

liberty. Freedom must be carried into wider fields than that of commerce between nations, necessary though that freedom is. If the forces that lie behind the cry of "Lebensraum" are to be destroyed, free trade must be supplemented by free production: every obstruction that now stands in the way of access to nature's bounties must be swept away. It would then be found by the peoples of each and every country that the natural resources within their own boundaries are amply sufficient to enable them to live lives in every respect both full and happy, so that the urge to seize lands of others would no longer be with them.

At first sight it might appear that this could not be true of countries whose territory is incapable of producing the immense variety of goods which men must have if they are to live truly full and civilized lives. It will be said that some things wanted cannot possibly be pro-

duced in every country for the necessary raw materials are either inadequate or do not exist at all within its boundaries. But provided that nations are allowed to trade freely one with the other, the incapacity of some countries to produce in isolation any particular commodity would in no way disqualify them from acquiring that commodity, for the resources of the whole world would then be available to them in exchange for such goods as they are able advantageously to produce.

With free production supplemented by free trade, nature's bountiful storehouse throughout the world would be opened wide to all and abundance take the place of the scarcity, poverty and insecurity which now afflict the nations and spur them to wars for the "Lebensraum" which would then be fully and freely theirs.

W. R. L.

THE FUTURE IS OURS—By BUE BJÖRNER

*From Address delivered as President of the International Union
at the Opening Session of the New York Conference, 30th August, 1939*

WE KNOW that never before in the history of mankind has the enormous producing power of the world given such great chances for permanent peace and prosperity for all peoples. Truly enough, we see around us a world, where autarchy has taken the place of co-operation between nations, where "the transformation of popular government into despotism of the vilest and most degrading kind" is no longer a thing of the far future, a world in which "the sword again is mightier than the pen." But we know the reason for this. We know that only the inequalities in the distribution of wealth are responsible for such abasing conditions.

At first glance it might seem—at least to people of democratic countries—that it is the policies of the totalitarian states that are to blame for international conditions as they are to-day. But it must not be overlooked that again it is primarily the inequality in the distribution of wealth within these countries which has caused the change politically and also mentally. Let us not take the symptoms of a malady for the cause of it; the inequality in the distribution of wealth is at the bottom of the world's problems to-day and at the bottom of the social problems in any one country.

In spite of all that is happening around us, we have still reason to be optimists. There is a widening general understanding of the truth that the real causes of poverty and war are of an economic nature. And in spite of the dark political aspects we find a manifest good-will to remove these economic hindrances to the peace and prosperity for all peoples.

As a member of the Danish National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce I had the privilege to be one of the hosts to the Tenth Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce in Copenhagen this summer.

More than one thousand leading business men of forty-one countries from every part of the world met there to discuss the problem of how to bring about a world-wide co-operation, which is essential to the maintenance of peace. At the opening session at the Town Hall of Copenhagen, in the presence of H.M. King Christian, T.R.H. Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Ingrid, members of the Government and members of the Diplomatic Corps, the Past President of the I.C.C., Mr Thomas J. Watson, sounded the keynote of this remarkable Congress by stating that we can only bring about "World peace through world trade."

There may be other delegates to the I.C.C. Congress present here, who can confirm what pleasure it was to

see that prominent business men of all nations, in spite of the most severe political tension between their countries, could in a mutual spirit of goodwill meet and discuss their individual and common problems. That delegates from democratic as well as from totalitarian nations could unite in stating that "the world can produce enough raw materials and manufactured goods to supply all the people of all countries with the necessities and comforts of life," that "lasting political stability and the settlement of outstanding economic issues are necessarily interdependent." They could unite in advocating "procedure and policies which will render unnecessary the movement of armies across frontiers and which will substitute therefor the increasing movement of goods, services and capital," and they could join in their declared objective "to help people everywhere to convert their longings for peace, security and prosperity into a practical programme of economic and human understanding."

Of course the mere wish for international co-operation does not solve the problem. But the desire for opening up world trade will naturally focus the attention on the main problem, the inadequacy of the usual free trade argument and the real strength of the protection argument. The former President of the International Chamber of Commerce, Mr Fentener van Vlissingen, broached the question by stating that leading business men, who at Conferences have affirmed their belief in Free Trade, are too eager when their own difficulties meet them at home to sacrifice the ideals and to ask their government for protective measures for their own little sick industry. Others, who are also filled with the desire for international free trade, think of what is going to happen to their unemployment question at home.

It will be our task to explain that Free Trade means Free Production, and that fully to free production it is necessary not only to remove all taxes on production, but also to remove all other restrictions on production. In the words of Henry George: "True free trade requires that the active factor of production, Labour, shall have free access to the passive factor of production, Land. To secure this all monopoly of land must be broken up, and the equal right of all to the use of the natural elements must be secured by the treatment of the land as the common property in usufruct of the whole people."

Until this simple truth is recognized all efforts to bring about Free Trade between the nations are doomed

forehand. The inequalities in the distribution of wealth will remain as long as our laws and institutions uphold the right of the few to seize the natural resources of all; and it is this inequality that causes fear of unemployment and impoverishment of the working classes everywhere, and which has in our time revived obsolete autarchy tendencies and put us where we are to-day. There can be no real desire for progressive steps both in the production and interchange of goods, as long as such steps in the eyes of the masses just spell unemployment and poverty. We must establish the equality in the distribution in the simple way which Henry George explained it could be done: by removing taxes and imposts on production and instead collect the economic rent for public revenues.

Only through the economic emancipation that can be reached when there is no more speculation in land but where the access to land is free and where productive labour is no longer taxed heavily, can we restore man's confidence in being able to provide for himself.

This is, in short, the message that we who are gathered here have to bring to the world. And are we in a position to carry this message? Yes, we are indeed. Splendid work is being done by members and leaders of more than fifty Henry George organizations throughout the world in spreading the message to the public. Through the individual work of speakers and writers, through the work of the organizations, and through the work of the schools we have to-day a better

chance than ever before for both creating and satisfying a wide-spread desire for enlightenment. In paying tribute to each and every one who is carrying on this important work to-day, let us not forget those who have done it in the past. "Human progress goes on as the advances made by one generation are secured as the common property of the next, and made the starting point for new advances." Exactly the same is true for what progress our work may show. When we can say now: that never before have we had such a chance to make ourselves heard as we have to-day, then let us acknowledge our indebtedness to those who are no longer with us but who did toil for the truth that Henry George made clear and thus laid the foundation on which we are now building.

We have taken upon ourselves the work for a great cause. How soon that truth shall prevail which it is our work to make known depends now on ourselves. A world of people are waiting, who desire to convert their longings for peace, security and prosperity into a practical programme of economic adjustment. Certainly: the Future is ours!

For in the inspired teachings of Henry George we find the practical programme of economic adjustment that will not only secure a material prosperity in proportion to the existing power of production, and secure political peace as well, but will—by removing insecurity and fear—make possible a spiritual emancipation that we feel the world needs and desires to-day above anything else.

HOUSEWIVES AND THE SUGAR TAX

MR ATTLEE, now happily recovered from his illness, quite rightly protested, on behalf of the Labour Party, against the increased taxation of sugar in Mr Chamberlain's first War Budget. Sugar cannot be classed with alcoholic drinks and tobacco as a "luxury"; it is, by general consent, a necessary and valuable article of food, and the increased tax will fall with special heaviness upon the very poor and under-fed people who specially need it.

But the bare statement that Customs and Excise Duties upon sugar are to be increased "by a penny a pound," with proportionate increases on glucose, molasses and saccharin, is a very inadequate way of describing a complicated business. Even sugar itself has to be taxed in 24 different grades, the rate of tax being determined by a polariscopic examination by skilled men, for whose scientific knowledge some more useful employment could surely be found in war time.

Moreover, sugar is not only a food in itself, but also a raw material in many branches of manufacture, and this increased taxation will necessarily enhance the price of all the foods into the making of which it enters in any quantity. When the sugar tax was first reimposed, the Grocery Department of the Co-Operative Wholesale Society stated that it would probably increase the price of the following goods:—

Biscuits, black beer (not subject to the Beer Tax), blacking, blanching powders, bottled fruits, British wines, cake flours, cakes, candied peels, candy, chocolates, cocoa, condensed milk, custard powders, glacé fruits, health salts, jams, jellies, lemon cheese, lemon curd, lemonade crystals, lime juice, lime juice cordials, marmalade, pomfret cakes, sherbet, spanish juice, sweets, syrup and tinned fruits.

Besides, as Mr Attlee pointed out, much of the great fruit crops must be wasted because of the difficulty of obtaining sugar for converting them into jam, etc., and

thus providing a pleasant and sustaining food against the needs of the coming winter.

Upon the very poor, upon the unemployed "on the dole" and upon the old age pensioners and others with small fixed incomes, these new burdens, like all indirect taxes, will fall with special severity. But we look in vain for any special taxation upon the landlord as such, and it is a sin against society, that, at a time when *all* our national resources are urgently needed for the prosecution of a great war, the landlord who holds his land out of productive use can thereby escape the payment of rates and taxes on the value which the presence, industry and expenditure of the nation have given to it.

It is, of course, urgently necessary to provide money in large amounts for the prosecution of the war. But surely the housewives of the country, who in most cases have already more than enough difficulty in filling their market baskets with the bare necessities of life, will protest that sugar taxes and the like are the very worst way of finding the money.

F. V.

The *Retail Chemist*, September issue, gives pride of place to a long review and recommendation of Mr Madsen's book *Why Rents and Rates are High* (Paper covers 1s.; full cloth 2s.), explaining why it should be studied by every chemist in business. "The centres of our great cities are the spear-heads of high rents and the suburban areas have their shop sites valued in relation to it. It is a fact only too well known that in towns the price of land tends to rise steeply with the development of local amenities." The *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* of 15th September also had a favourable review.

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