

State Comptroller Travis In His Great Travesty, "The Cave Man"

STATE COMPTROLLER TRAVIS has issued a little blue pamphlet, the title of which is "Would you be a Cave Man?" It is an attempted justification for the taxes the law now levies. The assumption is that if we did not levy these taxes we would revert to the condition of the Cave Man.

We pass over the statement that "the Cave Man got mighty little out of life." We don't know and we do not believe that Mr. Travis knows. It is conceivable that the Cave Man might have got a good deal out of life. His mental processes are hidden from us and he has left few or no records. Mr. Travis says "he received no remuneration for his labor." The remuneration of labor is the product of labor, and the Cave Man got that, didn't he? We are told that "he suffered bitter cold in Winter." So have we this Winter, but the Cave Man grew a nice hairy covering which protected his hardy frame almost as comfortably as the more or less steam-heated flats protect the man and woman of the city.

Here is the analogy which Mr. Travis seeks to establish. We tax our incomes to provide ourselves with "creature comforts;" and we do it cheerfully. We should as cheerfully tax our incomes for the advantages and comforts which government has furnished. A very pretty analogy, and as false as most reasoning from analogy is. For Mr. Travis must, in order to make his analogy rest on solid ground, fortify it with this statement: "The benefits from the government tax flow equally to all those who dwell in the community."

Does Mr. Travis believe that? If he does, his friend the Cave Man, could teach him better. For without these things the land inhabited by the Cave Man had no value. Mr. Travis has forgotten one advantage he had over the modern man. He didn't pay rent to any other Cave Man. Then along came government, with the benefits that Mr. Travis has enumerated—and the Cave Man discovered that he had to pay some landlord for the benefits conferred by society and government. It is idle to tell us that these benefits follow equally to all, for they do not. All these benefits increase land value, and we do not participate equally in the enjoyment of land values.

But that question, "Would you be a Cave Man?" There are times when we think we would. For half of the discomforts which Mr. Travis has mentioned were not discomforts at all. "He had no hot water to wash in." Think how the Cave Man would have laughed at the idea of washing in hot water during the few times he needed to wash at all, living the life he did. "He had no telephone." Well, he escaped that annoying experience. "He suffered from many diseases, which have been wiped out under modern government." But he lacked many of the diseases which

civilization has introduced. "He had no stove to cook his food." Has Mr. Travis ever eaten a meal cooked in the open over a brush fire?

But why go on? Of course, civilization is desirable, and the condition of the Cave Man undesirable—but for hardly any of the reasons which Mr. Travis gives. Civilization is desirable because of the greater social, intellectual and moral advantages which arise. But with these arise also the means of paying for them—and, new and curious as it may seem to Mr. Travis, paying for them *without a penny of taxes*. For land values are then called into being. They measure the utility value of government to a sufficient nicety. It is not because a man works and produces wealth and derives an income from his labor that he should pay for the services of government, but because land values flowing to him measure all that government is worth to him.

Mr. Travis thinks if a man gets any kind of an income he owes something to government. But he owes no more than the Cave Man, for it is not government but his labor that produces this income, if it is earned. Society has given him the advantages of co-operation, and his product is thus increased. This is reflected in land values. Society gives him railroads, telephones, telegraphs, etc. These help him to increase his income. But government does not give him these things, and he owes nothing out of his income from his labor to government in consequence.

Mr. Travis confuses society with civilization and government, and seems to think that what has transformed the Cave Man into the modern man are government and taxes, whereas the less we have of government and taxes the greater the income flowing to labor. Greater, too, the "creature comforts," and the more important things that differentiate the modern man from his cave-dwelling, tree-climbing ancestor.

But perhaps even the Cave Man would smile at a great State Government using the tax-payer's money to circulate a pamphlet like this, with its misleading conclusions, its *naïve* implications, and its humiliating confession that here is a State Comptroller who has apparently never heard that land values, and not individual incomes from labor, reflect the benefits of social and government service.

Selling Space in Cleveland

FOWLER AND WORMAN are real estate dealers in Cleveland. They advertise for men to sell lots. "Previous experience not essential." "Men who never sold anything are making \$1,000 per month." "They will make considerable (sic!) more when the selling season is fully under way."

Another real estate dealer, S. B. DuBain, advertising for help, says, "We have men who never sold real estate who have earned better than \$10,000 last year."

The Elworthy-Helwick Real Estate selling agency, also advertising for salesmen, tells of an agent whose "earnings" for one week netted \$217, and he had had no previous experience. This firm tells us a "Mr. J. V. B. joined the