

Whose Business Is Your Business, Any Way?

If you are "White and twenty-one", solvent, with no judgments or injunctions hanging over you, and are not being watched by the police, you should be considered free.



L. D. BECKWITH, Editor

But even though you are all that and are out of debt, possessed of a reasonably sensitive conscience and a fair education and are trying to the best of your knowledge and ability to do as you would be done by, **are you free to run your business as you think best?**

Are your books and records your private property, or are you compelled to make reports of your private affairs to strangers?

Are you free to decide to what relief work you shall contribute, and free to decide either how much you shall contribute or to dictate how your donation shall be applied?

Does the government meddle over-much in your affairs and restrict your freedom in the use of your own money in the conduct of your private business?

How much of the sovereignty of citizenship is left you? How much do you and your kind control the government under which you live?

Do you feel that, in these respects, matters are getting better? Or are they getting worse?

Would you let a carpenter work for you if he showed no knowledge of, and made no use of, the plumb line, the straight-edge, the level or the square?

Do you believe it safe to trust matters of vital importance to any one who recognizes no fixed standards outside of, and independent of, human judgment? If the voters recognize no fixed standards that are independent of human judgment, would any decision arrived at by a show of hands be dependable even though it be unanimously voted?

How can we safely trust to the rule of the majority in matters in which no individual voter has a fixed and dependable standard by which he can decide how to cast his ballot?

And if we have in civics, politics, industry and statecraft no standards that are fixed beyond the power of men to suspend and amend, what assurance have we that our affairs in these realms can ever be stabilized? How can we stabilize business and render society secure if there are no fixed principle on which we can depend in the effort to stabilize them?

Are we not enjoying as much civic liberty and getting as much political efficiency and as much business stability and social security as we have any right to expect, considering our lack of fixed and dependable standards by which we may know what is mine and what is yours, what is private and what is public, what is just and what is unjust, what makes for business stability and social security and what does not?

Men have long said that we should have more business in government and less government in business; but who of us was ever taught in the schools a dependable rule by which we could know how to render unto business what belongs to business and unto government what belongs to government?

Is it not time that we consider the question whether there be any standard, straight-edge, or plumb line, by which these matters may be tested that we may not only know what is public and what is private, but that we may know that we know?

There either is or is not a science by resort to which our social problems may be solved; if there is, that science is economics.

If it be true that there is no dependable science which is to civics, politics, industry and statecraft what physics and chemistry are to the shop and kitchen, then one man's guess is as good as another's and society is doomed to go on guessing its way into chaos; for if there be no compass by which we may check our course, matters will go steadily from bad to worse as society becomes more complex and men's nerves are more frayed by the increasing stress under which we live. If economics is not a science as exact as any, then is chaos our inevitable doom.

If economics is a science as exact as any, if its principles are as unchanging and unchangeable as those of physics and chemistry, then our depression problems and all kindred problems may be solved as are the problems of shop and kitchen—without waiting for men to reform or be reformed; for then these matters answer not to the moral law, as the world has so long thought, but answer instead to the natural laws of economics. In that case it follows, that moral law is limited to the individual and to his individual contacts and to the duration of these contacts; and it follows that the stability of society is not staked, as we have mistakenly supposed, upon the acceptance of moral standards that are, to say the least, debatable.

So long as it is assumed that our public relations are, like our personal relations, governed by the moral law, so long shall we have as many standards of right as we have moral creeds. We are many men of many minds, with varying backgrounds, and with consciences of varying degrees of sensitive-

ness; so that a general agreement upon moral questions is impossible. For proof of this, contrast our painfully slow progress in the realm of human relations with the progress we have made in those fields that are admittedly scientific and where it is admitted that everything is governed by natural law. In one field is dissention, strife, chaos; in the other harmony, a scholarly co-operation and no rivalry but the rivalry of good works—and progress beyond the fondest hopes of our fathers. Once let men realize that the moral law applies no more to civics, politics, industry and statecraft than it does to mathematics, physics or chemistry, it will be possible for them to be as impersonal in relation to our public relations as they are in reference to any of the sciences. This will eliminate all personalities and open the way for harmony and good neighborhood.

If economics is a science as exact as any then must we agree that personal feeling, suspicion, jealousy, resentment, bitterness and hostility have no more place in these realms than in a science laboratory.

This would be in harmony with the known facts of physics, mathematics and chemistry, in which Nature decides all matters of public concern and leaves to human choice only those private matters which are of no significance to the community, and limits moral responsibility to the issues of private life.

The truth of this will be more easily seen if the reader remembers that there can be no moral responsibility where there is no knowledge of, nor control over, the event or condition that is under consideration; and if he bears in mind that society (as such) knows nothing and does nothing—because everything that is known or done is known or done by an individual.

The fact that economics is not yet recognized as a science proves nothing. The sciences have all been "brought in" like our oil wells, one at a time, by pioneer thinkers who have had to stand rebuffs at the hands of men who either could not or would not comprehend the principles involved. But as each new field was opened up and "proved", we have found that Nature has provided for us more lavishly than men believed.

Our fathers trudged in the dust behind oxen, not because there was then no provision in nature whereby airplanes might be built and operated, but because men did not then understand the laws of physics. But once men understood the natural laws which govern aviation, it was seen that there has been in nature from the beginning ample provision for our needs with respect to flying. And so when it is at last seen that economics is a science as exact as any, it will be seen that we have been wallowing in this depression because we are ignorant of the most elementary principles of economics.

Economics resembles chemistry; but is much simpler. It is the simplest of the sciences. Whereas students of chemistry must study ninety or more elementals, students of economics study but three—wages, interest, and rent. All the human relations involved in economics are based upon the fact that there are but three economic classes, the wage-earners, the interest-takers and the rightful claimants of rent. The relationships of these three classes are those of a partnership between Labor and Capital in a business known as The Public.

Think what it will mean to mankind to have the vexing problems of civics, politics, industry and statecraft solved; so that men could devote their entire attention to the development of their personal talents and to the solution of their individual problems.

This prospect is enticing beyond anything men have ever had; for it means that it is possible for us to bring our social machinery up on a par with our shop machinery.

As an aid to those who do not yet see clearly that economics is a science as exact as any, let us say that as a result of the higgling of the market under what is known as Ricardo's law of rent 20% of our total product is taken as rent. This leaves 80% as the total available for the direct payment of wages and interest. It is a law of human nature that men seek to gratify their desires with the minimum of effort—though they may in their ignorance fail to discover the easiest way. Under that law that remaining 80% of our product will be divided between Labor and Capital in what will, in the long run, be equal shares.

Those who are wondering whether there are in nature any natural laws that can be utilized to guarantee industrial justice are asked to consider the fact that, by the laws of Nature herself, it is impossible for men to get wages or interest, and to get them AS wages or interest, except they themselves invest the required labor or capital; from which it follows, necessarily, that when men are denied rent and limited to wages and (or) interest, it becomes automatically impossible for men to obtain wealth at the expense of others, either in business, by political strategy or by the tricks of statecraft (which include war). Under such conditions the very selfishness in men would prompt them to confine their efforts to the getting of wages and interest. That would mean that they would be selfishly interested in making themselves useful. Under such conditions industrial justice and honest politics and international peace would result as naturally as water runs down hill—guaranteed by our selfishness and by our gregarious instinct. For man is gregarious like the ants, the bees and the beaver.

The alternative view is frightful to contemplate; for the rising tide of social emotionalism which demands that we "soak the rich" is a type of mob psychology that threatens civilization itself. None of these groups have any straight-edge, plumb line or standard by which they can themselves know how much of a man's wealth to seize or what to do with it when they have taken it. As Lenin, an unquestioned authority on Communism, himself said, **the dictatorship of the proletariat is based upon force and nothing else—upon no kind of law and absolutely no rule.**

There is no time to lose! What is to be done, must be done quickly!

In all the world there are but two newspapers that are devoted exclusively to the teaching of economics as a science as exact as any science. These papers must be given the widest possible circulation—and that at once; for they give the answer of science to the emotional hysteria that underlies the clamor of the various groups that threaten our stability.

These papers are full-sized newspapers, four pages, seven columns, NO TAXES is issued every second week. The subscription is \$1.50 FOR FIFTY-TWO issues (two years at the present rate of issue). In Stockton, NO TAXES is \$2.00, instead of \$1.50, THE FORUM is a weekly. It is recognized by the courts as a newspaper of general circulation. It naturally gives more attention to local illustrations of economic truth than does NO TAXES; for the latter has subscribers all over the United States and also in other countries—Canada, Mexico, South America, England, Ireland, Denmark, Africa, Australia, New Zealand. It goes to every college and university in the United States, and to hundreds of public libraries, public offices and newspaper and magazine offices.

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