

WE are glad that President Green is having his fling at the hoary old humbug. Little progress can be made unless various delusions on the subject of wages are discredited in the minds of the workers. The late Samuel Gompers advised his followers to abstain from politics. Though professedly a Single Taxer, he was apparently interested only in maintaining a great organization of labor to fight organized capital—a condition little short of civil war. His followers accepted very literally his admonition to abstain from politics. As some economic questions are already political—the tariff, for example, just as the land question must some day become—Samuel Gompers and the American Federation had no active opinions about it. It would seem a perfectly fatuous policy for men interested in raising wages to act as if economic questions had no existence. Mr. Gompers made lots of friends by his policy—friends of the kind that cared little for the welfare of the workers. President Green seems willing to depart from this policy—just how far remains to be seen.

IN an article in the *London Times*, Dr. Arthur Shadwell, speaking of unemployment in England, says: "There is no facile remedy for the present ills and no government can do much. The root cause, as the *Times* has said in its leading editorial on the debate in the House of Commons, is the destruction of wealth by war—wealth gradually accumulated during many decades by work and saving."

LET us see. Was there not very recently a school of political economists who believed that war, with its consequent destruction of wealth, made a demand for employment to repair its ravages? Were not large numbers of the unthinking on this account disposed to regard wars and rumors of wars with equanimity because of their resulting benefits (supposedly) to labor in the rebuilding of devastated cities and towns? Now we have another reverse theory. Instead of the destruction of wealth calling for increased employment for its restoration, it seems that labor has all this time been living on the "wealth accumulated during many decades by work and saving." These economic theories jostle one another curiously; in this case they are mutually destructive.

BUT let Dr. Shadwell consider. Most of the wealth used in the production of wealth, tools, machinery, factories, etc., vanishes after one or two decades. Very little wealth of any kind survives after thirty years. Nor was any element of wealth destroyed during the war that could not have been replaced in the ten years succeeding. There is every reason to believe that in 1925 there is as much wealth in Great Britain as there was in 1914. Dr. Shadwell wisely refrains from giving any figures that might serve to show how baseless is his explanation for unemployment.

LABOR no more lives on capital produced in past decades than the labor of today lives on the wealth of the Pharaohs. Labor lives on land and what it produces from it, and every hour it is replenishing what it consumes and what is laid aside for the making of more wealth—tools, machinery, etc. Employment is conditioned on the terms on which it can exercise itself on the natural material, not on the goods, capital or wealth, stored up somewhere by the labor of previous decades. If labor is denied access to the reservoir from which the products of labor are drawn, unemployment is the consequence. If too great a price is demanded for such access to the natural material, labor must remain idle. This is the simple explanation of unemployment and not the wholly fanciful theory of Dr. Shadwell and the *London Times*.

WE printed in last issue the indignant disclaimer of a Santa Barbara "realtor" to the widely circulated newspaper reports of an earthquake in that city. Some years ago it will be remembered that there was a report of an earthquake in San Francisco. This was followed by a destructive fire. A correspondent of the *London Post* tells his readers that Californians do not refer to the earthquake but always to the "fire." All cities have fires; some have earthquakes. "The reason," says the correspondent, "why Californians call it a fire is because they are all boosters out there."

A LARGE part of California rests upon what the seismologists call a "fault," which is a thin crust resting upon the more solid base. This is part of California real estate. As a basis for land speculation it possesses an all too shifting foundation. To sell a fixed portion of the earth is one thing, ridiculous enough in itself, but to sell a part of it that may disappear the next morning, is quite another. One hates to buy earthquakes at the prices asked, so we must argue them away. There are no earthquakes in California; they are hereby abolished by edict of the land speculators and land owners of the state.

THE question that will not down is the one to which LAND AND FREEDOM alone among the periodicals of the country is preeminently devoted. That question is the right of all the people to the values they create. The land boom at Rockaway, which the *New York World* of Aug. 9, says has "all the hectic thrills of a mining camp rush," is an instance in point. The *World* says that "it raises anew the question whether a city in creating facilities like the Rockaway Board Walk is not entitled to a part of the unearned increment in land values resulting." LAND AND FREEDOM says it is entitled not only to part, but all of it—to the last penny collectible of this value which the people create. How important it is in a time when timid hints of this nature are hazarded in the public prints, that the only paper devoted exclusively to