

this great principle of justice should go to the editorial desk of every newspaper of circulation and influence.

THE *New York Commercial* has made a discovery. So important is it that it is worth placing prominently before our readers. It says: "The idea that all wealth comes from the ground—a theory that dilettante economists are wont to voice—is rank nonsense. The iron and cotton do come from the ground but their worth as hair-springs and beautiful fabrics comes from human toil and planting." The toil is not exercised on land, of course, and the planting—but what's the use?

THE *New York Herald-Tribune* now places the "capital" which is tied up in tax exempt securities at \$14,000,000,000. This vast sum, according to the *Tribune*, is "withdrawn from industry." A few more tax exempt bonds and we must suppose that no capital at all would exist to run the industry of the country! How this capital pays interest when it is "tied up," just what is meant by the phrase "tied up," and just how this capital is "withdrawn from industry," is not quite as clear as the *Tribune* writer imagines. Indeed it doesn't happen at all.

JUDGE ELBERT H. GARY, chairman of the recently organized Crime Commission, in an interview printed in the *New York Times*, of Sunday, Sept. 6, gives his views as to the measures to be adopted to counteract the crime wave. His explanations for the increase of crime in the United States are deserving of attention. Briefly it is due "to the war in which the consciences of men become warped, the finer human instincts subordinated to the vicious instincts of the animal; crime becomes almost a corollary to battle."

SO far, so good. But the records show only a small proportion of crimes are committed by those who saw service in the World War, so the influence of that factor may be largely disregarded. Another influence indicated is that of indifference to or intentional defiance of laws with which we are not in accord. This encourages others to think that they have a right to ignore or violate the provisions of any other law. This reflection on the class to which Judge Gary belongs will be duly appreciated.

HE then summarizes a number of other reasons for increase of crime, such as lax administration of the laws; undue leniency of the courts; too little power vested in the judges; too much in the advocates; too much maudlin sympathy with offenders; too much politics in the selection of judges; prisons more comfortable than the previous homes of many of the occupants, etc., etc. All these are "stock reasons" and throw no light on the problem.

FINALLY, Judge Gary alludes to something which he regards as "very important"—the "vicious propaganda that has been more or less exposed by government officials and others." "This propaganda seeks to mislead by misrepresentation the young people of the country and to instill into their minds a feeling of hate toward public authorities; toward men who have been successful in various departments of human activity; and in general to revolutionize society." Our readers know, of course, that this widely heralded discovery of an active propaganda turned out a veritable "mare's nest," and that there was not enough teaching of this kind to disturb the serenity of any but the most fat-witted government officials.

WHEN Judge Gary comes to specific remedies for crime conditions their inadequacy is apparent. Briefly, they are uniformity of law enforcement; paroles limited to first offenders; speedier crime prosecutions; segregation of first offenders from veteran criminals, etc. He seems to feel, too, that the schools have failed in moral instruction, which is true. And he returns again to the charge of lack of parental responsibility in setting a bad example in the breaking of unpopular laws. By this we assume that he means the prohibition law; also it may be the income tax law provisions.

IT will be noted that Judge Gary has a touching faith in the efficacy of law. He goes no further than indicated, with perhaps the addition of moral suasion, in his summary of cures for increased criminality. With a temperamental kindness and sincerity of outlook, he nevertheless ignores, or reasons as if they did not exist, the deeper and more fundamental causes that are at work. Judge Gary is like a blind man in prison who feeling along the blank walls of his cell cannot see the open door of egress, so spends his time in futile speculation as to possible underground avenues of escape. Certain obvious social phenomena he cannot or will not see; therefore he struggles painfully to escape the entanglements of his own mental perplexity. He may be perfectly honest with himself; the half-truths he sees may appear to him as vital as whole truths; but he must be conscious that he gets nowhere—that he does not advance a step beyond his mental prison house.

LET us realize, if Judge Gary will not, that this society of ours, in which he is at one end and the criminal at the other, has an unnatural economic basis. It imposes an unnatural inequality of opportunity on the natural inequality of men—handicapping at the start labor, natural talent, ambition, in the possession of which qualities men varyingly differ. Our economic institutions do not give labor, talent, ambition what these qualities earn; they give to chance, greed, cunning and cupidity in far

greater measure. The rewards of labor are necessarily and woefully inadequate for the vaster numbers of mankind. It must be so as long as the earth is owned by the few; for wealth in consequence gravitates to an insignificant proportion of mankind.

WE do not expect Judge Gary to see this. We would not see it if we were Judge Gary. He is the product of the system at one end as Gerald Chapman is the most striking product at the other. Neither in all probability will ever see what is the matter with society. Judge Gary is aggrieved at the point of view carried into practical application by Chapman; the latter is probably aggrieved at Gary—and with about the same amount of reason, or unreason, if you please. We say probably, since we have no means of knowing; we have, however, heard from Judge Gary and have his point of view. It is wholly inadequate as explaining Gerald Chapman or any other criminal of the sort.

NOW what is Society doing to arrest this tendency to crime? We are speaking now, of course, of crimes against property. Nothing. On the contrary it is doing everything to encourage it. With economic institutions that give to those who do not earn and take from labor its product without recompense, that makes the reservoir of the earth a thing to be bartered for and speculated in, what sort of society can we look for? Is it any wonder that there has grown up a moral atmosphere that stifles the noblest impulses? Do we not hear on every hand the injunction—get money? Is lawless wealth a whit beyond lawless poverty in its depredations—has it a code of ethics at all superior to lawless poverty? If so it is not audible. "If you haven't any money you needn't come around," is a popular song; it is popular morality too.

WHAT does a protective tariff do? Never mind now about its labored and often nonsensical justifications. Does it not rob you? What does landlordism do? Robs you, of course. What of all the hugamuggery of stock speculation and stock watering, and the practices of business justified by business ethics—is not a large portion of it mere robbery? How does it differ from the practices of Gerald Chapman save that the element of violence is lacking? It does not need to resort to violence since it has the law—the same law Judge Gary would invoke for the suppression of crime which goes on at the other end of the social line. Judge Gary does not see this—he is probably so near to one end of the picture that the other escapes him entirely.

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Government Aid for Dwelling Construction

THE recognized failure of private enterprise under present conditions to furnish adequate housing accommodations in many of the great American cities, has led to proposals that the state or federal governments should lend their credit to builders of homes or apartment houses. It is urged by those favoring this radical departure from prevailing policies of leaving the housing problem to be solved by individual initiative, that the chief obstacle to the construction of a sufficient number of dwellings is the lack of capital, or at least, capital that will be invested on the basis of the returns that may be accepted. They admit that the high cost of most building materials and the high wages paid to all workers in the building trades, are important factors in limiting construction, but as there seems to be no practicable method of effecting a reduction in material costs or wage scales, the only alternative appears to them to be that governmental aid should be given those desiring to erect additional buildings.

That there is in reality any scarcity of capital in the United States is not indicated by the enormous amounts deposited in banks, trust companies and savings banks, and the immense surplus funds of the great insurance companies. The fact that American loans of more than a billion dollars were made to foreign lands during the past year alone, taken with the lower interest rates that have prevailed, would seem to show conclusively that there is an abundance of capital now seeking an investment. Even if there was an actual lack of capital, it is a little difficult to see how the supply could be increased by government action. Neither the state nor federal governments have any funds except those raised by taxation, and any system of bond issues for providing building funds would subtract just so much from the deposits or accumulated resources of the various financial institutions.

A factor that has been ignored by the advocates of government aid, but one that is at least equal in importance to those already mentioned, is the high cost of building sites in the localities where dwellings are most needed. Should any of the ambitious proposals for governmental loans amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars be adopted, the direct result of increased building activities would be to create an additional demand for land on which the dwellings were to be erected. How this would operate may be seen by the one instance of the recent sale of certain lots fronting on Riverside Drive, New York City, on which a large apartment house is to be erected, for \$1,000,000.00. The building is to cost \$3,000,000.00, so that of the charges for rent that must be paid, one quarter goes to pay for interest on the cost of land, necessitating just so much higher rentals. It would seem manifest that government aid for housing would only stimulate competition for desirable