

her poor little starved life illustrates? Can they not see that institutional injustice looms very plain behind the simple story of this little heroine?

And our law makers! Are they criminal or stupid? These things cry out against those institutions for which their laws are responsible. The earth is a closed storehouse—hence the little drudges in Nutley and elsewhere, childhood robbed of its joys, the way made hard for little feet.

What a responsibility is ours who see and know the truth. Why are the doors to Nature's storehouse closed? Is it a wonder that we grow impatient with our own dilatory tactics, that we stand before the barred gates, the fences, the paper titles, the "No trespass" signs built all over God's earth—God's and Mary McNally's—and utter in very agony the cry that shall yet reach the Poets and Preachers and Lawmakers, seemingly deaf to its appeal—"Open! Open!"

To Hold The Sea In Fee Simple

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Standard*, of New South Wales, gives a valuable tip to the government of Australia for raising revenue. The suggestion is that it sell the sea to private individuals and establish what is already established as to land—ownership in fee simple.

The plan offers great possibilities. If recollection serves us rightly, one of the early Popes did give away the Mediterranean, so the correspondent's suggestion is fortified by precedent.

There would be some difficulty in staking out claims, but the limits of ownership could be fairly well designated by shore measurements, and no doubt the value of location could be ascertained. Such value would vary in degree with shore proximity, tending to diminish as the "property" drew near the three mile limit, for we understand the author of the proposal to confine his suggestion to the *mare clausum*, thus avoiding possible international entanglements. Beyond the three mile limit certain nations have already made rather intangible claims of limited proprietorship which nevertheless were, we believe, set aside by a general consensus of the nations. This statement is predicated on the rather remote possibility that we understand what the nations were driving at when they talked recently in learned terms of the "freedom of the seas."

Economic rent would soon arise, though it would be likely to shift in a way perplexing to the rent payer when he came to estimate the yearly rental he could afford to pay to the sea lords, according, let us say, to the fish harvests at certain points with the same application of capital and labor. It would vary, too, with the kind of piscatorial harvest, whale-land—pardon, whale-sea—being rated somewhat higher than sword fish deposits, which would nevertheless have higher value when compared with the waters frequented by the lesser of the finny tribe.

But, of course, the main revenues would come from tolls on ships passing over these "no trespass" seas; fees that

bathers would have to pay the owners of the waters; and the small rent tax that little toddlers would have to give up who had just learned to waddle in the surf.

As a matter of fact—and quite serious we are in saying this—it would soon come to be looked upon as the natural thing. Merely because the sea moves, and land does not, is no reason why it should not be private property. Land moves, too, sometimes. Land torn up by earthquakes does not change owners if the man who holds the title deed can locate his property after a seismic upheaval. The same ought to be true of the sea.

So on the whole the suggestion is really worthy of consideration by our lawmakers. The land within the three mile limit belongs to the government. It would bring a tidy sum if sold at auction, and it is of no present use to the government itself. To sell it, and thus make it a source of revenue, involves no greater absurdity—we say no greater, being careful to choose our words—than many of the things it now does with light heart and a perfectly sober face.

Abolish Restrictions— But Whose?

A LETTER signed by Alexander C. Brown, president, and Munson Havens, secretary of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, is printed in the *Cleveland Plain-dealer*. It is addressed to the Building Trades Council. In one portion of the letter it asks for "the removal of all restrictions upon production and upon the freedom of men to engage in your industry."

And they say: "The public interest will be served by the removal of restriction and limitations."

To what restrictions and limitations upon production and the freedom to engage in industry does this refer? To building lots held idle? To taxes that lessen and restrict enterprise? To exorbitant rents extorted as the profits of the worker tend to increase? The language is an appeal to labor and trades unions to remove *their* kinds of restriction? Bad as these are, the writers of this appeal do not seem to know that there are restrictions and limitations on production which compared to those referred to are as whales to minnows.

Why not recognize these restrictions imposed by labor and trades unions for what they are—rules made necessary because of the restrictions by which labor finds itself shut off from the opportunity of employment and confronted with a surplus labor underbidding for jobs?

We hold no brief for labor unions. Their policy is short-sighted, futile and destructive. Their rules are oppressive and rob the individual worker of his independence. But if they will not *think* their only weapons are the weapons of restriction and force. Their only reply to restrictions is more restrictions—massed action, collective bargaining, and the threat of the strike held in the immediate background.