

Unfortunately this country has passed beyond the stage where capital and labor, applying themselves to the natural elements, can share between them their mutual produce. There is a third factor in the problem, the owner of the natural elements. When the country was new, ownership of natural resources was of little moment, and labor and capital shared between them nearly the whole product. At that time there were no unemployed. Newcomers, whether brought by ships or storks, were welcome. Fortunate was the father of a large family. But now that the resources of the country have fallen under the blight of the speculators who demand an ever increasing share of the product of labor and capital, human beings are a drug on the market, and the wife and mother takes the job the men and unmarried women feel belongs to them.

Under this increasing stress, capital frequently finds that the double burden of what the government takes in taxes, and what the owners of privilege take in rent are more than the business can stand. Then it is that the employer is confronted with the alternative of getting cheaper labor or going out of business.

The remedy for this state of affairs, however, is not in driving married women out of jobs that single women might have, but in relieving business of its double burden. This remedy lies wholly in the hands of the people. Fortunately it has had sufficient trial to demonstrate its practicability. In many parts of the country, and particularly in California, it has become the practice to levy taxes for various kinds of improvements on the lands that are increased in value by the improvements.

This special tax on lands benefitted, to pay for the improvements that cause their increase in value, has the double effect of lessening the burden on industry, and increasing the load carried by the land speculator. As business profits increase, and speculators' gains grow less, capital will be withdrawn from speculation where no labor is employed and put into industry that employs labor and produces wealth.

It will then be possible for married men to support their wives at home, and give the children a mother's care.

RENDERING EVIL FOR GOOD

A home for feeble-minded children near Los Angeles burned with a loss of more than a score of lives. Much ado was made over the calamity for a few days. Everybody in any way responsible shifted the blame to some one else—until the whole thing was forgotten. But before the matter was pushed aside by a new sensation there was a general overhauling of public, and semi-public buildings in the city. A very large proportion was found to be of a nature to cause a similar holocaust. Hospitals in particular were found to be inviting disaster, and the firetraps were tolerated only because there was no other room available.

Yet, what is the city doing to induce the building of fire-proof buildings. It fines the man who dares to build. If \$100,000 is put into a building that will barely pass inspection, but is still inflammable enough to endanger the lives of inmates the city will tax the owner; if \$150,000 is put in, and the building is made fireproof, the city will increase his tax 50 per cent.

Why? The building needs less fire protection, less sanitary inspection, and offers safety to the patients. Why increase the fine on the owner? Is this the Wonder Land that Alice saw through the Looking Glass, where everything was topsy-turvy?

TOO MUCH LEGISLATION

Lower Taxes and Less Legislation League is one of the latest organizations to set about righting the economic world. The purpose of the League as expressed in its name, will find a cordial response in many hearts. But what about the method. It may well be questioned if simply stopping the legislative mills will bring about the desired result.

It is not a question of lower taxes so much as of right taxes. As long as wrong taxes are levied whether they be high or low, evil results will follow; and as long as people suffer from the evil effects of unjust taxation, the making of new laws to give relief will continue.

When just and scientific tax laws have been enacted, we may begin to look for a slowing down of the legislative machinery, and not before.

IN BRITAIN'S PARLIAMENT

We have this position at the present time: The money of the public is spent, let us say, in the extension of a tube railway in North London, and the result of that extension is that all the land to which the tube goes suddenly acquires an enormously enhanced value. Into whose pockets does it go? We are looking for revenue, yet we allow the whole of that enhanced value to go into the hands of people who have never lifted a finger in its creation, and we talk of ourselves as the financiers of Europe.....

All around London and our big towns you have this position, that instead of creating a treasure house on the borders of your towns, upon which the municipalities and the State can draw, as the town increases its borders, you create a barrier that you have to buy back at fabulous prices, and, instead of seeing that the wealth of the country goes into the pockets of those who create it, you let this money go on drifting year after year into a few private hands. On the borders of our town you have great resources that you ought to have for public purposes, but you allow them to go into private hands. The effect is two-fold: Not only do you lose the revenue which you ought to get for further development of your towns, but, if you do not allow the town to develop outwards, it develops inwards, as the Royal Commission on Housing said forty years ago. All the courts and alleys of our big towns, all the slum dwellings of our big towns, are largely caused by an utter lack of any economic purpose in our taxation system. — *E. G. Hemmerde, in the debate on the Budget in the House of Commons.*

COMPARISONS ARE ODIOUS

Judson King, the brilliant director of the National Popular Government League, Washington, D. C., in the Bulletin No. 93, in a plea for government development of waterpower for the people, prints two electric bills. The bills are for the same amount of current. On one bill the charge for 334 K.W.H. was \$3.35; on the other bill the charge for 334 K.W.H. was \$23.18. The bills were for the same length of time. The smaller charge was made by the publicly owned Hydro-electric system of Ontario; the larger amount was from the privately owned Potomac Electric Power Co., Washington, D. C. The bills are sworn to before a notary public.

In view of the desperate appeals of private interests to have Congress give them Muscle Shoals, Colorado River, and the various other power sites, it is a question if Mr. King has not been guilty of striking below the belt in publishing these facts at this time.

BRITISH TAXATION

Few books have been more happy in the time of their appearance than "Land-Value Policy," by James Dundas White, published by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, 11 Tothill Street, London, S. W. 1. Price two shillings, net. The British Labor Party occupies the center of the stage. Its budget is one of the party's principal achievements and the promise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to include land values taxation in the next budget is the outstanding feature of the fiscal situation.

Education, training, and experience in every way qualify Mr. White for this task. The taxation of land values is destined to be one of the great world issues, and persons wishing to prepare themselves to pass judgment should include this book in their reading.

FUNDAMENTAL TAXATION

When you have read the taxation planks in the Republican and the Democratic platforms, turn to Progress and Poverty and see how simple Henry George made the whole question. A fine abridgement of the world famous book will be sent to any address for one dollar. Or with TAX FACTS one year for \$1.25.

Labor, published at Washington, D. C., by the associated railway labor organizations, with Edward Keating, Singletaxer and former Congressman from Colorado as manager and editor, is the weekly paper for those who want the news of current events from the standpoint of the interest of the common people. Subscription, \$2 a year, with a special rate of fifty cents for the next five months, which covers the campaign.

NOTES

Many of us live expensively to impress our friends who live expensively to impress us.

—*Columbia Record*

Any President can lead Congress if he can get advance information concerning the way it is going. — *Muskogee Phoenix.*

Maybe wild life is not disappearing; maybe it is just effecting a merger with domestic life. — *Little Rock Arkansas Gazette.*

The United States Senate has declared that the air is the inalienable property of the people. Is that to be regarded as the first step toward taxing it? — *Detroit Free Press.*

It is hard to walk straight in the dark. No less hard, however, for a community, as such, or the whole nation, as such, than for the individual in his private capacity. — *Municipal League of Los Angeles Bulletin.*

Let them have a House of Commons which reflects every strain of opinion; that is what makes democratic government in the long run not only safer and more free, but more stable. — *Herbert H. Asquith, Liberal Leader.*

The tendency of foreign population to refuse to blend with us dates back to the exhaustion of our free land, and the forcing of the newcomers to stay in the cities to get work. It was cheap land which mixed foreigners with Americans, and nothing else; and nothing else ever will. — *Herbert Quick, in The Real Trouble With Farmers.*

The San Francisco Waiters' Union has come out officially as being opposed to tips. A very sensible stand, as gratuities received in this manner, in the long run, are figured upon by the bosses and wages based accordingly. The degradation and subservience which usually accompany this habit are distasteful to both the giver and receiver.

Digitized by — *P. D. Noel, in The Citizen.*

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THE WRONG JUDGMENT

Let the right person, or the right number of persons, suggest a plausible, but utterly impossible idea, and shortly millions of people will acclaim its truth.

At the present moment there is a popular obsession that everybody is dishonest, particularly those holding public office. To be an office holder, runs the popular belief, is to be a tax-eater, a tax-eater is a politician, and a politician is a grafter.

Unfortunately some men are dishonest, and some of them get into office, where they betray the interest of the public. They should be brought to light as fast as possible, and summarily punished. But this fact of individual dishonesty should not be made an excuse for impeaching the human race.

The greatest enemy of good government is not knavery, but ignorance. Where the knave filches from us one dollar, the fool costs us a thousand. No law should be ignored by the executive, nor misinterpreted or modified by the judiciary; it should be either enforced or repealed.

But to honestly enforce a law based upon a false principle will result not in good but harm. Honesty and efficiency in public office are desirable in and of themselves; but until directed by intelligence and understanding they can accomplish little.

Party chiefs promise, if elected by the people, to "drive the rascals out." Then what? A dishonest pilot at the wheel is safer for the ship than an honest man who knows not the channel.

The "letting down," or "slowing up," of business, the closing of rural banks, the growing unemployment, the high cost of living are not due to official graft-

ing, scandalous though it has been, but to our unsound revenue system.

The first man who asked Congress for a special privilege, that is, the first man who confessed to our law-making body that he could not conduct his affairs unless a special law was passed to protect him from the competition of another man who could operate without such protection, set in motion an evil train of effects.

Every man's product is a raw material to the man who buys it. If government interferes with private business to the extent of enabling one man to charge more than the market rate for his product, it to that extent handicaps the man who buys that product and sooner or later the victim seeks similar relief from government.

The second special privilege lays a burden upon other consumers, who in turn seek relief. When the last man who commands sufficient political influence to secure a privilege has been favored, the first privilege-seeker finds that his raw materials have been raised in price, and in order that he may conduct his business at a profit he must have a greater privilege. When the second round of privileges has been distributed, the first man applies for a third; and so on without end.

If that were all of the story, if privileges could be distributed forever, it might be endured, except for two things. First, there are large numbers of people to whom these privileges are useless, such as farmers who must seek foreign markets for their products. Second, our higher scale of prices handicaps us in outside markets.

The result of this special privilege policy was inevitable from the beginning. Only the country's exceptional resources, and the remarkable era of science and invention through which we are passing have enabled us to carry the burden this long.

The answer to our dilemma is not to be found in granting more special privileges, but in repealing as rapidly as may be those already in force. Every privilege taken from one man cheapens the raw materials of others. When all special laws have been repealed, all citizens will stand on a footing of equality, each engaged in the business for which he is best fitted.

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Political Platforms and Taxation

Political platforms in this country have always ranked high in the endeavor to say nothing in a solemn and impressive way. But it may seriously be doubted if anything in the past ever has quite equalled this year's achievements in the gentle art of political dodging. Platitudes there are in plenty, fine and resounding phrases and promises, but a careful analysis of them in the light of past pronouncements and performances finds them singularly lacking in tangible and definite proposals.

In spite of many words in two of the platforms, and much vehemence in the other, it will be necessary to await the personal declarations of the candidates before one will feel safe in appraising the political situation. And even then the probabilities are that so far as there being before the country a practical proposal for the correction of public ills, nothing will be found but words, words, words.

Men may say ever so solemnly, or with the greatest vehemence, that the farmer must be relieved, that business must be unshackled, that the cost of living must come down; but these things will not come to pass from any sort of incantations or exorcisms. The hardships of the farmer, the laborer, and the business man are the effects of definite causes; and they can be removed only by removing the causes.

The evils complained of are in no sense due to a lack of wealth production. There has been no failure in soil fertility, or of efficiency in the factory that consumers are in want of food, clothing, and the comforts of life. On the contrary, there is too much food on the farms, and too many goods in the warehouses.

The plain fact of the matter is that income does not equal outgo. This is due to the fact that though all producers are consumers, not all consumers are producers. The situation may be vehemently denounced, and solemnly condemned;

but in spite of all the fulminations of statesmen and politicians the fact remains that when a consumer gets something for nothing some producer will have produced something for nothing.

The producer may keep going a little longer by working harder, by inventing labor-saving machinery, by discovering cheaper methods, or by devising other means of increasing his product; but as long as the non-producing consumers also increase, the producer will ever find himself threatened with disaster.

The new economists understand this matter. They know that it is legal privilege that saps the life of industry. They know that it is statute law that enables some men to consume goods without producing goods. And they realize that the labor and capital engaged in industry cannot be relieved until those statute laws have been modified or changed.

When in a country where all wealth is produced by labor and capital men are able through special laws to grow rich without employing labor or producing wealth even politicians see that something must be done. But it will avail little to practice the cheese-paring economy of President Coolidge, or extol democratic traditions with Mr. Davis, or join in the denunciations of wealth with Mr. La Follette. It is not a matter of persons. It is a matter of institutions based upon statute law. The same law