

ready for consumption, or are raw materials to be used in further manufacture. In either case they are of direct value to consumers. And since the cheapening of the price to the consumer increases consumption, the tendency is to increase, rather than to decrease, the demand for labor. There is, it is true, a temporary confusion during the introduction of the new labor-saving device; but the labor so displaced is quickly absorbed in the new industries that are made possible by this cheapened process.



The invention of a perfect substitute for leather would possibly throw some tanners out of work; but all the industries using leather as a raw material would increase their output, and would make a corresponding demand for labor. Bessemer steel required but a small part of the labor necessary to make charcoal steel in the old way; but when the new metal was reduced to one-tenth the price of the old, it became the basis of many new industries, and transformed old ones. Whitney's cotton gin, which enabled one man to do the work of fifty in removing the lint from the seed, made cotton growing one of the great industries of the country, and supplied the people of the world with cheap and comfortable clothing.



This is true of all labor-saving processes. No machine can or will run a machine; no process can manipulate a process. Labor is as necessary now as it was in the beginning; and it will be indispensable at the end. Operations, methods, and processes may change, but the one unvarying and indispensable element throughout is labor. The trouble does not lie in the labor-saving processes, but in another indispensable element, land. Every time any product is cheapened in price there is a tendency to start a new industry, with the employment of more labor; for man is the creature of unsatisfied desire. But a new industry cannot be established without using more land; and since no process, discovery, or invention has yet been devised to make land, the increased demand sends up the price. Hence, as science reduces the price of goods it correspondingly advances the price of land. This steadily advancing price of land not only weighs down industry to the limit of endurance; but it not infrequently overwhelms it entirely. So long as advancing land prices are within the compass of increasing productive power, industry continues, and labor is employed; but speculative values soon outrun even swift-moving science, and finally bring industry to a stand, with labor unemployed.

Is it not evident that unemployment is due, not to labor-aiding science and invention, but to labor-burdening land monopoly? Why, then, attempt the impracticable process of putting all industry in the hands of incompetent government, when the desired end can be attained by destroying land monopoly in a way that will actually simplify the present system of government? s. c.



Regulating Prices.

A warning note against governmental interference with prices is sounded by Progress, of Melbourne. There has been the same clamor in Australia as in this country for an embargo on wheat, and for other legislation to stop advancing prices. One of the witnesses before the parliamentary commission advocated that the price be fixed at four shillings a bushel. Later on this same man was compelled to place his affairs before a meeting of his creditors, and it was revealed that he had sold 675,000 bushels of wheat that he did not hold, at three shillings ninepence to four shillings per bushel. Had the government listened to his advice, he would have been the richer by \$300,000.



The writer of this able article in Progress shows how futile have been all attempts to fix prices, and how mischievous are governmental interferences with private businesses. Wheat at five shillings a bushel, the author says, will be used for human food; at two shillings and sixpence a bushel it will be used partly for human food, and also for chickens, horses, cattle, and swine. At the higher price the supply will last until the next harvest; at the lower price it will soon become exhausted. The advanced price, therefore, acts as a perfect regulator to gauge the consumption of wheat to the supply in hand. Again, if the price be forced below what the market now demands, it will deter farmers from planting the maximum next year. If they be allowed the advanced price now the extra abundant crop that follows will equalize prices. Those highly sensitive persons who have been throwing political fits because bread has advanced from five to six cents a loaf, typify the yokel who would economize at the spigot while wasting at the bung. Any persons who at this age of the world are burdened by an advance of one cent a loaf on bread need an examination into the source of their income. Before the state should be asked to save the laboring man one cent, it should explain how a laborer's income came to be so small that the loss of that cent causes serious inconvenience. s. c.