

Now the Island politicians still follow the old, successful Monarchical-Republican party technique of the early Spanish days and blame the United States Government for all the ills that afflict the Island. The hapless workers, believing in the integrity and patriotism of their leaders, lend ear to their bombastic denunciations and consequently they also are inclined to rail against the Federal Government.

It is true that the United States Government has erred in many of its policies with regard to Puerto Rico but all actions should be judged by the motives which prompt them. In the great majority of cases these motives were good. Time after time the Federal Government has sent commissions to Puerto Rico in order to study conditions and alleviate the condition of the people. Time after time have the efforts of these commissions been sabotaged by the big corporations and their insular lackeys. One earnest man after another has been attacked and discredited by the politicians and the privileged group of less than five thousand people who fatten on the miseries of their fellow countrymen. These sincere men, caught in the whirlwind of screaming invective abuse in the controlled insular press have been forced to leave the Island in disgust and seeming disgrace.

Because of the machinations of the politicians and the privileged five thousand, the 500-acre law has lain dormant in the law books since 1900 with no attempt made to enforce it. Laws to protect the *colono* from usury and extortion are also disregarded. The minimum wage laws in the needlework and other industries and the laws governing child labor are bogged down and lost in seas of insular red tape deliberately spun by the small, compact privileged class of Puerto Ricans. All this despite the fact that for some years the Island has enjoyed complete home rule in matters of internal policy.

To combat the evils caused by insular and absentee land appropriation, the United States Government has poured over eighty million dollars into the Island during the past few years under the auspices of the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration. At one time seventy-five percent of the people on the Island were directly or indirectly dependent upon this fund. Because the Federal Government does not allow the Island politicians to administer this fund to their own advantage, they immediately set up the cry of "carpetbaggerismo."

It was due to the efforts and insistent urgings of the U. S. Department of Interior at Washington that the 500-acre law (shot through with legal loopholes and inefficacious as it is) was revived again and legal steps were taken to implement the Federal Minimum Wage Laws and the Child Labor Law.

On April 12, 1941, Governor Swope signed the Puerto Rico Land Authority bill, which establishes a Land Authority composed of seven members who are charged with carrying out the Congressional resolution of 1900, limiting

corporate land holdings to 500 acres. Of course, the sugar companies expect to be compensated for their holdings and the battle and the delaying tactics in the courts have already begun. The most that can be said for this measure is that a faltering step in the right direction has been taken.

The Malthusian theory is still carefully nurtured by the privileged class in Puerto Rico since it enables them to shift to the Creator any responsibility it cannot hurl at the United States. The slightest use of the halls and appurtenances of the University of Puerto Rico should soon convince them, if they really want to be convinced, that the solution of the problem of over-population is not to be found in the Birth Control Law of 1937 but in a higher elevation of the standard of wages. The increased standard of wages would increase the standard of comfort and the higher standard of comfort would raise the level of intelligence. The wisdom of the ages tells us that the higher the mental type the less the tendency to large families. The problem of over-population in Puerto Rico is merely another aspect of the general problem of poverty.

Careful analysis affords most convincing proof that the misery and degradation of 95% of the inhabitants of the "Isle of Enchantment" are not due to the machinations of the Federal Government nor to the stupidity of the Creator, but most assuredly stem from the greed and cupidity of corporation-controlled legislators and the guilty connivance of the privileged five thousand.

Newton D. Baker on Henry George

IN an exchange of correspondence with the late Hon. Newton D. Baker some ten years ago, our good friend, John C. Rose of Pittsburgh, received the following from Mr. Baker:

"Henry George was a strange and significant phenomenon in the midst of an age of acquisitiveness and materialism. He sought and found fundamental moralities as the basis of an economic philosophy, and nobody who has read "Progress and Poverty" is ever the same in his thinking as he was before he saw those eloquent and impressive pages. Much that Mr. George taught has now become a part of the every day philosophy of our political life and much more will become a part of it. I do not, however, believe that there will ever be any sudden application of Mr. George's principles. Sound political development is a matter of growth and not a matter of revolution, and even a fundamentally right economic doctrine, if it involves a radical departure from accepted practices, has to be absorbed little by little to avoid consequences too severe to endure which would follow a nation wide attempt to go back to the beginnings of things to correct an ancient error."