

"Believing that the rights of true property are sacred," said Henry George, "we would regard forcible communism as robbery that would bring destruction." And he further asserted of socialism that "its methods involve the idea that governments can more wisely direct the expenditure of labor and the expenditure of capital than can laborers and capitalists, and that men who control governments will use this power for the general good and not in their own interests. They tend to multiply officials, restrict liberty, invent crimes. They promote perjury, fraud and corruption. And they would, were the theory carried to its logical conclusion, destroy civilization and reduce mankind to savagery."

This strong and comprehensive statement is not only accepted by Tom L. Johnson, but it is the inspiration of his public life. The issues in Ohio center on the rights of labor and capital, against which organized privilege is massed. Privilege is paramount to both political parties and infects both. This makes the fight of Johnson for reform doubly onerous, as he has more to fear from the spoliemen of the Democratic party than from the Republican voters who furnish his substantial accessions.

At such a crisis, when every heart that beats for justice should welcome this uprising against commercial greed and rapacity, we have fair minded newspapers, which have consistently preached the gospel of equal rights, joining in the ignorant hue and cry to discredit the truest exemplar of Jeffersonian democracy known in the political history of the nation.

CARROLL D. WRIGHT'S STATISTICS.

When the Republicans get into a tight place, due to discontent from high prices, low wages or waning prosperity, they send for Col. Carroll D. Wright. They state their troubles to him and ask him to fix things up. He smiles suggestively and says he will try. If he is successful—and he usually is—the Republicans see that his reputation as a statistical authority does not suffer, no matter how devious and crooked his methods. He gets the required result, is promoted to the highest position, and is hailed as the statistical saviour of mankind. The Republicans understand their business as well as Col. Wright does his business.

A year or so ago the Republicans became desperate. The census statistics of manufactures, instead of showing a substantial advance from 1890 to 1900,

showed a decline in wages of one and one-half per cent. As Dingley bill trusts were multiplying and were raising prices rapidly and greatly increasing the cost of living, wise Republicans saw trouble ahead. They consulted with their old friend, Col. Wright, whose methods had juggled the 1890 census figures so that they showed a substantial rise in wages, and who supposed that he had the 1900 census fixed to show a similar advance. They told him that he must somehow make a better showing for the wage earner, either by raising wages or by reducing prices, or by both. "Get your labor bureau busy," they said, "and do your best for us. Discredit the census figures and ask the people to wait for the only statistics which will be worthy of consideration. We will boost you as an authority in the meantime, and, if the census wage statistics now being prepared by Prof. Dewey are not likely to prove satisfactory, we will try to hold them up until after the 1904 election."

Col. Wright agreed to do his best. In March, 1903, the department of labor issued a bulletin on the "Course of Wholesale Prices, 1890-1902," which showed that prices were exactly as high in 1902 as in 1890, and that they rose only 25½ per cent. from 1897 to 1902. This was about 15 per cent. less than the rise shown by the statistics of R. G. Dun & Co., which are more carefully "weighted." On September 30 it was announced from Washington:

The bureau of labor, under the direction of Carroll D. Wright, is about to issue the results of an exhaustive study of the increased cost of living during the last few years in relation to the increase of wages. The work will be presented in two volumes, one relating to expenditures and the other to earnings. The manuscript will go to the printer in two days. The results of this inquiry may show that there has been a striking similarity between the advance in wages and the increased cost of living, and that neither has gone forward as much as popularly supposed. The current report that commodities have advanced 27 per cent. is shown to be wide of the mark. It will be nearer 15 or 16 per cent. Wages have so fully kept pace with increased cost of living that it may safely be said that the condition of the laboring man is better to-day than ever before in the history of this country.

Of course these statistics, coming from such a high authority, will reassure the workingmen and make them contented and happy. The man whose wages have remained substantially the same as they were in 1897, and who is paying 35 per cent. more for what he has to buy, will now feel that he is at least as well off as he was at the beginning of Republican rule. This is all that he could expect and the most

that the Republicans claim. The prosperity that they talk about has all gone to the trusts.

Until these new statistics are published and the methods of reaching them are known, we cannot criticise them, except to say that they differ radically from any others now extant. But to show how worthless they will probably be, except from a political standpoint, we may mention some of Col. Wright's past methods of raising wages—on paper.

Col. Wright won his first statistical victory and ingratiated himself with the Republicans by falsifying and juggling the wage statistics of Massachusetts. One of his methods of raising wages, statistically, was to divide the total wages paid in 1885 by the "average" number of wage earners, instead of by the entire number employed, and between whom the wages were actually divided, as was done in 1875. In this way he showed a decline of only ten per cent., whereas the actual decline was nearly 20 per cent. His same methods, continued to 1895, showed an increase in wages when an actual decline had occurred.

Col. Wright's methods, adopted in the 1890 census, made a substantial rise in wages over those of 1880. In 1900 this method of "averages" was carried still farther. In 1890 the "average" number was computed for each establishment for the actual time the establishment was in operation. In the 1900 census the "average" number employed each month was taken, and the establishment was considered to have run the full 12 months. This system is bad in all cases, but it becomes positively absurd in industries which run only half the year. It frequently results in "averages" which are less than the least number considered. As Mr. H. L. Bliss, the non-partisan statistician, says:

It will be seen by census bulletin No. 200, giving statistics of the canning of fruits, vegetables and fish, that while the greatest number of wage earners employed at any one time during the year was 133,106, and the least number employed at any one time was 46,106, the average number is reported as but 36,401. In the manufacture of building glass we find the greatest number employed given as 19,943, the least number as 16,060, and the average number as 11,902. It would be supposed that the average number would be somewhere between the greatest and the least number employed at any one time, but the statistician in charge of the manufacturing statistics had discovered a method of computing average numbers which has the important merit, from a partisan standpoint, of obtaining for the present census a number often smaller than the minimum number considered as the average number of wage earners.

Mr. Bliss says that this method of computing average numbers "seems to have been planned to create a fictitious increase in earnings between 1890 and 1900 similar to the fallacious increase shown, at the preceding census, between 1880 and 1890."

He further says:

To see how this works, let us suppose that some brick and tile establishment employs an average of 100 wage earners for each of six months of the year, and is idle for the remainder of the year. Following the new census method, we add together the averages obtained for each of the six months, and divide the total, which is 600, by 12. This gives us 50 as the number that would be reported at the present census as the average number, a number that is just one-half the number that would be obtained by the method of preceding censuses. The effect of reducing the number of wage earners one-half is of course to double the apparent average earnings.

Mr. Bliss shows that if the lumber and timber industry be omitted from the census of Michigan and Wisconsin there will be shown a decided decrease in wages in these states, instead of the rise that is shown by the juggled census. He thinks that wages in this country declined between five and ten per cent. from 1890 to 1900, instead of only one and one-half per cent., as indicated by the official census.

This much for Col. Wright's wage statistics. His price statistics are juggled even more deftly. Without attempting to explain the juggle in them, it is sufficient to say that some of the Republican experts in the statistical bureaus at Washington do not hesitate to say (though they do not publish these statements) that Wright's price figures are absurd, largely because they are practically not "weighted" at all. That is, because the prices of unimportant articles are given as much weight, in making averages, as are the prices of important articles. Thus, the prices of 130 unimportant articles, which show a decline, will offset the prices of 130 important articles, which show a similar advance. Mr. Wright quoted the prices of 260 articles. He balanced the price of nutmegs, which declined from 100 to 46.9, with lard, which advanced from 100 to 161.9. He put in bicarbonate of soda as of equal importance with fresh beef. The soda showed a decline of 48.3 per cent., while the beef rose 25.9 per cent. He put in two quotations of sheep, which showed a rise of only three per cent., and only one of corn, which showed a rise of 56.9 per cent. The value of corn sold is 20 or 30 times the value of sheep sold. The price of matches, which declined ten per cent., affects Mr. Wright's averages as much as does the price of coke, which rose

58 per cent. Wood screws, which show a decline of 37 per cent., affect the averages of metals and implements as much as do steel billets, which show a rise of 42 per cent. The value of steel billets consumed is 100 times that of wood screws.

Of course an ordinary statistician, with an elastic conscience and a reputation to insure the publication of his statistics, can prove anything by such methods. Yet it is on such stuff as this that Col. Wright's reputation as a statistician rests. That he still has some reputation left is due, in part, to the faithful and untiring efforts of his Republican boomers who have profited by his errors of discretion and who, everywhere and at all times, laud him and his truly wonderful work; but, more largely, to the lack of effort of the Democrats to expose and publish these errors. For instance, a long article will soon be given to the press from Washington, quoting Wright's figures and results. It will be printed in all papers, both Republican and Democratic. Criticisms, no matter how severe and well deserved, will find space only in a few scattering Democratic papers and will be unnoticed in Republican papers.

In these ways, a well disciplined Republican press makes small men great and great men small, for the time being. Future history will do much to adjust matters, but the politicians are looking for immediate results, and care little for the higher historical criticism which may follow. If their pockets are well filled with the proceeds of political graft, they are willing to take their chances with future critics.

Great is Col. Wright, professional wage raiser and price reducer and official statistical juggler of the G. O. P.!

BYRON W. HOLT.

SINGLE TAX PRINCIPLES.

The single tax controversy which Myron T. Herrick, the Republican candidate for governor of Ohio, has provoked in the present campaign in that state, revives interest in the following single tax tract, compiled several years ago from the writings of Henry George, and published under the title, "The Single Tax; What It Is, and Why We Urge It."

I shall briefly state the fundamental principles of what we, who advocate it, call the single tax.

We propose to abolish all taxes save one single tax levied on the value of land, irrespective of the value of improvements in or on it.

What we propose is not a tax on real estate, for real estate includes improvements. Nor is it a tax on land,

for we would not tax all land, but only land having a value irrespective of its improvements, and would tax that in proportion to that value.

Our plan involves the imposition of no new tax, since we already tax land values in taxing real estate. To carry it out we have only to abolish all taxes save the tax on real estate, and to abolish all that which now falls on buildings or improvements, leaving only that part of it which now falls on the value of the bare land. This we would increase so as to take as nearly as may be the whole of the economic rent, or what is sometimes styled the "unearned increment of land values."

That the value of the land alone would suffice to provide all needed public revenues, municipal, county and national, there is no doubt.

To show briefly why we urge this change, let me treat (1) of its expediency, and (2) of its justice.

I.

From the single tax we may expect these advantages:

1. It would dispense with the whole army of taxgatherers and other officials which present taxes require, and place in the treasury a much larger proportion of what is taken from the people, while, by making government simpler and cheaper, it would tend to make it purer. It would get rid of taxes which necessarily promote fraud, perjury, bribery and corruption, which lead men into temptation, and which tax what the nation can least afford to spare—honesty and conscience. Since land lies out of doors and cannot be removed, and its value is the most readily ascertained of all values, the tax to which we would resort can be collected with the minimum of cost and the least strain on public morals.

2. It would enormously increase the production of wealth—

A. By the removal of the burdens that now weigh upon industry and thrift. If we tax houses, there will be fewer and poorer houses; if we tax machinery, there will be less machinery; if we tax trade, there will be less trade; if we tax capital there will be less capital; if we tax savings, there will be less savings. All the taxes, therefore, that we would abolish are taxes that repress industry and lessen wealth. But if we tax land values, there will be no less land.

B. On the contrary, the taxation of land values has the effect of making land more easily available by industry, since it makes it more difficult for owners of valuable land, which they themselves do not care to use, to hold it