

Whence Come Surplus Populations

By H. H. Hollins

In a recent British Government committee report on nutrition in the colonies, it was stated that of the 55 million people in the British Colonial Empire the great majority are suffering from semi-starvation. London newspapers are quoted as saying "We have made our Empire a slum" and describing the report as "a shocking picture of the neglect of a great imperial heritage" and demanding a reconsideration of the whole economic position.

While England is launching emigration schemes as a method of relieving economic depression at home, and is pointed to by other countries as being fortunate in possessing colonies for her "surplus population," we find the condition of the people in those colonies to be worse than in the centre of the Empire.

Even in the Dominion of Canada, a world in itself, with its huge natural resources scarcely touched, we find an artificial "surplus population" being created by our brand of civilization, and regard with alarm any possible influx of immigration as likely to add to our problem of employment.

Mussolini says "Italy is overpopulated, and the natural urge to expansion must be met." Sir Samuel Hoare, speaking as British Foreign Secretary in 1935, said "we have always understood the need for Italian expansion, . . . we admit the need" —and Italy was allowed to take Abyssinia. Britain cannot, without hypocrisy, criticise Italy, Germany or Japan for demanding a refuge for the "surplus population." This was the Italian Government's excuse for coveting Abyssinia and Hitler's excuse for coveting Poland.

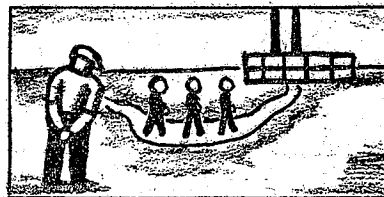
Italy is a more suitable country for the Italians than Abyssinia, but 45% of its cultivatable land is in the hands of 0.6% of the agrarian population; 25% is in the possession of 6.3% of the agricultural producers; while 30% is available to

93.1% of those who live by agriculture. If Italian soil were freed, millions of Italians could live happily, peacefully and industriously at home.

The root cause of the Spanish civil war is to be found in the instinctive desire of the disinherited masses to repossess their heritage of the land, filched and withheld from them by a landed aristocracy and the privileged interests.

Great Britain, it is said, possesses a quarter of the globe, but what does the average British citizen possess? If British possessions occupied a half instead of a quarter of the globe, he would be no better off by a single cent. He is part of an artificial "surplus population" created by a well ordered system based on the monopolization of the land by the few, backed by judicial and military powers of State and made respectable under the euphemistic title of civilization.

Land monopoly makes all other monopolies possible, and as it spreads over the globe it closes the frontier of opportunity to the masses, and new generations are born to find themselves disinherited. In South Africa the mine owners are agitating for what they call "a sane land policy," which will shut the native off his mealie patch and thus provide cheap labor. In leading towns Chambers of Commerce, advertising the resources of that country, offer "the cheapest labor in the world." The cheapness of this labor which is offered for exploitation is capitalized in the fantastic prices demanded for the land and its resources, and the immigrant who is unable to buy the privilege of employing himself must perforce enter the labor market in competition with the dispossessed native.



In handing over what should be the sovereign rights of the whole people of any country as the special privilege of the few, civilized governments establish a system of social injustice which must carry with it the seeds of their own destruction, the first evidences of which are involuntary unemployment, depression, semi-starvation, and, finally, war.

The present unrest in the civilized countries of the world is traceable to the social injustice existing within the territorial borders of each, and the private monopoly of the land and its resources is undoubtedly the fundamental cause and chief buttress of it all. The public values created by civilization are diverted as an increasing tribute to a privileged class, instead of going into the public treasury as the natural social revenue, and the frontiers of opportunity are closed except by their permission and at their price.

Having allowed the publicly created revenue to be diverted at its source into private pockets, government then turns to various forms of exaction from the despoiled majority in order to provide for the cost of administration. These causes are cumulative in their effect; labor is no longer free to employ itself, having now to go cap in hand competing for the privilege of access to its birthright, and finding its shrinking and precarious earnings increasingly taxed for the support and protection of the privileges which enslave it. Thus does poverty accompany progress in the world's sovereign states and thus are colonies turned into "Imperial slums."

Five at Once

Your booklet on the school and the course has captivated the entire family; will you enroll the whole kit and kaboodle for the early class on Friday or the later one on the same day. Gordon Guerrasio, Brooklyn, N. Y.