

## **Privilege: Bar to Progress**

**By Henry Ware Allen / published 31 May, 1942**

**To the editor of the New York Times:**

Everybody approves the democratic rule of special privilege to none, but with the proviso that the special privileges, if any, which they enjoy must not be interfered with. Thus the landlord, who owns valuable city land, the manufacturer or farmer who profits by the protective tariff, those who receive government subsidies for raising or not raising certain crops, labor unions which have been favored with the Wagner Act and similar legislation, youths who are provided with college educations at government expense and church properties which enjoy exemption from their share of taxation—all of these together constitute a community of interest. The very fact of enjoyment of a special privilege dulls the keen edge of criticism of any one against any other. While the harmful effect of any one of these special privileges may be negligible, all of them together constitute an effective barrier to progress, a curse upon the nation. Their combined effect is a nation at least one-third of whom are ill-fed, ill-clad and ill-housed, even in time of peace. If our nation is to survive after the war all must obey, the democratic mandate equal rights to all; special privileges to none.