

LAND VALUES.

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"OUR POLICY."

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacred to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—*Henry George.*

MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE ON THE PROBLEM OF WEALTH.

"The problem of wealth will not down. It is obviously so unequally distributed that the attention of civilised man must be attracted to it from time to time. He will ultimately enact the laws needed to produce a more equal distribution. It is again foremost in the public mind to-day."

With the above true and wise words and suggestive prophecy, Andrew Carnegie, "a multi-millionaire, one of the greatest of the kind," as Mr. Stead describes him, commences a most timely article in the January number of *The Review of Reviews*. He quotes approvingly President Roosevelt's dictum that "no amount of charity in spending such fortunes in any way compensates for misconduct in making them," and re-affirms his previously expressed conviction that "graduated taxation of estates at death of possessors is the easiest and best mode of insuring for the community a just share of great fortunes." That it is the easiest may readily be admitted; that it is the best is, to say the least, very doubtful.

Mr. Carnegie first gives a typical example of a family enriched beyond the dreams of avarice by the gradual growth and expansion of a large town. He points out that this increased power of acquisition is not due "to superior ability, sagacity, nor enterprise, nor greater public service"; that "while its appropriator slept, it grew as fast as when he

was awake"; and that, in truth, "the community created this millionaire's wealth." And he pertinently asks—"What canon of justice would be violated were the nation to step in and say that, since the aggregation of their fellow-men, called the community, created the decedent's wealth, it is entitled to a large portion of it as they pass away?" "In a prosperous country, increasing rapidly in population, like our own," he says, "by far the greatest amount of wealth created in any department comes from enhanced values of real property. The census shows that from 1890 to 1900 the value of real estate increased from \$39,544,544,333 to \$52,537,628,164—an increase of \$12,993,083,831. The obvious creator of this wealth is not the individual but the community. Property may pass through many proprietors, each paying more for it than his predecessor; but whether each succeeding owner sells at a profit depends almost solely upon whether the surrounding population increases. Let population remain stationary, and so do values of property. Let it decline, and values fall even more rapidly. In other words, increased population—the community—creates the wealth in each succeeding generation. Decrease of population reduces it, and this law holds in the whole of that vast and greatest field of wealth [or rather of wealth acquisition], real estate. In no other field is the making of wealth so greatly dependent upon the community, so little upon the owner, who may wholly neglect it without injury. Therefore, no other form of wealth should contribute to the nation so generously."

Mr. Carnegie then examines other fields in which large powers of wealth acquisition may be gained—(a) the control of necessary public services, such as the high-roads, or railways, of the community; (b) the control of the mineral resources of the nation; (c) the control of monopolistic enterprises, such as Oil Trusts and Meat Trusts, which, however, are only possible by the connivance and with the aid of those who control the land and the high-roads; and (d) the control of improvements due to the inventive genius of a few individuals, such as Edison, Westinghouse, Graham Bell, and others; but he seems to realise that where, as in such cases, "wealth accrues honourably, the people," even without the intervention of special laws, "are always silent partners." In all the other fields, however, Mr. Carnegie points out that it is the community which really creates the values some few are to-day allowed to appropriate to themselves. And he pertinently contends that "It is difficult to understand why, at the death of its possessors, great wealth, gathered or created in any of these forms, should not be shared by the community which has been the most potent cause or partner in all its creation."

Put in this ingenuous manner, the question admits of but one answer. But we would respectfully remind Mr. Carnegie of his opening sentence, the full meaning of which he has evidently overlooked. "The problem of wealth which

will not down," and which to-day is attracting the attention of civilised men everywhere, is *not* as to how to secure an occasional overflow of superfluous wealth to the nation's Treasury, but rather as to how to secure daily, weekly, and annually a more equal and more equitable distribution of the superabundant wealth daily, weekly, and annually produced by the united labours of the whole community. In other words, serious students of "the problem of wealth," or rather of the problem of poverty, demand that there shall be, to use Mr. Carnegie's words, "a fairer acquisition and fairer distribution of wealth." They quite agree with him that—"except we build upon the foundation of 'As ye sow so shall ye reap' [or, in other words, upon the great social commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal'], we labour in vain to establish a higher, or even to maintain the present, civilisation." Like himself, too, they have come to trace the iniquitous extremes of both wealth and poverty to our persistent ignoring of these basic commandments, to the engrossing by some of the natural resources and public utilities necessary to the life of all, and to the accompanying appropriation by these of land franchise values created by and due to the presence, needs, and industry of all. But they realise, as we trust Mr. Carnegie may yet come to realise, that the very plausible and insidious remedy he at present favours will not touch the fringe of the problem he is discussing, and which, doubtless, he, like themselves, is earnestly desirous to see solved. As a real and effective remedy, as "the law needed to produce a more equal, as well as a more equitable, distribution," they demand that these public values shall be annually appropriated for public uses, leaving sacred to the individual, as well as to companies of individuals, anything and everything due to their own individual exertion.

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FOR A HUNGARIAN TRANSLATION OF "PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE."

Dr. Robert Braun Lippa, Hungary, writes:—When I left Britain in the summer, as you remember, I promised to do what I could to place George's ideas in Hungary. You suggested as the next thing to be done, the translation of one of Henry George's works. We agreed that "Protection and Free Trade" was the best for this purpose. As you know, and as perhaps your readers will remember, I had completed the greater part of the translation by Christmas time. I went to Budapest to see after the publication of the work. I found a publisher who would undertake the printing of 1000 copies for 1600 crowns (about £67), of which I should pay 1100 crowns (about £45).

I need now £45 to bring Henry George's work for the first time before the Hungarian nation. Hungary is just preparing a tariff on her own account separate from the hitherto Austro-Hungary tariff, and everybody is speaking of the tariff question. There has never been a better opportunity to bring the interest of the public to Henry George than by the publication of a translation of his "Protection and Free Trade."

I appeal to British Single Taxers to lend me the sum I need for this purpose. Hungary was the first country to tax the unimproved value of the land—the Emperor Joseph II. imposed a tax of 40 per cent. Everyone assisting in the publication of George's work helps to revive the spirit of Joseph II., which was like that of Henry George—the spirit of Progress and Liberty.

I am very glad to inform you that I sent some pages of the introduction of my essay on Henry George to the editor of the *Twentieth Century*, and have received a favourable reply. He sympathises with the object and aim of the work. It is very satisfactory to our cause that an essay of this kind should be printed in our most prominent and most sociological review. It prepares the public for "Protection and Free Trade." I hope the book will be a great success, and I am almost sure I shall be able to refund the sum necessary. I get *Land Values* regularly, and am glad to read of your progress in Scotland. In my article I refer British readers to your address if they should desire to read "Progress and Poverty," or any of Henry George's writings.

We direct the attention of our readers to this appeal of Dr. Robert Braun for £45 to help him to meet the cost of publishing his translation of "Protection or Free Trade" into the Hungarian language. He has done well, indeed, and deserves every encouragement, which should take the form of the financial help needed to bring his good service to the movement to a successful finish. The question of tariff reform or tariff adjustment in Hungary is now being considered, and the time is most opportune to issue Henry George's famous message on the question. We heartily congratulate Dr. Braun on his courage and industry, and sincerely hope he will obtain the sum he requires to place the book he has translated before the Hungarian people.

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