

there will be more jobs and more income to the great mass of folk. The strain of taxation and rents will then be taken off the workingman and the man on a salary and the business man, and put on economic rent. A dollar earned will go farther, and there will be more dollars actually earned by industry and capital; the wealth produced in the country will go to more people; for the rent monopoly which gathers it in now will be destroyed. And homes will become possible instead of luxuries to be dreamed of.

AN OLD STORY RE-TOLD

(For the Review)

By R. T. SNEDECKER

Rightness expresses of action what straightness does of lines,
And there can no more be two kinds of right action,
Than there can be two kinds of straight lines.—HERBERT SPENCER.

The gist of political economy is: "How to get a living." The science treats of the laws governing the production and distribution of wealth. It is the science on which all other arts, sciences and even civilization rests. For all nations that have ignored its just and affirmative laws have perished from the face of the earth. The law of retribution is as certain as the law of gravitation.

There are certain natural laws that govern the phenomena of vegetable, animal and civic life. There are certain lines of action that bring a dwarfed and stunted growth and early dissolution, while another line of action brings health, strength and happiness.

Justice is the keystone in the arch of any civilization. To ignore Justice is to invite the death and destruction of society. To follow her is to reach a higher civilization than was ever dreamed of by any human mind.

It is assumed here that all men have a natural right to the use of all the elements from which life is sustained; that each one is equally free to use the earth for the satisfaction of his wants, providing he allows others like liberty.

That when a man applies his labor to a piece of unused land and produces a bushel of corn or wheat, the corn and wheat belong to the producer.

This is not a question for society to settle, for he is the first man on earth. This bushel of corn or wheat would not be in existence had it not been for the labor of this man. In the grain are the elements from which life is sustained. To take it all from him, means starvation; to take a part of it, is to lower his standard of living.

Other men coming on earth would have the same equal right to the use of the land from which all their material wants must be supplied. The first

man would have no natural right to levy tribute on the late comers, nor would they have a natural right to take the wealth produced by the first man. Nor has the government any right to take wealth produced by individual exertion.

Men by nature are social beings. When a number of them come together they form society. Society organizes government, not for the purpose of limiting its individual members in the enjoyment of their natural rights, but the better to protect them in the full use of the results of their labor. Men also find that by working together in government, they can accomplish things that individually they could not do.

Thus, Society through government, the administrative arm of society, could build a bridge across a river by the united efforts of all the citizens, a task impossible for a few men to do.

When a bridge was thus built by the community, to whom would the bridge belong? Would any one citizen have a right to take possession of the bridge and levy tribute on all other citizens who used it?

In the argument given above we find that Justice gave the bushel of corn to the man who produced it. Here we find that Justice decrees that the bridge belongs to the community which by its united efforts built it, and all have an equal right to use it.

Now we come to another item of great value, produced by the presence and industry of the community. If we find out to whom it rightly belongs, we may be able to settle the industrial question.

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the fact, agreed to by economic writers, that land has no value in a commercial sense, until two or more men desire to use the same plot.

Thus we find that land values increase with increase of population and the productive power of labor. This is clearly seen, if we look back a century when the value of land in the limits of Kansas City where I write had little, if any, value. Today some acres have a value of three to four million dollars. If all the people should leave the city and country, and no others take their place, the same land would not have a value of forty cents per acre.

Now if it is clear that increase of population and the productive power of labor produce land values, to whom in justice do land values belong?

On this decision depends higher wages, a higher civilization, or low wages and degeneration, both mental and physical.

We said at the beginning that nature, the best guide for human action, gave the wheat and corn to the man who by his labor produced the grain.

And it is just as clear, if Justice be done, that the bridge built by the community belongs to all the citizens in the community and not to any one or half dozen of them.

Is it not quite as self-evident that the value of land created by the presence and industry of the community belongs to and should be shared equally by all the citizens in the community or State?

Land values increase with increase of population and productive power of labor regardless of what the owner as owner may do or not do.

Here is the point at issue. This value, termed economic rent, belongs to the people who by their presence and industry create it. There are no ifs ands or buts in the question. Justice says plainly, that things of value belong to the producer. If that be true, then it is robbery of the people when a less number than the whole appropriate what all produce. And any State that allows it to be done aids in the robbery of the masses and hastens the downfall of the government that is one of the main factors in creating land values, for the more public improvements and the better the form of government the higher are land values.

Common sense tells us then, to take economic rent for public purposes and from the citizen not one dollar produced by his own labor. When the State takes hard earned dollars from the meager wages of twenty-five million homeless workers, who have only their labor to sell, while allowing a few to appropriate the billions of ground rent that should be paid into the public treasury for the use of all, it assists in a most gigantic robbery.

Everything that tends to satisfy the material wants of men is produced by labor applied directly or indirectly to land. Hence, it is the users of land and not landlords and speculators, who pay all revenue and make it possible for us to live.

The wealth produced by labor from land is divided into two parts, The part going to labor is called wages, the part taken for the use of bare land is called rent. It is from these two sources alone that all revenue must be taken.

The townships, schools, cities and States raise annually about two and one quarter billions of dollars. About one third of this amount comes from ground rent and two thirds from wages in the form of taxes on buildings, goods, mortgages, money, occupation, licenses and other forms.

The general government raises some three quarters of a billion dollars annually; nearly every dollar comes from wages or small incomes.

While the general government raises \$700,000,000. from internal revenue and a tariff tax on imports, it aids and abets the privileged classes and tariff-made trusts, to take from the people every year over two billion dollars in higher prices than the same goods are sold for in foreign countries. This indirect system of taxation lowers the standard of living of the men who feed, clothe and house the nation.

Professor Andrews, of Brown University, said several years ago:—"If the American people knew how they were plundered and robbed by our indirect system of taxation, they would rise up and overthrow the government in twenty-four hours."

But that is not all. By letting private individuals perform public services that are properly functions of government we allow these owners, or more

properly speaking, the managers of steam railways, street car companies, telegraph, telephone, water, gas, electric lighting, and express companies to take annually another billion dollars to pay dividends, not on actual capital invested, but on the privilege to monopolize public service. This last billion dollars also comes out of the wages of the people engaged in gainful occupations. Does it not begin to be clear why it is so hard to get a living; harder then ever before to get a home, when with all our improved processes of production, it should be easier than when our forebears turned the soil with a wooden mole-board plow, cut the wheat with a sickle, thrashed it with a flail and winnowed it with the wind? And the story is not half told.

Mr. Herbert Spencer says:

"Given a race of human beings having like claim to pursue the object of their desires, given a world adapted for the gratification of those desires, a world into which such beings are similarly born, and it unavoidably follows that they have equal rights to the use of this world."

If this premise is in harmony with correct reason then every man in the United States has the same natural right to the use of any plot or parcel of land within our boundary. It is also a law of nature that no two men can use or occupy the same piece of land at the same time. Here seemingly is a conflict. How can conflicting desires be reconciled, so that justice may be done to every citizen of the State?

All laws of nature are simple in their working, and there is no exception in the statement of these personal desires. Let the man who is lucky enough to have selected the most desirable lot of land in the whole country pay each year, to all others, what it is worth to have exclusive possession of such tract of land; the claims of all are thus satisfied, and his undisputed possession guaranteed.

While there are no public records giving the annual ground rent in the United States, it may be possible to give a fair estimate.

Everywhere you may go in the States, you find the farmer is compelled to give at least one bushel out of four for the use of the bare land. If he gives one third or one half or more, it is on account of improvements. When we come to the city, we find about the same conditions. At least one fourth of the earnings of the laborer, merchant and business man, is taken to pay ground rent for the land they live and work on.

According to Dunn and Bradstreet, a larger percentage of business men fail and lose all their capital than there are farmers driven to the city on account of high rent. Our present system of taxation is making 750 tenant farmers every year in Kansas, over 1,000 each year in Missouri, and other States in proportion. Unless something is done, we will soon be cursed with tenants on one hand and landlordism on the other.

Let all who read this satisfy themselves whether or not one fourth of the total yearly product are taken to pay for the use of bare land. Then

the most important item is the amount and whether it would be sufficient to pay all public expenses without taking a dollar from the wages of the producers.

Making an estimate based on the last census report, last year 36,000,000 persons engaged in gainful occupations produced over \$36,000,000,000. (Thirty-six Billion) dollars worth of wealth. Then if the workers give up one fourth of their products to pay for the use of bare land, there must have been nearly nine billions of dollars taken last year as ground rent. If that be true, and all appropriated to private use, except the three quarters billions paid in taxes, what kind of civilization would we have if all the ground rent was used for government purposes?

It would save to the wage workers over \$4,000,000,000. each year that is now taken in taxes on improvements, personal property and tariff trust prices on goods.

If the ownership and operation of all public utilities were assumed by government over one billion dollars more would be saved to wage earners.

Now if the people take for public use what they conjointly produce, we have a fund of nine billion dollars to draw from. How shall we appropriate it?

Let the counties, cities, States and general government, abolishing all other forms of raising public revenue, take three billion dollars. One and one half billions for transportation purposes.

One and one half billion dollars to pay \$300. yearly to every man and woman above 65 years of age. Not paying it to them as mendicants or paupers, but because it justly belongs to them; pay it from a fund they for 50 years have helped to produce.

Set apart each year from the rent fund enough to pay to every widow \$10. a month for every child under 16 years of age.

Pay for every man killed or crippled in public service a just compensation.

Taking this way of raising public revenue and using government service to benefit all men instead of profiting a few, would increase production to a higher degree than was ever dreamed. And the rent fund would soon increase to ten, twelve or perhaps fifteen billion dollars. Use the balance of the fund to pay what the physical values of the railways and other utilities are worth; pay off all county, city, State and national debts and in less than ten years we would not have a dollar of public debt.

Taking for the use and benefit of all the people the values produced and created by the people, may be called paternalism. But what do you call it when less than five million people appropriate each year for private use over eight billion dollars that are created by the ninety-five million people? Name it, and if in justice it belongs to the few, we will keep on in the same old way of supporting government from the wages of the poor.

President Wilson and Ex-President Roosevelt have often said in public speech: "It is the duty of government to give every man equal opportunity

to use the natural resources from which life is sustained." So far, they have not told us how this is to be secured, or when they were going to recognize man's equal right to the use of the earth.

Foreigners own over 40,000,000 acres of land in the United States on which American citizens must pay rent, the same as Irish tenants must pay the English landlords. W. W. Astor and the Lord Scully estate alone take millions of dollars each year in ground rent, and like other landlords never earn a dollar of it. Would it not be more in harmony with justice if the people who create this ground rent used it for public purposes instead of paying public expenses from the wage fund?

In this country we have 15,000,000 landless, homeless men, 15,000,000 mothers without homes—workers, all of them. And we have farm laborers who would like to have farms of their own.

But what chance have they to get them? The State does everything it can in the way of taxation to drive men off the farms. Then they throw them sop in the way of National Reserve Banks and farm credit associations. Farmers and miners do not need credits. They are the real producers of the wealth. What they want is equal rights to the use of the earth.

The upheaval at Lawrence and Salem, Massachusetts; the miners' strikes in Virginia, Michigan and Colorado; the outbreak of tenant farmers in Missouri and Texas—are but manifestations of corruption and disregard of human rights. If democracy awakes not, then the people may declare, as did the French Assembly over a century ago, that: "Ignorance, neglect or contempt for the natural rights of men is the sole cause of corruption and downfall of governments."

CRIME AND CRIMINALS

(For the Review.)

By **H. H. HARDINGE**

The principle reason for the failure of "anti-crime" crusades and the general futility of crime discussions is the fact that but one side of the question is discussed by the superficial reformers who engage in these often well meant but silly crusades.

Crime is of three kinds and only three. It is committed by one individual against another, or by an individual against a group, the State for instance; or it is perpetrated by the State, the collective body, against the individual. In nearly every discussion of the crime question that I have heard, it dealt solely from the individualistic standpoint and rarely is it hinted and never is it asserted by our alleged criminologists that the "State," as it is organized and supported today, is the greatest and most vindictive of criminals; yet it