

THE BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT

By Fredk. Verinder

We are in search of some method of placing every citizen, who is willing to work for his living, within reach of employment at useful, productive work, such as a self-respecting man may do, feeling that he is not only earning his livelihood, but is also doing something to add to the common wealth. Under modern conditions, there is a bewildering variety of possible jobs, the names of many of which are known only in certain trades or localities, or to the students of technical dictionaries. But they all fall under three main headings.

(1) The first, and economically the most important, are the *primary* or *extractive industries*. The cultivator of land produces (draws forth, extracts) from land many kinds of food for man and beast (cereals, grasses, roots, tubers, pulses, vegetables, sugar cane or beet, fruits, nuts, etc.) or grows rice, cotton or flax, or taps tropical trees for rubber, or breeds and feeds stock for the production of meat, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, hides, horn, wool, hair, bristles, feathers, etc. From land the miner extracts coal, peat, iron ore, copper, lead, spelter and other useful metals, building stone, brick-clay, chalk, flint, gravel, sand, fire-clay, china-clay, salt, potash and other chemicals, mineral oils, etc. The hunter traps wild animals for their flesh, furs, feathers, ivory and so on. The fishermen, from land covered with water, draws forth fish for food and incidentally provides seal-skin, whale oil, spermaceti, medicinal oil from the livers of cod or halibut, whale-bone. Upon the land, the lumberman cuts down timber for the use of the builder, cabinet-maker, miner (pit props, etc.), paper-maker, charcoal burner, and many other tradesmen. It is clear at a glance that the raw materials of our foods, clothes, houses, furnishings, books, newspapers all come from land, and that the raw materials for all our manufacturing industries come from the same source.

(2) So the *secondary* or *manufacturing industries* depend for their raw material upon the primary industries, which, in their turn, depend absolutely on access to land, e.g., the farmer supplies the raw material (wheat) upon which the miller, the baker, the manufacturers of a great variety of prepared cereal foods exert their labour. The miner supplies the coal and iron-ore which are the raw material of a large number of industries which may work them up into anything from steel girders or big guns to watch-springs or needles. The building, furnishing and clothing trades are equally dependent upon land products for the materials they work up.

(3) Dependent upon and co-operating with the other two classes of workers are the *distributive* or *carrying industries*, viz., transport and "shopkeeping," wholesale and retail. They provide for the carrying of the raw material from the farm or mine to the factory or mill, from the factory to the shop, from the shop to the consumer. The carter who takes the grist to the mill, the railway servant or motor-man who carries the sacks of flour from the mill to the baker, the man or boy who delivers the bread to the customer are all dependent upon labour that has previously been applied to land.

The "black-coated" workers, no less than the manual labourers, owe their employment to the activities of the primary land-users. If, for instance, building materials are scarce and dear, the architect and the quantity-surveyor and many other black-coated workers, as well as the bricklayer and the carpenter, are likely to

find times bad. When ships are carrying full cargoes of the products of industry, the officers and the sailors of the ships and the labourers at the docks find employment good, and the clerks who make out the charter-parties and bills of lading are busy also.

Moreover, the secondary and distributive industries themselves require direct access to land for the sites of their factories, mills, warehouses, offices, railways, goods yards, engine sheds, receiving offices, garages, canals, harbours, docks, and what not. . . .

As all jobs of useful productive work depend, in the short or long run, upon access to land, the one hope of diminishing and finally abolishing DISemployment lies in making better use of the land now in use, and in bringing into use the very large area of land that is now withheld from productive use. So long as unemployment on a large scale continues, there is little or no hope of permanently raising the wages of those who are in work, for the Trade Unions are helpless while there is a crowd of workless people outside the factory gate: people who must get work, or slowly starve, in body and mind, on the meagre doles of the Labour Exchange or the Public Assistance Committee administering the Means Test, and the "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick." With less unemployment and higher wages, the increased demand for goods will ensure better trade all round. The reduction of taxation on industry and its products will both lower the cost of goods and increase the demand for them, thus encouraging both production and exchange. With the taxation of land values carried to its logical conclusion, making some land free and all land cheap and available to those who wish to use it, other forms of taxation will be unnecessary, disemployment will be unknown, and the labourer, working on his own account or in the employment of others, will get as his wages all that he earns.

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The foregoing is from Chapter VIII of Mr Fredk. Verinder's new book, "*Land and Freedom*," cloth bound, 200 pages, price 2s. 6d. net, obtainable from the Henry George Foundation, 94 Petty France, S.W.1; from the publishers, Hogarth Press, and from the English League, 7 St. Martin's Place, London, W.C.2.

The death of Emeritus Professor J. O. E. Steggall was announced in the *Glasgow Herald*, 27th November, with an interesting biographical sketch of one who rendered a great public service. He was in his 80th year. He occupied a professorial chair in University College, Dundee, from 1882 to 1933, and was one of the foremost mathematicians in the country. The *Herald* pays tribute to the part he took in the public life of Dundee. He is also to be remembered for his interest in social reforms and particularly for his unswerving support to the land value policy and the cause of the "land for the people."

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The journal *Great Thoughts*, September issue, gave prominent place to the challenging passage in *Progress and Poverty* beginning "Shortsighted is the philosophy which counts on selfishness as the master motive of human action." We are obliged to the correspondent who sent the cutting.

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100 YEARS AGO.—The Church Patronage of the parish of Ochiltree, in the county of Ayr, was exposed to public sale on Wednesday in Edinburgh, and bought by the Most Noble the Marquis of Bute at the price of £240. The upset price was Fifty Pounds.—*Glasgow Herald*, 29th November.