

The Testimony of Dead Empires

Our primary social adjustment is a denial of justice. In allowing one man to own the land on which and from which other men must live, we have made them his bondsmen in a degree which increases as material progress goes on. This is the subtle alchemy that in ways they do not realize is exacting from the masses in every civilized country the fruits of their weary toil; that is instituting a harder and more hopeless slavery in place of that which has been destroyed; that is bringing political despotism out of political freedom, and must soon transmute democratic institutions into anarchy. It is this that turns the blessings of material progress into a curse. 'It is this that crowds human beings into noisome cellars and squalid tenement houses; that fills prisons and brothels; that goads men with want and consumes them with greed; that robs women of the grace and beauty of perfect womanhood; that takes from little children the joy and innocence of life's morning. Civilization so based cannot continue. The eternal laws of the universe forbid it. Ruins of dead empires testify, and the witness that is in every soul answers, that it cannot be. It is something grander than Benevolence, something more august than Charity—it is Justice herself that demands of us to right this wrong. Justice that will not be denied; that cannot be put off—Justice that with the scales carries the sword.—*Progress and Poverty*, book x, ch. v.

The Need For More Homes

SAMUEL B. DONNELLY, Secretary of the Building Trades Employer's Association, has brought attention to the fact that, based on figures for the first seven months of this year, there will be a shortage of 20,000 homes in New York by January 1, 1924, compared to total homes erected in 1922.

In his opinion the recent ordinance limiting tax exemptions on housing structures to \$15,000 is responsible in a large measure for this appreciable reduction. Mr. Donnelly's position in the building industry of New York gives weight to his conclusion. He added, however, that the shortage of skilled mechanics, such as bricklayers and plasterers, augmented the decline.

F. W. Dodge Corporation's reports in recent weeks bear out Mr. Donnelly's prediction as to a loss of 20 per cent. in housing developments for this year, its figures clearly indicating such a reduction.

Real Estate Record and Guide.

THINK for yourselves; ask yourselves whether this widespread fact of poverty is not a crime, and a crime for which everyone of us, man and woman, who does not do what he or she can do to call attention to it and to do away with it, is responsible.—HENRY GEORGE.

The Sales Tax

YOUR reported address of Senator Moses on the 11th is one of the amusing indications of the intelligence put forth by those we elect to represent us in congress.

Mr. Moses states that in his opinion in order to offset the reduction on the Mellon tax plan a sales tax should be instituted. This, he states, would be easily administered and produce much revenue.

Anyone with a training along economic lines knows that this sales tax is shifted to the consumer, and the one making the sale does not pay it.

In order to make this plan appear just he follows the statement with this remark: "Surely a man's ability to buy is a fair indication of his ability to pay." If Mr. Moses was acquainted with business methods he would know that business is not done on this basis, and that there is no justice in it. even if it would be workable. When I go into a baker's shop to buy bread the merchant does not ask me how much money I have in order to determine what he shall charge me for the loaf. There is a natural law that governs the price of bread, just like the law of resistance. If Mr. Moses does not believe this, or does not know it, he can try running his head against a brick wall.

What I say about the purchase of a loaf of bread holds good with the purchase of anything. So that a man's ability to buy is not a fair indication of his ability to pay.

Tax has always hampered business because it is not paid by business, but is shifted to the consumer of goods, lessening their purchasing power, and it is only what a man can buy back with what he earns that makes business possible. If you tax a shoe manufacturer a dollar on every pair of shoes he turns out he adds it to his price, and the one that wears the shoes pays the tax, with much more added to it as it comes down the line passing the jobber and the retailer. He is therefore not able to buy as many shoes.

If Mr. Moses would go a little further into the matter he would find that in this country we fine a man for being industrious, and we also fine him for being a loafer. If he builds a home he is fined every year it stands, just as though he had committed an offense against the community. If he takes the money and gets drunk with it and becomes a nuisance he is locked up, comes before the judge in the morning, pays his fine and is turned loose, and that's the end of it—until he commits a similar offense. From this Mr. Moses can see that if a man gets drunk with his money he is only fined once, but if he is industrious he is fined as many times as this vicious system of taxation can get hold of him.—G. J. FOYER IN CLEVELAND *Plain Dealer*.

"EVERY improvement in the circumstances of society tends either directly or indirectly to raise the real rent of land, to increase the real wealth of the landlord, his power of purchasing the labor or the produce of the labor of the people."—ADAM SMITH