

OK Not The First Time

YOUTH'S OPPORTUNITIES in post-war America are painted in glowing colors by Donald M. Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board. Addressing the 1942 graduating class of the University of Missouri, Mr. Nelson told his young hearers that though they would go out into a world torn by war, in which all normal standards have been discarded in favor of a war economy, that was only part of the picture.

"If the war is costing us a fearful price," he said, "it is also developing for us new techniques and new abilities. It is placing at our disposal an industrial plant—a set of developed resources—that will simply be beyond price. We shall have the most magnificent opportunity any nation ever had. To accept that opportunity we need have only the good pioneer sense not to be frightened by it just because it calls for new mental attitudes and new habits of thought. We are fighting for something. For a generation we have been living on the edge of a new world; we are only now beginning to realize it."

Then the WPB chairman went on with this significant statement: "For the first time in the history of the human race there can be enough to go around. Poverty is not inevitable any more. The sum total of the world's greatest possible output of goods, divided by the sum total of the world's inhabitants, no longer means a little less than enough for everybody. It means more than enough. The possibilities in that simple statement are beyond calculation—and what we are fighting for is the right to turn some of those possibilities into realities."

Georgists will see no exaggeration in Mr. Nelson's declaration that "The possibilities in that simple statement are beyond calculation," but they will be less ready to agree with other of his conclusions.

Human beings have been wending their weary way across the face of this old earth of ours for countless aeons, and an aeon, remember, is quite a spell. Even so well-versed an authority as the head of WPB might hesitate to say that something is now happening that has never happened before in all that stretch of time.

As believers in ~~Natural Law~~, Georgists will be inclined to the view that there has never been a time in human history when there was *not* enough for

all. And by the same line of reasoning they will hold that poverty *never* has been inevitable but only ~~and~~ and always man made.

Man doesn't need any material thing until he comes on this earth as man. When he reaches that state, his brain and brawn, applied to the natural resources which he finds at hand, will supply him with food, clothing and shelter. Naturally a few squillion years ago he had to work much harder for considerably less than is the case in this modern age of pushbutton gadgets, but as long as he had access to the earth he managed to get along.

We were not there, of course, any more than was Mr. Nelson, but there is no slightest evidence that in ages past Old Mother Earth was any less capable of providing for her children than is the case now. Recorded history, on the other hand, furnishes abundant evidence that the widespread poverty which has been the portion of a large part of the masses much of the time has been due to such social stupidities as absolute private ownership in land and interference with free trade, rather than to the niggardliness of nature or man's inability to provide for himself when given freedom to do so.

C. O. S.