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WHY JAPANESE IMMIGRATE  
TO CALIFORNIA—TAXATION

In America, However, Monopoly of Land in the Hands of the Few Makes the Pacific Coast Laborer Unduly Feel Competition. Economic Taxation the Solution of the Problem.

BY HENRY GEORGE, JR.

Tokyo. December 25.—As to whether or not it is wise for any considerable proportion of different races, even where equal, to mix together, is a question. Herbert Spencer, in a letter to Baron Kanoko some years ago, advised the Japanese to guard themselves against it, even to the length of passing prohibitory laws against Europeans and Americans being permitted to own land, obtain or exercise corporate functions or enjoy any privileges, rights and immunities other than those obtainable by treaty for sojourners. "Let Japan be for the Japanese," was his counsel.

While Japan did not follow the letter of this advice and while she has been as liberal in her laws toward foreigners as her whole people have been polite toward them, yet the conscious and unconscious policy of people and government has been and is now expressed in "Japan for the Japanese." Indeed, it is said that one of the strong reasons why the government arranged to buy up the private railroad lines was to prevent their acquisition by foreigners.

And likewise it might seem logical and wise for Americans to hold to the intentions of the fathers of the republic and restrict the citizenship to those who are native born and those who come from Europe.

But these questions would be of little or no practical use were it not that behind them lies a problem of first-rate and passing importance both in Japan and in the United States—the labor problem.

FARMING IN JAPAN.

Japan has an area of 147,655 square miles, over 10,000 square miles less than the area of the State of California; yet it has a population of more than 45,000,000, which is approximately 30 times as large as the population of California. In both countries there is a "labor problem," and in both countries superficial thinkers say there are too many people.

At first glance this might be thought to be the case in Japan. Everywhere, there are people. The cities are most densely populated. Nowhere are there large farms. Everywhere the lots are small and most curiously split up, a farmer generally having a number of these small lots together; but

often his holdings are scattered. Yet not only do Japanese farmers expend effort of the most intense kind, but they do it in the primitive ways. And it is not one crop, but two and three crops that they raise. It is work, work, work; and all for what? Verily, the Japanese farmer is "the man with the hoe." For, when it is all done and he has paid his direct and indirect taxes, he has little left.

#### PLENTIFULLY TAXED.

This man not only finds his own direct taxes heavier to bear, but all the indirect taxes fall more and more heavily upon him, so that his sons and daughters are more readily than before attracted away into the great cities. The daughters take up menial or factory work, or increase the number of dancing, singing, amusement-making girls, and the sons turn their eyes to foreign shores, where the chance to earn a living seems easier.

In this way it was that immigration was started a few years ago from Japan toward the United States. But by a treaty between the two countries the immigration of laborers to our country was stopped, although that to Hawaii was continued, not being prohibited by the treaty. Such is the consistency of our policy.

Now, while it is true that plantation wages in Hawaii are higher than paddy field wages in Japan, and the wages of farm and fruit lands in California higher still, it seems to me very unlikely that there would be this flow of immigrant laborers out of Japan if the laboring man's enormous tax burdens here were remitted save on the small economic value of the land he works, and were he to apply his land to its obviously higher uses, as, for instance, the raising of sugar instead of rice.

#### SHIFT OF TAXES.

That is to say, were taxes shifted from labor to economic or ground rent the Japanese laboring man would be wonderfully better off, and would feel an incentive to make the most of his opportunities toward higher production in Japan, not somewhere else. There would be lessened inducement to go abroad. The Japanese is not a colonizer. He leaves Japan because hard conditions compel him to leave it. Improve these conditions and he will remain.

#### WHY CALIFORNIA SUFFERS.

On the other hand, the reason why in California the competition of the laborer from Asia is felt is that the great, rich territory is monopolized by a comparatively few persons. It is because the vast wheat farms, cattle ranches, orchards, vast timber tracts and mineral possessions are in few hands, and the railroads rob and discriminate in their rates, that there is such intense competition for employment among the million and a half people.

#### LABOR RIVALRY.

Is it any wonder, then, that the laboring men of California object to competition in their ranks, and that their opposition finds its first mark in the "Asiatics?" If land monopoly were broken up by heavily taxing all land on its market value, immense natural opportunities would be thrown open and there would be a tremendous and lasting demand for both labor and capital. Then there would not be a competition of laborers for employment, but a competition of nature, so to speak, for users. There would be no limit to the demand for labor, and the immigration question would not give us the concern it is now giving so large a proportion of our people.

#### HOPE FOR JAPAN.

Will such a state of things come to pass? I am strongly inclined to think that it will come in Japan before a great while. The Japanese will soon see, as many of their best thinkers now see, that to shift taxation from the laborer and all the fruits of labor to the value of land, regardless of improvements—that is to say, to the common value of land, the value made by the presence of population—would be of inestimable value to the working masses of this country.

If this shall be done there will be a materially lessened desire of Japanese laborers to emigrate. And were California to apply a like tax there would be so large a demand for labor of every kind there that California would care little whether or not the Japanese laborers should come in large numbers.