

true concept is that of a natural order in the sphere of economics in which the inevitable and easily discoverable sequences of cause and effect with which we are familiar in the physical universe are co-related with a like chain of sequences in the sphere of morals.

Economists have caught glimpses of this truth in blurred, half lights, the physiocrats in their way, the Manchester School in theirs. But later the historical method dominated the writings of these men; the mysterious mathematical school of the brain-terrifying Marshall gained increasing adherents; theories were tested by or were made to rest upon forms of legislation. And the great white light which might have blazed a pathway to the solution of every one of these problems was allowed to die out in darkness. The physiocrats were the first to seek the establishment of a theory of economic life. Rousseau had a somewhat cloudy conception of laws established by nature governing production and exchange. Subsequent political economy, however, for the most part, has been concerned in denying these tenets, in erecting artificial theories and discussing phases of economic life in terms of legislation.

Not that the historical or *a posteriori* method that sets out to discover economic principles as exemplified in the life of peoples is to be unqualifiedly condemned, and the *a priori* exalted as the one and only line of inquiry. They must travel together. The fault with the historical school has not been so much its adherence to the *a posteriori* and its neglect of the *a priori* as its failure to follow even the lines of the first to the discovery of anything likening itself to "principles."

The natural laws of economics prescribe a rule of action, but they do not necessarily secure its observance. Penalties innumerable are provided for their violation, for there is no law, man being a free agent, that does not permit of its violation, and there is no violation which does not insure its penalty. These penalties are of two kinds, embodying both a moral and material loss. "What a man soweth that shall he also reap" is a final law of the economic conduct of peoples.

The attempt is constantly made by writers on political economy to deny these laws by denying the universality of their application. It is assumed that economic laws, if there are any, are subject to constant change, that there is a national law of political economy; and that every land has its own economic laws, much the same as every land has its own political system.

With the banishing of the concept of "natural" and "moral" from the domain of political

economy, the field was left free for individually created dogma and the finest of fine-spun theories; economic institutions acted upon by legislation were taken for phenomena created by it and the solution of such evils as appeared sought for in additional legislation. Looked upon as an artificial and not a natural order, there could thus be no appeal to natural forces nor a return to first principles. Prohibition of the employment of children must be had, for example. Few had the temerity to ask why. Was it not clear that children should not be condemned to stunted lives in shop and factory at a time when they should be at play? To ask the question was to answer it. Yet we can safely trust even a dog to look after its young. No guardianship other than the parental instinct is needed, save in rare abnormal instances. Was Man inferior to the lower animals in such instincts that large numbers should voluntarily condemn their offspring to arduous and in some cases hazardous occupation? Clearly the conditions that prompted them was not a natural one. Some natural law of economics had been violated.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER.

---

## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

---

### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES.

Adelaide, South Australia, January 16.

Since last writing, two polls under the Land Values Assessment Act have been taken in South Australia. On December 6, at Wallaroo, the ratepayers were given an opportunity of saying whether they wished to exempt improvements from taxation. They decided by 299 votes to 272 to continue under their present system. We shall continue our educational work in this town, and we are hopeful that in the near future we shall be able to secure a majority of ratepayers in favor of revenue being raised from land values only.

Special interest attached to the poll taken at Thebarton. This municipality was the first in South Australia to adopt the principle of land values rating at a poll in 1907. The system came into operation in 1908 and immediately the land speculators commenced to unload. During the past year opponents of the principle secured control of the Thebarton Council, and at once set to work to discredit the principle. Instead of taking advantage of the Amended Land Values Assessment Act, which gives Councils power to make their own valuation, the Council preferred to work under the Government assessment, which was very much out of date as to values. The result was shortage in the amount of revenue required to meet the needs of a growing town. The ratepayers petitioned the Mayor and asked that a public meeting should be convened so that the matter of the new assessment might be discussed. The petition was turned down by the Mayor. Then six ratepayers, whose rates were increased under the land values rating system, petitioned for a

poll of ratepayers with a view to returning to the old system of rating improvements. This request was at once granted. Two days before the poll an announcement was made that tenants would not be permitted to vote at the rating poll, the reason being that the Council were anxious to see the principle defeated. Our League interested itself in the fight, and issued a special leaflet. Steps were also taken to have evidence for a test case in the courts in the event of the poll being lost on account of the disfranchisement of the tenants who had voted at all previous polls under the act. It is gratifying to know that when the people were appealed to, they reaffirmed the principle of land values rating by 695 votes to 360. This was a great victory. After the system had been in operation for five years, the majority in favor of the principle had increased from 268 to 335; and that at a poll where some 300 tenants who had previously voted were disfranchised.

Not only did the ratepayers reaffirm the principle at the rating poll, but every candidate for Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors opposed to land values rating was defeated by big majorities, and a sympathetic Council returned. It is not at all likely that the opposition at Thebarton will ever again ask for another poll. They were routed all along the line.

We have just had a by-election for the Federal Parliament. The death of Representative Roberts caused a vacancy in the Adelaide division. The Labor candidate was Mr. G. E. Yates, secretary of the Labor Party. The Liberal Union did not put up a candidate. The Singletax League decided to again run me for the seat as a protest against party politics, and because the policy of the Labor Party is a policy of protection. Under the present tariff the people of Australia are called upon to pay £15,000,000 a year. The landlord only pays £1,200,000 a year. There was never any hope of victory, but it was as splendid chance for preaching land values taxation and free trade. As a result of our work the vote received this time was nearly double that secured at the general election last May. The district is a strong labor one, and a hot bed of protection, and we are well pleased with the result.

E. J. CRAIGIE.



### WEDGWOOD IN TORONTO.

Toronto, Ont., Mch. 13, 1914.

Josiah C. Wedgwood, Member of Parliament, gave an exhibition of hustle which would do credit to the American foremen whom he said "come over to England to show workmen how to do twice as much work." Mr. Wedgwood reached Toronto at four o'clock p. m., March 12, was interviewed by the press, attended a reception given for him by the Toronto Singletaxers, addressed a dinner of the Canadian Club, and went to New York, at 7:20.

Speaking to the Canadians as "Men and Brothers" rather than as cousins, which he regarded the Americans, he spoke on the Radical movement in England.

The working classes in England, he thought, were much better educated on the fundamentals of political economy than they were in Canada or the United States; since the campaign which resulted in the election of the present Liberal Government, there had

been a continuous process of education, and perhaps a debt of gratitude was due to Joseph Chamberlain for forcing the issue to a point where it became necessary to show the fallacy of the Protectionist ideas and their balance of trade theory.

The Liberal Party had a programme—old age pensions—with which Mr. Wedgwood did not agree—the abolition of plural voting, Home Rule, and Land Value Taxation. He believed in Home Rule, for Ireland and elsewhere, for every man would rather govern himself, though badly, than be governed by someone else.

The Taxation of Land Values was the great work of the Liberal Party. Its object being to free the "wage slave," to give to every worker just exactly all that he produced, and to give to all willing to work, a job either working for himself or for someone else, at wages governed by what he could produce working for himself on free land.

His story of the unemployed in South Africa after the Boer War was a center shot. He was autocrat of the town of Ermenlo, where he gave the use of the town lands to the unemployed, who found that they could average £1 (one pound sterling) per day in produce, and this automatically raised the wages of all classes of labor to not less than that sum. The thin edge of the wedge of Land Value taxation in England was apparent in the proposal of Lloyd George to transfer five per cent of taxes from improvements to land values, and in the course of a few years to take it all. Already some of the large landholders were selling out and buying in Texas and Saskatchewan, which would not help Canada or the United States, however much it might benefit England.

Mr. Wedgwood's address made an impression on the members of the Canadian Club which cannot soon be lost; his easy graceful style, his perfect English and his very evident sincerity and enthusiasm, all combined to lead to the climax of his address which was an appeal to listen to the "clarions of battle, which call and call and call."

WESLEY E. BARKER.

---

## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

---

### THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.

Brooklyn, N. Y., March 8.

The question at issue at the hearing before the Board of Estimate of this city on the Herrick-Schaap bill was not one of taxation but the referendum. This was neatly put by Mr. Marsh when he pointed out to the Mayor that as the voters had been wise enough to elect him he ought to consider them wise enough to decide a matter of taxation.

Mr. Prendergast's opposition was more logical, for an electorate which gave him 80,000 votes less than the head of his ticket and which, if it had had to choose simply between him and his opponent Metz, would undoubtedly have buried him, could hardly in his opinion be safely trusted to decide any question. His position was also more consistent with his pre-election utterances than that of the Mayor, whose attitude all through has been that of trying to please both sides. In fact, the only candi-