

is President of a Chemical Company but one could wish that he were occupying a chair of economics somewhere in Pennsylvania.

Under the head of the question about Congress undertaking a survey of taxation with a view to studying its effects, Professor Seligman says that he approves the idea of studying taxation but then delivers himself of the one positive statement which appears over his signature in the pamphlet, "No tax can reduce the cost of living." Of course if he says so, we must regard it as final, but perhaps there is a court of appeal. Nevertheless, it is very discouraging.

On the question of paying off the bonds rapidly there is considerable agreement although some bizarre views are advanced. One jurymen contributes this interesting (?) thought. "The debt can be paid in goods only. Keep the goods in this country and the payment will make us truly prosperous. A high tariff will keep the goods here; because if they go out they can't come back."

The Great Steel Strike Its History Told by William Z. Foster

HAD not Mr. Foster written this work, "The Great Steel Strike (Huebsch, N. Y. City), the Foster of fiction might have survived the real Foster and continued to serve as a "bogie" to frighten the timid and ignorant who derive their knowledge of public men from the free and enlightened press of the country. It is true that Mr. Foster is the author, or was the author eight years before, of a pamphlet on Syndicalism, acquaintance with which we must at this time plead ignorance. We are concerned now only with the writer of this work, and shall consider him only as revealed in these pages.

IN THE LAND OF THE FREE

Mr. Foster tells the history of the great steel strike. But he tells much more. The steel industry employs half a million men. At a time when eight hours a day is rapidly coming to be accepted as the standard working day, the steel mills are operating on a twelve hour basis, and many of the workmen are employed seven days in the week. They are denied the right of bargaining collectively, and even the right of petition has in some cases been denied them.

In some towns the public officials, even the mayors, are officers of the companies, and here the right to hold meetings have been forbidden, notably in Bethlehem, Duquesne, Clairton, and other places. In many of these towns orders have been directly issued to the police to break up these meetings. The Company's influence is so great as to secure the co-operation of owners of halls and vacant lots to forbid the holding of workmen's meetings. Even the influence of the pulpit has been pressed into service in behalf of the steel monopolists, so that, regardless of the merits of particular disputes, "agitators" for the adjustment of difficulties between mill operatives and mill owners have been roundly denounced by "ministers of the gospel."

Professor Johnson advances the interesting thought that war bonds should be paid out of the proceeds of site value taxation. Another jurymen's attitude is that "Prosperity should be required to bear a large proportion of the war debt." Evidently his favorite Scripture text is "The sins of the father shall be visited on the children, even to the third and fourth generation." Another jurymen thinks that the payment of the war bonds should be passed on to future generations as a *reminder*, he does not say of what.

On the whole the perusal of this mass of fragmentary opinions leaves one in a dubious frame of mind as to the future. There were among the jury a considerable number of men, whose names are known to Single Taxers, as sympathizers if not avowed believers. Naturally their votes and explanations have some resemblance to each other but for the rest, there is little evidence of intelligent comprehension of the issues involved. And yet it must be remembered that the jury was composed of persons supposed to have some economic knowledge.

ECONOMIC TERRORISM

The air of these places is charged with espionage and repression. Over all, paralyzing initiative and public spirit, rests the oppressive power of the great Steel Monopoly which exercises its influence through every channel of public information. It is an economic terrorism which surpasses anything exerted in feudal times, or under political despotisms. Here in these great Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Ohio exists this invisible government—an *imperium in imperio*—which sets at naught the promise held out to the poorest of our citizens under our form of government of succeeding to that measure of independence possible to the exercise of such powers as he may possess.

To throw off this monstrous influence, this tyrannous power corrupting the Commonwealth and enslaving the individual, was begun the great industrial protest which this book essays to tell. And here is what the men, unless they were willing to consent to the condition of slavery, must meet in the contest that ensued—an alliance of the Steel Companies with the State, the courts, the press, the pulpit, and the police and State Constabulary. Meeting these forces in a test of endurance the strike failed. After three months and a half the men were compelled to return to the old slavery, now generations old, twelve hours a day, with such wages as are determined by individual bargaining for employment, for they were forced to surrender their union cards. And this at a time when in England, France, Italy, and even in Germany, the steel workers have a voice in the control of the industries in which they are engaged.

TOLD WITHOUT PASSION

Mr. Foster has told the story of the intolerable situation leading up to the strike of 1919. He has told it well, and without any more passion than seems justified to one who

represented and was himself a victim of the policy of tyranny and repression of which this strike was the outcome. He tells the history of the Hannibal strike which, like the strike of 1919, was a bitter defeat for the men, as was a subsequent "walk out." Always and everywhere the men were beaten, with nothing to show for their heroic self-denial, their sacrifice and the sacrifices of those dependent on them.

Though we suspect that Mr. Foster's reputation as a bold, bad labor leader has been deliberately manufactured by the press of the country, it is true that he uses militant phrases in this work. Incidents of the prolonged struggle are referred to as "battles." But what else are they? It is war, and war from which all chivalrous sentiments, so far as the companies and their supporters are concerned, seem to have departed. We have the spectacle of one of the steel trust mayors of one of the towns (Duquesne) challenging one of the organizers of the workers to personal combat. The same mayor said he would not allow Jesus Christ to speak in Duquesne for the A. F. of L. It does not appear from a careful perusal of Mr. Foster's work, though reading like a report from the battle line, that he accepts the analogy that is suggested. Though the workers who raised their voices were discharged, blacklisted, starved, beaten, jailed, and in some cases shot, it does not appear that the evident conclusion drawn from the situation is insisted upon. Though, after all, what can be clearer than that these forces meet for battle, and that the logical apprehension must regard it as a conflict of two forces which must result in the final capitulation or utter destruction of one side or the other?

A WORD WITH MR. FOSTER

May we address these few words to the author of this book. You, Mr. Foster, have told the story of this heroic struggle. It must be a calloused heart indeed whose sympathy you have failed to enlist by this thrilling narrative which, as we have said, reads like a report from the battle line. War indeed it is, but what an unequal war! On one side are all the forces of power, State, courts, police, press and church, and above all (what Mr. Foster does not see) the ownership of the natural resources. On the other hand the "ragged army" of the workers armed with only their power to labor. How unequal the struggle!

And this army of workers—what do they seek as the supreme goal of victory? *The power to talk with their masters as to the terms of wages and hours of employment.* And that is all!

We have said that Mr. Foster has been regarded as a revolutionist. He is supposed to advocate the seizure of all these means of production and distribution. He does not even hint at such eventuality. But if he has no other remedy, if he does not aim at the ownership of natural resources by the workers of the world in the exercise of their rights in the earth, then this is the only remedy he can offer. Victory can come to either side only by the total surrender or destruction of the other. The State, the police, the army must be overcome and the workers seize the power.

The labor struggle is a struggle for power, and therefore not a struggle for right. With victory to the workers and their leaders power passes, but is not changed in kind. Nor is there the faintest assurance that this power will be exercised in the spirit of equity. What is sought is only a transfer of power. For a dictatorship of land and capital we are asked to exchange a dictatorship of labor, plus land ownership and capital.

WHY NOT STRIKE AT THE SOURCE OF POWER?

What interest have the people in a solution such as this? Betrayed by our sympathies we take the side of the workers because it is the weaker side. But change the relations, and where do the people come in? This monopoly of natural resources, the ownership of the coal and iron lands on which the real power of the steel corporation rests—all the ramifications of power possessed by these gigantic combinations based upon the ownership of the earth—remain.

We find no intimations that Mr. Foster, despite his reputation as a bold, bad labor leader aims even at collective ownership of these mills. All he seems to contend for is the right of labor to bargain for better terms of employment. How pitiful it is! The earth belongs to these men and to us. It is the source of power, the only real source. The right to bargain on better terms rests on this power. In place of destroying it, we are asked merely to transfer it. Labor shall now be vested with the exercise of all this great and monstrous power. Or there shall be a compromise in which the power by no means disappears, but is vested in two elements of the people by compromise between labor and capital. Is this a solution that Mr. Foster approves? Is it one that the people when they shall arrive at sane conclusions will sanction?

The New Hero

SURELY, one so characteristically an individualist as the Single Taxer will not begrudge a word of praise for those who by dint of ability and sheer devotion to the cause become its leaders. For forty years the movement has been led by self-sacrificing men and women of ability. We have not hesitated to express our admiration for their bigness of heart and our appreciation of their work.

It is true that some of us differed with these leaders in their selection of methods. And it must be admitted that from the light of later experience the methods employed by our heroes of the past do not seem to have been chosen wisely. For the failure of our movement to progress more rapidly must be attributed only to the means of propaganda employed; it cannot be that our philosophy is unsound. The error, for instance, of temporarily subordinating the Single Tax and urging initiative and referendum measures for limited Single Tax, can only be realized now after the fight was made and it was found that the results did not warrant the effort.

Thirty years were given by earnest leaders to "boring from within" in the ranks of the Democratic Party. That