

of labor." We congratulate the Socialists on the abandonment of an ancient shibboleth which was always a stumbling block in the path of progress. Perhaps the way is now open for a wider consideration of those problems which affect the entire well-being of the community and concern every man and woman therein.

THE following Resolution was adopted at the recent Liberal Conference in London. It just barely carried: "This Conference affirms its conviction that the housing of the people is a national responsibility." If the housing of the people is a national responsibility so is the feeding and clothing of the people, and we are well on our way to the extreme of state socialism. The opposition to the recommendation was led by our friend Ashley Mitchell among others.

WHAT is the national responsibility in the matter? Only to provide the opportunities for the people who will then make their own housing. The State is neither an architect, builder or contractor. It is impossible for the nation or the government to lay a single board or drive a single nail. If under the direction of the state the producers of houses start building, the result will be disappointing. If the intention is that the government raise the necessary money to secure housing accommodations for the people the question then is, why are the people unable to do this for themselves, and the nation's responsibility is of another sort—a responsibility for the laws and conditions that fail to secure for the people opportunities for employment that will enable them to provide their own housing.

THE well known farm paper, *Farm and Fireside*, speaking of a glass factory which turns out 41 times as many bottles as could be turned out by one man under the old processes, and declaring that one worker with a steam shovel does as much as 145 men could accomplish with pick and shovel, cries out: "Hasten the day when the manless plow, that will work day and night by itself, is perfected."

WELL, what then? Would it surprise *Farm and Fireside* to be told that the majority of the farmers, if they remained farmers, would then come pretty near starving to death? The man who owns the land then needing no labor, could start his manless plow going and watch it from a point of vantage while he gathers in the fruits of his land. Others "fortunate" enough to own manless plows, but no land, would be forced to sell their plows at a sacrifice and enter the employ of the landowning farmers, or others in the performance of menial chores. The inventor of a manless reaper would complete his destruction.

THIS does not mean that labor saving devices are the enemy of labor, as Socialists declare. Nor does it

mean that government should own the machinery. Nor does it mean that the inventor of labor-saving devices should be penalized or discouraged. Under our present system he who owns the land will own the labor saving devices and the men that work them. To the landowner goes the productivity which enhances the value of his land, enabling him to appropriate most of the increase, without effort on his part.

THE wish of this farm paper, if it means well to the farmer, should be not for a manless plow, but for a different division of the wealth produced. Why not think in terms of this division, if it is desired to arrive at any real conclusion? A manless plow is of no use at all to the landless man, but places him at a further disadvantage as compared with the actual possessor of the land. Is it not time that our farm journals—they more especially, as representing the basic industry of the country—begin to seek the reason for the complaint that John Stuart Mill voiced when he said that the invention of labor-saving machinery has failed to better the condition of a single individual dependent upon his labor for a livelihood? Though to this there are exceptions it remains substantially true. The reason was not clear even to the fine mind and keen perception of Mill. But the answer has been given in clear and luminous exposition by Henry George in a book entitled *Progress and Poverty*. We assume that *Farm and Fireside* has heard of the work.

## Cleveland's Housing Spasm

CLEVELAND is having her annual housing spasm. This one was started by Dr. E. J. Greeg, who represents in the city council a tenement district in which the poorest dwell, under very bad conditions.

Like all other similar spasms, this one will accomplish nothing except, possibly, to enrich a few landowners, win a little publicity for local politicians and capitalists, and glorify Andrew J. Thomas, a New York architect who was urged to visit Cleveland to advise the city council and who was hailed by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* as the "Housing Messiah," which caused the irreverent cynics to chortle. If Thomas' advice is acted upon, it will cause the poor tenement inhabitants some discomfort and expense, for they will be compelled to go elsewhere.

This spasm, however, has been the cause of some plain talk, and that is at least educational. Councilman Petrash, chairman of the building committee, put his finger on the sorest spot in the problem. He declared that if the city or private capitalists undertook to acquire the bad, old tenements, to tear them down, and to make way for Architect Thomas' improved buildings, the landowners would at once ask prohibitive prices, and it would be found that the city's building code stood in the way.

For a "Housing Messiah," Architect Thomas is singularly indifferent. Christ, the original Messiah, was exceedingly tender toward the lowest of the poor. Thomas admits that his plans do not take them into account, for he coldly and frankly says: "You can't do anything for the poor devils at the bottom of the heap and there is no use trying."

Dr. Gregg, however, started this housing spasm to help "the poor devils at the bottom." Thomas has turned the spasm into a movement to provide better housing accommodations for those he calls "the middle working class." He is said to have built model tenements in New York City for the Rockefeller Foundation.

Nobody has mentioned the heavy taxes levied on buildings and building materials, and advised their abolition. The Cleveland newspaper editors know the truth about it, but are silent. One demands heavier taxes on intangible personal property, which, of course, would add to the housing troubles of all except the very rich. In short, the Cleveland newspapers take their *cue* on taxation from the land owners and speculators. This is what renders their housing spasms such awful humbugs.

## U. S. S. R.

AN American, a large part of whose life and thought had been given to the study of American and European governments, has recently returned from an extended visit to Russia. Having justly earned a reputation as a man of liberal views his path was made easy and he was permitted to see what was going on with little interference. His conclusions have therefore a special value. He returns as one who having gazed upon a great experiment in the working is chiefly concerned that the public at large shall understand what is really happening.

From his report the following reflections are deduced. As Max Hirsch pointed out long ago the initial steps for the establishment of Communism involved the total negation of Democracy. There is no more pretense of Democracy in Russia today than there is in Italy under Mussolini. About one million class-conscious Communists control about nine million proletarians and, between them, they dominate one hundred and fifty millions of peasants of a mental development too primitive to be able to comprehend their relation to so large an entity as Russia.

The million communists, who are the effective government, are mostly honest fanatics. Even the highest officials receive no more than one hundred and twenty dollars a month, live in poor quarters and work long hours. Graft and opposition to the government are the only capital crimes. The utmost freedom of speech and action prevails in regard to every subject except the policy of the government. On this topic, if a man does not approve he had better keep silence. Not even a trial may be given in cases where persons are seriously suspected of communications with the enemy.

The rumors of subsidies paid to carry on propaganda abroad seem to have some substantiation in spite of the difficulty of believing that so poor a country can spend money for what looks like a pure abstraction, but we are dealing with the motive power of a new idea, which in its early stages at least partakes of the generative power which carried Mohammedanism to such lengths of conquest. The Soviets are working in India and China and Japan, and as a result the "Yellow Peril" may come to assume a totally new significance. The very crudeness of the Communist idea makes it easy for primitive peoples to grasp and wherever these are vast masses of propertyless people there is inflammable material.

Then there is the rising generation of young Russia to be counted with. Joseph Conrad foresaw that on account of the lack of education in Russia the effect of a war prolonged for any length of time and resulting in the destruction of the upper grades of the army would result in the practical deliquescence of the mass, because there were no middle class educated people to take their places as there were among all other civilized peoples. The Soviet managers were of course aware of this and when they came into power recognized the need for education if anything was to prove permanent under the new regime. Of course it had to be a slow, unperfect process. Czarists could not be used and most of the educated class, while they may have been disaffected to Imperialism, when compelled to make a choice between that and Communism showed themselves reactionary, so far as it was safe to do so. Even if they kept their views to themselves, they could hardly be trusted with the education of youth. And not only had schools to be organized where there were none before but a whole teaching staff had to be developed.

By this time they have largely succeeded in evolving it, though with much travail and many absurdities. In these public schools the dominant subject taught is Communism. Whatever intolerance our educational institutions have shown toward economic reform seems like enlightened liberality when compared with the rigid drilling in Communist tenets which the Russian school child receives.

What will the outcome be? Will the attempt to put the human mind in a strait-jacket have the same result there as elsewhere. Perhaps that out of it physical conflict may arise seems only too likely. A Europe burdened with crushing debts, broken up into small peoples divided by customs barriers with the great mass of people living lives of penury and hardship, will be an easy mark for a powerful nation preaching solidarity of the workers and a Communist basis.

Clearly the situation is such that it behooves the Nations to consider whether they must not, if they want to see Civilization survive, try the experiment of doing Justice to their disinherited. The only answer to Communism