

What do these monstrous land-value figures mean?

We readily understand that it is the capitalized value of the present or prospective income derivable from the bare land so assessed. Assuming that it is capitalized on a four per cent. basis this indicates a net income of \$147,000,000 annually from this bare land, irrespective of the improvements upon it. Let us consider from what source this immense annual payment is drawn, where it goes to, and why.

That it is paid by the users of the land to the legal owners is clear, and that it must be withdrawn from the proceeds of the business carried on by the user is equally so. That it goes to the legal owner is due to governmental regulations which compel it. This payment in no degree relieves the user of the land from the payment, directly and indirectly, of taxes for expenses of government, but it is merely an additional payment which government compels him to make, not for public use, but for the private use of the legal owner. If the legal owner has just claim to it, then government is merely exercising its proper functions; otherwise not. Let us consider his claim.

The improvement value is a labor product, the legal title to which is based upon the equitable right of the laborer to the fruit of his toil and the free transfer of it. It is equitably as well as legally private property.

Land value is now being clearly and generally recognized as having an entirely different basis. It is not a labor product at all but a monopoly value. It is measured not by labor cost but by demand for use; and this demand is created by population. It is, therefore, a value created by society, and not by individuals. With this fact clearly recognized it must be admitted that it is equitably public property and not private property.

This equitable right has, however, been practically set aside by the granting of legal titles by government, giving individuals exclusive control of specified portions of land, subject only to the payment of duly levied taxes thereon. Taxes have been universally so levied upon these portions of land

as to absorb only a fraction of their annual value for use, thus allowing the legal owner to collect full payment and to retain the bulk of it for his individual use. The capitalization of this retained payment approximately determines the assessed land values as quoted above for New York city, and the selling price if so transferred. The present titles have thus been mainly acquired by substantial payments to preceding holders who carry back to original government grants more or less remote. The effect of these titles has been and is to confiscate to private use the main portion of values created by society and equitably belonging to the public.

What is the natural effect of this legal confiscation of public values to private use? It is obviously a present burden of \$147,000,000 annually on the industry of New York city; and it is a corresponding burden upon industry everywhere. The recipients, as such, give nothing in return; it is a pure bounty to them. But the disarrangement of normal conditions resulting is worse in its effects than this great burden. The equal freedom of all men to labor and produce as they will is so far from being secured by such governmental regulations, that access to natural opportunities for labor (among the most important of which are those created under natural law by the close association of men in communities) can only be had by the payment of tribute to individuals. Exploitation and speculation are substituted for free competition and honest enterprise. The disease thus diagnosed adequately accounts not only for the symptoms noted but for many others.

Booker T. Washington tells a story about a slave who one day appeared in a red velvet waistcoat, and straightway was seized and taken before the master to whom it, and he, belonged. Well, Jerome managed to prove that he had not stolen the waistcoat. Calhoun Hamilton stole it and Jerome had bought it from Calhoun for a small sum. "Now, Jerome," the master said, "I admit you're not a thief, but you're a receiver of stolen goods, and that's just as bad." "No, no, sir," said Jerome, "No, no, that is not just as bad by

no means." "Why isn't it just as bad?" asked the master. "Because you wouldn't receive stolen goods yourself, sir, if it was bad." "How do you mean? Me a receiver of stolen goods? Explain yourself," the master commanded. "Well, sir," said Jerome, "you bought and paid for me the same as I bought and paid for that red waistcoat. Well, wasn't I stolen the same as the waistcoat was? Wasn't I stolen out of Africa?"

It is very unlikely that the master saw it so, but the fact is now generally recognized that the master's title to the slave was not made good by the fact that he had bought and paid for him; the slave's title to himself was always the only good title in equity, and it was liable at any time to be made good legally. The selling price of the slave was based upon the legal power of the master to appropriate to his own use a portion of the fruit of the slave's labor which equitably belonged to the slave himself. The only remedy for chattel slavery was to free the slave from this legalized extortion. The proposition that the selling price of land is just as clearly based upon the legal power of the owner to appropriate to his own use a portion of the fruits of others' labor, which equitably belongs to and should be used for the public; and that the only remedy for such tribute slavery is to free society from this legalized extortion, is now demanding consideration. Whether conservatism will be aroused to the necessity of considering it and of providing a conservative but real remedy; or whether it shall be left perhaps to develop another catastrophe such as wiped out chattel slavery, is a question that conservatives, however reluctantly, must apparently take part in deciding.

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#### EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

##### INDIA.

Delhi, Ind., April 2.—India, containing one-sixth of the population of the world, should be interesting to us because of its similarity in relationship to our Philippines, and especially because our imperialists at home point with pride to England's rule here.

Let it not be assumed that England rules without criticism and protest. For the last 19 years the most intellec-

tual Indians, mostly college graduates, have assembled in Congress and formulated their complaints in subservient and sycophantic language. A person needs only to read a few of the speeches to feel the deep underlying grudge the Indian harbors. Indeed, one of the ablest writers on India, Meredith Townsend, a man of 50 years' experience in the colony, and a radical thinker whose thoughts are highly prized by leading London periodicals, says that after over 100 years of rule there are not 10,000 natives who, uncoerced and unbribed, would lay down their lives for English sovereignty; that the English are hated most where they are best known in India; and that in the Sepoy mutiny of 1857 the favorite native regiments were the most dangerous and treacherous. "There is no province, no tribe, no native organization in India upon which, in the event of disaster, she [Great Britain] can rely for aid." The Indian empire may be said to be a corporation of less than 1,500 men, who are set to govern and who protect themselves in governing by finding pay for a minute white garrison of 65,000 men.

The Indian's criticism in a nutshell is that England rules India for English gain and not for her benefit. When, for instance, cotton manufacture sprang up in India like a mushroom in the night and increased eight and ten fold in a few years, the British imposed an excise tax thereon, of course in favor of Manchester (England) cotton mills. The Indians here are watching with much eagerness the outcome of Joe Chamberlain's somersault on the tariff issue. If Canada and Australia thereby secure for the purpose of imperial unity preferential treatment for their grain, is India to be treated as a stepchild and thus indirectly be legislated against? Is the poorest land in the world supporting a dense population by the most intense labor in irrigation to bear additional indirect taxation for the sake of British imperial unity? Are the millions of souls periodically required to be sacrificed on the altar of famine and pestilence for the good of India by the love and benevolence of Britania not enough? From 1880 to 1890 the occupancy rights to 1,963,364 acres were offered for sale by reason of default in the payment of taxes, and 1,174,143 acres were returned unsold for want of bidders and bid in by the government. Does this not prove an unbearable rate of taxation? The annual tribute India must pay for British love is \$100,000,000 annually paid in extravagant salaries and liberal pensions. Is it any wonder that this proud, domineering Briton, sapping the life blood of the poor colony, awaiting impatiently the expiration of his service in India for the enjoyment of his half-deserved pension at home, living in this black country only by the grace and assistance financially and physically of the black man, is secretly despised?

But the answer to all this is the "Pax Britannicus"—without British peace there would be anarchy and bloodshed. The Indian replies that the killing of a few hundred thousand in religious conflicts far outweighs in social and religious benefits the slow and blighting process of killing millions by starvation and famine. How did the European gain his civilization but by international, interracial, interreligious conflicts involving the death of many millions of people in the strife? Did it not require strife involving the sacrifice of millions of dollars of property and the blood of hundreds of thousands of men to maintain American unity? These Indians are not stupid people. They claim not only to be equal but even superior in intellect to the Briton and boast that they can pass any examination that the Briton can.

In regard to the judicial system much criticism is offered by the Indian. How can he secure justice when prosecutor and judge are one and the same official? How can native and English fare alike when with a few dozen Englishmen residing in a city (of the 300,000,000 people in India, excluding the white soldiers, there are but 65,000 English in all India), an Englishman is tried by a jury of his peers, Englishmen, and a native by a mixed jury. In the latter case, the wheels of justice hampered and checked at every point by British supervision, modification and nullification, the high offices, civil, military and judicial, all being filled by Englishmen. A bill is even now pending to throw the burden of proof upon the defendant, contrary to every maxim of civilized jurisprudence. In the Assam tea districts, where field labor is hired at \$1.65 per month on a three years' contract, natives are guarded by armed pickets posted on brick walls about the plantation. About two per cent. of such labor deserts with opportunity, when "Pax Britannicus" invokes the goddess of justice to arrest the deserter, contrary to the civilized legal principle that no man shall be imprisoned for debt.

As to education, the census shows that ten per cent. of the males are literate and .006 of the females. The native Congress is agitating general compulsory education, but whoever has watched the course of imperialism knows that it can never exist where education flourishes. The doctrine of imperialism tends toward special privileges, special opportunities, special education, special power, and a corresponding debasement of the privileges and powers of the masses.

The policy of the English government in India, as must necessarily be that of every alien governmental authority, can be foretold upon every measure and at all times accordingly as it tends towards equality or inequality, democracy or aristocracy. In proportion as such legislation encourages the equality or op-

portunity it hastens and deepens the pitfall of its very existence.

One of the means of centralizing the English power is the land tenure system. I do not know what proportion—for statistics concerning English rule are very difficult to obtain—of the land is owned by the government; but I am credibly informed that fully one-half is so owned and leased on terms of 30 years or less at a fixed rental. This enables the government to reward the faithful and punish the unfaithful. It is an approach to the Henry George idea, though not carried out in his spirit. That would be too equitable and destroy the weapon. The present inequitable method of leasing land at a rental depending upon the dyspepsia or gout of the land commissioner, permits the English government to tax the people off the land, thereby minimizing their interest and patriotism in India.

Since the mutiny in 1857 the English do not hesitate to show their distrust of the natives. No natives are permitted inside of any of the numerous forts in the heart of the large cities; natives are employed on guard duty during the day, but at night all must vacate the premises and Englishmen stand guard. There are no batteries of native artillery of any importance. The British troops, before the mutiny one-sixth of the native, are now about one-half. No firearms of any kind are permitted to be purchased or sold by a native without a special license. The English may be successful temporarily in governing 300,000,000 natives, but their policy does not create content nor is it benevolent assimilation.

India enjoys the "Pax Britannicus," but who, being unbiased and unprejudiced, will not concede that it is a blighting, withering, debilitating, degenerating decay? Is the "Pax Britannicus" the explanation of the fact that with the exception of France and Ireland India's population has increased less in percentage than any other civilized or semi-civilized country?

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#### AUSTRALIA.

Corowa, N. S. W., June 3.—As prophesied in my letter of April 22 (p. 118), Mr. Deakin, then the ministerial leader in the Federal House of Representatives, has resigned, and the Labor leader, Mr. Watson, has formed a new ministry.

When this had been done the House adjourned and Mr. Reid, the free trade or Opposition leader, and Mr. Deakin, the leader of the deposed protection or Conservative party, met to try to arrange a coalition. After negotiating for several days, they agreed personally upon a programme, but made no arrangement as to leadership. This tentative programme left the fiscal tariff question in abeyance during the life of the present parliament.