

What Is Security?

Security is merely the certainty of retaining possession of what one produces. One who gets more is a beggar or a robber; one who accepts less is a slave.

Government cannot give us security, except that through its police powers it can prevent the robbing of the producers by the monopolists. That it has not done so is due to the ignorance of the people. True, this ignorance is in turn the result of control by the monopolists of the instruments of education and information. It is nevertheless certain that only when the producers know how security of possession can be had will their government give it to them.

The soft-hearted and weak-minded legislators who confuse security of possession with the idea of certainty of income, present and future, have merely enhanced by their acts this insecurity of possession. For the shortage of income resulting from the speculations of monopolists is made up by taxes, which are a further drain upon production. The tax system in itself insures the continuance and strengthening of the very instrument, rent, which the monopolist uses to get something for nothing. The machinery of tax-col-

lection and tax-distribution which are made necessary by the attempts to assure income is an additional burden upon producers.

Thus, confounding of the idea of security with the idea of income results in a continuing tax-drain and a consequent fortifying of rent, both of which reduce the amount of his product retained by the worker. From the social viewpoint certainty of income is highly undesirable. For this involves a condition of monotony, with a corresponding lack of incentive necessary for progress. The chattel slave always is sure of his income. But, an economy based on chattel slavery breaks down because of the productive incapacity of such workers; no slave civilization progressed or persisted for any considerable length of time.