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ANOTHER £1,000,000 SUBSIDY - - - -	50	<i>The value of land apart from buildings and other improvements is due to the presence and the activities of the community. It is therefore common property and should be used to defray the public expenditures, in place of the unjust taxes which fall with particular severity on the poorest, raise prices, obstruct exchange and penalize production. By requiring contribution in proportion to the value of the land alone, whether used or not, land value taxation would make it unprofitable for speculators or monopolists to hold valuable land unused or only half used, and would throw open to labour the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man.</i>
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THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO PEACE

By John Paul

The following extract from an Editorial appearing in this Journal, January, 1919, is so appropriate to the present situation and the prediction it contains has been so amply verified that we need make no apology for reprinting it.

THE FIGHTING men had gone out in defence of the land, but when the fighting ended they were to return as they had left, landless. If they aspired to a patch of ground and to a decent house fixed on an idle half-acre where there was light and sunshine, the same old monopoly price had to be paid. Before our volunteer Army and our conscripts set out to meet the foe they were shown by the Government a striking picture of a soldier taking leave of a home with a garden bearing the inscription: "Is This Worth Fighting For?" To millions of sailors and soldiers from the overcrowded slums this was at once a piece of grim humour and a dream to be realized. This fetching poster was the work of our politicians, and now they talk and plan as if they were determined that the dream shall not become the realization. . . .

Let us look at the one grand hope that arises out of the ashes of the great devastation, the League of Nations. What is it but an inspiration set in the clouds, where it must remain so long as the existing economic dispensation prevails? We search in vain through the writings and the speeches of the leaders of this new crusade for any recognition of this fundamental truth.

Behind the longings and aspirations for the great Peace lies the problem of getting a living. No question is settled until this is settled. It is the bottom question. The land, the storehouse that "Nature owes to man for the daily supply of his daily wants" has been parcelled out by Kings, Emperors and Parliaments, and sold for a price

at the public auction rooms like so much private property. Robbed of their natural right to the use of this storehouse, the opportunity for peaceful industry, men gather at the gates of any kind of factory open to them. Millions in a Europe so conditioned get their living in the making of armaments, and in its dependent industries.

It is officially stated that in 1914, Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy spent among them £390,330,361 on armaments. The mass of men who get their living in and through this huge industry have none other to turn to for employment; very many have been specially trained by the Schools to fit them for the higher-grade positions in the great arsenals and ship-building centres. This is where the opinion that supports and maintains the Balance of Power policy is to be found. This is what stands athwart the League of Nations and reduces the idea even in the hands of its most competent votaries to a meaningless formula. Even now, at the very birth of the idea championed by the greatest democratic leader in sight, the passionate cry is heard from all quarters of the globe that it is a lost cause. Blame for this is hurled as usual at the heads of men who stand or who seem to stand for the opposing principle. Not a word nor a single sign to indicate that the cause of the failure is to be found at the bedrock on which society itself rests.

In some quarters optimism turns to pessimism, and human nature, poor, misunderstood and much maligned human nature, stands charged with a

due share of the failure to rise to the great occasion. Amid all this grief and lamentation the plain truth is before us. The problem is mainly economic and not altogether a question of politics. The getting of a living is the dominating factor, and so long as it exists will provide the atmosphere and the opinion which petrifies and circumvents those who strive so diligently for a sound and enduring Peace system. Our well-intentioned peacemakers are up against a hard stern fact born of human needs. Men with bodies to feed and clothe cannot freely step into the hell of unemployment to satisfy the cravings of their higher nature or respond much to an appeal for any high purpose. If that were not so war and the lust for war would have been banished long ago. If we would have peace we must first have justice.

Let us give human nature a chance ; let us emancipate man from the bondage of economic slavery and then look with assurance for the opinion that will abolish the armament industry. So long as men must regard work as an end in itself instead of as a means to the higher life, and natural avenues to alternative employment are shut in the face of those who must find work or starve, we shall preach in vain about the urgency of a League of Nations. The fundamental question of the restoration of the land to the people must first be dealt with. The unequal distribution of wealth which property in land determines will hold men firmly to the lower levels of thought.

What is wrong with the world can still be named : ignorance, contempt and neglect of human rights. Let Nature's wide field for human progress be set free ; let wages rise to full earnings point ; let the workers feel they are not any longer on the verge of starvation, that they need take no thought for the morrow ; let the just claims to a fuller life be recognized ; let the slogan of liberalism, equality of opportunity, remain no longer the cold abstraction it is ; let the pace be set for the co-operative commonwealth. This is the way we must travel if we would have the great Peace League in our day and generation.

[We gladly print this article also as an In Memoriam —John Paul, 28th April, 1933, Editor till then of this Journal since its foundation in June, 1894.]

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ANOTHER £1,000,000 SUBSIDY

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE announced the Government's new bacon policy in answer to a question in the House of Commons on 10th March. He said that the difficulties of the bacon industry were due to the high cost of pig feeding-stuffs and to the high costs of bacon. The Bacon Marketing Board were preparing a scheme of rationalization of bacon factories, and the Government were going to pay a subsidy to pig producers which would be related to the cost of feeding stuffs and to the price of bacon. As the payment to be made by the Exchequer was variable, a precise figure of cost could not be given, but it was estimated at approximately £1,000,000 a year.

It would be interesting to know by how much the Government's protectionist and restrictive policy has increased the price of feeding stuffs. For the rest, this proposal calls for no extended comment. It is of a piece with the other parts of the Government's agricultural policy. As most of us are consumers of bacon we will pay in taxation what we would otherwise have had to pay in price, and indeed will pay more, for some part of the money is bound to be wasted in administrative and other expenses. In any event the last result, if the scheme does benefit the farmer temporarily, will be that the owners of land will reap a permanent harvest of higher rents or land values.

Difficulties of Rural Housing

Speaking at a meeting of the Stratford-on-Avon Rural District Council the Chairman (Mr T. R. Canning) said that the Housing Committee had considerable difficulty in obtaining sites at reasonable prices. The figure asked had frequently been considerably in excess of the value of the land, which in many cases was merely agricultural. The importance of this would be realized when it was pointed out that £50 on the cost of a house increased the rent by 1s. per week. (*Royal Leamington Spa Courier*, 18th March.)

This case is typical of many others. The holding up of land for excessive prices is not confined to urban areas, and the need for rating and taxing land values and un-taxing houses and other improvements is as great in the rural districts as it is in the towns.

Houses for Chickens and Houses for Humans

A private Member's Bill to amend the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act 1854 was brought into the House of Commons on 1st March by Capt Ramsay (Con.) and read a first time. The object of the measure is to exempt from rating any shed or greenhouse of a superficial area of less than 100 square feet, provided that it is used solely for a hobby, such as the keeping of chickens or the cultivation of plants. The Bill was backed by Sir Arnold Wilson, Capt McEwen, Mr Mitchell, Mr Hunter and Miss Horsbrugh, all Conservative members. In moving the Bill Capt Ramsay said that the tax was vexatious and brought in little or no return, while it possibly deterred many people from going in for occupations which were good for them.

This proposal is in itself a good one, but it needs to be carried to its logical conclusion of exempting all buildings and improvements and basing the rates on the value of the land only. As things are at present, to