

The Real Cause of the High Price of Anthracite Coal is Monopoly

THIS monopoly is made possible through our unjust laws which recognize as a proper subject for private ownership, natural resources created by a beneficent God for the use of all his people.

The Girard Estate (outside Philadelphia) according to its 1924 report received in royalties \$3,995,338.67 for permitting 12 mining corporations to dig 2,807,750 tons of anthracite from its holdings; an average of \$1.40 per ton. This part of the Girard Estate, assessed at \$12,340,741, shows a gross return of 31.5 per cent. on that valuation.

The Girard Estate (neither during the lifetime of its founder, Stephen Girard, nor since his death more than 90 years ago) ever mined a single ton of coal. It merely permitted others to do so.

The price of such permission at the time of Stephen Girard's death was at a rate around seven cents a ton as against \$1.40 in 1924.

It can be seen from the above it now costs 20 times as much for mere permission to dig anthracite as it did ninety years ago.

The Girard Estate virtually belongs to all the people of Philadelphia as the municipality is trustee and the income goes to support Girard College, a really remarkable institution founded under the will of Stephen Girard, which supports and educates more than 1,500 orphan boys. Therefore, so far as the Girard Estate is concerned, the whole people of Philadelphia are the beneficiaries of its income from royalties on coal. It might be noted however, that to the extent of nearly \$4,000,000 annually, the consumers of anthracite coal are co-philanthropists with Stephen Girard.

AS WITH THE GIRARD ESTATE THE PRICE CHARGED BY OTHERS FOR PERMISSION TO MINE ANTHRACITE COAL HAS GONE UP MORE THAN 2,000 PER CENT.

Anthracite deposits having been put where they are by Almighty God for the use of all his children; any law which nullifies this by permitting but a few to monopolize the benefit, is obviously unjust.

A larger population with its greater demands for fuel is alone responsible for the use or rental value of the coal fields. The royalty collector, having rendered no service, is therefore entitled to no compensation.

Collection of this rental value (created by all) by government for its maintenance would make the present dishonest system of taking (taxing) private property for the public purposes unnecessary.

Since no one has the hardihood to deny that the earth is the birthright of all mankind nor that the value of its use is created by their mere presence on it, it follows that: **THE RENT OF LAND BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE AND THAT THE FIRST DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO COLLECT IT.**—*Pennsylvania Commonwealth.*

Why Not Give Them The Larger Life?

THEY were sons of the soil. Their lives, as George Eliot says in "Daniel Deronda," were "well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labors men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home (of childhood) a familiar unmistakable difference amid the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbors, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood." If the millions of children in the slums and crowded sections of our cities could be brought up in little worlds like that, would we need to fear for the future? Think of what it would mean to these orphaned children (orphaned because they are robbed of the very kind of life they most need) could they enjoy the sunshine that streams across green fields and wooded hills and lovely streams, and "think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one's homestead!" Take a child who has been brought up in a home where there is not even a yard in which to play, out into the country, and how he will enjoy the companionship of birds and poultry and sheep and cows and horses and dogs! Country life may seem constricted and uninteresting to many, but it is in a real sense the larger and the truer life—the best kind of nursery for children to grow up in.—*Lutheran, Philadelphia, Pa.*

South America

THE new Governor of the Province of Cordoba, Dr. Carcano, has issued a decree establishing a general plan of valuation of land of all the cities and towns in the Province, with the object of taxing land irrespective of improvement values. There has been a land value tax of 7 per thousand in the rural areas since 1914.

The leading paper of Buenos Aires, *La Prensa*, says that "In order to prepare the necessary data for a modification of the tax system, in so far as it affects the land tax in the urban districts, the State Executive, through the medium of the Finance Department, has issued the following decree, which reveals its intention to adopt the system of laying the heaviest burden upon the land, apart from improvements."

It then quotes from the Decree as follows:

"Whereas valuation by zones, apart from improvements, is the most equitable system for assessing property for the purpose of land taxation;

"Whereas said system has been adopted in the province since 1914, for the valuation of rural property;

"Whereas this system does not penalize labor nor burden

improvements which represent progress, and on the other hand stimulates building and attacks the vacant lot, which is a drag on society and a cause of the ever increasing area over which municipal services have to be extended, with a consequent decrease in their efficiency;

"Whereas it is therefore desirable to extend this system to urban property, not only to complete the land taxation system, but also because of its essential justice and the advantages of an economic and social character which its application represents."

The remainder of the Decree deals with the methods of preparation of tax maps by the engineering staff.

The "zoning system" referred to means that various zones of different values are to be established in the municipalities, and within each Zone the land is taxed at a uniform rate per metre frontage; a fairly accurate method where land values are not high, and enabling a quick adoption of a land value tax plan.

For example, in the City of San Francisco, Cordoba, the Mayor, Senor Serafin Trigueros de Godoy, is a convinced Georgist. Being hampered by existing laws, he succeeded in establishing a "zone system" of seven different classes, in which the annual land tax varies from 80 cents down to 5 cents per metre frontage in the cheapest zone. This tax represents approximately one-half per cent. on selling value, according to the City financial report.

San Francisco has a population of about 15,000, and while this land tax yields only \$102,000, this sum is the principal item of revenue and has allowed the city to abolish various "nuisance" taxes on labor, and also to undertake the construction of a new municipal market. In the future this revenue can easily be increased, as a new provincial law expressly authorizes municipalities to tax land apart from improvements, without limitations.

CITY REPORT ENDORSES GEORGIST DOCTRINE

It is an extraordinary Financial Report that is issued by Senor Trigueros de Godoy, Mayor of the City of San Francisco, Province of Cordoba, Argentine. After treating of fiscal details the report proceeds with an enthusiasm uncommon in official documents to denounce land monopoly and proposes an adequate remedy. As related above Mayor Godoy has already succeeded in establishing some measure of land value taxation, but he sees in these matters much more than a fiscal question. We quote from the report at page 36:

"In the year 1837, forty years before the great North American economist, Henry George, published his celebrated book, 'Progress and Poverty,' Flores Estrada, a Spanish economist, wrote the following: 'Individual property in land, or the soil, is contrary to nature and condemned by its results. On account of the appropriation of the land by certain individuals, the great majority of the human race is prevented from working, and the laborer does not receive due recompense for his labor, and the interests of the associates are in conflict.'"

Again on the same page the report says:

"Pedro de Valencia, born in Zafra, Spain, in 1554, anticipated Herbert Spencer (1875)—to whom the critics attribute the historical origin of the social theory of the common right to the land,—states in his address to the King:

"In the beginning of humanity, land that could be worked was the common property of all men; in order to make their labor easier, the lands were divided amongst them, but not in full ownership, only on lease and on condition that the respective lots should be cultivated. Otherwise, they should be forfeited."

And on page 55:

"Against this irritating injustice (private property in land), some hundreds of years ago, there rose,—loving and sweet as the parables of Jesus of Nazareth, but firm and accusing,—the voice of a priest, the Spanish Jesuit, Juan de Mariana, in the year 1536, who says in his book: 'Of the King and Royalty;' 'To Phillip III, Most Catholic King of Spain: Private Property had its origin in greed and rapine.' 'It is a duty of Humanity, he says, for us to keep at the disposition of all these things which God wished should be common; since to all men he gave the land, in order that they should sustain themselves by its fruits; and only violent greed could grab and monopolize for itself this divine heritage, and appropriate for itself the food and riches placed there for all. From that one fact have arisen in great part the evils that afflict the peoples and the dissensions and disorders that agitate them.'"

And from the same page:

"In the year 1600, Dr. Martin Gonzalez of Cevillago, an Attorney of the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid, published his book: 'Memorial of the Policy necessary and useful for the Restoration of the Republic of Spain,' in which we read the following:

"He who lives on the rent of land robs the sweat of others. He who is not a tiller of the soil has no right to be a landholder."

Sr. Godoy accepts the Georgist theory in all its amplitude and does not hesitate to declare, in support of his plan, that "natural bounties which are produced without man's intervention cannot be legitimate subject of property for anyone" and that "the laws which protect such property are an offense to morality and sound reasoning." (p. 57). He also reproduces in his report a newspaper article by our esteemed contemporary, Dr. C. Villabos Dominguez, in which may be found affirmations no less radical (p. 135).

AT the head of its editorial column, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* keeps what is called: "Platform for Cincinnati." It is a list of proposed improvements for Cincinnati, including rapid transit facilities, a barge-canal, parks, boulevard lighting, etc., all of which would cost several hundred million dollars. A conspicuous omission from the platform is a statement as to how the several hundred million dollars OUGHT to be obtained. The inclusion of such a plank in the platform would be offensive to the