

that has been made, that we are a "nation of economic illiterates."

The humor of the situation is that the landed interest, forestalling the government, has already conscripted Labor and Capital, to the apparent satisfaction of both.

THE white man is land hungry—not gold hungry, but land hungry; and the Indian, in seeking a piece of land, is always at a disadvantage with the white man."

March 3, 1918.

SENATOR ASHURST.

While pleading for a few thousand landless California Indians, the worthy senator seemed to forget the millions of landless white men, his own fellow citizens. These landless white men are also land hungry. What keeps them from the land? The senator might, with profit, seek the reason.

Equity demands that the right to hold land be conditioned by the capacity and will to make adequate use of it.

The adjustment of the sum of fiscal obligations in strict proportion to the value, or economic potentiality, of land is the most practical instrument known for making effective the above demand of equity. The enforcement of fiscal obligations so adjusted engages the will of the holder to assist his capacity in order to make adequate use of the land, while the amount of the obligation influences his judgment to choose land adapted to his capacity.

A Vision that is Also a Promise and a Call to Action

(From a message addressed by President Wilson to the Democrats of New Jersey, March 21st, 1918)

EVERY sign of these terrible days of war and revolutionary change, when economic and social forces are being released upon the world whose effect no political seer dare venture to conjecture, bids us search our heart through and through and make them ready for the birth of a new day, a day we hope and believe of greater opportunity and greater prosperity for the average mass of struggling men and women and of greater safety and opportunity for their children.

"The old party slogans have lost their significance and will mean nothing to the voter of the future, for the war is certain to change the mind of Europe as well as the mind of America.

"Men everywhere are searching democratic principles in their hearts in order to determine their soundness, their sincerity, their adaptability to the real needs of their life, and every man with any vision must see that the real test of justice and right action is presently to come as it never came before.

"The men in the trenches, who have been freed from the economic serfdom to which some of them have been accustomed, will, it is likely, return to their homes with a new view and a new impatience of all mere political phrases, and will demand real thinking and sincere action.

"The days of political and economic reconstruction which are ahead of us no man can now definitely assess, but we know this, that every programme must be shot through and through with utter disinterestedness—that no party must try to serve itself, but every party must try to serve humanity, and that the task is a very practical one, meaning that every programme must be tested by this question, and this question only:

"Is it just; is it for the benefit of the average man without influence or privilege; does it embody in real fact the highest conception of social justice and of right dealing, without respect of person or class, or particular interest?

"This is a high test.

"It can be met only by those who have genuine sympathy with the mass of men, and real insight into their needs and opportunities and a purpose which is purged alike of selfish and of partisan intention."

WOODROW WILSON.

THE VISION. A future of freedom, equal justice and economic security for all.

THE PROMISE. The supreme head of the nation has spoken and his words must have voiced a purpose of action.

THE CALL. Simple economic justice would increase tenfold our people's strength, and never was that strength more needed than today. The call, therefore, is imperative for immediate action to end our fiscal disorder and economic injustice. The future hangs on today.

The Compulsory Work Law of New Jersey

(CHAP. 55, LAWS OF 1918)

TO assure the habitual and regular employment, in some useful, lawful and recognized business, profession, occupation, trade or employment, of all able-bodied male residents of this State, between the ages of eighteen and fifty years inclusive," is, according to Lewis Bryant, Commissioner of Labor, the immediate purpose of the Compulsory Work Law of New Jersey, issued by proclamation on the 8th day of March of the current year.

"All persons similarly circumstanced shall, so far as physically possible to do so, be treated alike, after taking into consideration the age, physical condition, and other appropriate circumstances." . . . "A reasonable and proper administration of the Act will make necessary a more or less individual determination of each case presented."

After mentioning several special cases and presenting a list of occupations which appear to him the "more essential during the stress of war conditions," the Commissioner concludes, with a statement revealing the full purpose of the law:

"If this Act is to be made the useful adjunct to the adequate mobilization of man power of the State, necessary to the successful prosecution of the war, the fullest cooperation and assistance on the part of the State, county and municipal authorities must be afforded, and in turn the Commissioner of Labor gives the assurance that the

entire machinery of the Department of Labor, including the federal, State and municipal employment services will be included in the effort to curb vagrancy, uselessness and mendicancy during these times when every red-blooded citizen of our country should be doing his bit towards the successful termination of our present conflict.

A similar law has been proposed for the State of New York, and before long we may expect the like dispositions to cover every State in the Union. The nation is mobilizing to bring its full strength to bear upon the economic as well as the military problems of the war. Defects of organization which were tolerated in times of peace, will be tolerated no longer. The highest efficiency in our whole economic mechanism is the minimum service that can be exacted from our country—and by country, we mean our men and our material resources.

It is manifest that the Compulsory Work Law, even if perfect and complete in all its provisions, covers only one-half—the human half—of our duty.

What is to be done with that other half, the material resources? Are they to be made accessible for mobilized labor? Or is access to be conditioned by payment of a toll to some third entity, which is neither labor nor the nation—quite possibly some foreign interest? Are we to see labor and all its products devoted, with singleness of purpose, to the service of the nation? Or is a private interest to exercise priority over the nation and exact a heavy tribute first, thanks to a strange fiscal immunity it enjoys through an abuse of the law-making powers of Congress and the States?

If “vagrancy, uselessness and mendicancy” in the individual are to be penalized and forced to useful labor, it is surely reasonable to inquire what is to be our attitude toward idle, unused land—that potential cause of idle and useless men?

Those who live by land speculation will welcome this New Jersey law, if it comes unqualified or unaccompanied by a reversal of our fiscal policy toward land and land values.

The concentration of war industries in the State of New Jersey has already caused there an exorbitant inflation of land values. Columns could be filled with a mere list of cases of this legalized extortion. Instead of remedying this already serious scandal, which has found its echo in a Government Commission of Investigation from Washington, Governor Edge proposes to force still higher the industrial pressure, knowing well that higher still will rise the tribute that must be paid to that passive factor in the economic situation—the owner of the soil. In other words, he seems willing that the people, individually as workers and collectively as a nation, shall toil first and foremost for the increase of the landlord's gain and only in the second place for the nation's safety and honor.

Is Governor Edge, is any public man, ready to stand on record as making of the nation's emergency the land speculator's opportunity? It is puerile to argue that labor can be legislated upon, and that land cannot. The dilemma puts to the test both the sincerity and the patriotism of the New Jersey Governor.

Landed Interests and the War-worn Battlefields of Europe

WE have seen in recent French papers announcements of the sale and transfer of landed property at present occupied by the contending armies. “No man's land” is a misnomer, a mere figure of speech, as the realty transactions already reveal, and as land speculators will teach us still more plainly when the war is over and its fruits are to be gathered.

We could wish the schemes for reconstruction of the war-wrecked Belgian and French cities, promoted here with much blare of philanthropic trumpeting, could be cleared of all slur of after-the-war profiteering. No such guarantee, however, has so far been produced.

It cannot be forgotten how our own War Charity Festivals have been exploited for private profit. Under the name of Charity, as under that of Patriotism, much unsavory work has been done. This, here, at home. Is it to be repeated by us on an international theatre? Are the blood-stained battlefields and the cities and towns that have witnessed so much tragedy and heroism to suffer the last indignity of the speculator's spoliation?

Elementary instincts of honor and prudence call for prompt and clear statements of purpose and method and the legal and legislative guarantees for the right use of the vast financial and still greater moral obligations which our American municipalities and other public authorities are now being urged to incur in the name of devastated Belgian and French cities, towns and villages. The toll-gathering privilege of the landed interests should at least have limits of decency and decorum.

The Sydney *Bulletin*, of Nov. 8, 1917, is authority for the following story. Commenting on the visit of Mr. Holman, Premier of New South Wales, to the firing line in Belgium and France, it says:

“War is a queer business; but the queerest aspect of it came under Mr. Holman's notice in the payment of rent for the ground where Billjim has his little dugout.

The Belgian and French farmers and landowners, instead of going to their own governments and making claims which would be settled with the British government, personally came to the British adjutants and other officers on the ground, and begin to haggle about the trench rents and rent for the occupied territory. So Australia pays its share to the British government. The Belgian and French peasants are sometimes grasping, and show themselves in their worst lights.

“Holman found a few things that had made him wonder whether the organizing genius he had heard about wasn't a myth; but he reckons this method of settling the rent payable for a battlefield is well able to hold its own for foolishness.”

In the sale and lease of land to our own government in the present war emergency, we have, unfortunately, many landowners who could compete successfully for the prize