

## Skimming The Milk of Other Men's Cows

**A**BOUT the middle of November there passed away a man who was nearly an octogenarian who was known as the Dean of New York Realtors. The usual conservative and stern *Record and Guide*, the organ of the New York Real Estate Interests, becomes lachrymose over his demise, and prints an editorial entitled "His Vision Brought Merited Rewards."

We would be the last to question the importance of the role which the realtor plays in city development, but we cannot quite see what public service a man renders by being able to see that a given site will sell for a marked advance if it can be held either idle or only partially used until somebody comes along who is willing to pay a profit for it. There is no evidence at all that the deceased gentleman ever put up a building, though he may have done so. He simply bought about one hundred Broadway corners for himself or clients, which were all sold at a profit.

The following table gives some indication of the growth of values, within the period of a century, and would seem to prove that it did not need extraordinary foresight to reap rich rewards in such a rising market.

### HOW THE PRICE OF LAND HAS GONE UP WITHIN THE LAST CENTURY

The book "Fifth Avenue Old and New," published for the Centennial, gives the following comparative table of real estate values:

District	Date	Value	1924 Value
Arch to 13th street.....	1826	\$ 14,600	\$ 8,128,000
13th to 23d street .....	1836	405,000	29,541,500
23d to 34th street .....	1838	246,500	61,947,000
34th to 40th street ....	1838	138,800	71,802,000
40th to 86th street ....	1841	397,000	259,287,000
86th to 110th street ..	1841	173,000	22,287,000

The man who uses his brains and energy for the improvement of his community by launching new enterprises and constructing new buildings is truly entitled to the respect and regard of his fellow citizens, but the man who spends his life in skimming off the top of the milk which he takes no hand in producing, does not deserve the eulogy pronounced upon him by a paper like the *Record and Guide*.

**L**OS ANGELES police have started a crusade to drive all the mediums, clairvoyants and other "psychics" out of town. What's the use? They'll still have the real estate dealers.—J. W. ROPER in *Cleveland Press*.

## Free Trade, Free Land, Free Men

**L**ATE in January there met in Washington a National Conference to consider the Cause and Cure of War. May men and women of prominence, leaders of thought in many fields, were present. Speeches were made and theories outlined to prevent the recurrence of war. In these proceedings there was little of interest to those who would drive beneath the surface of things for the primary cause of war. All the speakers dealt with the contributory causes as if these were the real ones.

Not all. There was one exception. That exception was Prof. Warren Thompson, of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He began his address by asserting that the "differential pressure of population" was the chief cause of war and that the cure was birth control.

We refrain from comment on this theory, very widely held and very popular, but not nearly as conclusive as some imagine. There are too many facts against it. But Prof. Thompson did not stop here. As the newspapers report his address, he added that the following economic measures could be put into effect by the advanced nations to equalize the pressure of population and render armed conflict less likely:

1. The abolition of all barriers which now prevent free access of all peoples to the world's resources.
2. The abolition of all customs barriers.
3. The abolition of all barriers to migration.

While declaring that birth-control was the cure for war, Prof. Thompson said that this was a "relative matter," pressure of population becoming a menace to peace "when a people feels that it is being kept within narrower limits because other peoples are unjustly monopolizing too large a portion of the earth's resources."

Prof. Thompson seems to argue for a condition Single Taxers used to summarize in "Free Trade, Free Land, Free Men." But we are not quite clear on this point. Access of "peoples" to the natural resources of the earth may not mean access for all "persons" on equal terms, inside as well as outside the national boundaries. Yet undoubtedly the denial of this right of access is the potent cause of civil strife as of international warfare. That the Professor should immediately have followed his first recommendation with his second, "the abolition of all customs barriers," would seem to indicate that he had in mind a state of society in which equal access to natural resources by "persons" as well as nations was implied, since the second might be said to render the first unnecessary if the more limited implication is construed.

We are a little curious and would have been glad of further amplification. But at all events, Prof. Thompson is very "warm", as the children say in their games, even if

he is nothing more. And amid the superficial utterances of this well-intentioned gathering a note was struck that if not quite clear will echo with more familiar resonance in future conclaves.

Present at this gathering were Rabbi Wise and Carrie Chapman Catt. The former is reputed to be a Single Taxer; the latter was a member of the Fels Fund Commission, and so presumably of the faith. An opportunity was presented for either of these forward looking persons to come forward in support of the Miami professor. They had nothing to say in defence or elaboration of his contention, the nearest approach to anything fundamental in all the "blatherings" of the Conference.

## To The Landlord— The Processes of Petrification

TO the landlord belongs, not only the land, but the slow processes of petrification through uncounted centuries. Mark Twain tells the story of the man who collected echoes; future generations may tell the tale of those whose newest "fads" will be the amassing of petrified forests.

The *Dearborn Independent* tells interestingly of Ollie Bocker, a lady who owns the only petrified forest in California which she bought of a "realtor" for \$16,000. California is the Mecca of landlordism, and it is appropriate that the newest development of landlordism should be found in that state. To own a petrified forest sets one aside from the common run of mankind as a unique personage.

## Organizer Robinson Permanently In The Field

IT is good news that James A. Robinson, National Organizer of the Commonwealth Land Party, is now permanently engaged as lecturer and organizer for the party.

Mr. Robinson has left California and will proceed direct to Cleveland. From this point he will begin his work, filling lecture dates and organizing party groups wherever possible. Those wishing to secure him for addresses before labor unions, church associations, chambers of commerce, etc., in Ohio, will communicate with J. B. Lindsay, 7410 Franklin Avenue, Cleveland.

From Ohio Mr. Robinson will proceed to other states, where his lecture engagements will be in other hands. Financial support for this work should be forthcoming, for there is no man in the movement whose services are more valuable. Mr. Robinson is an eloquent expounder of the economic gospel as it is in George, a ready debater, and a real power on the platform. We shall furnish from issue to issue of LAND AND FREEDOM full reports of his work as it proceeds.

## The Stolen Lands of England

THE Right Hon. Stephen Walsh, M. P., Secretary for War in the late Labor Government, has succeeded in arousing the Landlords of Britain to attempt a "Reply" to his charges of "Stolen Lands." Mr. Walsh has been making very good use of the historical information published by the C. L. P. in their weekly journal, *The Commonwealth*, and, of course, the press has had to take notice of the utterances of a Cabinet Minister. So it comes about that the Central Landowners' Association, alarmed at the unusual publicity given to their monopoly, have rushed into print with an "Official Reply," published in *The Times*, for December 16th last. The article is a piece special pleading which, so far from "refuting the charges," as was hoped, confirms them. If this is the best defence that the Landlords can put up, then the oftener they do it the better. Readers of LAND AND FREEDOM will be interested to read the "reply" for themselves and accordingly it is reprinted in full hereunder.

"Land and The People." "Socialist Charges Refuted." "A Page of History." These are the captions under which the article appears in *The Times*.

"A speech made by the Right Hon. Stephen Walsh, then Minister for War, at Radcliffe, Manchester, was reported in *The Times* of October 27, 1924. In that speech Mr. Walsh is reported to have spoken of 'the restitution of the stolen lands to the people' and of 'the awful robbery' of land by landlords in the 18th and 19th centuries. 'No more infamous records,' he is reported to have added, 'had been established in England,' and 'no more infamous robbery.'

"The insistence on the recurrent phrases of 'stolen lands,' 'awful robbery,' 'infamous robbery,' constitutes a serious charge against the landowners of this country. It is unthinkable that Mr. Walsh would have given the weight of his public services and the authority of a Minister of the Crown to so grave an accusation, unless he had believed it to be true. We therefore desire to put on record some historical facts which, in our opinion, show the charge to be unfounded.

"The restitution of the stolen lands to the people' necessarily implies that the land of this country was at one time owned by the people. In the earliest records of Saxon times there is no trace of such ownership; but there is abundant evidence that land was owned by individuals. For more than 13 centuries, therefore, the State has sanctioned private ownership.

"But Mr. Walsh specifies the particular period—the 18th and 19th centuries—at which, as he alleges, landlords robbed the people of the land. Apparently he refers to the operation of the Enclosure Acts, which broke up the village farms by redistributing their common-fields and common-pastures in compact freehold blocks. It is, of course, true that in 1760 one-half or one-third of the cultivated land of England was occupied by groups of occupiers who tilled and grazed it in common, and that, by 1875, practically the whole of the land was occupied by individuals who cultivated it with the aid of wage-earning workers. This transformation was part of the industrial movement which within the same period changed