

HOW FRIDAY SOLVED IT

[In our March issue appeared the article "Over-production" which stated the problem put to Friday by Crusoe. It appeared in the Canadian SQUARE DEAL of Nov.-Dec., 1932, with Samuel Danziger of the American Economic League given as the Author. The answer to Friday's problem appeared in the same issue of the SQUARE DEAL in an article by John S. Codman of Boston. It is here reprinted with our acknowledgments to both Mr Danziger and Mr Codman.]

"Good morning, Master," said Friday, "it was truly charitable of you to let me have a place to lie down last night. I got no sleep, but I thought hard about my problem."

"And what did you accomplish?" responded Robinson Crusoe.

"Master," said Friday, "is it true that the principles of the Declaration of Independence have been accepted by us on this island and, therefore, that each one of us has a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?"

"Most assuredly it is true," replied Crusoe.

"And," continued Friday, "is it true that you and I as citizens of this island have equal rights and equal opportunities, and that our votes count equally?"

"Why, of course, my dear Friday, all of that is essential to liberty, and we should be thankful that we live where true liberty exists and no one is a slave."

"I appreciate that, Master, but at the same time your title to the island gives you great power over me. I cannot work for myself anywhere on the island without your consent, and that consent you won't give because I can't pay you anything. Therefore, I am obliged to ask work from you, but all you offer me as a job is the carrying of your garb—"

"Friday," interrupted Crusoe severely, "it appears to me that your ideas are radical if not seditious. Are you criticizing the institutions of your country? Do you intend to try and change them by the use of force and violence?"

"Oh, no, Master, certainly not! I believe in law and order, and would make no change except through the ballot. But you know, Master, in your title to the island you hold a valuable privilege for which you ought to pay."

"Privilege! Nonsense!" burst in Crusoe. "Don't you know that a landlord has worries and responsibilities? Don't you realize that it is I who furnish the land for you to work on or, in other words, it is I who give you a job?"

"Yes, I understand, Master, but just now you won't give me a decent job with a living wage and you won't let me work for myself. Now, I have a plan which will remedy this condition."

"I see," shouted Crusoe, "you intend to divide up the land, to deprive me of my property. Such a proposal is Socialism. No! It is worse. It's Communism."

"Oh, no, Master," returned Friday, with a slight smile. "I am merely proposing for our vote a practical measure. It is that land owners shall be required to pay to the community a tax equal to the rental value of their land, in return for the exclusive use guaranteed to them by the community. In our case, as you are the sole land owner, you will pay the rental value of the whole island to the community, which means to you and me jointly. We can use this fund for community purposes, that is for what we jointly desire to accomplish. And you see, Crusoe, that you will have to cultivate more of the land than you have been doing in order to earn the tax you will have to pay; and in order to extend the cultivation adequately you will have urgent need of my services. Then you won't be able to drive such a hard bargain as you did last night."

"How dare you even suggest such a proposal? And how dare you call me 'Crusoe'? Your plan amounts to confiscation of the value of my property. But fortunately confiscation of property without due process of law is prohibited by our Constitution."

"Confiscation" is an ugly word," said Friday, quietly, "but with the present arrangement it is you, Crusoe, who can and do confiscate what I produce. And as to 'process of law' there will be no lack of it under my plan. You know that you and I together forming the whole community of this island, have the lawful right to levy taxes, and if you object to paying rent directly as rent, then it can be taken instead as a tax on the value of your land properly assessed."

"And," continued Friday, "this island is not over-populated. It only seems so because you won't let me use it. There is plenty of room for many more persons who can all have land to use, or good jobs, once your power to withhold land from use is ended."

"Neither will there be over-production when each gets what he produces, or its equivalent in wages, instead of piling up a surplus for you to waste or destroy. And when all are employed, who will fear the competition of foreign goods? They will only come here in exchange for what we produce, and if the foreigner insists on taking very little in exchange, or, in other words, 'dumps' his goods or gives them to us, we shall be only too glad and can take life easy."

"Well, I have half the votes and I won't support your measure," angrily exclaimed Crusoe as he rushed away.

"But, I have half the votes and will insist on my measure, Goodbye, Robbie."

And then Friday with a broad grin proceeded to plant his own crop and build his own house. And that was the end of depression and unemployment.

JOHN S. CODMAN, BOSTON.

In reply to questions by Mr Daggar on 31st March, the Secretary for Mines stated that during the year 1935 the estimated amount paid by colliery owners in Great Britain in royalties and wayleaves, including the rental value of freehold minerals where worked by the proprietors, was £4,999,000. In the same year the number of persons employed at mines under the Coal Mines Act, 1911, was 609,531 below ground and 171,186 above ground.

The royalties, therefore, amounted to over £6 per man employed.

IN MEMORIAM. Three years ago, 28th April, 1933, the Henry George movement lost John Paul whose memory is held in high honour by all its followers. This Journal was edited by him from its inception in June, 1894, until his death. It is in tribute to his work and to help it forward that, as our readers know, an Australian friend and admirer has sponsored an especial "Sustentation Fund" for *Land & Liberty*, offering to duplicate all contributions up to the amount of £500. The response has been such that the sum named has been nearly reached. John Paul's name is attached to this remarkable gesture of good will. In acknowledging again the many letters with support for the Fund and commending its purpose, we appeal to those others who, having the matter in mind, will make good act of good intention and write complete success to this *extra* endeavour for the sake of the cause.