

was repealed and removed from the labors of Britain's impoverished toilers.

It is January first, 1854.

The record of '53 is not so hot, or, as the *Times* puts it, closed with a "chequered and cloudy aspect." Providence has been butting in again, during the twelvemonth. Prosperous artisans took on the "self-imposed misery of strikes." The auspicious opening of '53 "ran out" on the nation. The great and grand Gladstone politically was born, however, to save the times. The Succession Duty successfully stymied the real-property feudalists, in logical (?) converse to the Corn Law's prohibition of discriminatory taxation. An unrepealable impost takes the place of the Income Tax. The Irish Income Tax hides under an expression of principles rather than as a means for revenue, though the revenue was not sneezed at.

The India Bill put an end to proprietary racketeering. Political and parliamentary jobbers no longer sold state-service jobs. The Charitable Trusts Bill clearly distinguished between public and private property without messing into Land Tax, site values, et cetera.

Providence insisted upon upsetting Gladstone's 2½ per cent stock scheme by returning poor harvests, short crops, and increased demands for food from prosperous "working-classes" until prices of corn exceeded the wildest hopes of the Corn Law advocates. Britain's wise ministers left the people to distinguish between "a scarcity caused by the act of an all-wise Providence and by the blind and short-sighted meddling of man." The empty stomachs found physical results to be identical; the full stomachs found financial results to be in the same category.

The "Lancashire strikes" brought home the *Times'* conviction that all wealth and prosperity depend upon the will of men "too ignorant to understand their own interests, or to listen to any argument save that enforced by the wretchedness to which they are reduced by their own folly."

The demand for general education gained force because of the need to educate these too ignorant wretches, but the educational scheme did not include the principles of Single Tax and economic freedom. It was an educational scheme which, aided by a steady flight of emigration, assured a tranquil tax-torture state once more.

Thus ended the year 1853. Thereafter came 1854, '55, '56, and all the other years, in a sequence which quietly occurs whether or not taxes are repealed or imposed upon man and his industry. And the quietness of this sequence is equalled only by the silence with which the site-value exploiters annually collect the unearned increment even 'til today.

MODERN DICK TURPIN

The highwayman of ye olden dayes was a man beyond the pale of the law. He was an uncouth usurper of

private rights to private wealth, or he was a romantic radical who believed in getting to the roots of fully filled wallets and in redistributing the coin of the realm to the poverty-stricken objects of his pity and brotherly love. His activities brought financial disaster to lone wayfarers, at most, and the industrial life of the community pursued the cliched even tenor of its way.

It wasn't until the art of highway extortions was enlarged in scope to include special-tax shakedowns that the activities of highwaymen became of widespread concern and alarm. To make matters worse, our modern highwaymen are not uncouth, lawless operators. On the contrary, they function from resplendent suites in governmental buildings and under legislative authority sustained by legal adjudications—togged out in tonsorial perfumes and tailored tapestries. They began to operate upon a nation-wide scale in 1916 when the first Federal Highway Act became effective. In the ensuing twenty years, through 1936, federal aid expenditures have amounted to the ten digit sum of \$2,079,086,000.

But, during the same period the government has collected from special taxes on highway users the sizeable sum of \$2,252,487,000. In other words, at the end of 1936 there stood to the credit of Uncle Sam a surplus of \$173,401,000 which represents the excess in what he took out of the nation's highway users over the money he put into modern turnpikes.

In the one year of 1936, alone, the federal government in this manner realized a net revenue of \$80,914,894. The average annual "take" during the ten-year period amounted to \$86,700,500 net, or a mortgage load of \$1,734,010,000, at 5 per cent, upon the highway users over and above the mortgage load of \$41,581,720,000 capitalized from the original cost.

The pickings gleaned from the same highway users by towns, cities and states are not included in these statistics, nor are the unearned increments accruing to the owners of the land along the way—unearned increments which amounted to probably an equal or greater sum than the total highway investment capitalized at a rate limited only by the victim's "ability to pay."

The ramifications of extortion, originating in the use of highways, has multiplied in excess of the number of tentacles tacked to an octopus—and this branch of taxation is but one of the many forms, phases and fancies used in exacting tribute from the least shackled freeman in the world, His Royal Joblots Peter U. S. Public. As men measure time it is a far cry from Dick Turpin to the Federal Highway Act of 1916, and the intervening years have revealed that our boasted progress of civilization—our arts, science, culture and erudition in general—has added to, rather than lessened, the financial hazards hiding in wait for the one and every traveler who foolhardily fares forth upon the town turnpike.

Official hi-jacking of the highway traveler must, of necessity, continue as long as our governments need revenue

whilst *failing to collect* the ground-rents arising from the public's creation of site-values. As long as our government permits land titles privately to pocket public wealth, official highway robbery must grow apace.

Stand and deliver!

Steering for 'the Rocks

(A Reprint)

IN the erection of the Department of Labor Building at Washington, work was delayed for months by a silly dispute between unions presumably composed of grown men. It was whether laying of a tiled floor "belonged" to the carpenters, the cement workers or the tile setters. While wrangling over such a matter it is not to be supposed the members had time or inclination to think of why opportunities for work had become so scarce that they would seriously engage in a fight of that kind. Yet it is in such squabbles that the time and strength of organized labor has been wasted while questions of fundamental importance have been neglected.

For over half a century the American Federation of Labor has devoted its energy to such trivial matters, to wrangles with employers, to striving for legislation to prohibit this, regulate that and generally aim at hindering of opportunities instead of increasing them. Organized labor in other countries has done practically the same thing and the Federation should take note of the results. Dodging of fundamental issues while engaging in futile treatment of superficial symptoms has let fundamental wrongs continue undisturbed until economic conditions became so bad that the people lost confidence in democracy, and in Italy, Germany, Austria and elsewhere allowed dictators to seize control. Then these dictators promptly suppressed organized labor. Nevertheless the American Federation continues in its obviously suicidal course. It still refrains from demanding and insisting upon removal of the causes of unemployment such as land monopoly and taxation of industry. It holds as more important the question of whether a carpenter or cement worker should lay a tiled floor. Its leaders have excused its course with the statement that the organization holds it more advisable to strive for some trivial thing that can be obtained now in preference to an important object that may not be had for a long time. Not even a great world war or a worldwide depression resulting from neglected fundamental evils has taught these leaders better. They still urge devotion of effort to the small immediately attainable trifle. They stick to the road that in Italy and Germany has led to disaster. It is time that the rank and file woke up.

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Thinking Would End Depressions

By HENRY J. FOLEY

EVERY man on earth is engaged in the one great purpose of hunting prosperity—wealth: things to eat, things to wear, a house to live in, and things to make life enjoyable, the luxuries. Even when he aspires to the nobler things, music, and painting, and learning, and love, these things are impossible without a foundation of material wealth, prosperity.

The animals also need prosperity, wealth, material things, and they do enough thinking (or whatever their substitute may be for thinking), to assure themselves of the wealth necessary to live. The herd of buffalo finding themselves in a depleted pasture, move to more promising fields. The wolf pack, in a blizzard, will forsake their usual haunts and follow the game. Animals which failed to study the problem of prosperity would quickly die, and they think very seriously on the matter—all but man.

Some plants in my window were recently brought from the garden, where they grew upward toward the sun. They are now streaming in horizontal lines towards the window. It would seem that they had thought out the problem of their prosperity, and of where wealth was to be had. But men in distress do not even think of where they should look.

The problem of prosperity in man should be an easy one. Man has at his disposal the earth and the fullness thereof. He has all the abilities of the animal for the making of prosperity, plus a million abilities which no other animals possess—hands to fashion most effective tools for the production of wealth; a brain to organize; science, machinery, and division of labor. But prosperity for men is more elusive than the black cat to the blind man at midnight. The "thinking animal" has ceased to apply to the problem of prosperity the thinking which furnishes to the buffalo and the oyster a supply of the good things of life.

In the matter of prosperity, men have adopted the plan of following leaders and slogans, and have abolished thinking. Two hundred million Russians followed Lenin into Bolshevism. Fifty million Italians followed Mussolini into Fascism. A hundred million Americans followed Hoover into "rugged individualism" and then followed Roosevelt into regimentation. Possibly one of these methods could be right, but certainly all these opposites can not be right, and none of them has yet succeeded in bringing to mankind the prosperity of the oyster.

"Fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong"—if they think. But fifty million Frenchmen can be woefully wrong if they follow a leader who is headed for perdition. There is no magic which automatically selects for men the leader who will take them where they wish to go.