

What is Wrong with the World—The Cause and the Logical Remedy.

THE trouble with the world today is that it lacks perception, vision, light. Men cannot strive for that which they do not know exists and is attainable. No sculptor could ever carve from a block of marble a form of grace and beauty who did not first perceive that form within the uncut stone; nor can the world of God's creating be realized as an accomplished fact until it is first perceived in thought; seen mentally in all its peace and harmony; when this is done nothing can prevent the gradual unfolding of this beautiful conception until God's purpose stands revealed. Man is not a maker; he is an explorer, a discoverer. If man has vision, it is because there is something to be perceived; if he has intelligence, it is because he reflects this quality of mind from Him who possesses all intelligence.

LOOKING BACKWARD, NOT FORWARD

In the progress of our civilization we have developed many specialists: doctors, lawyers, engineers, physicists, chemists, and so on; and when we need knowledge in any of these fields we unhesitatingly consult these specialists; but we have not yet realized the need of specialists who are qualified to look forward into the future and lead us unerringly to the solution of those problems which are incident to the advancement of the human race out of darkness into light. Such specialists must recognize that their business is to discover those natural, moral, and spiritual laws which un-failingly operate at all times and which must be implicitly obeyed.

In the domain of physics, chemistry, electricity, mathematics, men recognize the existence of natural laws and instinctively realize that these laws cannot be defied; but they have not yet recognized the fact that natural laws govern in every department of human experience as truly as in the sciences mentioned above, and that when these natural laws are discovered and written in our statute books in place of the so-called man-made laws, which have no validity or force in science, then will wars cease and peace be assured.

SLAVES OF PRECEDENT

Most of the men who are looked upon as leaders in the art of self-government are lawyers, and yet one of the characteristic qualities of the legal mind is to look backward for human precedents to sustain its position and rulings, rather than to look forward for light. Imagine a man riding a horse and looking backward, the mariner on board ship keeping his brightest lookout astern, or a man driving an automobile and facing the road over which he has just passed; could anything be more stupid or impractical? Apparently the jurists have not yet discovered the spiritual law which is always operative and which causes man to

become like what they gaze upon. If the art of self-government is ever to become a science we must face in the direction in which we move and look earnestly on those things which we hope to achieve; we must face the problem of the salvation of the race and the attainment of peace through *law* and not by conference.

It may be claimed that this is idealism which is altogether impracticable under our form of representative government; if this is so, then our form of government will have to be changed or national stability will be lost. There is no good reason, however, why men elected to public office should not give the best that is in them to the public service. It is not necessary that they should be returned to office again and again after their terms have expired; but if they have done the best they could do their chances for return are not impaired thereby. If the legislators are to continue to look backward like the jurists, there can be no hope for the race except through revolution and chaos; and this is indeed the case so far as the signs of the times can be read.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

The pressing problem to be met and solved today is the economic problem, and this can only be solved through a recognition of the natural laws which govern the production and distribution of wealth, conforming our customs and practices to the demands of these laws as soon as they are known. Now these laws never change and they are as old as the universe, and there never has been a time since the beginning of the present age when they were not known by somebody and recorded where they can be found. Even if this were not so they are as simple and plain as the law of gravitation and can be recognized by anyone of average intelligence. Take the case of the new born babe; when this little stranger comes into our material world the same force and the same natural law which is operative to bring him here is also operative to provide sustenance for him; and so it is when society is born, when an industrial commonwealth is brought into being; natural law, in the same instant when sustenance is needed, provides that sustenance in the value of land due to population. This value is not created by labor; is in no sense individual, and cannot belong to any person; it is created by natural law, and by natural law alone, for a specific purpose, and for that purpose alone; it comes with population and it disappears when population goes; and it as surely belongs to population as the shadow belongs to the tree that casts it, or the milk in the mother's breast to the babe. He who appropriates to his own personal use the sustenance created by nature for the express use of the community violates natural law; and he who violates natural law is more truly a criminal than he who violates statutory law, and his punishment is more certain and sure.

PARASITISM

In the English language we have a word for that species of organism which draws its sustenance from other organisms of the same kind rather than from organisms of a lower order, or direct from nature, in accordance with natural law. We call these peculiar organisms "*parasites*," and we have parasites in both the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and in the social world as well. Strange as it may seem some people admire the parasites of the vegetable kingdom, but abhor those of the animal kingdom, while the parasites of the social world are worshipped and adored. When we realize that *all parasites* are as detestable to the intelligent lover of justice as the species in the animal kingdom, that draws its sustenance from the bodies of other animals, we shall be well on the road to solve the questions which determine the attitude of the world for peace or war; for when we eliminate the social parasite we shall have solved the economic question and will be free from most of our perplexing problems. Now the laws governing the production and distribution of wealth are known as economic laws and these economic laws are largely embraced in what are known as laws of taxation; and to our laws of taxation the existence of the social parasite is due.

PARASITES THAT FASTEN ON ECONOMIC RENT

Our laws of taxation accomplish two things which, taken together, constitute class legislation of the most vicious sort because it makes inevitable a wealthy class that draws its sustenance from economic rent, or the income from the value of land due to population; and a poor class on which these parasites subsist and which is compelled to support them in idleness (a state devoid of productive labor) in addition to providing for itself. The first of the above mentioned things is the recognition of private property in land, an institution which is just as immoral as chattel slavery, because it recognizes the right of landlords to appropriate for their own use the fund created by natural law for the sustenance of the community, which misappropriation creates the social parasite. The second thing is the replacement of this natural fund, which has been alienated from its proper use, by means of unnatural and unjust taxation on all property, on consumption, industry and thrift. In the history of the world no laws of taxation were ever instituted or enforced that were more pernicious in their effects on civilization, more destructive of happiness, or more productive of discontent. Here is to be found the cause of the general unrest felt throughout the world today, and this unrest will culminate in the only thing it possibly can produce, revolution and chaos, unless the proper remedy is applied.

A remedy however is waiting which fully recognizes the demands of natural and moral law. This remedy was first taught by Jesus in conversation with Peter, the record of which is found in Matt. XVII, 24-27. It is evident from the record here found that the legitimate source of public revenue is not a tax on labor, or industry, or thrift; but that such income is provided from a fund created by natural

law that is available for nothing else. The piece of money taken from the fish's mouth was typical of the operation of this law.

THE IMPOT UNIQUE, OR SINGLE TAX

Again, in France, before the great revolution, a band of Frenchmen, known as Physiocrats, discovered this law and attempted with the aid of the king to save the social situation by putting it into effect. They were prevented from accomplishing their purpose by the special interests in power, and this failure was followed almost at once by the French revolution, which sent many of the privileged class to the guillotine. It is probable, and in the minds of many practically certain, that had this attempt been successful the French revolution would never have occurred.

Again, in our own time and in our own country, this law was discovered and fully expounded by Henry George, who gave to his discovery, or rather to his remedy for the social injustice produced through the violation of this law, the name "*Single Tax*." In writing of the Physiocrats and their clear perception of natural justice Henry George says (Political Economy, page 159): "Never, before nor since, out of the night of despotism, gleamed there such clear light of liberty."

A REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINE

The Single Tax is a revolutionary doctrine of the most pronounced type and yet it can be simply accomplished. The outstanding characteristics of this great reform are two in number: first, its absolutely scientific basic justice—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's"—and, second, the altogether beneficent influence which it exercises on society. In its transforming effect on society, on the human consciousness, it eliminates nothing but evil—and in this respect it makes a thorough house-cleaning—and besides it throws the door of the human consciousness wide open to innumerable blessings of which the consciousness of man never before dreamed.

THE NATURAL SOURCE OF INCOME

Suppose a man is engaged in business, he very naturally desires to be as near as possible to a dense population in order that he may have as many patrons as possible, as many customers as possible; in order that his business and its profits may be as large as possible. He realizes the desirability of a good site with respect to population because the population makes his business lucrative; the site has a money value and this money value is created by population and therefore belongs to the community. Anyone can see this and no honest man should object to the recognition of the fact, or unwilling to pay an equivalent value for value received. The site value of land, or the value given to land by population, is the natural source of income for the community, the only real source of income the community has; it is strictly in accordance with moral law and is dictated by intelligence. Under the operation of the Single Tax a man gets exactly what he pays for and nothing more, and he is entitled to this and nothing more in justice.

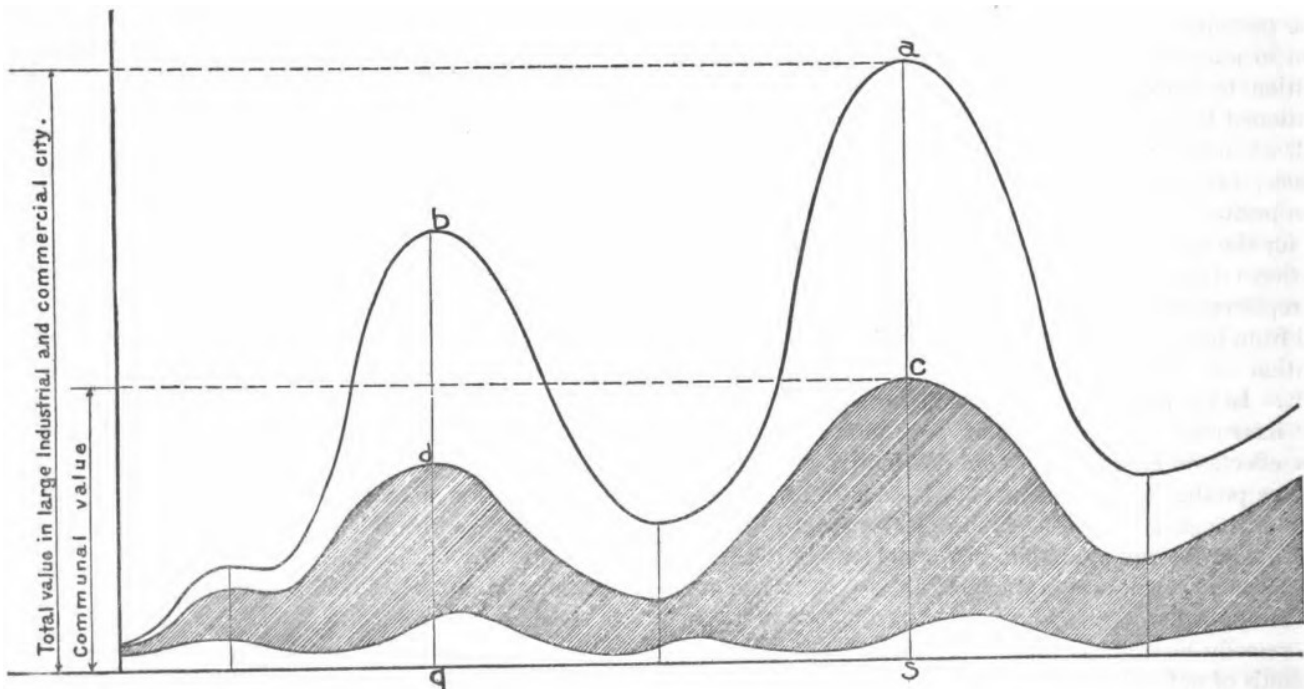
UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CÆSAR'S

Under the present method of taxation the selling value of land is its total value, made up of the site value, which belongs to the community, and the value of improvements. Under the operation of the Single Tax the community value is squeezed out and the selling price becomes the value of the improvements only, for naturally no man would consent to capitalize an investment which belongs to another and from which he could never hope to receive any benefit. The benefit received is paid for annually, as it is received, and this constitutes interest on the site value; it belongs to the community because the community creates the site value, and it should be paid to the community because justice demands it. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's."

ILLUSTRATING THE DIAGRAM

In the accompanying diagram s-a represents the total value of land and improvements in a large city. This total value is made up of three elements: the primitive or agricultural value of land, the communal value of the land, and the value of the improvements. In a modern city the first element can be neglected, since no agriculture is conducted in cities, and the only value of the unimproved land is the site value, which is given to it by population. In cities, therefore, there remains to be considered but *two* elements; the communal value and the value of improvements. The

principle of the Single Tax requires that ownership shall be the determining factor in matters of taxation; that is the first thing to be settled. In the matter before us for consideration the communal value, represented by s-c in the diagram, is created by population, and not by labor; it therefore rightly belongs to the community, while the value of improvements, represented by a-c in the diagram, is created by labor and therefore belongs to labor and *not* to the community. Having determined this the rest is simple. Let the community take what belongs to it and let labor have what belongs to it; all of it and nothing more, for this and nothing else is the demand of justice. Now let us see how this thing is going to work out in practice. Suppose s-c represents a value of \$6.00 per square foot. This value is created by the public, by population, and belongs to population, the public. It is a capital investment and the public is entitled to the full use of this capitalized value. To get this it becomes incumbent on the holder of the improvements, the occupier of this investment, to pay into the public treasury each year the full interest on this value of \$6.00 per square foot or, at 6%, 36 cents per square foot. The public is entitled to all of this and to *nothing else*. There remains to the holder the physical ground, the foundation, the land, and all his improvements no matter how elegant, no matter how valuable, all this remains, all that is the product of labor, *absolutely tax free*. He has all that he created and never can be taxed one penny for it; for this is what justice demands.



LOWER CURVE REPRESENTS PRIMITIVE OR AGRICULTURAL VALUE OF LAND.
 UPPER CURVE REPRESENTS TOTAL VALUE OF LAND TOGETHER WITH IMPROVEMENTS.
 SHADED AREA REPRESENTS COMMUNAL VALUE DUE TO POPULATION.
 AREA BETWEEN SHADED AREA AND UPPER CURVE REPRESENTS VALUE OF IMPROVEMENTS.

THE PLAN THAT MAKES FOR FREEDOM,

The Single Tax is an effectual remedy for nearly all social, political and economic evils. There is in this purely correct, scientific, scheme of taxation no tax whatever on any man or on anything that is his, but merely an appropriation by the community of its own community-made values. This plan, when adopted, will make for the millennium; it will remove all obstructions from the path of industry, all burdens from the people, and, being absolutely the basis of all morality, it will purify and simplify government; enhance human interest and brotherly love; make men honest; stop war, trickery, lying, cheating, crime; abolish armies, navies, police courts and jails; and furnish a sound basis from which true christianity can flourish, giving opportunity for the human mind to solve the higher problems of an ideal civilization.

An unjust system of taxation is the mother of all social, political, and economic evils; a just system of taxation constitutes the basis of all virtue. Kill the mother of evil by abolishing an unjust system of taxation and you lay the axe at the root of all evil.

HENRY L. PECKHAM.

Are We Really Mistaken? Mr. Hutchins Says We Are

IN the SINGLE TAX REVIEW for January-February, under the title, "Turning Over the Iceberg," you have given expressions that I consider great fallacies. You say:

"The effort to make government more truly representative of all the people would seem destined to failure so long as the great majority of the voters take but little interest in public questions. Too much stress is laid on the machinery for recording the public will, and not enough on the vastly greater importance of educating the electorate so that it will be able intelligently to pass upon the various issues submitted to its judgment."

I find two misstatements in these sentences. As a matter of fact people do take great interest in public questions. From the lowliest to the highest one can hear remonstrances against conditions under which existence is carried on, and denunciations of the political government that does not remedy them. What I guess you may mean is that so many of the voters fail to exercise their privilege of voting, but who can blame them?

Under present ballot laws the people have no means of impressing their wills upon their representatives. To make any effective use of the ballot they have only one choice of two alternatives; they must vote the Republican or the Democratic ticket, and it is pretty well established that it makes little difference which one they choose. Occasionally an able man comes forward with a principle that appeals to the majority of the people and is elected upon that single proposition, while he may misrepresent his constituents upon every other issue.

Likewise, let a demagogue play upon the self-interest of the majority, and in glittering generalities promise to

mend conditions, he is likely to be elected only to betray those who voted for him.

How can a voter, by selecting either one of the dominant parties, express his will on Volsteadism, Armaments, Tariff, or the Single Tax? The political machine selects the candidate, solely on the grounds of his ability to serve the party, and not as representative of any fundamental policy that is approved by the majority in his community.

It requires only a few and easily effected changes in the ballot laws to enable each voter to express his opinion on all fundamental questions, which opinion will be controlled by his self-interest. But you say the "plain people" are not competent to form an intelligent opinion. This is second fallacy. The most ignorant, as well as the most intelligent, knows full well what hinders his living a free life.

Every man is compelled to subserve his own self-interest, whether that interest is dominated by selfishness or altruism; whether his interest in prohibition is dominated by his desire for self-indulgence, or his notion that it is best for the public good. Now, when a consensus of the opinions of all the people, upon fundamental public policy, can be obtained, there will be a determination of the self-interest of the majority, which is the ideal of popular government.

Democracy may be defined as: Government by the well ascertained ambitions of the majority of the population.

Intelligence, as applied to the exercise of the franchise, does not lie in book learning; in the ability to get money; in theories of economics, or any other faith or science, but in the hard facts of experience. One man's experience is as educating as another's; it is only when all experiences are summed up that there is obtained sound judgment of the laws regulating human society.

It can readily be seen that the working of self-interest and experience, will produce the best government. Take the self-interest of the robbers, whether within or without the legal restrictions. It is evident that in their many divisions, they must be a negligible influence in any expression of public opinion. Then again, no matter how corrupt, how dishonest, how unjust, any person may be, he desires, for his own self-interest that all others should be incorrupt, honest, and just, and in consequence would so express himself at the polls.

Refraining from further arguments I submit that a democracy may be attained by these few changes in our ballot laws:

- (1) Entry upon the official ballot by petition, subscribed to by a sufficient number of qualified voters to assure a short ballot, containing only those propositions that have arisen to that importance which demands a decision.
- (2) Said petitions to set forth a definite proposition in clear unmistakable language, AND THE NAMES OF THOSE SELECTED BY THE PROPONENTS TO REPRESENT THE POLICY.

Thus securing the men, or women, best able to carry the policy into effect if it should be successful in the election. That this would improve the character of