

tence. We cannot forbear quoting it, for every letter is golden:

"However complicated and perplexing the social or labor question may seem, we must never lose sight of the fact that there are a few simple and fundamental principles which, if understood, show the way clear to peaceful and evolutionary progress."

Vancouver's Troubles

WE are afraid that Prof. Robert Murray Haig, will have to be called in again as an expert on Vancouver's fiscal disabilities.

Its troubles, as diagnosed by the professor, arose from the tax exemption of improvements. Unfortunately, things have not turned out thusly. With a 50% assessment on improvements, pleasantly called "broadening the basis of taxation," the municipal deficits continue piling up; and, somehow, the ideas of further increasing the tax on improvements is far from popular. Here is what the Vancouver *Daily World* has to say about the situation, in an editorial of February 9, 1921:—

"With all the present sources of taxation utilized practically to the limit, Vancouver faces a deficit of over one million dollars, according to the tentative estimates presented to the civic finance committee this afternoon by the chairman, Alderman Owen. The mill rates have practically reached the limit allowed by the charter. There remains the possibility of taxing improvements to the full amount of the assessed value, instead of only fifty per cent. as at present; but the burden already carried by property owners makes it extremely doubtful that the council, in face of the storm of protest that would be aroused, could carry such a project through, even had the aldermen any idea of suggesting it,"

Apparently Vancouver is in need of another Haig tonic to restore enthusiasm for the special fiscal privileges of the vacant lot.

New Land Settlement Scheme

W W. HUSBAND, the new Commissioner General of Immigration, announces an interesting plan for distributing our incoming population. It has the approval of Secretary of Labor Davis. Indeed, most of our readers will sympathize with the wholesome and politically wise purpose of the scheme, however much they may question the methods proposed.

Commissioner Husband states his plan as follows:—

"There is land enough in this country for millions of small farms, land that the Department of the Interior is opening in the West for entry, land in the South and elsewhere that is now swamp but that can be drained and put to use, and still other land in the East that has been abandoned for farming by the draft of our population to the cities.

"Our plan is not to replace American farmers with for-

eigners, but to create new farms and make new farmers, thereby increasing the resources of the nation. Our immigration problem is largely a problem of distribution of the immigrants.

"The majority of our immigrants are peasants, and essentially farmers. American labor, under present conditions, would never take up in large tracts the land now idle, but by cutting them up into small farms and offering them to the immigrant, we will offer him a chance to realize his life's dream—to own land—and at the same time we will be rendering an economic service to the country.

"Our plan is not to scatter these people out in sparsely settled sections and put them up against the problems that our pioneers went through. Neither do we plan to start foreign settlement communities in the strict sense of the term, but we plan to group them, somewhat on the European village plan, and offer them the advantages of expert agricultural demonstration instruction through the Department of Agriculture, and to aid them in taking advantage of the Farm Loan act.

"By handling the immigration problem in this manner, we will do away with the 'red danger.' The farm, with the advantages we can offer, will be the best sort of an Americanization school.

"We must divert immigration from the crowded industrial centres. The change from European rural life to conditions in some of our big factory cities is too much for human nature to stand.

"Our employment service, which has been shot at so often, but which Congress saw fit to continue, can be made to be a great aid to the immigration service.

"The flow of immigration to the cities has been a matter largely of 'follow the leader.' A few of the early arrivals from each European district, have stayed in the cities and the bulk of the others, following naturally, lodged there. We believe the current can be diverted to the farming sections by the same process."

High ideals undoubtedly inspire the above plan and policy. But some very practical difficulties seem to have been left unconsidered.

On the one hand, for instance, the captains of industry will scarcely look with favor on a plan which proposes to draft away to the rural districts the imported labor so long considered as the rightful perquisite of manufacturing centres. On the other hand, American agriculturists are today clamoring for higher prices for their product, certainly not for more and lower-priced production at their very doors.

These are two big lions in the way. Is the Commissioner's pet lamb likely to survive the encounter?

But more serious than the opposition of selfish sectional interests are the economic laws that finally decide the success or futility of such schemes.

Mr. Husband laments the waste places in the country. Apparently he does not see the waste places in the city. The vacant lot and the uncultivated acre are twin offspring of the same evil,—a fiscal system that favors and stimulates with preferential bounties the unproductive holding of land, while it condemns and penalizes by tax discrimination the productive use of the land.

The drift from country to town is of the same origin as the drift from suburb to slum. It is also as conspicuous in