

Valuation Department and the main district offices shall remain in existence for the purpose of supervising valuations and compiling the valuation roll. As a result of the war and through the desires of the landowners the Land Valuation Department has been depleted of its officials, and public opinion would not support their re-appointment to the former number when an expeditious and economical method of valuation is to hand.

So when we regard the comparative ease and economy with which valuation through the owners has been secured by the Australasian Colonies in contrast with the difficulties which have arisen in the United Kingdom in connection with State valuation, the former method still appears as the beneficial one for the initiation of a system of land value taxation.

It may be remarked that in the various States of Australasia where the system of rating upon land values has been adopted the work of valuation has been done by the Municipalities whose officials have been accustomed to the determination of values.

It may be added in conclusion, the writer having had an intimate acquaintance with the work, that Australian precedents should be regarded with an eye to their failures as well as to their successes. The exigencies of party politics have frequently led to the violation of principle in the application of land value taxation. An exemption is an error of frequent occurrence—this has been provided for to mitigate the hostility of small owners of land and as has been shown, operates to the detriment of the landless, because it has prevented the land values tax operating to reduce the price of land. The proper method to meet the small user of land who is generally taxed already to more than the full annual value of his land by way of other taxes falling upon his industry, is, concurrently with a tax upon the value of his land, to relieve him of these other and greater burdens. The soundest system of a levy upon land values existing in Australia is to be found in the rating system of New South Wales. Of recent years New South Wales has swept away the old system of rating upon the capital value of land and buildings and imposed all rates upon the value of the land alone. This, with the exception of Central Sydney, which has not followed the example of all Sydney Suburban Municipalities. But a majority has recently been returned to the City Council pledged to the levying of rates solely upon land value, and it is therefore to be anticipated that shortly the whole of the rates of New South Wales will be raised in this way. Experience has so fully justified this reform here, as elsewhere, that no reversal of the system is possible. After a multiplicity of endeavours to solve the problem by other methods, the taxation and rating of land values holds the field as the only effective weapon for the destruction or mitigation of the evil of land monopoly.

Do you remember when I stood on the steps
Of the Court House and talked free-silver,
And the Single-Tax of Henry George?
Then do you remember that, when the Peerless Leader
Lost the first battle, I began to talk prohibition,
And became active in the church?
That was due to my wife,
Who pictured to me my destruction
If I did not prove my morality to the people.
Well, she ruined me:
For the radicals grew suspicious of me,
And the conservatives were never sure of me—
And here I lie, unwept of all.
—Epitaph of George Trimble in "Spoon River Anthology,"
by EDGAR LEE MASTERS.

THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR

"A demand for commodities is not a demand for labour."—MILL.

You quote this as a self-evident maxim in your April issue. Would you be good enough to expand it in your next issue for as it stands it seems to me obscure?

Yours, &c.,

NOT-QUITE-CONVINCED.

We readily admit, with our correspondent, that Mill's dictum and his presentation of it is somewhat obscure. He works it out in his PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (Book I., Chapter V., §9) and arrives at a sound conclusion, though some of the arguments advanced in its support are not fortunate; especially where based on the theory that labourers cannot set to work unless there is capital to support them. The expression "demand for labour" gives rise to misunderstanding.

There is only one real demand for labour and that is the demand which in the nature of things exists within the labourer himself, and which arises from his desire for food, clothing, shelter, &c. He works because he wishes to get these things and in his own requirements creates the demand for his own labour. The "demand for labour" does not necessarily imply the existence of more than one human being, so that to ensure labour we need not pre-suppose any demand at all in the sense in which that word is commonly used, *i.e.*, the demand coming from one man and the labour from another. In the case of men living isolated lives, like Robinson Crusoe, labour would clearly go on without any demand for commodities or labour as the word is commonly understood, for demand in that sense would not exist and yet neither commodities nor labour would be lacking. Each man would supply his own labour and his own commodities. The same is really true when men live in communities and exchange their services and commodities. The motive of each man in working is to supply his own wants, and not those of other people who are supposed to "demand" his labour. All desire food, clothing and shelter, but when, say, three of them specialise and become respectively farmer, tailor and builder, exchanging the products of their work ("demanding" each other's commodities) it would not be true to say that the farmer tills the land because the tailor and the builder want to buy his corn, that the tailor makes clothes because the farmer and the builder want coats, or that the builder builds houses because the farmer and the tailor want shelter. In reality they each of them labour at their special calling because one and all want food, clothing and shelter for themselves, and they specialise simply because by so doing each man can get more of the three things. Were any of them to change their demand it would not mean either an increase or decrease in the amount of labour, but only a diversion of labour from one thing to another. Should the farmer one day prefer a carpet to a coat, we can well imagine the tailor putting in part of his time carpet making. But the change would not affect the amount of labour in demand—it would only affect the kind of work done. The demand for commodities, therefore, determines what kinds of things shall be produced, but not the amount of labour. What does determine the amount of labour is the intensity of the labourer's own desires for things that he wants and the extent to which he enjoys freedom of access to the means of producing them—the land.

W. R. L.

One cannot hold another down in the ditch without staying in the ditch with him; in helping the man who is down to rise, the man who is up is freeing himself from a burden that would else drag him down. For the man who is down there is always something to hope for, always something to be gained.—BOOKER WASHINGTON.