

MUST SEA-LANES FEED BRITAIN?

In a recent issue of *The Nation* (New York) John A. Hobson discusses "Free Trade and British Labour" in an interesting and enlightening manner. He sees the impracticability of Britain abandoning the Free Trade policy, and evidently has ground for believing that Labour will continue opposed to such action, if not undermined by special appeals to specific industries.

But he is surely mistaken when he asserts that the intelligent workman knows that "a self-sufficient Britain, producing its food and raw materials for its industry, is impossible." Mr Hobson has evidently not had access to the information summarized in Redmond & Co.'s *World Economic Chart*. Eighty per cent of Britain's 94,203 square miles is arable and pasture land, and it should be remembered that much land ranked as "pasture" should properly be included in private domains.

Only 31 per cent of this arable land in Great Britain is cultivated, and that not according to intensive methods. Professor L. H. Bailey, Professor of Horticulture of the College of Agriculture of Cornell University, Editor of *Cyclopædia of American Horticulture*, etc., says, in his excellent *Principles of Vegetable Gardening*: "An area of 150 feet by 100 feet (about two-fifths of an acre) is generally sufficient to supply a family of five persons with vegetables, not considering the winter's supply of potatoes; but the acres must be well tilled and handled. . . . The produce that could thus be obtained from an acre of land well situated would abundantly supply with nearly all the vegetables named, nineteen families, comprising in all 114 individuals."

Great Britain has more than sixty millions of acres of cultivable land, and the present forty millions of uncultivated acres, at two to the acre, would give food to 80,000,000, leaving for export, at present population, food for 35,000,000. If farming were conducted in Britain as in Denmark or the Channel Islands, the dependence of her people upon other food-producing countries would be entirely abolished, and her labour population would find its condition enormously improved.

The laws and customs that prevent the use of all the cultivable land are the real cause of Britain's present unemployment and want. Neither "safeguarding" duties, nor any other form of protection will relieve, let alone cure, Britain's troubles. She will always need Free Trade, not because she cannot feed herself, but because it affords the best means for that free interchange of products which makes for success and world harmony. But Free Trade in products of man's labour will never bring its full measure of prosperity to Britain while Labour is cut off from its rightful access to natural resources, and has to pay tribute to the Land Owner for the privilege of using that which is its own.

Great Britain is the world's outstanding example of the suffering and want entailed by private ownership of land, even while enjoying the greatest measure of Free Trade known in any country. If the whole 80 per cent of arable land in Britain were freely open to cultivation, unemployment and want would soon disappear, and the "dole" become only an ugly dream.

BOLTON HALL.

The *Daily News*, 3rd July, reports "a big financial deal" in respect of the formation of a syndicate to acquire for £550,000 the site of the Meux Brewery in Tottenham Court Road, London. The site was bought in 1918, according to Mr Solomon Barnato Joel, for £400,000.

THE PERFECT TAX

With one exception all our taxes are forms of robbery, differing only in degree from the one he singles out. They all alike transgress the eighth commandment; they are reprehensible, unjust, unequal, unwise and totally unnecessary. They fall on enterprise, industry and thrift with crushing weight, clogging the wheels of industry, lessening employment and materially aiding in producing that abiding poverty which seemingly makes charity a necessity.

The one exception to this is that tax which falls on the value of land. This tax is the only tax which meets all the requirements of a perfect tax. It falls on a value made by society as a whole, and this value attaches itself to that element—land—to which we all have, by nature, an equal right. It is the natural source of public revenue and will amply provide it. It puts no burden whatsoever on industry, enterprise or thrift.

Take the full economic rent of land for public purpose in lieu of all our many taxes and we can stop our disgraceful and harm-working public thievery.—HAROLD SUDELL in the *Philadelphia Record*.

THE CHURCH AND THE LAND

The Scottish *Daily Express* has recently opened its columns to a discussion on the relation between the Church and the mass of the people. In an anonymous contribution to this series, entitled "God's Gospel on the Land Question," a layman writes:—

"Had the clergy unflinchingly preached the democratic gospel of Moses, boldly advocated the Mosaic laws, and pointed out how to give them a modern application, the Church would have been powerful in influence. How many clergymen, for instance, have ever taken as texts, 'The earth He has given to the children of men,' 'Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's landmark,' 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world, and all they that dwell therein.'

"Scotland's curse is poverty occasioned by unemployment. The clergy are grand at organising charity calls, but why have they failed to urge that the earth of Scotland, with all its great industrial possibilities, should be put to its fullest use? Surely Christian editors and other men will admit that it is Biblical doctrine that the earth was given for the fullest use of all. Why, therefore, do thousands in this land stand idle, who could grow food for themselves? Why are the Highlands depopulated, and what action has the clergy taken to remedy the evils that have driven thousands of Scots abroad to engage in agricultural pursuits, while millions of acres of suitable untilled tillage land exist in Scotland?

"In the natural resources of Scotland there are millions of new jobs for willing workers. Why, therefore, do the Churches not come out boldly and demand that all of Scotland's land be fully developed in the interest of all of God's children?"

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