

Do not enough of our babies die every year? Do our old live too long? Why is it there is so little room in this vast continent of ours? Is it ours? Who is withholding from our grasp the opportunities of life? By what right is the fertile land, lying there unused, denied us?

ALL ORATING, NONE DOING

These are grave questions. Have we no clear-visioned, courageous statesman to give the true answer and save the people from blind counsels of despair?

There is little hope for rational answer and action from Washington. The whole course of its procedure in fiscal and economic issues reveals total mental obfuscation. In Congress and Senate pigmies are orating, while the task of giants awaits the doing.

FROM WASHINGTON WE APPEAL TO THE STATES

Never in all our history has such an opportunity been afforded to an American State to advance its own wealth and power and at the same time render a signal service to the Nation. Which State in the Union will be the first to declare against the local slacker and for the soldier? Which State will be the first to declare, and make it law, that ownership of land within its borders shall be conditioned by adequate use of same, and that the use of land shall involve no greater tax burden than its non-use? Which is only the equivalent of saying that no useful activity shall be the subject of taxation, and that the tax burden shall be distributed in strict accord with the potential value of the land held in title. Is not that, after all, the democratic doctrine of equality of opportunity brought from the political and applied to the economic, field? Is it more than fair play? Does it infringe at all on the finer graces of hospitality? Viewed in the cold light of facts, the wild Indians were more truly hospitable to the first invasion of the white man, than we are proving ourselves, in real essentials, to our own kind and kin. Like a meatless bone to a dog, our national government flings them the leavings of our economic store,—a precarious footing on the very fringe of opportunity,—the swamp and the desert! Let us give our men a square deal first, and then, only then, offer them the hospitality due to equals.

NEW YORK RICH IN UNUSED RESOURCES

The State of New York, larger in area than England, has room and abundant natural riches for four times its present population. To fail to invite our vigorous, loyal soldier youth to an equal share in the natural opportunities contained within New York State,—on the terms and in the form above named,—would be nothing short of an economic and, under the special circumstances, a political crime. Because, however, New York has claimed the title of Premier State of the Union, is no guarantee that she may not lose both title and position to some actually smaller or less populous State, where the political and economic vision may be clearer and the will to action stronger. The programme of economic justice,—of equal

rights to access to the soil, asserted and established by rational fiscal legislation,—is, indeed, the monopoly of no political party. Far from being necessarily the slogan of radical politicians, it might well be the watchword of the best conservative elements, those who believe in order and fair dealing as the only basis of a stable social structure.

THE PALSIED HELMSMEN AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

The heart and the pride of the common people are deeply stirred by the heroic and enduring sacrifice of our boys over there. The National Government might easily and most worthily have interpreted and satisfied those feelings by a simple yet sufficient act of justice, and of an historic significance worthy of the occasion. The magnificent youth of our nation, returned from great achievements for Democracy and Right in foreign lands, might have been received at the landing stage with a Magna Charta of their own, won for themselves and their country,—the equal right of all,—not of a few only,—to the soil of America. That opportunity of a century was lost by Washington, through incompetence or design. A belated opportunity is still open to the State governments. That perhaps may be the last chance for reason. The execrations of posterity will weigh heavy on the memories of those who, with their hands on the helm of state, failed in capacity or duty and guided her upon the rocks.

Lane's Land Settlement Scheme

EXTRACTS FROM THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

REVIEW readers are asked to draw their own conclusions from the following extracts. They are asked to note that the Secretary is not blind to the vast tracts of desirable land held out of use everywhere. Notwithstanding he directs the soldier in search of a habitation and a farm to the arid deserts and pine barrens of distant states.

They are also asked to note, as pointed out in a recent issue, that the returned soldiers are to be subject to a variety of discriminations which they should properly resent as insults to their intelligence and their status as citizens—discriminations which are defensible only as they are universally applied, to the land speculator as well as to those who have offered their all in defence of their country.

THE SOLDIER'S QUESTION:—"I am back now, back for a man's life. This America that called me out has called me back, and it will have something for me to do. Now, what is to be my chance?"

THE GOVERNMENT'S ANSWER:—"America offers you a farm, if you will help in its making and pay for it out of what you make out of it."

THE MEANING OF IT:—"We have a full 200,000,000 acres which may be converted into farms, either by irrigation, drainage or clearing. These lands in greater part

have passed out of the hands of the Government and are in private hands, though there are several of the largest bodies of lands needing drainage, which are in the hands of the States.".....

"The energy and talent which he (the soldier) has been expending for an ideal and \$30 a month he can now use to make a home for himself."

THE LIMITATION OF IT:—"There is one other feature which should be incorporated in any such scheme of land developement,—the acreage should be limited to that which will be sufficient to support a family. Revolutions come from great land holdings, and it should be the first policy of the Nation and the States to discourage in every way possible the gathering into one hand or a few hands large bodies of lands....."

FURTHER LIMITATIONS:—"So these farms should not be speculative ventures in unearned increment, but they should be non-transferable to anyone holding any equally large tract of land in the same State."

YET FURTHER LIMITATIONS:—"To compel their use, the owner might well be required to live on the land for five years before gaining sufficient title to make any transfer, and during the full period prior to the last payment three years of idleness should make the land subject to forfeiture to the Government upon repayment of the three payments which have been made.....We wish no slacker lands. Enough land for a family, but not enough to make a new draft on the labor supply."

SLACKER LANDS IN PRIVATE HANDS:—"I have been surprised to discover how much land in the older States, such as Massachusetts and New York, for instance, there is that is unused, which once was tilled and which now, with modern methods of farm development and with the advantage of nearness to the great markets, can be again profitably put to use.In New York land by the tens of thousands of acres has been deserted and is advertised by the State....."

"In almost every Southern State instances can be cited where white men under the wise direction of the Department of Agriculture support their families and make an excellent living upon small farms of from 10 to 30 acres. Yet between this city and New Orleans, there are over 40,000,000 acres of unused land."

THE PEOPLE'S FAULT, OF COURSE:—"No one, I believe, can make a study of this question without being convinced, as I have been, that this country can support a population of from three to four times that which we now have,—if the people will give over their desire to congregate in industrial centers....."

MR. LANE'S QUESTION:—"Is there a better way to insure the future than to direct these strong-armed, big-chested soldier men into a battle against the wanton wastefulness of nature?"

MR. LANE'S ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION:—"Go to the swamp and the desert!"

James R. Brown's Lecture Work for 1918

DURING 1918—or rather from December 1, 1917, to November 30, 1918—Mr. James R. Brown, president of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, delivered 157 addresses distributed as follows: Universities and High Schools 45; Business Men's Organizations 33; Forums 16; Churches 15; Single Tax Meetings 9; Labor Unions 5; Granges 4; Patriotic 30. His auditors, independent of the patriotic meetings, numbered about 15,000. Newspaper reports of addresses amounted to some 70 columns.

Mr. Brown distributed during his various tours in this period about 12,000 tracts. Wherever he went he found interested and eager hearers. His work in Canada is likely soon to result in some important legislative changes—and this is the vital thing.

We are pleased to note the following from this Report: "Co-workers in tax emancipation are welcome at the Manhattan Single Tax Club, and we are happy to serve all who are seeking our vision in any way we can."

The temptation is too strong to contrast this with a recent utterance in the *Bulletin* in which the General Manager of the National League says: "By this plan we aim to bring to an end the competition which has prevailed" i. e., between the various activities of the State Associations and the National.

We had thought that the lamentable results under the Fels Fund Commission in the pursuance of this policy, the stifling of individual as well as organized initiative everywhere under that regime, would have been a sufficient lesson to even the most inexperienced.

We think Single Taxers everywhere will prefer Mr. Brown's theory of Single Tax activities that offers a generous welcome to the freest competition of all those who are doing genuine work for the movement.

Thomas G. Shearman on Railroad Franchises

THE franchises.....consist so obviously of mere privileges to use unimproved land as to need no explanation. Street railways.....so palpably own no privileges other than the mere right to run over bare land that it seems almost an insult to the understanding of any reader to explain the case. None of these corporations have any other franchises than these rights over land.....Upon these franchises they have issued vast amounts of stocks and bonds. One such corporation, after purchasing all the rails, equipment, and other productions of human labor connected with the road for about \$200,000, proceeded to issue \$8,000,000 of stock and bonds upon its land privileges.....More than three quarters of the whole market values of the stocks and bonds of corporations, having these municipal privileges, consist of pure land values.