800–1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

4. James L. Huston, *Securing the Fruits of Labor: The American Concept of Wealth Distribution* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1998).

5. Louis S. Warren, *The Hunter’s Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of Ameri-*



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can Conservation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Benjamin Heber Johnson, “Conservation, Subsistence, and Class at the Birth of Superior National Forest,” *Environmental History* 4 (January 1999): 80–99. The association of progressivism with the expansion of democracy was challenged decades ago by Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

6. These themes are developed more thoroughly in Lawrence M. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910–1930* (forthcoming, University of Illinois Press).

7. George, *Progress and Poverty*, 340–1. On his background, see Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers*, 6th ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 184–91; and John L. Thomas, *Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Adversary Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1983), 6–17.

8. George, *Progress and Poverty*, 336–9. On the radical potential in Locke’s understanding of nature and labor, see Richard J. Ellis, “Radical Lockeanism in American Political Culture,” *Western Political Quarterly* 45 (December 1992): 825–50.

9. The natural law and Lockean foundations of George’s producerism receive excellent treatment in Ronald Yanosky, “Seeing the Cat: Henry George and the Rise of the Single Tax Movement, 1879–1890” (Ph.D. diss., University of California Berkeley, 1993), esp. 60–85. See also Thomas, *Alternative America*, esp. 118–4; Steven J. Ross, “The Culture of Political Economy: Henry George and the American Working Class,” *Southern California Quarterly* 65 (Summer 1983): 145–66; and Kathleen G. Donohue, *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 16–25.

10. Leon Fink, *Workingmen’s Democ-*

racy: *The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983)

11. On the single tax in Washington and British Columbia, see Schwantes, *Radical Heritage*. For its influence among trade-union leaders in San Francisco, see Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 157–60.

12. *Oregon Labor Press*, March 7, 1912, April 20, 1911.

13. Robert C. Woodward, “W. S. U’Ren and the Single Tax in Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 61:1 (March 1960): 46–63. See also Arthur P. Dudden, “Joseph Fels of Philadelphia and London,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 79 (April 1955): 143–66.

14. *A Pamphlet Containing a Copy of all Measures “Referred to the People by the Legislative Assembly,” “Referendum Ordered by Petition of the People,” and Proposed by Initiative Petition” to be Submitted to the Legal Voters of the State of Oregon* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1912), 230.

15. *Proposed Constitutional Amendments and Measures with Arguments Respecting the Same* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1914), 38. Carlos Schwantes emphasizes the theme of disinheritance among northwestern workers in “Unemployment, Disinheritance, and the Origins of Labor Militancy in the Pacific Northwest, 1885–86,” in *Experiences in a Promised Land*, 179–4.

16. *Proposed Constitutional Amendments and Measures (with Arguments) to be submitted to the Voters of Oregon* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1916), 7–10.

17. Frank P. Walsh to Eugene E. Smith, October 20, 1915, in *Oregon Labor Press*, November 6, 1915. On Walsh, see Joseph McCartin, *Labor’s Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 12–37; and Shelton Stromquist, “Class Wars: Frank Walsh, the Reformers, and the Crisis of Progress-

sivism,” in *Labor Histories: Class, Politics and the Working-Class Experience*, ed. Eric Arneson et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 97–124. On Gompers, see Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political Activism, 1881–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

18. *Oregon Labor Press*, July 22, 1916; Robert D. Johnston, “The Myth of the Harmonious City: Will Daly, Lora Little, and the Hidden Face of Progressive-Era Portland,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 99 (Fall 1998): 248–97, Daly quotation on 264.

19. Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 171–3. An example of the kind of opposition the measure raised can be found in *Oregon Voter*, September 30, 1916.

20. Morton Horowitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 31–62; Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 88–92; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2d ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 48–64.

21. *Oregon Labor Press*, April 27, 1911, January 25, July 25, 1912, July 27, 1911.

22. OSFL, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention*, 47; *Oregon Labor Press*, January 5, 1911. See also November 2, January 19, January 26, March 2, November 23, 1911

23. *Oregon Labor Press*, October 19, 1911, November 29, 1919. In this, the Progressive Era labor supporters of the single tax drew upon an earlier tradition that had attacked Social Darwinian certainty with denials that God and natural law could be the cause of so much poverty amidst plenty. See Herbert Gutman, “Protestantism and the American Labor Movement: The Christian Spirit in the Gilded Age,” in *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working Class and Social History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 79–117.

24. *Oregon Labor Press*, July 29, 1916, January 25, 1915; OSFL, *Proceedings* (1911), 15.
25. *Oregon Labor Press*, November 1, November 8, 1919, December 7, 1911, December 16, 1912.
26. *Oregon Labor Press*, November 4, 1916.
27. *Oregon Labor Press*, February 23, 1911.
28. OSFL, *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention* (Portland, 1910), 27; *Oregon Labor Press*, March 30, March 2, 1911. Calls to resettle the unemployed and destitute on cut-over lands were commonplace; success was not. See Richard White, "Poor Men on Poor Lands: The Back-to-the-Land Movement of the Early Twentieth Century," in Edwards and Schwantes, *Experiences in a Promised Land*, 287–303; and Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 113–41.
29. *Oregon Labor Press*, March 30, 1911; Stephen J. Pyne, *Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910* (New York: Viking, 2001). Growing interest on the part of the lumber industry in fire protection in the wake of the 1910 fires led to the establishment of a state forester, county wardens, and greater regulations over burning, all fed by a significant portion of the state budget. See William G. Robbins, "The Good Fight: Forest Fire Protection and the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 102 (Fall 2001): 277–81.
30. *Oregon Labor Press*, January 26, 1911.
31. OSFL, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention* (1916), 29.
32. *Labor Press*, July 27, May 18, 1911; OSFL, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention* (1916), 28.
33. Larry Maring Rymon, "A Critical Analysis of Wildlife Conservation in Oregon" (Ph.D. diss., Oregon State University 1969), 122–6, 179–80. The relationship among sportsmen, rural producers, and the game commission is addressed at length in Lipin, *Workers and the Wild*.
34. *Oregon Sportsman*, August 1914, 11–14.
35. On the growing organized power of sportsmen across the country, see John Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3d ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001). On concerns about the health and vigor of elite men, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
36. *Oregon Sportsman*, September 1913, 1; January 1915, 3; and July 1916, 292. See also Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 50–142.
37. On the conflicts that arose between commercial fishers and anglers, see Joseph Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).
38. *Oregon Sportsman*, September 1914. See Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 44–45.
39. Board Minutes, Fish and Game Commission, March 4, 1912, Container 32, Department of Fish and Wildlife Records, Oregon State Archives; *Oregonian*, March 6, 1912. In the early 1920s, Christian Schuebel, U'Ren's former law partner, a single-taxer, and a long-time political ally of trade unionists, continued to advocate the rights of commercial fishermen. See *Portland Daily Journal*, April 26, 1921; C. Schuebel to Carl D. Shoemaker, March 23, 1922, Folder 15, Box 14, Master Fish Warden Correspondence, Department of Fish and Wildlife Records, Oregon State Archives, Salem.
40. See Patrons of Husbandry, *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Session of the Oregon State Grange* (Oregon City, 1914), 49.
41. Ronald J. Fahl, "S.C. Lancaster and the Columbia River Highway: Engineer

as Conservationist,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 74 (June 1973): 108, 114; C. Lester Horn, “Oregon’s Columbia River Highway,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 66 (September 1965): 240–71. Benson and Yeon also took prominent roles in state highway development as members of the newly reconstituted Oregon State Highway Commission. See E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1915–1950* (Portland: The Georgian Press, 1979), 24–28.

42. Fahl, “S.C. Lancaster and the Columbia River Highway,” 106, 114.

43. MacColl, *Growth of a City*, 26.

44. *Oregon Labor Press*, May 20, 1916.

45. *Oregon Labor Press*, March 15, 1915.

46. *Oregon Labor Press*, April 12, 1915.

47. *Oregon Labor Press*, April 12, March 15, May 3, 1915.

48. *Oregon Labor Press*, July 31, May 3, 1915.

49. *Oregon Labor Press*, May 23, 1912. On Cridge, see Johnston, *Radical Middle Class*, 332–319.

50. Patrons of Husbandry, *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Session of the Oregon State Grange* (1914), 22.

51. OSFL, *Proceedings of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, Twelfth Annual Session* (1915), 18.

52. *Oregon Labor Press*, May 23, 1912; *A Pamphlet Containing a Copy of all Measures* (1912) 101.

53. Patrons of Husbandry, *Proceedings*

of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the Oregon State Grange (Lents, Oregon, 1911), 75–76; OSFL, *Proceedings of the Ninth Convention* (1912), 13, 24, quotation on 4; OSFL, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention* (1916), 4.

54. OSFL, *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Convention* (1911), 25–26; Patrons of Husbandry, *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Session* (1914) 21–24. This convention also endorsed a call for the abolition of the game commission, all game laws and hatcheries.

55. OSFL, *Proceedings* (1915), 33.

56. *Proposed Constitutional Amendments and Measures (with arguments) to be Submitted to the Voters of Oregon at the Special Election, Tuesday, June 4, 1917* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1917), 23–32.

57. *Ibid.*, 33–34.

58. *Oregonian*, February 8, 1914; Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 132.

59. Patrons of Husbandry, *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Session*, 86. Spence and U’Ren both hailed from Oregon City, a hotbed of producerist radicalism in this period.

60. A similar tendency is revealed in Robert Johnston’s discussion of East Portlander Lora Little, who challenged the authority of doctors by resisting the imposition of forced vaccination in the public schools. See “The Myth of the Harmonious City.”

61. For the development of these themes, see Lipin, *Workers and the Wild*.



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