

the small towns of Virginia and Maryland, and the public meetings in the city of Washington will continue throughout the winter. A circular letter has been addressed to all the churches, labor unions and civic bodies of the city asking permission to send them a speaker to explain the taxation principles of the Association. In addition to these meetings it has been arranged to distribute Single Tax papers and pamphlets, and no effort is to be spared to educate all the citizens within the reach of its activities as to the evils of the present system of taxation and as to the benefits that must follow from a change to the Single Tax.

HOW IS IT WITH U. S. ?

(For the Review)

By **W. B. NORTHROP**

Americans are inclined to indulge in self-complacence. Our prosperity has been shooting ahead, at so much per schrapnel. As Browning would say: "God's in His Heaven; the worm's on the thorn; all's right with the world" (whatever all that means).

But let us stop, look, listen. Are we so everlastingly better off here than are the Europeans?

A country may be said to be no better off than its weakest economic link. Examining the economic link is like trying to find the missing one. We think we are strong in our business link, our naval link, political link, and other segments of the chain that binds us in as a people. It is seldom that we pay any attention to the link economic.

Let us forget the European war for the nonce. Let us only regard the peoples of the different countries—aside from their governments—in their relative status supposing no war existed. Particularly, let us look at our own social conditions.

It is difficult to summarize an economic comparison between the United States and any one European country, or to compare an American city with any one European city, owing to the difference in kind, if not in degree, of the poverty existing in the different countries; and, also, owing to the widely differing character of the problems in each particular State of the Union. There are, however, certain outstanding general features in connection with definite portions of the population which are alike in nearly all States and which cannot fail to attract the attention of any one who gives even the most passing glance to these social questions.

As societies greatest asset is said to be its children, it is well to begin with a consideration of the state of the children in this country, and let us ask our-

selves if it is well that in this glorious land there are upwards of 1,750,178 children—between the ages of 10 and 15 years—engaged in “gainful occupations?”

This figure does not include the vast number of children employed long hours in sweated industries and “home work;” nor those in street trades. Were all the children in this country who are working included in the count the total might conservatively be placed at 2,000,000 or more. The census giving 1,750,178 children employed in this country was issued in 1900, but child employment in the cotton mills has increased 200 per cent in the last ten years. Besides, the figure given relates only to children between the ages of 10 and 15 years, whereas large numbers of children under 10 years are employed not only in Southern and Northern cotton mills, but in the canning and agricultural industries. In the last-named industries, such as oyster packing and berry picking, children 5 years old work long hours without restraint, exposed to all sorts of weather, under the most distressing conditions.

In some of the cotton mills night work is permitted, and children 10 and 12 years old do a twelve-hour night shift. Let me read you the words of a poor little worker—a wee bit of a girl, undersized and ill-fed, who worked in a Scranton, Pa., cotton mill. Her age is 11 years:

“The tangles in the threads,” she said, “are always worst when I’m tiredest. Sometimes my head aches something awful, and I have to cry and some other girl has to straighten out the tangles.”

A little boy in a Southern cotton mill, working on the night shift, gives the following experience. His age is only 10 years:

“When first I went to work at night the long standing hurt me very much. My feet burned so I cried. My knees hurt me worse than my feet, and my back pained me all the time. Mother cried when I told her how I suffered, and that made me feel so bad I didn’t tell her any more. My eyes hurt me from watching the threads at night.”

In South Carolina mills they have a law that children under 14 years cannot work at night, unless they are orphans. These latter can be worked at any age, it seems. All over the South, however—where the laws such as I mean are practically dead letters, and no factory inspectors are appointed or permitted—children of all ages are working day and night, and a photographer who took a number of photos among these children—Mr. Lewis Hine—for the National Child Labor Committee, which is doing splendid work exposing child labor conditions, informs me that he has seen children at work in the mills at the tender age of 5½ years.

The working of orphans in Southern mills reminds me of the way they used to do with workhouse and orphan children in England forty years ago. Tiny children were compelled to work in the Manchester cotton mills, and when they became tired or dropped off to sleep, they were dipped into great vats of icy water, and sent back to work. Those who died of pneumonia or

exhaustion were buried in the grounds of the institutions whence they came, and other batches were supplied. When the grounds of the institutions were sold some years ago huge cemeteries containing nothing but the bones of children were unearthed—the victims of greed and profit-getting.

Nor are the Southern States the only offenders against children. Massachusetts refused to grant an eight-hour law to children, though it gave one to adults, and the children in sweated home trades—in the tenements of our great cities—work twelve, fourteen and even sixteen hours a day. In New York State 13,000 children work in factories, to say nothing of those in street trades, stores, offices, etc. There are over 749 newsboys in this city, many under 10 years, and when you consider that our reformatories are filled with boys mostly from the street trades, the danger is apparent. Many little girls are also working in these street trades, some of them late at night.

Tenement house work for children has been exposed in this and other great cities time and again. In one block in New York, bounded by Broadway, East Houston, Crosby and Prince Streets, 40,000 people are employed in the garment trade, and among these are many children, living under overcrowded, unhealthy conditions, at wages pitifully inadequate.

In some States working hours for factory children have been reduced from sixty-six per week to sixty—even the granting of a ten-hour day being looked upon as a great concession. In home work the work hours are indefinite.

In the regulated trades, such as the canning factories of Maine, children leave their beds at night to work at cutting up fish; some of these little ones being only 5 years old, while young women in this same trade work eighty and ninety hours per week. Children receive from 8 cents to 12 cents per day, and women not much more. New Jersey children of 4 years are engaged to string beans.

In the Delaware and Maryland oyster industry children work from 4 a.m. to midnight, receiving 1 cent to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per hour. As many as fifty and sixty women and children are frequently crowded into one wretched little shack, used for sleeping purposes. This terrible trade has no "legal restrictions," and no moral ones either.

Comparing the children of the well-to-do with those of the poor, scientific investigation among 30,000 poor children has during the last few years demonstrated that the children of the poor between the ages of 11 and 12 years are $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches shorter, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches less in chest measurement, and weigh 11 pounds less than well-to-do children. Furthermore, one-third of the children of the poor suffer from mental and physical defects, nervous diseases, rickets and other results of malnutrition and poverty.

Now, there is no possible excuse for this state of affairs. Nature provides every child coming into the world with a healthy physique, irrespective of its poverty conditions, except, of course, such as inherit disease. When born, normal children of the poor weigh quite as much as those of the rich,

and are in fact, often more robust and better nourished. Society, as organized to-day, deliberately wrecks these little lives and throws them on the scrap heap.

In addition to the work imposed upon women and children throughout the country, a vast amount of labor is done by young boys from 12 to 16 years old. Many are employed in the coal mines, shoving cars, watching doors and other occupations. Among these lads the percentage of accidents is from 250 per cent. to 450 per. cent higher than among adults, and the conditions of work are terrible.

In the glass factories young boys 10 to 12 years old remain in rooms heated to more than 100 degrees, and in some spots, facing what is known as the "Glory Hole," the heat is 140 degrees. Heat prostration, exhaustion, chronic headache, and affection of the sight are common. Collapse from being "burned out"—the system becoming too dry—is so common that little attention is paid to it, save to revive the victim and get him back to work as soon as his fainting spell is over. Children in the glass blowing trade begin work often at 3 a. m.; others work all night. The glass industry in New Jersey is said to entirely depend upon the labor of children.

In the congested tenement districts of New York, infant mortality among children of 6 years and under is nearly 92 per cent. Mothers throughout these districts are compelled to leave little children locked up all day in bare rooms, or else put them out in the streets, at the mercy of passing traffic.

There are 15,000 licensed tenements in New York; this means that "home work" can be done in them under conditions that would not be allowed in any factory. The average pay for a home worker in the artificial flower trade is \$2.07 per week. Flowers, formerly 5 cents per gross of 144, have now been reduced to 2 cents per gross. Home work in the garment trade—a terribly sweated industry in which whole families live under ruinous and almost inconceivable conditions—pays \$3.67 per entire family per week—that is, father, mother and children working. As low as 5 cents per hour has been paid in these sweated home trades.

A recent investigation into 1,573 cases of poverty in New York City by the Charity Organization Society brought some remarkable facts to light. In the first place it exploded the old theory that drink and idleness were the causes of destitution. It was found that 43 per cent of poverty is caused by illness, 25 per cent by unemployment, 12 per cent by insufficient income, .04 per cent by non-support, and intemperance less than .02 per cent. In other words, the great discovery has just been made that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty."

I might quote in this connection a few words from Tennyson's "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After:"

"It is well that while we range with Science glorying in Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city crime?"

There among the gloomy alleys, Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousands on the street;
There the master scrimps his haggard seamstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead."

Wages of women and children in all the factory and home work trades—and there are 1,965,884 women in manufacturing pursuits alone in this country—are hopelessly inadequate. Children in the mills get less than \$3.00 per week—for all night work often—and women in the home sweated industries receive often less than \$3.00 per week.

Women and children in all these trades, by the way, are introduced as competitors of men, and serve to reduce men's wages. In many cases if men received adequate wages, it would be altogether unnecessary for women to work at all. The average woman's wage per day throughout the United States is 60 cents. The average pay in the department stores is only \$3.00 per week, out of which most of the women have to pay \$1.50 for room rent. Underpayment for work done is one of the greatest causes for the horrible "white slave" traffic and the thousands of our poor sisters who join the Magdalens of our great cities.

Brief allusion must be made to the steel industry, which employs throughout this country 250,000 workers. It is usually supposed that laborers in this industry—especially the 70,000 to 80,000 steel workers of Pittsburg—are better off than those in other trades. This is only a supposition. Sixty per cent of the steel workers are foreigners, with low wages, and living below American standards. Wages among these people range from \$1.50 to \$2 per day; 36 per cent of the steel workers receive between \$2 and \$5 per day. The conditions of work are terrible. Here is the story of John Griswold, a furnace boss, as narrated in Fitch's book on the steel workers:

"Mighty few men have stood what I have. I've been twenty years at the furnaces and been working a twelve-hour day all that time seven days in the week. We go to work at seven in the morning and get through at six at night. We work that way for two weeks, and then we work the long turn and change to the night shift of thirteen hours. The "long turn" is when we go on at 7 Sunday morning and work through the whole twenty-four hours up to Monday morning."

Though capital has combined in the steel industry, trade unionism has been stamped out.

Andrew Carnegie is mainly responsible for the anti-union attitude of the steel corporation. Furnace workers in his mills receive 16 cents per hour, while Carnegie's steel bonds bring him an income of \$10,000,000 a year. His total wealth from this industry is conservatively estimated at between \$500,000,000 and \$1,000,000,000, mostly dividends on watered stock when the great amalgamation was made by Morgan.

The terrible work endured by the men on the "hot jobs" in the steel

mills has recently been the subject of government investigation, and, doubtless, in the course of another few thousand years something will be done.

Speaking of the lowering of American standards, it has been proved by Prof. Scott Nearing, of the University of Pennsylvania, that \$900 per annum is the minimum required in order for a man in this country to support decently a family consisting of his wife and three children.

Now, 60 per cent of the adult males in this country receive less than \$900 a year, or \$12 per week. This means between 4,000,000 and 7,000,000 male workers, to say nothing of women, who do not receive half as much as the men.

The average wage in the leading industries of this country range from \$450 to \$600 a year, or \$8.60 to \$12 per week. More than one-half the adult males in the United States get less than \$12 per week, less than one-tenth receive more than \$1,000 a year, three-fifths of the women receive less than \$8 per week, while a very few—"a vanishing percentage"—receive more than \$15 per week. Even these figures must be reduced 20 per cent to make allowance for unemployment.

Statistics are more or less unreliable, but Professor Nearing has worked out his figures very carefully and they may be trusted. Therefore, it will be seen that only one-tenth of the male population receives anywhere near \$900 per year, while nine-tenths of the women workers receive less than \$750 per year.

It is hard for any one to maintain any sort of living standard on the kind of wages now received in the United States, when the high cost of living is considered. Prices have advanced during the last nine years between 45 and 55 per cent, according to Dun and Bradstreet's reports and wages have remained stationary or actually declined. The inrush of foreign labor, willing to receive payment at European valuation in money, but ignorant of the fact that the money here has scarcely one-half the purchasing power abroad, has lowered our standards, and on every side you see American labor displaced by the foreign element.

While foreign labor is displaced on every hand, wealth has become more and more concentrated in fewer hands, natural opportunities have been seized by the exponents of big "business," and the ordinary American citizen is now practically held in a species of feudal bondage by those who have acquired all the wealth of the country.

To afford a concrete idea of how wealth has concentrated in this country, it may be stated that 800,000—or just about 10 per cent of our population—own nearly 90 per cent of the aggregate wealth of the country.

In 1900, 8,429,845 people owned \$24,000,000,000, while 20,393,137 only owned \$4,000,000,000. While two-thirds of our working population—made up of 18,000,000 wage earners—are homeless or pay rent to their owners, we see the

Astor family with.....	\$1,000,000,000
The Vanderbilts with.....	1,000,000,000
Carnegie with	500,000,000
Clark with	500,000,000

Our 6,000,000 farmers have nearly become simple tenants to the bankers, 33 per cent of the farmers being heavily mortgaged. Farms are worthless to-day by \$300 than they were in 1860—fifty years ago.

In 1907 our national wealth was estimated at \$106,000,000,000; John D. Rockefeller owns one-thirtieth of it, or \$3,000,000,000; the Standard Oil owns one-tenth of our national wealth.

Taking the total wages of our 18,000,000 workers, averaged at \$400 per year, as \$7,200,000,000, we see that Rockefeller—one man—receives \$3,000,000,000, or nearly one-half the total wages of every worker in the United States; the Standard Oil group, with Rockefeller, get twice the total wages of the country.

Ninety-five per cent of our population live precariously; only one-twentieth live comfortably, while one-thousandth possess most of the wealth.

With such an unfair division of the wealth of the country is it any wonder that our government authorities are attempting to restrict immigration? Upwards of 1,000,000 a year—20,000 a week—have been pouring into this country. Why have these people come; why do they come? It is mainly because their own lands have been exploited by their governmental classes and these unfortunate wanderers are seeking in a new land a vestige of the liberty they lost in the old. They do not know that our country has already been expropriated; that nearly all our vast lands are in the hands of the railroads, banks, and real estate speculators; that most of our farmers are spending their life blood in paying off mortgages; that all our city lands are in the hands of a few wealthy families whose extortionate rents blackmail industry to such an extent that it is one of the factors in our tenement and sweated industries problem; they do not know that rent lords cause 70,000 evictions each year in this city; that we have in this city every year 1,000 poverty-caused suicides, and that 14,000 homeless men wander each night about the streets of this city, or take shelter in the police stations or cheap lodging houses. They do not know that in this great country—"the land of the free and the home of the brave"—there are 3,000,000 official paupers, to say nothing of about 10,000,000 workers who are living on wages that are below the poverty line.

I crossed the Atlantic as an immigrant a few years ago and mingled with people fleeing from Russia, coming to this country full of hope, looking forward to their speedy emancipation from serfdom.

I often think of what a shock it must be to these people when they find themselves herded into construction camps; housed worse than cattle in the slums of our great cities; tyrannized over by work bosses and political bosses.

Little did they think that their children would be drafted into the canning factories and cotton mills, or that their wages would be so low that life could scarcely be supported.

These people had heard that this country is the richest in the world, but they did not know that the total wealth of the nation—or 90 per cent. of it—was in the hands of 10 per cent. of the wealthy families. They did not know that in New York State alone 300,000 people receive charitable aid; that one out of every four of the tenement dwellers receives charity, and that every one out of ten persons who die in this city are buried in potter's fields.

Our "Golden West" is mortgaged, and our workers from one end of the country to the other are in bondage. Under all the circumstances, have we any cause for self laudation? If things are as described in the "land of the free," is it not high time that our people awoke to the deceptive nature of their dream of prosperity? Is it not time that our great and supposedly all-wise statesmen look within and examine our economic and social status? Is it not time that more than mere investigation be directed to our home-made horrors? Is it not time that some programme of fundamental reform be carried out? Can anything be done to remedy these crying conditions in our own country? Statesmen the world over have agreed that the Land Question is at the base of the social problem. Why not have a great convention of all recognized thinkers who are sincerely striving for the welfare of the country, and make an attempt to solve the Land Question. All social thinkers are agreed that the Land Question is one of the most important of issues. Let us see if this great question cannot be brought into the light which its supreme importance deserves. As a possible solution of the problem of Unemployment (there were, by-the-way, upwards of 400,000 Unemployed in New York City last December) the Land Question should take its place among the great questions of the hour. If bodies of government experts and investigators would look into the great railway holdings of this country, and consider how the real estate interests of our great cities are virtually controlling municipal governments, much good might come from such research.

Until a serious attempt is made to answer the Land Question, it might be truthfully said that efforts to solve other economic riddles are vain.

It is very clear that God, as King David says, "has given the earth to the children of men"; given it to mankind in common.—LOCKE (1690) "Essay on Civil Government," Sec. 25.

THE land therefore of every country is the common property of the people of that country—The Bishop of Meath, letter to clergy and laity, April 2nd, 1881.