

Pilgrim Fathers—who waded ashore at Plymouth Rock three hundred years ago?

How did they find employment with no Chamber of Commerce to greet them—no bankers from whom to borrow money—no taxi cabs nor subways to carry them uptown from the surf-swept shore of Plymouth—no WPA's to "make work" for them—no "going concerns" to offer them jobs—no captains of industry nor trade associations to raise "venture money" for them—no town welfare rolls upon which to rest, no old-age pensions, nor national youth-administrations, nor orange and blue credit stamps?

No pot of tea stood waiting upon a hospitable hearth, nor nary a candle flickered forth a welcoming ray from a tiny window pane.

What brand of brain and brawn were these pilgrims?

They landed here with little or nothing and from it built up this world's greatest democracy. Gracefully dying off they left to us a nation fabulously wealthy in resources, wealthy in towns and cities and states—they left to us a potential population of 130,000,000 manpower, millions of fertile acres, manifold modern inventions, new works, new ways, new machinery.

What have we done with all this?

They began with nothing and left much. We have inherited much and yet can do nothing to rescue ourselves from a mysterious "depression."

Our industrial intelligentsia are doubled up with economic cramps—our pedagogic power plants are stuttering, sputtering and fluttering—our statesmen are running 'round in circles—whistling in, the dark and Coueism in the day are current modes for keeping courageous and cool. High-pressure diagnosticians hasten hither and thither chanting of effects, causes and cures—lightly lilting words of cheer to "little business"—lustily booming at Big Business of "incentive, new ideas and money." Financial Goliaths are exhorted to play the economic "stymie." Dulled incentives are deplored—putting the brakes on speculative urge is decried—and the noseay nonsense of federal "fixers" bring squawks of disgust.

Meanwhile multiple taxation is mouthed as "the ability to pay," but no one proves the ability and, consequently, we pay whether or not our ability equals this accusation leveled at our incomes.

Why did not our old-time Pilgrims at once set up and send out "countless questionnaires" whilst waiting to reap the first harvest? Why did they not mobilize an army of "labor relations" snoopers, taxation detectives, and why did they not summon their members to be put upon the political, inquisitorial rack at the Capitol when times turned tortuous as the months wore on?

Having inherited a nation of enormous wealth and of billions of foot-pounds of energy—having fallen heirs to millions of idle acres which once were naught but heartbreaking, tangled wildwood obstructing the handi-

capped labors of our pioneers as they fought foes inch by inch back into the hinterlands—we now have bogged down into a slough of despair.

Meanwhile enormous rents have flowed—from publicly created site-values stemming from an ever-increasing population now grown to 130,000,000 people—into the bottomless pockets of site-value exploiters, whilst industry groans under an ever-increasing burden of multiple taxation. The idle lands, which once gave life, labor and love to all who could find no hire among their fellow pilgrims, today stand empty and hedged by the dead hands of legal custom, while ten millions of unemployed workers in vain seek jobs.

What manner of men were our Pilgrim Fathers, that they could create such a mighty nation from such virgin obstructions? What manner of heirs are we, that our inheritance should be our undoing? Where is our boasted knowledge, with its scientific marvels, knowledge which ne'er was dreamed of by our forebears as they builded an empire based upon naught but crude and limited learning? What of our vaunted statesmanship which has come to supplant the halting, homely and mediocre town-meeting of New England? To what straits has our streamlined statesmanship led us?

In the past quarter of a century our national cost of education has risen 400 per cent, though our student-body has increased only 200 per cent. Today we spend, annually, 2,500 millions of dollars for education, and yet our students know as little about economics as did the first school tots taught in a colonial cabin.

'Tis said that we Americans have the reputation, at home and abroad, of never doing things by halves. In the matter of taxation we uphold our reputation. We have scorned a Single Tax to take up in a great, big way, double and triple and quadruple taxation upon industry.

Our colossal culture, our stupendous science, our industrial ingenuity, all—added together—are equalled only by our suffocating stupidity in taxation.

We have idle men and women who are willing to work. We have idle acres fit to flower and to flourish with all that this nation needs. The Pilgrim Fathers had no more, yet they were successful. We have all that they had, plus the accumulations which have come down to us through the generations, yet we are helpless as we mooch and mope through our home-made "depression."

"What fools we mortals be."

OUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Our estimable Chamber of Commerce of these United States has made several important discoveries. It has learned that taxes affect permanent jobs, taxes affect the consumer, taxes affect the retailer, taxes affect the employee, taxes are the cause of certain other effects, taxes affect posterity, taxes affect recovery, taxes today

are more devastating than taxes of olden days, and, more important, it has discovered that taxes are hidden. In toto, less taxes mean more jobs.

All in all, our Chamber of Commerce has discovered all there is to know about the destructive power of taxation. Unfortunately this body of national business men has not begun to discover how to cope with this "power to destroy." We are personally skeptical that the Chamber would be willing in convention assembled to listen to Henry George's age-old analysis of the identical enumeration of complaints, nor do we entertain the hope that the several officers of this national chamber would take the initiative and pore over the pages of "Progress and Poverty" to the end that Single Tax be once and for all time accepted—or rejected for good and sufficient reasons. This latter course is out of the question because the Chamber is still convinced that taxation upon industry is still the best policy—that "spending for recovery" is still very necessary—that we must buy our release from the tentacles of the depression.

The United States Chamber of Commerce wishes to return to the good old days when industry could afford to take taxes out of its profits while profits from *site-value speculations* went into *private pockets*. It would have us believe that idle capital is eager to work—to start new ventures—to "rehire workers," and to enlarge going concerns—but only under the old terms by which speculation (particularly in site-values) would continue rampant whilst the producer produced aplenty for the consumer to consume to the end that sufficient profits should accrue to cover reasonable wages and good rates of interest and ample amortization funds and all the other thanksgiving trimmings which add to their turkey dinner of economics.

In short, the United States Chamber of Commerce yearns for a return to static permanency of the very order of ancient ways which incubated the very condition now deplored by the Chamber's writers. Of course, the Chamber does not recognize the error of the old ways. On the contrary it places the blame for our present governmental policies upon the "handcuff legislation" which has come to pass openly and aboveboard rather than by hidden and devious ways. It recognizes this effect as a cause, and it proceeds to blame the cause (effect, in fact) as being the course of discouragement in reviving old, and in inaugurating new, enterprises. Having ingeniously confused cause with effect, it lists the ill effects of taxation upon industry and then prays for a return to the very method of easy-taxes which naturally grew into monstrous taxes.

The Chamber wishes to pull the trigger of taxation in an easy manner, so that the death of the victim may be made a transport of joy in which the body of industry spits out the bullets with a nonchalant smile as fast as the trigger-man from the assessor's office pumps the pills

into the victim's torso. This is the Chamber's idea of the science of political economy. Just enough taxational epicac to yield plenty of tax-revenue without upsetting the national stomach beyond repair.

We have no objection to the Chamber proving that wrong methods *can* produce right results. We should be happy to learn that, having failed to get right results from right action, we have the alternative of working for right results by means of wrong methods. Variety is the spice of life, even in ways which work just results.

As we read of civilization's statesmen urging a "moral rearmament" whilst tenaciously adhering to their one diet of taxes upon industry with an avoidable tax upon site-values, we are reminded of the European oil beetle which snootily refuses to eat aught but bee's eggs and honey. Our statesmen write laws directing assessors to feed civil government upon naught but the economic eggs and honey of industry. With parasitical persistency they creep into commerce and steep themselves in the sweets of production until, having gnawed the vitals into disintegration, they attempt to arouse the victims into a "moral" awakening. Let's be honest without disturbing the methods by which dishonesty fattens upon the fruits of labor.

Perhaps the Chamber's plan can succeed, but we shall need first to destroy the significance of words in the language of economic morals. When wrong methods are held up as the goal for right results, what sense is left in our sequence of words?

All this is the import of the "nation's business" as set forth in pamphlet No. 26 issuing from the United States Chamber of Commerce's files at Washington in the District of Columbia. No. 26 tells a sad story of taxes, wages and profits, wherein a "typical medium-sized business concern" enjoyed a wage bill of \$35,225 and a tax bill of \$1,824 in 1930, only to awaken in 1938 to a wage bill of \$154,850 and a tax bill of \$15,226 in a five-fold increase in business.

"Certainly we must spend for recovery," says the Chamber of Commerce, "but the kind of spending makes an awful lot of difference."

Amen, we murmur.

And this spending need not exceed one dollar for a copy of "Progress and Poverty."

Sweet Land of Liberty

A WOMAN was recently fined and then held for trial because she had "smuggled" cigarettes from New Jersey to her home in New York City. Let this be a warning to those who would escape paying the special cigarette tax "justly" owing to the City of New York. Oh well, people who do not know the real meaning of Freedom can hardly be expected to know the meaning of Free Trade.