

7-27-15
Editor,

The Public,

Ellsworth Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:

Up to the present time, as far as I know, attention has not been called to the confusion of thought and speech which makes no distinction between true property rights on the one hand and monopoly or special privileges on the other. Our most notorious public speakers and social welfare workers are continually harping on the statement that human rights must be put above property rights and they seem to sincerely believe that most of our social and economic ills arise from what they claim is the present habit of considering property rights more sacred than human rights.

True property rights and human rights are identical and coexistent. It is because we fail to recognize and protect true property rights that human rights suffer as they do and we have such dire poverty with all its attendant distress and evils. If we would stop confiscating by taxation a large part of what each individual earns by his own labor and ability, which represents a true property right, and tax instead the publicly created values, which we now hand over to a favored few and which do not represent any right at all but a special privilege, it would become, at once, evident that human rights and property rights are identical.

Under our present stupid and inhuman system of taxation, we certainly deprive the majority of the people of liberty, happiness and even life itself, by an indirect method of slow torture, in other words, by indirectly depriving them of their true property rights.

What our worthy friends are railing at is really the setting of special privilege above human rights and property rights. It is a tactical mistake to confuse special privilege with property rights, for the reason

that the majority of mankind desires to be just and they can see no justice in depriving even a rich man of that to which the law entitles him, because of some morbid sentimentality. If, on the other hand, we can show that we desire to deprive no man of his rights but simply to insure equal rights to all, by a simple, natural and easily applied method, we shall gain the attention of many, who would otherwise look upon us as mere sentimentalists and cranks. It is most important that people desiring to bring about social and economic reform should think and speak clearly to the end that they may be more easily and clearly understood.

Yours truly,

(Signed) Edmund J. Burke

Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts,

July 27, 1915.

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