

of the merchant will be the same; and in no case will he really pay the tax."

It cannot be denied that these reflections, which we attribute to Condorcet, could only come from a mind both subtle and vigorous. They have a logic which seems compact and shows no defect. We do not think, however, that things take place exactly as the author of these notes asserts.

LAND BELONGS TO PEOPLE

By Henry S. Ford

A man lives on and from the soil as much as a tree does, the difference being that a man moves about. To deny my right to the soil is to deny my right to live.

As it is nature that made the land, so it is government which divides the land into sites. If the Government assumed the capacity to give away these sites absolutely, any dissenter of the present or of future generations could demand a redistribution. The sites were distributed for use, and through necessity, owing to the fact that it is impossible and undesirable for everybody to live on one spot.

Nature having made the land, and the Government the sites, who made the value of the sites? Value is determined by demand, and demand is determined by the natural or social quality of the site. If the site is a mine, Nature created the value. If it is a sky-scraper site, the entity that created the metropolis created the value of the site. That entity is the entire population of the city.

People congregate in urban communities to secure the convenience, pleasure and profit afforded by social and economic intercourse. While it is a desirable thing to live within the space occupied or influenced by the community, it is an especially valuable privilege to have the exclusive possession and use of the best portions of the communal area where the social and economic advantages are intensified.

What is created by Nature belongs to all of us by reason of the equal right and natural necessity of all men to use the earth. What is created by the community belongs to the community for the purposes of the community. Every citizen as a joint partner in the community has a real and assertive right in the social product as in his individual product, and he may demand an accounting. Any neglect of the Government to collect its peculiar and legitimate income, exposes the citizen to unwarranted taxation on his private industry and improvements. He has a right to insist on the collection of the ground rent, and its expenditure for his benefit on political administration and public works.

Private immunity from the payment of ground rent, and the private retention of rent collected from tenants causes rent to assume the form of capitalised land values, and leads to socially injurious barter and sale and speculation in the fundamental means of life. It causes the flow of enormous masses of public values into private pockets. It impedes the natural expansion of industry by forcing producers, before they can employ their labour and capital, to surrender their accumulations for the space and natural elements necessary to the use of the capital. It induces an artificial scarcity and a speculative enhancement of present value, by the anticipation of increased future value. It renders the use or the relinquishment of land largely a matter of caprice, and invites the entire impounding of vast treasures of opportunity. It constricts the field of human endeavour, checks enterprise, obstructs labour, and depresses wages. It cramps population, breeds slums and social demoralisation, and makes a hell in a Garden of Eden. It submerges a stratum of the population into

poverty, failure, disappointment, despair, and makes life for them a calamity.

It is the right and duty of the State to resume collection of the full ground rent so long defaulted. So far from the landlords being entitled to compensation, they are fortunate to be discharged of past delinquencies and of the resulting social privations.

In paying ground rent to the Government we will be paying it to ourselves, so that, to the people as a whole, land will be free, as Nature intended it to be. The rent will measure only the difference between the better grades of land and the poorest grade in use, and its collection will be no more than an equalising adjustment of rights and privileges. It will rob no one, for it is a natural and social surplus product, and does not trench on economic wages, or the earnings of the individual. It takes only what would otherwise go as unearned wealth to non-producers.

It will cause all land not adequately used to be thrown open to labour, for no man will pay rent for land and not use it. It will remove the necessity of capitalising on land; and having paid his rent, the occupant of the land has in so doing paid his taxes, and has relieved himself of a miscellaneous job-lot of penalties on his private industry.

Labour, which by the exercise of creative intelligence and manual skill renders all services and creates all capital and all wealth, will be given the fullest opportunity, and by the elimination of deadheads and parasites will be secured its full product.

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