

F. White Co. had land that had now acquired a value for residential or for park purposes. The building of the causeway, the piping in of Catskill water, the airport, the bridge, all made land on Barren Island worth many times what it was before. The need for riparian rights had gone since it no longer depended upon navigable water to live. And there is still plenty of shore line for a yacht basin should one be deemed necessary. The nearness of Riis's Beach for bathing makes it unnecessary to risk the polluted waters of the bay. So the demand for \$132,894 for damages to the value of the land due to loss of riparian rights is plain unadulterated gall. But here is the joke on us, the people of New York. The experts for the city claimed the value of the plot to be \$3,555. Justice Lockwood gave the claimants \$4,000. The Thomas F. White Co. own 45 acres on Barren Island. They said that this was worth \$996,123 before the city took the small plot. The experts set the previous value at \$208,431 before any improvements were made. Now if this is so the improvements of the causeway and Floyd Bennet Field before the adding of the small plot made the value of the White people's lands more than four times what it was before, an increase of about 450 per cent. Yet they claimed damages equal to half the value of their whole 45 acres originally and they were allowed \$4,000 for 1,638 square feet. Now lots in Flatbush, six miles nearer to the city's center of business, entertainment, and education are assessed at \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a full 20 by 100 feet. It is a joke but a sad one.

The proceedings in which the above award was made are interesting for another little drama that was unfolded. Stick-to-it-iveness, try, try, again, and all the copy-book slogans are illustrated in the case of John H. Ward of New Jersey. This young man wanted to go places, it didn't matter whose backs he used for conveyance. Being a farseeing man he took note of the plans to develop Jamaica Bay back in 1920 or thereabouts and accordingly he managed to get a deed to lands under water, said deed going straight back to a grant of land made by the Canarsie Indians in 1636 to two officers of the Dutch West India Company. Then when the development of the bay was well under way he presented this deed to land supposed to be part of this grant, the Gerritsen and Hudde Grant. The courts declared his deed fictitious and threw out his claim. Then he started in to buy quit-claims to the tune of \$33,000 to 43 parcels of land, all under water until the city improved them. He asked \$5,103,340 for them. With interest this came to well over \$10,000,000. The city experts placed a value of \$941,254 on the 43 parcels. The award of Justice Lockwood is exactly nothing. Why? Because Mr. Ward in his eagerness to cash in on public service had bought what could not be delivered since the sellers never had it to sell. Among those who took money for quit-claims were

the heirs and descendants of old Dutch settlers, among them being the Lott and Elbert families. Justice Lockwood pointed out that these families were familiar with all properties taken by the city and had sold the right to lands ostensibly worth millions for a paltry \$31,000, lands which they had never claimed nor mentioned in any condemnations, partitions, divisions, maps, transfer or inheritance tax proceedings. Furthermore, he pointed out, they always in such proceedings claimed as their lands their farm on the mainland and lands on Barren Island and has paid taxes on these lands alone. He expressed surprise that a family so well-known and so prominent in the professional, business, and civic life of this city for generations, should have stooped to take money from a land speculator seeking to mulct the city in return for a quit-claim to property they never owned.

This pricking of the bubble of family claim to super-respectability is a good thing for democracy since it shows those who are inclined to worship heredity and social standing and therefore lack confidence in the ability of the people to know what is good for the people, that there is nothing after all in ancestor worship. Codfish and cabbage aristocracy are alike in producing descendants willing to satisfy their desires with the least effort. So we find the Lotts and Elberts just as willing to get something for nothing as the lowlived racketeer of labor. But why was the Thomas F. White Co. entitled to anything? Why was any one of the claimants entitled to anything for land under water, or for abandoned farmland, useless for any other purpose until the completion of the great civil undertakings mentioned before? We, the people, are still saps.

SYNDICATED ECONOMICS SEEN THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Robert Quillen in a syndicated article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* of Wednesday, August 3, 1938, explains the origin of wages in this way:

"A great many years ago, in a land where slavery was ended or not yet begun, a certain smart man said to his neighbor: 'If you will make two spears for me, I will furnish the material and give you one of the spears.'

And thus he started something that has caused continual controversy from that day until the present, and bids fair to disturb the world for generations to come.

Argument, altruism and force may affect the worker's wage for a while, but in the last accounting it will be determined by *simple economic rules* that nothing can change."

There is but one true statement in this and that is modified by the use of the future tense. The worker's wage *is* determined by simple economic rules that nothing can change, and always has been so determined but since very few know what those simple economic rules are t

worker has very seldom received his wage. Mr. Quillen does not know the law of wages. He does not know the laws of production or he would not begin with one man offering to provide the materials for another to make spears for him, the other's compensation to be one of the spears. We might ask Mr. Quillen how it happened that the man had nothing but labor and skill to offer for the things he wanted, while another man had materials. We can not think of any man except a helpless invalid being without the ability to labor though the ability to labor does not mean the quality of skill as a companion power. Therefore in this example we have two men, one with nothing but labor and skill, and one with labor and also materials to supply. A man is born with the ability to labor, and skill is acquired by practice. What man is born with materials to supply labor? So here is an inequality that did not exist when wages began. Materials could be obtained from but one source of supply, the earth, and by means of labor alone. Even if our early entrepreneur found branches lying before him on the road, or if he lay under a tree and had them fall on him when torn off by the wind, or if they were washed up to his feet by the tide, he would have to depend upon labor to get them into his possession, his labor or that of someone indebted to him. Now how did it happen in those early days that he had the opportunity to obtain materials and the skilled spear maker did not? Perhaps Mr. Quillen might say that the brain power of the spear-maker suffered because his hands had acquired skill and that he did not have foresight to store up a set of materials and the other man, not wasting energy in acquiring manual skill had more for mental development and therefore he saw the possibilities of having a monopoly of skilled labor and materials and acted accordingly. But this is not to be considered for the man skillful at making spears would be skillful in making use of them and since the mental giant would have to depend upon spears made by the skilled artisan he would be at the mercy of said skilled artisan, who would make an inferior spear for him and a good one for himself. Thus no wise guy could set himself up as the purveyor of materials for spears or other necessary utensils or foods, as long as the source of such materials was available to any body.

Mr. Quillen has overlooked the part land plays in the production of wages. Therefore his economics are worthless. He does not know that wages originated when land was free to all, and that wages are the product of a man's labor when rent does not have to be paid and capital is not used. A monopoly of land robs a man of his wages so that he receives less. Social services, both public and private, increase production and this increased production increases rent. Capital increases production and this increases interest. These are the simple economic laws that Mr. Quillen does not know. The greater the proportion of land the less the proportion of wages or of wages and

interest that has to come out of production. Let Mr. Quillen laugh that off. But he is greatly muddled, as in the following:

"Thus every man who works for hire works on commission or shares. He receives a share of what he makes, and the *value of what he makes determines the value of his share.*"

Not so, Mr. Quillen, not so. His share is what is left after the rent and interest have been taken out. But he never gets his share because the resources and opportunities having been monopolized he must needs bid against other men for a chance to work. He sells his labor cheap. He adds value to the materials he works upon, that value minus the rent of the place where he works, that is, the site rent, and minus the interest for the use of the boss's capital invested in buildings, tools, equipment, safety devices, comfort appliances, etc., is his wages, his real economic wages. The difference between his real economic wages and his share as referred to by Mr. Quillen represents the price he and every worker must pay for allowing economic rent to be privately possessed. The man who hires a worker may believe that he is conferring a benefit upon him but as a matter of fact he is indebted to the worker since he owes him for the value the worker adds to his product every minute of the time that worker is employed until he is finally paid off in full. It is foolish to speak of the worker producing \$300 worth of cotton and expecting value to the tune of \$300 because we are overlooking the fact that \$300 worth of cotton is the entire product out of which must come rent, interest, and wages. Yet Mr. Quillen speaks as if labor expects the entire \$300. The seed and tools and conveyances, the gin and press, and the fertilizer and insecticides are capital. The land, not because of its fertility, but chiefly because of its location near centers of social activity and social services produces economic rent which would be missing in the case of a Robinson Crusoe shut off from the rest of mankind. And the labors of the boss in finding a market and arranging for shipment are to be paid in wages. And all of these activities, not the labor of the worker alone, have contributed to the production of cotton to the value of \$300 and these activities must be paid out of the \$300. Naturally the worker can not receive \$300 since he has not produced \$300 of value. The trouble that agitates the world is not that the worker does not get what he does not produce, but that he is compelled to take less than he produces, which means that some one gets something for nothing. Let Mr. Quillen ponder that.

JOHN LUXTON.

WE cannot safely leave politics to politicians, or political economy to college professors. The people themselves must think, because the people alone can act.—SOCIAL PROBLEMS, BY HENRY GEORGE.