

"ROME, Oct. 12.—In Pietralta, near this capital, the Sacerdote Culotta, accompanied by fifty ex-soldiers, invaded a lot of land, the property of a Signor Guiliani, and began to dig it up.

"The proprietor went to the prefect and protested against the outrage; but this high functionary only advised Signor Giuliani to consult the Ministry of Agriculture, where a commission is sitting, specially authorized to deal with invasions of property rights.

"The commission gave its opinion in favor of the invasion, pointing out that a royal decree authorizes the invasion of land that is uncultivated."

In the United States, uncultivated land is not only secure from invasion by the land-hungry, but enjoys a fiscal premium by virtue of its lack of improvements. And we imagine we are knights errant of democracy and justice!

Our property regime, with its fiscal corollary, can have no place in a true industrial democracy: they are simply protective devices for the economic parasite.

## James Dundas White Leaves The Liberal Party

MR. JAMES DUNDAS WHITE, LL.D., who was Liberal M. P. for Dumbartonshire, from 1906 to 1910, and during the 1910 Parliament, and for the Tradeston Division of Glasgow from July 1911 to the end of the last Parliament, is another eminent Single Taxer to follow the example of Col. Wedgewood in forsaking the Liberals, who, like the Democrats in this country, have ceased to represent anything worth while. In a letter to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald he announces his adhesion to the Independent Labor Party. We quote the concluding part of Mr. White's letter:

"The taxation of Land Values was a Liberal watchword long before I entered politics; but official Liberals have gone back on it. Their pledges were not redeemed when they were in office. The Increment Value Duty, the Reversion Duty, and the other land taxes of 1910 were unworthy substitutes for the real reform. Even the valuations were unsatisfactory, and the proposals for their amendment were futile and came to nothing. Then, during the war, we had the Corn Production Act—a reactionary corn-law which gives financial guarantees to the landed interest at the expense of the taxpayers—and the attempt to set up Petroleum Royalties for landlords. These measures were brought in by Mr. Lloyd George's government; but Mr. Asquith and other leading Liberals must bear the responsibility of an acquiescence that amounted to consent. What opposition there was came from a few independent-minded men, who were either Liberals like myself or Labor members.

If we are to escape disaster, we must turn again towards the guiding stars of Liberty, Justice, and Human Brotherhood. Free Trade and Free Production are but applications of these principles in the economic sphere. Even economic justice, in its largest meaning, is not the ultimate aim; but it is a necessary condition for the development of a free co-operative commonwealth, with better opportunities for every one to realize the possibilities of life, and to develop those faculties and aspirations which are now so often starved and disappointed. It must ever be remembered

that the well-being of each is bound up with the well-being of all, and the drawing together of the nations must be kept steadily in view. These ideals may seem far-off; but they will at least keep us heading in the right direction. They represent the direction in which the Liberal Party used to move, and in which the Independent Labor Party is moving now. Like many of that Party, I am strongly opposed to any policy that would narrow personal freedom or increase the power of the bureaucracy, from whatever quarter it may come. For the reasons already stated, I am fully convinced that, in this stage of our political progress, the course which I am taking is the right one."

## Tax Opportunity Not the Product

THE *Courier-News*, of Fargo, N. D., referring to the long fight of farmers and workers in Minnesota to secure a tonnage tax on steel, now about to end in victory for them, calls attention to the fact that such efforts to curb the power of the big corporations have usually ended in failure. It says:

"North Dakota imposes a tax on oil and gasoline, largely to cover the cost of inspection, and in lieu of the fees heretofore charged. Standard Oil protested, refusing to pay the tax—and added two cents a gallon to the cost, in order to pay the tax., and at the same time add still more to its profit. Controlling the oil industry, Standard Oil has really only a minor interest in taxes.

"And so it will likely prove in Minnesota. The State will derive a big income from the ore tax, but the steel trust will add the tax, and then some (!) to the price of all products and the consumer in the end will pay it all. Minnesota will benefit, but over the country as a whole the people will have to add a little more to the high cost of living.

"When private corporations control the natural resources of a country they really can't be taxed. There is only one way for the people to beat their game, and that is to take the ownership of such resources away from them."

We call the *Courier-News's* attention to the fact that one plan has not been tried, which there is every reason to believe would prove effective. That is, to tax the opportunities monopolized by these big corporations at their full value. To take their natural resources away from them will involve their purchase, according to all rules and court decisions, but to increase the tax on the natural opportunities held out of use, would be no more revolutionary (in practice; it would be in results), than the tonnage tax which Minnesota is about to impose and Alabama as well.

To levy a tax on the product in marketable shape is of no effect, except to increase the public revenue, but at the expense of those already paying the bulk of taxes, but a tax on the natural opportunity to produce cannot be so easily added to the price of the product.

Fairhope (Alabama) *Courier*.

LANDLORDS are, perhaps, the only great body of men whose interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the nation.—Buckle.