

leave of any man, once he has paid the trifling license fee exacted of the small oysterman. Plainly enough, then, no able-bodied man of reasonable energy will hire himself to a farmer for much less than he can earn upon the free waters of the Chesapeake. Farms are often neglected because labor cannot be had to work the crops. The capitalists who own and operate oyster boats have to import some of the worst and most shiftless residents of city slums, because thousands of local laborers, black and white, are self-employing oystermen.

It is natural and proper that these self-employing oystermen should watch with suspicion all legislation for the protection of the oyster, lest it result in their being driven from the natural oyster beds and made the hired men of farmers ashore, or of those who own land under water and private oyster beds.

The new law, which was drawn with the view to enabling as large a number of persons as possible to avail themselves of riparian rights, is condemned by many of the self-employing oystermen, and the operation of it is being keenly watched.

Some such protective legislation is needed if the oyster industry is to be preserved, but if the effect shall be to drive many of the smaller oyster men out of employment there will be a strong movement for its repeal or amendment.

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RUSSIA'S LAND PROBLEM.

From an Editorial in the London Tribune of December 6, 1906.

More interesting than the dismal chronicles of repression and scandal are the measures which M. Stolypin is taking to transform the Russian land system.* Good or bad, they are certainly revolutionary, and Liberals of all shades are bound to protest against them, as the moderate "Party of Pacific Regeneration" did, because they are an autocratic exercise of legislative powers which ought to belong to the Douma. But, quite apart from the party politics of Russia, they have for all the world an immense sociological interest. They seem to destroy, or at least to doom, the oldest system of land tenure in Europe, that communal ownership which historians still study as the type and survival of an arrangement which once flourished in one form or another among so many primitive agricultural peoples.

In the Russian Mir the land is the common property of all the families of the village, who also pay their taxes in common, and claim by virtue of this obligation a patriarchal power over the movements of every member of the community. The fields are redistributed periodically, but while each family cultivates its own lot, it may neither be alienated nor transferred, and returns at the end of a term of years to the common stock. The advantages of the plan are obvious. The inequalities of soil and situation are shared fairly; no family can become landless and desperate; even a peasant who, with the consent of his village, has gone to work in a town, knows that his wife and his heirs retain their right, and remain members of a brotherhood which will respect it. The disadvantages are equally obvious. Since there is no fixity of tenure, the peas-

ant is tempted to do as little as possible for the soil, and to take the utmost out of it. The method of tillage has remained wasteful and primitive, and the Mir system undoubtedly plays a part second only to that of bad government in explaining the listlessness of the peasantry and the poverty of rural Russia.

It is easy to guess the political reasons which have induced M. Stolypin to attack the Mir system by allowing peasants to detach themselves from it and to claim their present lot or its equivalent as their permanent private property. He is afraid of socialism, and the Mir is a species of primitive communism. He is also fighting Liberalism, and hopes no doubt to create a class of peasant farmers who may become a conservative element. The liberated peasant, left alone with his inadequate plot of land to face the tax collector and the money lender, may sell out, and drift into the class of the landless and voteless laborers. He is thereby eliminated from politics. But the land remains, and must pass into the hands of someone, whose interest may perhaps lie in maintaining the status quo.

But is there no alternative to individual peasant ownership, with its danger of alienation, and this communal system with its wasteful tillage? The "Temps" tells the Russian Liberals that they ought to remember that the prosperity of France is founded on peasant proprietorship. It forgets that this replaced a bad system of dual ownership, and that the French peasants acquired not merely the poor land they had cultivated before the Revolution, but the rich land of which the church and the emigrant nobility were despoiled. There was no tradition of communal ownership in France, on which an even better scheme could have been grafted.

We, for our part, regret that Michael Davitt's views were not followed in Ireland; we rejoice no less that in its Scottish Land Bill our own government, while giving the crofters security of tenure on their allotments, has reserved the ownership of the land to the public. This method gives to the tiller the security which alone can develop private resource and energy. It also preserves the nation from the monopolist, prevents the growth by purchase of vast estates, and secures the land as a means of livelihood to the largest number of independent families. The Mir system could easily have been modified in this sense, and so evolved as to develop the habit of co-operation.

Let us hope that when at length, a free Douma meets it will have the power to save the precious tradition of common ownership and mutual aid, which made the Mir system one of the most hopeful germs for the creation of a free rural community.

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THE CREATOR OF WEALTH.

An Editorial from the Pittsburg Evening Leader of Dec. 15, 1906.

Andrew Carnegie clearly recognizes and points out the inequities of our present system of taxation, to which is due the accumulation of fortunes swollen to danger point and a distribution of wealth that has caused both political and commercial corruption in the life of the nation. But the remedy he pro-

*See The Public of December 1, page 824.

poses would give only partial relief. It would not cure the evil.

He advocates a graduated inheritance tax that would be confiscatory after a fixed limit of wealth had been passed. He would not levy a tax on incomes, which, he says, would make this a "nation of liars." He would not "disturb the bee while it was making honey," but when the "bee" has passed from earth then he would have the State step in and take the biggest share of the "honey," when there was more than was needed for the good and comfort of the little "bees."

In proposing this tax Mr. Carnegie justifies it on the ground that the real creator of the wealth is the community, and in confiscating part of it the community would be merely taking its own. He shows how the community creates the wealth, by proving that the ownership of land, well or fortunately located, will bring wealth.

To illustrate his point he takes the suppositious case of two brothers, one of whom got a farm that was located on Manhattan island from his father and the other got a farm beyond the Harlem river. The owner of the Manhattan island farm was made immensely wealthy without an effort on his part. His wealth was created by the growth of the community known as New York City near and around his farm. The trans-Harlem unfortunate remained a common farmer.

Now would Mr. Carnegie contend that the owner of the Manhattan farm was a "bee" who should not be disturbed while "making the honey"? Rather would he not be a drone in the hive taking the honey made by others?

Of course he would be and why should the working bees of the hive have any hesitancy about "disturbing" him? Why should the community wait until the Manhattan landowner died before taking the wealth that it created?

Since the wealth belonged to the people living when he was living they were entitled to the use and enjoyment of it during their lives and at the same time he was using and enjoying his fair share of it. There is no reason why they should wait until he died before taking possession of their own.

Other illustrations used by Mr. Carnegie to prove that the community creates the wealth of the individual show the relation between the community and the miner and manufacturer. The miner makes his money out of the minerals he finds in the land for which minerals a demand or market is created by the community. The manufacturer makes his in practically the same way, except that he turns the minerals the miner sells into useful commodities to meet the demand created by the community.

The miner and the manufacturer are working bees in the hive. So far as they are concerned Mr. Carnegie is right. Do not interfere with them while they are making the honey. Do not take away from them any of the honey they make. It is theirs and in all fairness and justice they should have it.

And to go a bit further than Mr. Carnegie: they should have it for their use and enjoyment not only during their life time, and they should have it all to pass on to their children or whomsoever they please when they die. Not one bit of the honey that

they made should be taken away from them under any pretense.

But they should have no more than they made. They are not entitled to the honey that the other bees in the colony made. They have no right to that in their lifetime and they have much less right to pass it on to their children at their death. It belongs to the colony and the colony should take it when it is made.

But how can the colony or community take this honey? Mr. Carnegie makes plain how it should not be taken in his argument to prove that it should be taken after the death of the "bee."

He proves conclusively that the land is the source of all wealth and that while it may be taken from the land by individuals its value is created by the community. Without the community the land might as well be a desert, for there would be no demand for its direct or indirect products. The community may then be said to be the actual creator of wealth.

With the opportunity that the individual has, or is given by the community through the ownership or exclusive occupancy or possession of land, he may accumulate personal property or wealth in which the community has no right to share. What he makes for himself should be his. What the community makes should be the community's.

The land belongs to the people, and the users of it should pay to the whole people the actual use value of it. Their profits from the use of it would be their own and they could do as they please with it without dodging the tax collector or perjuring themselves when he happened to catch them.

The income tax that Mr. Carnegie condemns would undoubtedly make many men liars and perjurers. But they are liars and perjurers now under the present system of taxation. They dodge the tax collector when they can and swear falsely when they cannot.

The inheritance tax would also be dodged. Instead of disposing of his property by will or under the intestate laws of the State the dodger would make both real and fictitious transfers of his property during his lifetime.

When the tax collector would call around after the panegyric had been delivered and the obseques reverently performed he would find that the deceased died a comparatively poor man; that in the generosity of his heart and in his laudable desire to be his own executor he had in his lifetime put all of his property in the name of his wife and children.

But he could not dodge the land tax. He would have to pay that or the land would pass into the possession of some other man who would pay it.

And he would still have to pay his share of that tax even though he did not own a single foot of land. He could not live without using the land. He could not live without the products of the land. He might not pay anything directly into the common treasury if he owned no land, but he would pay to the man who did own the land, or to the man who supplied him with products of the land, who in his turn would have to pay to the owner of the land. The community would then collect from the land owner.

In that way it would take the wealth as it created it and would have the enjoyment of it when it needed it. That would put an end to the justice of the

few "bees" "hogging" all the "honey," while the many were existing precariously and unpleasantly on New Orleans molasses.

But until the people of this country can be induced to take their own under the reasonable and rational system of land taxation let us have the inheritance tax proposed by Mr. Carnegie. Let us have any tax that will give the slightest relief from the present intolerable system that throws the burden on those least able to bear it and on those who receive the smallest benefits from government.

Every step that is taken toward the dispersion of over-grown fortunes brings us nearer to a fair and equitable distribution of wealth and that is the great problem to be solved.

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POLITICAL PARTIES IN RUSSIA.

From an Interview with Professor Samuel N. Harper, as Published in the Chicago Chronicle of December 9, 1906. Professor Harper Has Recently Returned from Russia.

There are in Russia three general parties—a Reactionary, a Revolutionary and a Reform party. The last two are often confused or viewed as one, though their principles and policies are really radically different.

Revolutionary Parties.

The Revolutionary parties are: The Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists, the Jewish bund and a few smaller parties. They are working for a democratic republic, a socialistic order. They believe that reforms can be secured only through revolution. They are propagating for an armed uprising of the peasants and workmen. They are trying to spread disaffection among the troops.

The Social Revolutionists admit terroristic acts as a temporary weapon of combat, but not as a principle. They are the revolutionists who killed Von Plehve, Sergius and the rest. But they do not recognize petty terrorism such as police murders and holdups for political purposes. The Moscow bank robbery and the attempted assassination of Stolypin were not their work, but that of a small group which had seceded from the party. They denied officially the Stolypin attempt, which had been laid at their door. They are much embarrassed by the uncontrolled development of terroristic acts due to their adopting this weapon for extreme cases.

The Social Democrats do not admit terroristic acts at all. The Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists do not work together harmoniously. They are always burying the hatchet, but the co-operation never lasts very long. The Social Democrats are themselves split up into two distinct factions which expend much of their energy in purely partisan polemics. To summarize the distinction between Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists in a single word, the former are more theoretical, doctrinarian socialists; the latter more practical, social and revolutionary workers. Both are antagonistic to the bourgeois reformers—the Social Democrats particularly.

These actual revolutionary workers are a small but most active minority. Their methods of combat, however, tend to give them a disproportionate prominence and they are rapidly gaining ground among the peasants. The workmen are already with them.

Reactionary Parties.

The Reactionary parties are also not large. The official figures are several times larger than the opposition will admit. The opposition accuses the Government of supporting these reactionary organizations, of aiding them with funds, of allowing them privileges denied to others, such as freedom of meeting, etc. These organizations are held to be responsible for the policy of organized massacre. The official organs of some of these reactionary groups come out quite frankly with most insidious accusations against the Jews and liberal intelligence. They lay all the blame for this reform movement upon the Jews, thereby trying to arouse false sentiments of patriotism among the most ignorant classes.

Unfortunately there have been instances of the clergy preaching in this same tone. The creed of these reactionaries is "Russia for the Russians." They called themselves the "Union of Russian Patriots," the "League of Sincere Russians," etc. They support an autocracy—a firm sovereign authority. They are now urging a change in the electoral law which shall insure against a second Douma of the radical character of the first.

Reform Parties.

The Constitutional Democrats, Professor Milyoukov's party, present the type of the Reform organizations. Their name indicates their program. They hope to bring about reforms by legal measures. The extent of protest to which they will go is indicated in the passive resistance policy they advocated in the Viborg appeal, but admitted that the program of passive resistance, especially the refusal to give recruits, could not be applied at the present moment.

They demand more concessions than the Government has consented to give, especially insisting upon ministerial responsibility. The Cadets, as the Constitutional Democrats are called for the sake of brevity, are accused of not drawing a sufficiently clear line of distinction between themselves and the revolutionists. Perhaps during the Douma session they gave way too much to the influence and pressure exerted by the radical groups. Their excuse, however, was the necessity of maintaining the support and co-operation of radicals in order to control and direct them. As I shall try to explain later, it is this care to win over the support of the people that dictates in a large degree the policy of all these three tendencies.

The other Reform parties are the Octobrists and the Party of Peaceful Regeneration. The latter was organized out of the former by Count Heyden assuming a more definite and radical liberal tone. The Peaceful Regenerationists refused to participate in Stolypin's ministry.

The Octobrists, so called because they have taken the manifesto of October, 1905, the manifesto which was the promise of a constitutional form of government, as their policy, are the only reform party