

argues with considerable logic that "real estate owners" throughout the city are benefited. However, it is encouraging to see some thought being given to the ultimate financial beneficiary of public improvements and some effort being made to collect from those benefited instead of charging it all up to the straphanger.

Prosperity?

O PROSPERITY, what crimes are tolerated in thy name! For a long time prudent people have tabooed agitation for social reforms on the ground that the United States was so prosperous that public attention should not be directed to a proposal to alter, in any important particular a social order which had produced such beneficent results. Some were reluctantly compelled to admit that prosperity, abounding and overflowing, had its drawbacks in the demoralization of youth due to inevitable and concomitant luxury, incident to unaccustomed wealth in the hands of parvenus who had not been brought up to the proper use of extravagant fortunes. One had to concede the claim that probably at no time in history had one hundred millions of people in a single nation possessed so much wealth or had so large a percentage of people able to live in moderate comfort.

As companion pictures to this possibly gratifying state of affairs, however, come certain considerations which may well justify the belief that prosperity like beauty is little more than skin-deep. Wages expressed in dollars have risen strikingly during the past ten years, but while in certain avocations they have risen more than living costs, in the majority, especially in unorganized industries, they lag far behind the cost of living. The housing situation in New York is an outstanding illustration; there is no longer a shortage of housing in New York, but the price of the simplest apartments of the new construction is beyond the reach of all but the most highly paid workers.

At a recent Convention of Building and Loan Associations, figures given out by the Secretary indicated that 69% of the wage earners in New York did not receive enough wages to enable them to become home owners, no matter how strenuous the efforts made to keep down costs.

Again in the prosperous City of New York from the best figures obtainable \$90,000,000.—\$15. per person or \$75. per annum per family—is expended annually on charitable relief by public and private agencies. Perhaps some will argue that the raising of such a sum of money is a proof of the prosperity of the Community, but what about those upon whom it is expended?

Recently the city of New York was threatened by a strike which would have paralysed its transportation system. The figures given out indicated that 26,000 men were involved. These men were employes of the big traction companies. In order to be hired these men had

to join the "Company" Union and to declare that they would not join the "free" Union. In doing this they were acting counter to their desires and abandoning their rights as citizens, and yet they did it for the sake of jobs, which, all unbiased authorities agree, do not pay living wages.

The economic plight of the farmer has been held up to the pity of mankind for several years, yet the universal prosperity has left him unaffected. The tariff, which bears with especial severity on all wage earners, leans upon him with especial force for it raises the price of everything that he must buy while leaving him to sell at prices determined by world competition.

From these and other considerations which might be urged, if there were space, we are justified in deducing that our widely heralded prosperity means merely that a relatively small fraction of the total population have been able by the use of special privileges to absorb a disproportionate amount of the admittedly greater wealth produced by invention and organization, but that for the average man the problem of making a living remains the complicated task that it has been since the coming in of the industrial era.

There never was a time when it more behooved thoughtful and patriotic men to consider how the dream of democracy, which has never been more than a mirage, can be brought to realization, nor was it ever more incumbent upon those who have, or who think they have, a remedy for the tragic injustices which are apparent in human relations, to bring their projects before the people by all the means in their power.

The Race Problem An Angle of the Land Problem

I WAS one of many a few years ago that joined in a gold rush to Tierra del Fuego. There was gold aplenty, and Americans, Chinese, Chileans, Hungarians, and Negroes worked side by side without any great friction. Presently the Argentine Government stepped in and granted a land concession to one Julius Popper, who promptly ordered us off the earth, his orders being backed by Remington rifles. We moved to free land, but found ourselves crowded—and then race hatred reared its head; for race hatred is born of greed or fear. And the mildest went first, and after the chasing of the Chink came the chasing of the Chilean, then the hunting of the Hunk and the negation of the Negro, while each in turn gouged the Gringo. Now, clearly, to reverse the order of things, you will have race hatred disappearing with given elbow room. The moral to be pointed out to those disturbed over race antagonisms is to release the land by application of the Single Tax when these imagined problems will disappear, they being not problems in themselves but angles of the land problem.

—CHAS. J. FINGER.