

Recent History

The author of this piece, HENRY WARE ALLEN, was born in New Bedford, Mass, in 1861. Owing to some unaccountable set of circumstances it was not until 1888, when he had reached the advanced age of 27, that he evinced a more than ordinary interest in matters economic by organizing a Bellamy Club in Kansas City. A few weeks later he was attracted to the Single Tax movement by seeing a copy of Henry George's Standard on a Kansas City newsstand. He then joined the Kansas City Single Tax Club and has been an active member ever since.

Mr. Allen is the author of Prosperity, a book setting forth the Single Tax in theory and practice, and numerous magazine and newspaper articles. Our readers will recall his "Labor Unions and Strikes," in the June issue of THE FREEMAN. Mr. Allen makes his home in Wichita, Kansas.

★ When President Hoover said that prosperity was "just around the corner" he stated an exact truth. Prosperity was available just as electricity has been available to serve mankind since the beginning of time. But prosperity was not to be wooed by the wishful thinking of a careless suitor. Any graduate of the Henry George School of Social Science and thousands of others throughout the country familiar with the science of political economy exemplified by Henry George, could have advised President Hoover precisely what should have been done, and left undone, in order to bring prosperity around the corner.

Strangely enough, while all of the sciences, particularly those of chemistry, medicine, and mechanics have made remarkable progress in recent years, the most important of all sciences in relation to human welfare, the science of political economy, has been neglected, very few men in public life apparently having any knowledge of it at all.

When Mr. Roosevelt succeeded to the presidency he was equally ignorant as to what should be done and left undone to entice prosperity around the corner. Like his predecessor in office he left undone those things which he ought to have done, but he also did those things which he ought not to have done. It was here that Roosevelt rushed in where Hoover feared to tread. Roosevelt knew that something should be done but he was quite ignorant as to what that something should be. He was in a quandary much like that of three ship-

wrecked sailors midocean in a boat who felt the urge to do something religious but could think of nothing until at last one of them remembered that at a religious service a collection had been taken so he passed a tin cup to the other two.

Obedient to an irresistible urge to do something Roosevelt requisitioned a shining light from a northern university who came to Washington like a Modern Pied Piper followed by a cavalcade of similarly bright students. By some mischance they were not, true to form, led down to the Potomac River to be submerged in its waters, but were instead taken to the White House where they constituted the Brain Trust that was responsible for the fantasies of the New Order.

The new President had the go-ahead signal from the American people. Never before had an American President been so liberally favored. He assumed that Uncle Sam had the constitution of a Cardiff giant and the capacity of a rat hole, and all of his subsequent acts were based on that assumption. The New Deal was appropriately ushered in with a "Bluebird of prey made of papier-mache" nailed over the front door of every citizen. Then followed a long series of regulations each one more startling than the last. Humble citizens were thrown into jail because they charged too little for their services; every third row of growing crops was plowed under in order to provide the farmer with better prices for his product, while five million little pigs were sacrificed upon the altar of the unknown God. And prosperity still remained unmoved around the corner.

Meanwhile, an unsympathetic Supreme Court had inconveniently condemned certain of these prosperity remedies as unconstitutional. This was too bad, and in order to remedy the matter that august tribunal, the bulwark of our liberties, must be purged of recalcitrant members. Fortunately, the guillotine did not have to be used as seven of the nine members were in failing health and could soon be replaced by reliable New Dealers.

Then followed the appropriation of billions of taxpayers' money to Agriculture and legislative favors to Organized Labor in fulfillment of pre-election promises. Worthy farmers received a steady stream of subsidy checks as rewards for raising what they were going to raise anyway and for not raising other crops that they were not going to raise anyway. These payments put a lot of new money into circulation and had a slight effect of producing a fairly good imitation of prosperity, such as may be produced by a shot in the arm, but the national debt inconveniently rose steadily while the army of unemployed continued to increase.

Partnership between the New Deal and Organized Labor then resulted in the National Labor Relations Act and the Wagner Act. Strikes became more frequent and

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labor leaders more defiant of law and order. Employers were commanded by government officials to rehire men who had been discharged for reason and to pay them full wages for all the time since they were discharged. Heavy fines were imposed upon employers for the crime of employing labor slightly under legal age and for employing men more than forty hours per week. Still, prosperity stubbornly refused to budge from its position just around the corner.

Fortunately for the New Deal, the subject of prosperity was suddenly changed by the declaration of war. Up to the last minute supplies of gasoline and scrap iron had been sent to Japan in huge quantities so the contest started with extreme difficulties for Uncle Sam. But the opportunity was now open for a huge expansion of governmental activities and regulations that would not have been tolerated in times of peace. One of these was the infamous regulation of rents under

Administrator Henderson. Owners of property were commanded to reduce all rents to the lower level of the depression period and to cancel all contracts and agreements in force under penalty of fine or imprisonment or both. This involved the robbery of one class of citizens for the benefit of a larger class of voters who were, as a rule, better able to pay the normal rents they were paying than were the property owners to receive the reduced rents. | ?

For wages then being received by tenants were in many cases three times the normal pay for similar services. This confiscation of rents was regarded as possibly an entering wedge for the confiscation of all wealth. At least, it was State Socialism in action. Now the people evidently did not want Socialism. The presidential vote for the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas, was in 1932, 918,057; 1936, 200,522, and 1940, 112,274. Again, it was Roosevelt who rushed in where Norman Thomas would not have been allowed to tread.