

deny the right of the many to freedom to work in partnership with Nature and to enjoy both the work and the result without any "raiding or pillaging" on the part of the Government, is the practical politics of both the trusted and discredited leaders of all parties.

The C. L. P. has answered the question many times. Not until Land Monopoly is quietly but firmly and entirely abolished as a consequence of the people's demand that the rent of their countries be collected for their use and benefit will it be realized what is the truth, which the C. L. P. has endeavored to proclaim, viz., not only that

OURS IS A NICE WORLD, OURS IS,

but that it *is ours*, in the real sense of the word (although we are ignorantly or fraudulently deprived of the natural rights and advantages of life in it) whenever we acquire sense enough to make it so.

Who will help by joining in the demand for Justice? That is all that is needed. A little commonsense, which it would not hurt any of us to acquire, would soon make it clear that

OURS IS A NICE WORLD, OURS IS

London, England.

"X"

Ruth White Colton Talks to the Lions

MRS. RUTH WHITE COLTON spoke before the Lions Club at West New York last month.

She said in part: "Either we may continue the hit-or-miss, hodge-podge method of penalizing industry, agriculture and home-owners, through taxation, or we may, as is advocated by over five hundred of the leading manufacturers of this state, shift the burden from the back of industry and thrift onto the site value of land. How will such a change benefit the average man and woman? The answer is very simple.

"The less revenue that is collected from site-value, the higher is the selling-price of sites—factory sites, farm sites, home sites, and the higher is the selling price of all raw materials, such as lumber, coal, clay, etc., and the more difficult it is to get sites and materials for productive uses. High prices for sites and raw material increases the cost of production and decreases the demand for the products of industry and agriculture alike. This, of course, restricts production and restricted production means unemployment, industrial strikes and general social unrest.

"With site-values and building materials sky-high we are faced with the housing problem, which carries with it a tremendous social significance. Congested housing is responsible for more of disease and crime than we are yet generally aware, and our state institutions are filled with the victims of these conditions, for the cost of whose maintenance all of us are responsible. The sooner these facts are understood and recognized the sooner will labor and capital intelligently combine to fight this rising cost of sites and raw materials."

Our British Letter

WHY WAGES ARE LOW

"AN incident, reported from Colchester, Essex, in which unemployed men fought for work, provides yet another contradiction to those people who assert that the unemployed man has no desire for a job.

"Fifty men were required in connection with the laying of electric cables. It was hard toil, but some 200 men turned up to be taken on. The man in charge told them that the first 50 who got the tools would be put on the job, and immediately there was a wild rush for the implements. Fortunately, none was seriously hurt, but many received hard knocks. One man said to have had his coat ripped off by a pick, and others were badly bruised."—*Daily Herald*, London, May 9, 1925.

"James D. Graham of Montana, an acute observer of conditions in the Western States, writes that unemployment in this region 'has been on the increase for four years. Wages are going down and shop conditions are becoming poor.'... The Colorado coal fields present another situation that adds to the general distress. The Rockefeller company 'unions' in that State signed an agreement last month reducing wages twenty per cent. . . . If we turn to agriculture the economic prospects are just as black. There is no relief in sight, and the national administration has neither the knowledge nor the ability to handle the situation. The Woolworth stores that deal in the cheapest wares that workers buy are curtailing business in the Western States. They have reduced the wages of their girl employees to nine dollars a week, and the trade unions are fighting this policy with but little success."—*The New Leader*, New York, April 18, 1925.

These extracts from the Labor press of Britain and America expose the utter futility of "organization" alone as a means to prevent the wages of workers in civilized countries from being forced continually lower and lower. Lament is made by Mr. Graham that "the conditions are black and there is no relief in sight." But he makes no suggestion to help his readers out. The comment of the writer in *The New Leader* who quotes him is that "Unemployment is by no means confined to the Western States. It is general, but little is being said by the newspapers about it. *The New Leader* will try to get more data regarding this miserable by-product of capitalism." What the editor of the paper in question expects to be able to do with that extra data should he obtain it we do not know, but it is certain that one who only sees unemployment as a "miserable by-product of capitalism" is in the same hopeless condition as the national administration, and unlikely, therefore, to contribute anything to the solution of the problem.

ONLY CIVILIZED WORKERS WORRIED OVER WAGES

It never occurs to these publicists to enquire how it comes to pass that it is only in "civilized" countries that such conditions obtain. Here in Britain there has just died one of the greatest capitalists the Socialists and trade

unionists have ever met. I refer to the late Lord Leverhulme, head of a combine with a capital of more than £156,000,000 and having its tentacles stretching out to all the known countries on the globe. Ever since his return at the beginning of March from a tour of the world, in the course of which he inspected conditions in Nigeria, on the West coast of Africa, from the point of view of a would-be exploiter of cheap native labor, Lord Leverhulme had been complaining in public of the economic situation he found in that country. "There is in Nigeria," he told us, "a population of twelve millions, excellent soil, wonderful sunshine and rainfall, in fact everything suitable for the production of cotton. All that is needed is organization."

To the capitalist "organization" is a polite word for exploitation. To the trade union Boss it means the same. And in each case it is Labor that gets the "organization."

Lord Leverhulme complained that "Englishmen are prevented from buying land from willing natives," and said that "the European capitalist will not supply organization so long as he is prevented from buying land outright."

He was quick to discover that exploitation is not possible there because the blacks are masters of the situation; they can—and actually do—refuse to work for wages. Unorganized though they be, they do not worry over wages, and when they do consent to serve the white capitalist, it is only after the said capitalist has offered them an inducement to do so. Now, as the only inducement any employer can offer is good conditions and wages, it follows that there can be no exploitation of labor. There is no rush of 200 men for 50 jobs. Actually more than 200 jobs call out for 50 men, and so these are able to choose employers and thus fix wages for themselves. Lord Leverhulme was quite right. Once let the system of land holding common to civilized countries be established in Nigeria, and the organization of slaves by trade union bosses will quickly follow, and another acute observer of conditions will have to report that "wages are going down and shop conditions are becoming poor."

For some unaccountable reason the poor slaves do not see this thing as clearly as do the capitalists. The trade union boss is concerned only with "organizing." The slaves are to be marshalled into unions, and counted as so many members "good on the books." The average boss has a vision limited to the superficial area of a union card. Cause and effect mean nothing to him, and so he goes on his way reporting to his members from time to time of the negotiations with the employers over hours and wages—but all the while the "wages are going down and conditions are becoming poor."

There is no avoiding this result so long as the fight is over wages.

WHAT WAGES REALLY ARE

Unfortunately the workers are often very hazy as to what "wages" really are. Generally they think of these in

terms of money—dollars or pounds—and count their wages high or low according to the number of these money tokens received for the work done, or service rendered. The man getting five dollars for his day, is apt to consider he is getting a rise should the number of dollars be increased to six. Conversely, should the number be reduced, he feels aggrieved because of the fall in his wages. This is quite a mistaken concept. A man's wage is not to be reckoned in money but in goods. Money is simply a measure of value, and its possession gives a command or call on wealth. It is the nominal wage; the real wage is the sum total of wealth, i.e., food, clothes, and the thousand and one things that man needs for his sustenance and comfort, that he is able to get in exchange for the money wage. To put it another way; a man's real wage is measured by the purchasing power of the printed paper or metal coins that he draws. If this is kept in mind it will easily be seen that there is all the difference in the world between money wages and real wages.

Under free conditions i.e., where men are able to employ themselves instead of having to work for some other person for a wage, a man's wage will be the whole of his product. This is the natural wage, and should be the reward of every worker. In Nigeria, for instance, there is no argument over wages, nor does the "cost-of-living" affect the matter of it in any way. Every worker being free to work on his own account, naturally none will work for an employer for a wage lower than he could earn working for himself. It is only where the workers are "organized" that we find them begging for a "living wage," and pleading the cost of living, instead of demanding the full product of their toil.

The "cost-of-living" argument is a dangerous one. In Great Britain, during the war, this was the chief argument employed by the trade unions when seeking to raise the money wage of their members. It was successful, or at least, so it seemed to those who were not able to think it out. Money wages went up, but the real reason for this lay in the fact that there was a shortage of labor; men were scarce and their price rose, as did the price of everything else. As prices of commodities soared, we heard more of the cost-of-living talk in the bargaining between employers and the unions. When at length prices began to ease, the employers were quick to point to the fact and demand a fall in wages. The unions were furious, but that made no difference, wages kept on falling, until today the drop in the weekly wage bill is measured in millions of pounds. This was only to be expected, and the workers found it impossible to resist their own arguments when these were being used against them. Logically, if a rise in the cost of living be a good reason for an increase in the money wage, then a fall in that cost is an equally good reason for a reduction. There is no escape from it. The mistake lay in adopting a false basis of wage standard.

THE TRUE BASIS FOR THE WAGE

At this moment discussion in certain trade union circles is turning on the question whether married men should be paid a higher wage than single men. Of course, it is not suggested that the extra wage should be in the nature of a reward for the man's courage in venturing into matrimony, but in recognition of his "having a family to keep." This is just where the argument for a "living wage" goes wrong again. The true basis of any man's wage is the value of the service rendered, or the wealth produced by him. His needs have nothing whatever to do with the case. If a man by working for a week, for instance, produces wealth to the value of say—fifty dollars, then by every canon of justice and equity, his wage should be fifty dollars. The inequity and absurdity of the cost-of-living basis will be apparent if we suppose two men engaged upon precisely similar work, and producing equal value by their labor. "A" finds that it costs him to live according to his standard of comfort let us say, forty dollars. "B" is a man of very simple tastes whose wants are few. He can manage on twenty dollars. To be logical, assuming the cost-of-living basis, there should be a corresponding difference in the wage paid—which is absurd! Obviously, the value of the work is the only sound basis.

WHY WAGES ARE LOW

I have said that the whole of a man's product is his natural wage. It will not be necessary to take up space in attempting to prove that the worker in civilized communities does not get that wage. The following will help to explain why this is so. I will suppose that in order to satisfy my hunger, I go to a stream and catch a fish. Actually I have applied my labor power to natural resources, and wealth has resulted. I have produced the fish. If the stream be open, I have the whole fish as my wage. Now, in civilized communities, the stream will be "owned" by some Land Lord, who will demand rent for permission to work. Note that he will not assist me in any way; he merely allows me to work. As there is no fund from which I can pay the rent apart from what I earn by my work, it follows that I have to let the Land Lord take the first cut of my fish. Naturally, having the power of choice, he takes the prime portion, or middle bit, and my wage is reduced. Another worker appears and seeks work. Competition for land—natural resources—is set up, and, in consequence of the increased demand, the Land Lord raises rent, i.e. he asks, and gets, a larger portion of my fish. I am left with the head and tail as my wage.

Follow this out for yourself, reader, and you will not fail to see the implications. While natural resources are "owned" those who own them can always take the first slice from the fish.

But this is not all. In addition to the rent taken by the Land Lord, there is the taxation taken by the State. This is just another slice from my fish, for I cannot make any pay-

ment except from the wealth that my labor produces. If I do not labor, then I must obtain wealth from those who do, before I can pay. Lady Astor, M.P., once declared in the British Parliament that she "Liked paying Income Tax." Of course, she only goes through the motions of paying. When she draws her cheque it would be mere worthless paper were it not for the toiling denizens of the Astor estate, who labor to catch fish so that the Astors may take their slice of rent. These are they who really pay her tax. And, in short, it is always and only those who are engaged in productive labor that make possible any payment whatever. But this fact is often lost sight of by the workers. They feel that their wages are low, but do not know why this is so.

If the distinction between real and nominal wages is kept in mind, it will be a simple matter to see that anything that raises prices reduces real wages. A man may actually be receiving higher money wages and, yet, owing to decreased purchasing power through increased prices, be getting a lower real wage. If ten dollars will furnish me in food for a week at one time, and prices rise until I have to pay twenty dollars for the same amount of food, then it is plain that my real wage has fallen to the extent of that increase. Similarly, if I should be able to obtain for ten dollars what previously cost me twenty, I shall have had a rise in wage although the figure on my weekly pay check will have remained the same.

Tariff taxes reduce wages. So do the profits added by the dealers who handle the taxed goods while these are on their way to the consumer. Government schemes of road-making in order to find work for the unemployed reduce wages, since their cost has to be provided from national taxation. Every addition to taxation sends real wages down and, through reduced purchasing power, lessens the demand for commodities, and so adds to the volume of unemployment. Unless civilized peoples wake up to the facts it will not be long before they will be reduced to "eking out a precarious existence by taking each others' washing."

HOW PERMANENTLY TO RAISE WAGES

Wages are not fixed by trade unions, neither can they be fixed by legislative action. Organization has failed hitherto because it has not been intelligently directed. When the workers understand that it is always the unemployed man who, by his competition for the job, determines the wage, they will begin to seek the reason of his being unemployed. This, they will soon learn, lies in the power of the Land Lords to hold land out of use and so prevent men employing themselves. The example of Nigeria should teach them that in the restoration of common right of equal access to land, lies the solution of their wage problem. The Commonwealth Land Party points the way to this.

Collect the rent of all land and use the fund to pay for public services, and the natural resources will be restored to the people. The wealth-producer will retain the whole fish as his wage, less a small slice paid as rent for the use of natural resources; but this will return to him in public services, provided free of taxes and tariffs or other forms of plunder. Thus will wages rise to, and remain at, their natural level.

London, England.

—J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

Herbert Quick's Last Article

WE have the melancholy duty of presenting here the last article written by the late Herbert Quick. It will appear as a chapter in a work shortly to be issued by Will Atkinson, under the title of "The Henry George We Knew." To this work many hands will contribute, and the chapters will include not only articles from those who knew "The Prophet of San Francisco" personally but who sat at his spiritual feet and learned from the writings of the master the lesson of industrial emancipation. Herbert Quick was one of these and tells in the following of the debt he owed to Henry George.—EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM.]

My meeting with Henry George was in the spirit only; but I think it was as complete and intimate as it could have been had we met in the flesh. I was a young man, teaching school and studying law, I had lost all my real hope of any redemptive force in society which could abolish poverty and give all men equal chances according to their ability, and assure even the one most poverty-stricken in efficiency a certainty of necessities of life, given the possession of industry. In other words, I had adopted the gospel of economic gloom.

The reading of *Progress and Poverty* had a marvelous effect upon me. I passed through a phase somewhat like that described in old-fashioned revivals as "experiencing religion;" only my exaltation was based on a hope founded on logic. It changed my whole life. It was a barrier to advancement to the best places in my profession of the law, but it made my life richer in every other respect.

For forty years I have been searching for an answer to the social message of Henry George. I have made up my mind that only in his principles of population was he mistaken, but that he was even at that nearer right than the old Malthusians whom he so brilliantly attacked. I have grown to believe that with the economic perfection of our institutions which his programme would bring, an intelligence would surely be built up which would result in a balance between births and deaths, but that with the increase of poverty with the growth of society under our present system all the calamities which Malthus predicted will come upon us. So that George gives us the remedy or cure for the evil which he denied. The economic system George laid before the world has never been refuted, and is irrefutable.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that the first fervor of the

'80's has cooled, my conviction remains that the system must win eventually if civilization is to be saved. Socialism of the governmental sort is a dream as wild as it would be for a man to seek to control all his vital processes by his brain. The involuntary nervous system of society must control its activities in the main; and these could work under the Single Tax. We should obtain reform without revolution. It is this high faith in the slow perfectibility of society to the end that we shall win eternal social life, and not come to one of the smashes of civilization with the wrecks of which history is strewn; that I owe to Henry George.

—HERBERT QUICK.

A Parable on Economics

TWO honest men cooperated to produce food for themselves and their families;—for food is the fundamental necessity of life. One of these men did the work, and the other furnished the capital. The workman had to have strength, knowledge and skill to do his part. The capitalist was required to furnish materials, implements and tools which were needed. Operating thus together there was ample food produced for them and their families.

But there was a curious law in the strange country in which they lived. In producing their food they naturally had to have a place on which to stand and to operate; and under this curious law a third man was permitted to take from them one-third of the food which they produced, leaving the laborer and the capitalist only one-third each, instead of one-half, which they should have had. As a result they often quarreled over their shares; for neither had quite enough, especially when the processes of production were slow, as they were at times; and each thought he should have a little more.

But neither the laborer nor the capitalist was very bright, except in his own field of activity. They did not see that this third man was not needed; that he aided them in no way, that he furnished nothing and produced nothing, and was a mere parasite living upon them, and taking the food from them and their families. To be sure he used to say that he furnished them with the place on which to stand and operate; but that could not be true; for the place was always there from the beginning of the world.

Another strange fact was that the laborer and capitalist could have abolished the curious law referred to, and deprived the third man of his privilege, and thus could have secured to themselves and their families each one-half of their joint production of food. But they have not yet reached that plane of intelligence, although there is some evidence that their children or grandchildren will do so.

—JOHN HARRINGTON.

DOUGLAS JERROLD listening to the interminable argument from a clergyman about the great evil of the time being the surplus population, exclaimed impatiently, "Yes, the *surplice* population."