

every piece of land, so that a proposing purchaser, or a proposing money-lender, is in perfect safety, and acts with the greatest facility. It has often been proposed to introduce this highly useful institution into England; but had it been some custom of the Hindoos or ancient Mexicans, utterly alien to European ideas, it could not have been treated with more dread and suspicion than it has been in the Houses of Parliament. . . . England is *walled* against it as is the Celestial Empire."

Feudalism is, indeed, essentially secretive, selfish, anti-social. We must expect stubborn opposition from our land grabbers, who will misuse their legislative powers even as their forbears did during the railway mania of 1846-7. But influence that has been exerted for selfish ends is slipping from their grasp. I hope and believe that the British fetish of Property will be overthrown without the deluge of blood and tears which attended its destruction across the Channel.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

FRANCIS H. SKRINE.

147 VICTORIA STREET, S.W., 28th Aug.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

To the Editor of "Land Values."

I am home again after having spent six weeks in Britain. It is not easy for me to focus my feelings and impressions of this comparatively short period.

Seven years ago I spent a month in London. As everybody knows, politics have changed very much since. Hardly anything would strike a foreigner more than the difference in public opinion between the times of the Boer War and the times now of the Transvaal Constitution.

Seven years ago everyone who doubted the righteousness of private property in land was regarded as an anarchist or at least a crank; to-day there is hardly a question more discussed in Britain than the land question.

Seven years ago unemployed workmen occupying the unemployed land in Plaistow (is it possible to find anything more natural) would have been considered as robbers, now they found a large amount of sympathy in the greatest newspapers. Mr. Tom L. Johnson of Cleveland figured then in the British press as one of the very many cranks America had. Now they regard him as a courageous man doing, though in a somewhat unusual way—but still doing the right thing. I heard several times speakers mentioning the land question, but not one of them was in favour of landlordism. A speaker in Hyde Park, on the platform of the National Democratic League, said—"If the House of Lords refuses to pass the Education Bill, let us tax land values five shillings in the pound; if it still refuses let us increase the tax to ten shillings in the pound, and if it should still be against the Bill let the tax be twenty shillings in the pound. I never heard such arguments at open-air meetings seven years ago, and all the people cheered these sentiments. It is still certainly very profitable, more profitable than ever to be a landlord in Britain, but landlordism never was more unpopular.

Of course one cannot say that the majority of the public are single taxers, for this demands not only that they should see the question of the right and wrong of landlordism but also possess a certain mental capacity to understand what the rent of land means. And not everyone—even if he is a Professor of Political Economy—possesses this mental capacity.

Though one may find even to-day true of the single tax what Dupont de Nemours said in 1766 of the Physiocrat Principles, that "They are so clear and simple to everybody who will but think, that they are easily understood by people with clear heads who are not biased by private interests."

Public opinion is more and more against landlordism, and more and more in favour of the taxation of land values. All this shows how deep an impression Henry George's teaching has made. This progress must also be due to the excellent educational works of the Leagues both in England and

Scotland. A visit to Glasgow must have an encouraging effect upon every single taxer. From the Lord Provost to the poorest workman, I found everywhere single taxers, or, at least, sympathisers with the movement.

It has a great significance for us that Glasgow, which on the continent is not without reason called "the best governed city in the world" has the most vigorous single tax movement.

ROBERT BRAUN.

LIPPA (HUNGARY), 30th August, 1906.

ON UNEMPLOYMENT.

By W. R. LESTER, M.A.,

In the "Huddersfield Examiner," 28th July.

The whole labour problem hinges on the presence of an unemployed class needing to find a livelihood, and who are, therefore, always underbidding their more fortunate brethren. The vital question for us is: Shall we, by solving the land question on single-tax lines, also solve the unemployed problem? Will every man then who wants work be able to find it, and, if he can, will his wage equal the product of his labour? We believe that "Yes" is the answer. We have seen that, with a sufficient tax on land values all land would be forced to its most productive use, be it for agriculture, railways, docks, market-gardens, factories, offices, or dwellings. Who will assert that man's desire for these things or their products is yet satisfied?

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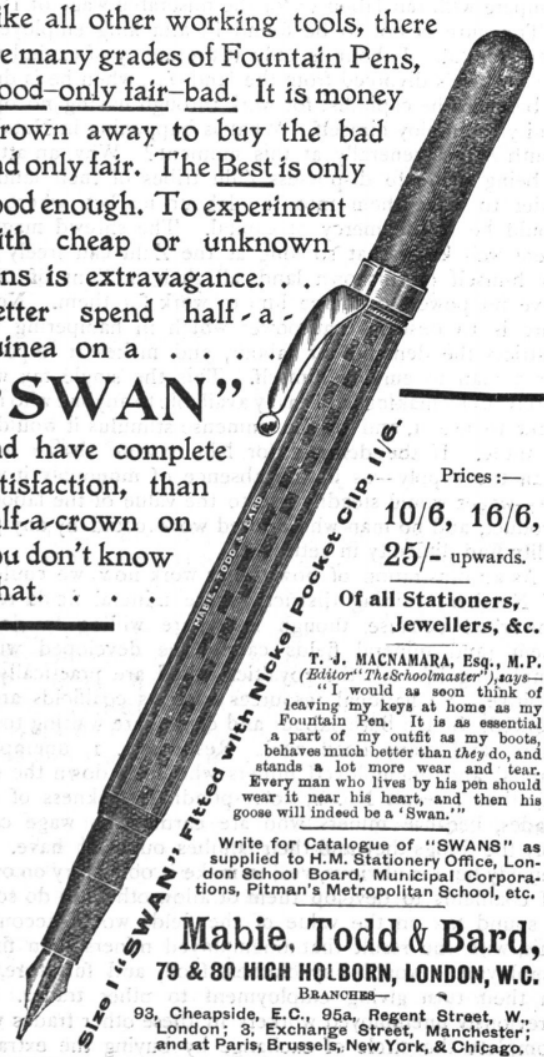
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But, if not, and there were nothing to hinder him working to satisfy his desires, does it not follow that there could not possibly be any scarcity of work? To take a concrete case, here is a labourer whose wage is the common one of 18/- a week. Why can he not get, say, 30/-? Simply because there are many other good men ready to take on the job at 18/- if he throws it up. But 18/- is a mere fraction of what labourers contribute to production. Why, then, are many men ready to do the work at 18/-? Because many are at present unemployed, and rather than remain unemployed they will work for an employer at 18/-. Why cannot they work for themselves, either singly or in association with others? Because they have first to come to terms with someone who owns the natural opportunities of employment. Let these men try to acquire allotments, for instance, and they will find almost everywhere that they are either outrageously rack-rented or that they are not wanted as allotment holders on any terms whatever. If they cannot employ themselves, why do not others want their services? Because trade and industry are everywhere obstructed and work rendered scarce by monopoly.

There is no lack of capital ready at any time to embark on production and employ labour if only it can see a fair chance of return, but the terms asked by many owners of land are such as to make this chance slight. Often quite prohibitive terms are demanded because sites are held in expectation of a rise in value. In this way trade is hampered, the demand for labour is correspondingly hampered, and work becomes scarce. There is thus no demand for the services of legions of willing workers who are driven back to compete with our labourer for the miserable wage of 18/-.

The cure is not to be found in attacking employers or their capital. Labour is only at the mercy of capital when the worker is divorced from the land, *i.e.*, when he is driven to beseech the capitalist for work through having no opportunity to employ himself. What is happening in Natal and South Africa generally at this moment? Why, an attempt is being made to dispossess Zulu tribes of their lands, in order to drive them into the labour market, where they would be at the mercy of capital. The shrewd magnates there well know that so long as the Zulu can freely work for himself on his own land, all their millions of capital have no power to coerce him to work for them. No, the cure is to destroy that power which in hampering trade restricts the demand for labour, and makes it impossible for a man to employ himself. This the single tax would surely do by making land easily available to anyone who might want to use it, and by the immense stimulus it would give to trade. If the demand for labour were always greater than the supply—as in the absence of monopoly it would be—wages would steadily rise to the value of the labourer's product, and no man who desired work could by any possibility find difficulty in getting it.

As an illustration of how things work now, we could tell of Northern mining districts where mineral fields remain unworked because, though many are willing to develop them (and mineral fields cannot be developed without employing labour), the royalties asked are practically prohibitive. So national resources such as coalfields are unworked, though both labour and capital are waiting to work them, and many need coal. Result No. 1, unemployed capital and unemployed miners who keep down the wages of others; result No. 2, corresponding slackness of other trades, because miners who are earning no wage cannot buy the things they and their families ought to have. The remedy here is obvious, *viz.*, to make it obligatory on owners of coalfields to develop them or allow others to do so, and a sound tax on the value of the fields would accomplish this, with the result that unemployed miners then finding employment would buy clothes, food, and furniture, thus in their turn giving employment to other trades. The previously unemployed workers in these other trades would complete the circle of exchange by buying the extra coal produced by the miners. To leave the particular for the

general, it is clear that this stimulus has only to operate all round, and the demand for labour would infinitely grow over the whole field of industry, so removing the primary cause of unemployment, overcrowding, and sweated labour. When this was accomplished it would surely be time enough to see whether any call remained for the hundred and one secondary reforms so many now demand. If we might venture an appeal to progressives of all shades, the appeal would take this form:—Concentrate on the reform that goes to the root. Overthrow land monopoly through taxation. When monopoly is gone we shall at least have established a sound foundation on which society may build to heights now undreamed of.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION AND THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

It is not too bold to assert that no department of the British Association possesses such great capabilities of serving humanity as the section which devotes itself to economic science. At the meetings of the Association, held in York in August, a morning was devoted to the discussion of the unemployed problem, but the morning's achievements were not such as were calculated to inspire hope in the social reformer. One speaker declared "there was nothing to lead anyone to suppose that they could ever dispense with unemployment," and added that there could be no permanent alleviation of the evil except in some system of insurance in times of prosperity whereby workmen would be able to subsidise themselves in times of distress. Another speaker contended that the causes of unemployment were so numerous and so elusive that they could not be traced and definitely stated. Several attributed the evil to the "imperfect organisation of the labour market," and a long paper was read on labour exchanges, arguing that institutions of this character would contribute to the solution of the problem by enabling the labourer to "market" his labour more easily. The essayist, however, virtually admitted that they were inadequate to meet the whole needs. Such, with a couple of expressions of belief in State Socialism, was the net result of the sitting.

To say the least it is disappointing, and one can hardly resist the conclusion that the economic scientists, in their survey of the problem, are chained to a false standpoint. When we are told there is nothing to lead us to suppose that we can ever dispense with unemployment what can we say? Is this true? If so, life is a hideous nightmare, and the Great Creator has planned the Universe dismally amiss.

Our friend, the economic scientist, cannot possibly have realised the significance of his assertion. He cannot have understood how hopeless is his philosophy; how completely out of harmony it is with the conception of a well-ordered Universe.

Let us state the terms of the problem as simply and clearly as possible. Let us see if the great cause of unemployment is too elusive to be easily apprehended. Let us see if a radical cure of this social disease is not possible.

Man is a being with physical needs. "Man's needs," said Pope Leo XIII., in his *Encyclical Letter on the Condition of Labour*, "do not die out, but recur; satisfied to-day, they demand new supplies to-morrow. Nature, therefore, owes to man a store-house that shall never fail. . . . And this he finds only in the inexhaustible fertility of the earth." But it is a natural