

# Land and Freedom

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## Comment and Reflection

SOME surprise has been expressed at the appointment of Harry Hopkins to the post of Secretary of Commerce, for it does not appear that he has had experience in business, nor has ever been anything of a student of commerce. The point is not well taken. Knowing nothing about business he will make an ideal Secretary of Commerce under the new interpretation of the laws governing business, which is the production and distribution of wealth.

WHEN a man enters business he finds, no matter what business it is, that there are lots he did not know about it. He finds what are sometimes called the laws of political economy which he had never heard of before. He usually pays so little attention to these laws that he winds up in bankruptcy. Sometimes, most frequently indeed, his failure is due to circumstances over which he has no control. There come business depressions, and these are attributed for the most part to divine visitations or the blunders of the other political party. Get rid of the party and things will be on the upturn again.

IN the situation as it exists today the appointment of Harry Hopkins is ideal. We are positive that he does not believe that there are any laws of business, that he entertains the same views that his chief does, namely, that the laws of political economy vary with each decade. Roosevelt has told us in so many words that he has observed the changing teachings of what certain deluded people call the "science of political economy." The laws of political economy are what is taught from time to time in the class room, and are constantly changing. There are no fundamental principles.

WE need therefore feel no surprise that the newly created Secretary of Commerce has had no experience in business or commerce. It is due to the absence of experience that the appointment seems to us a peculiarly appropriate one. As there are no fundamental principles, nor even well trodden paths to be pursued, here is a tabula rasa for the new secretary to experiment with. That is as it should be if the new theory is to be followed that

the only laws governing the production of wealth and its distribution are those to be determined by experimentation at the hands of Brothers Roosevelt, Ickes, Hopkins, Frankfurter, Wallace, et al.

WHEN the world was planned, which was some time ago, provision was made for the needs of mankind. The plan appears to have been the satisfaction of human desires by the application of labor to land. This appeared to be so obvious that little attention is given in the Scriptures or the religions of the world. The method of making a living seemed so plain that any mention of the method by the Original Planner seemed quite unnecessary. Here was a world rich in natural resources. Merely to scratch the surface was to provide wealth in abundance.

PERHAPS it was not foreseen that stupid laws and the greed of man might set at naught the beneficence of the plan. Instead of relying upon the simplicity of the plan man at once began to substitute cumbersome and complicated planning for the simplicity of natural laws. A few long range thinkers sought to arrest this tendency by citing natural laws and their simplicity. Among these more enlightened pathfinders were Turgot, Patrick Edward Dove, Cobden, and a few of the poets. But nothing was done about it by the lawmakers. These are the last to learn anything. Even the professors in our universities were a little ahead of them. Most all of them were free traders, though they did not understand all that was involved in free trade.

THERE is no such passionate adherence to the doctrine of protection as there once was. Perhaps subconsciously the masses of the people who are not converted by argument are partially impressed with facts such as the period of depression through which we are passing—if we are to pass. We owe Secretary Hull a debt of gratitude for his reciprocity treaties. It seems a rather roundabout way to accomplish a purpose, namely, that we shall cease taxing ourselves when other nations cease taxing themselves. But Secretary Hull has at least made it clear that trade involves reciprocity and connotes a *two-way traffic*. It may be that through several doors the protective tariff is on its way out.