

### "THE INDUSTRIAL AGE"

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your recent editorial "The Superstition of the Street," you very properly destroy the illusion of "Wall Street" as a determining economic force in the welfare of the country. There are other similar illusional psychological phenomena of the masses that produce wordy debates, that result in wrongly applied retributive or corrective action. The frequently repeated use of the term "Industrial Age," like that of "Wall Street," has given it a degree of false authenticity so that extensive experiments costing billions of dollars have been undertaken with no stronger basic reason than a romantic fantasy, namely, that this is an "Industrial Age."

Industrial Age, like Iron Age, Bronze Age, and so forth, indicates either an outstanding characteristic of a period of time or a defect in our knowledge of more important characteristics of that time. As a matter of fact the terms are purely romantic and reveal if anything a lack rather than a plethora of information.

Industry is only a phase of labor and represents mainly that portion that uses the capital of others to produce wealth, as in mills, railroads, mines, and so forth, and does not include the independent day laborer, business man, professional man, farmer, fisherman, hunter, stock raiser, teacher, carpenter, and so forth, in fact the great majority of productive laborers.

The attention of our mass mind has been caught by the flashing lights and spinning wheels of industry, so that it reacts hypnotically whenever industry is mentioned. The illusion is pretty so long as it does not become the basis for action and vast spending. It should be known, however, that it is secondary or lower in the economic scale and is not a significant or determining economic factor. It is as futile to attempt to bring about "economic recovery" (?) through industrial increase as for the tail to try to swing the elephant.

Appleton, Wisconsin.

WM. J. HARRINGTON, M. D.

### PROSPERITY BOUNCES BACK

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Again we are facing "a more abundant life." Good news has come to us from our Secretary of Commerce. He informs us that *only* nine millions of workers are now out of employment.

Is not your heart gladdened?

These nine millions idle persons (and their dependents) means that there will be needed *only* 36,420,000,000 free meals during the next twelve months. *Only* 72,000,000 feet will need shoes between them and the cold pavement this winter. *Only* 72,000,000 hands will need mittens to keep fingers warm as they brave February's fury. Not over 36,000,000 suits of winter clothes will be needed to shield shivering bodies from biting blasts, because many of these may be seeking straw hats, gay parasols, linen suits and perforated sandals to keep the scorching sun from burning blisters on their backs, fronts, tops and bottoms.

Less than nine millions of homes will be needing oil for Yankee lamps or two-bits for soulless gas-meters week in, week out. *Only* nine millions of landlords, at the most liberal estimate, will need to worry about collecting the week's rent. Probably less than 2,000,000 farmers (if there are that many) will need to fuss about disposing of surplus crops. *Only* nine millions of times, each day, will our captains of industry need to look up from their desks to say "No, we aint got any job for you."

Is not your heart gladdened?

Fall River, Mass.

THOMAS N. ASHTON.

### THESE FALLACIES RECUR IN MANY FORMS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

There appears to be a feeling among followers of Henry George

that the Wage Fund Theory and the Malthusian Doctrine do not dominate social thought today to as great an extent as they did at the time Henry George wrote and for that reason "Progress and Poverty" should be revised with a view to bringing it up to date. This attitude is not only impractical in view of what is taking place in the world at the moment, but it betrays somewhat of a kinship with those people outside the movement who believe that conditions are so different today from what they were in the last century that George's ideas are no longer applicable. It is true, furthermore, that he thoroughly exposed these theories as fallacies, but in spite of this fact, current thought, when critically analyzed, is seen to be completely impregnated with them. While they have been formally rejected in academic circles, most professional economists, nevertheless, unconsciously believe in them. And there, I believe, is where the danger in large part lies—in the unconscious acceptance of such unscientific theories.

The average person unquestionably believes that capital employs labor and that before labor can be employed or can employ itself, there must first be capital available for the payment of wages. They also hold the opinion that capital profits at the expense of labor. Thus the trend throughout the entire civilized world is towards communism or fascism, for both of these "isms," in the last analysis, spring from a belief in the Wage Fund Theory. In my opinion, acceptance of the Malthusian Doctrine, conscious or otherwise, is also world-wide as evidenced by immigration laws, birth control agitation, the craze for colonial expansion and the agitation for the retirement of men at the age of sixty-five, and for the displacement of women in industry by men. Even many of those people who profess to be followers of Henry George unconsciously pay homage to these fallacies. I have met many who, after finishing a course in "Progress and Poverty," express sympathy for a protective tariff, for the curbing of chain stores and for such artificial devices as the NRA and AAA. Obviously they have learned nothing about economic science, for they have memorized their lessons parrot-fashion; but unfortunately they go about miseducating everyone with whom they come in contact. And are we not frequent witnesses of the curious spectacle of earnest individuals advocating land value taxation, income and inheritances taxes, public spending and government regulation of industry all in one breath?

There is no doubt that the Henry George movement is encountering greater opposition today than it did fifty years ago, because the entire world is drifting rapidly away from ideas of freedom and natural law towards a pathetically defeated attitude engendered by an intense belief in these age-old fallacies. The recent election indicates that our own country is following in the footsteps of Europe, trying the same things, making the same mistakes; and we might as well realize that economic planning is firmly in the saddle and will not be ousted until the United States has also gone the limit in social welfare experiments and, through extreme taxation, reduced the middle classes practically to the bare subsistence level of the poorest classes. But how can we have any real understanding of the issues at stake if we fail to recognize the underlying cause of this trend? We are well satisfied with ourselves that we know the truth, and we have a sublime faith in its ultimate triumph if we can only rally enough people around us to give it holy lip-service, serenely unaware that, at the same time, these people are naively supporting the very fallacies that have plunged the world into its present state of economic insanity and that are distracting attention from our own movement. In adopting such an attitude, are we not, therefore, partly responsible for the direction in which our country is headed?

Mere reiteration of the chief tenets in George's philosophy is not enough to overcome this trend. That sort of approach makes the support of the philosophy something of a cult, and the world is already suffering from too many cults. Henry George was not content merely with repeating his conclusions and ignoring the weaknesses of the opposition. He was constantly exposing the fallacies that prevented