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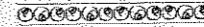
THE
RULE OF THE LAND

BY

JOHN E. GRANT.

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The Common Land is my own Land, equal with my Fellow Commoners; and our true property by the Law of Creation. *It is everyone's, but not one single one's.*

True Religion and undefiled is this: To make Restitution of the Earth, which hath been taken and held from the Common People. Do not all strive to enjoy the land? The Gentry strive for land; the Clergy strive for land; the Common People strive for land; and Buying and Selling is an Art whereby People endeavour to cheat one another of the land. Now if anyone can prove from the Law of Righteousness that the land was made peculiar to him and his successively, shutting others out, he shall enjoy it freely for my part. But I affirm, it was made for all; and true Religion is to let everyone enjoy it, and you shall find rest.

This is your very inward principle, O ye present Powers of England, you do not study how to advance Universal Love. If you did it would appear in action. . . . All this falling out and quarrelling among mankind is about the Earth, and who shall, and who shall not enjoy it, when indeed it is the portion of everyone, and ought not to be striven for, nor bought, nor sold, whereby some are hedged in and others hedged out. Far better not to have a body than to be debarred the fruit of the Earth to feed and clothe it. And if everyone did but quietly enjoy the Earth for food and raiment there would be no wars, prisons nor gallows.—WINSTANLEY (1650).

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The "Irish Fair" of History.

This passing epoch of physical and moral violence may be likened to the disorderly conditions in a thoroughfare, where the ignorant wayfarers, who do not know that they are ignorant, move about anyhow and anywhere without intelligent consideration for each other. "Unions of strength" form in the hostile environment for the purpose of hacking a way through the rabble, and these contend with each other for "Freedom of the Road."

So long as men in the street remain unenlightened as regards the Rule of the Road, "freedom" will have to be fought for. In like manner, chaos, manifested in the friction and the quarrelling among mankind about the Earth and its fruits, is due to our failure to observe the Rule of the Land. Until we learn to conform to this application of the Golden Rule, "freedom" will have to be fought for, and millions will continue to perish by war, pestilence and famine.

The Rule of the Land.

The economic rent of land is the rate by which individuals measure the desirability of living within the jurisdiction of any community or nation. In districts remote from society, where there is no social service or government, solitary individuals live rent free. The difference between the social value of living in solitude and the value of living in society manifests itself in site value, which is the measure of government.

Security of tenure is essential for the encouragement of private enterprise and the conservation of property which individuals are justly entitled to, and there is no security of tenure so long as ground rent finds its way into private pockets. The Rule of the Land is that the economic rent which is common property should be aggregated into a balancing or common fund and returned in equal portions to

all members of the society or nation in some suitable way, as, for example, by being devoted to common needs as determined at any time by the whole people themselves, thus encouraging public enterprise.

Until the common right to the earth is asserted by the taking of the public rent by the people, abolishing for ever the power of individuals to buy and sell site value, it is inevitable that citizens will continue to be robbed by private and public banditti of what is private property. Private and public enterprise will also continue to be discouraged, and experience has abundantly demonstrated that until we conform with the Natural Law of Equity, with regard to land tenure, there is no escape from niggardly production and unfair exchange.

What is Taxation?

Mr. James R. Brown, an American writer, succinctly describes our present unscientific system of collecting municipal revenue:

"Taxation is the collection of payment for public services. By public services we mean streets, sewers, lights, police, schools, etc. Public services should be paid for as all other services are paid for, that is, according to the value of the said services. The value of your house, furniture, garage, auto, etc., is not and cannot be the measure of the value of the public services you have enjoyed. To tax a man on the value of his house as payment for public services is just like charging a man for a suit of clothes by the value of his auto. Taxing a man on the value of private services is simply taking private property for public use without compensation—in other words, stealing by due process of law.

"When a man builds, paints or improves his house, he pays for those services to the painter or the builder. Why, then, should he be called upon to pay for those services a second time to the town that did not build or paint—in fact, rendered no service, and delivered no goods? To increase a man's assessment, merely because he rendered a private service unto himself and, incidentally, to the public through improvement to the neighbourhood, is, to say the least, unreasonable.

"If your butcher, going past your door and noticing that you had painted or improved your house, went back to his shop and sent you a bill for twenty pounds of steak that he had not delivered, and did not intend to deliver, you would say that he was both a fool and a crook. Then, in the name of common sense, why should the town do a like foolish and dishonest thing?"

Nothing in our relationship with each other is of such far-reaching importance as taxation, or the collection of public revenue. It is the means whereby the door of

opportunity is opened or closed, yet we persist by means of taxation in choking industry, and by omission to collect what by right belongs to the community we place a premium upon idleness.

The prevailing concept we now have of the vital functions of taxation is that, requiring a certain amount of revenue, we, the State, should go out and seize it wherever it may be conveniently confiscated. There is a total disregard of the consideration of services rendered or of value received. Consequently, the State is at present merely a device enabling one section of the community to live upon the rest.

We have not deliberately committed this folly, but have drifted into a false position through ignorance of the fact that the so-called value of land is the measure of public services or government. Through omission to turn this value from private into public channels, by adjusting the incidence of taxation, we have given some the power to close the door of opportunity against others.

But it is decreed that in depriving our neighbour we inevitably deprive ourselves in due time. Nature abhors unequal opportunity, and we must live and let live. Given equal opportunity to the resources of Nature, wages, rents and prices would right themselves. There would be profuse production and loafers would no longer be enabled parasitically to live upon labourers.

The Futility of Quack Legislation.

Attempts to set matters right by quack legislation are comparable with the futile actions of people residing in a building the foundations of which have dangerously subsided. The subsidence may have been imperceptible at the commencement, but the house leans over so far now that the maladjustment can be denied no longer.

Instead of courageously facing the situation and carrying out a real reform, which daily becomes more urgent, the ill-informed occupiers waste precious time quarrelling with each other about symptomatic obliquities. They discuss the necessity of putting the pictures straight upon the wall and disagree about the means to be taken to prevent the furniture sliding along the floor.

Finding themselves "overpopulated" against one side of the house, owing to the slope of the floor, those crushed near the wall blame their neighbours whose weight they feel, whilst the "oppressors" peevishly curse the inconvenient struggles of the "much too many" for power. All the occupiers are consumed with fear and hatred; all are unhappy within the doomed structure, threatened with the periodic and increasing frenzies of the revolving factions.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel?"

Like leprous Naaman the Syrian, the quack legislators imagine that the terrible nature of our social disorders calls for something "much more effective" than conformation with the Golden Rule. They wish to be bid to do some great thing, and would "nationalise," by one magnificent financial operation, land and "the means of production," regimenting the workers under Commissions of Experts. For our social leprosy the inauguration of the Rule of the Land, which is square justice, seems too simple a remedy.

Yet in advocating glittering schemes of spurious Socialism these false prophets say the adoption of the Rule of the Land is impossible of realisation, because so many difficulties are in the way. The contentions of the quack legislators are thus mutually destructive. Beware of false prophets!

The remedy, like all real remedies, is a simple one. The difficulty lies in clearing away superstition. We see what we know.

Legislation is at any time the reflection of the common credence of a people, and education must precede legislation.

We must learn that Justice with Mercy—compassionate relief in the few cases of temporary hardship arising when the community resumes possession of its property—is the only way to dissolve conditions promoting fear and hatred.

The Dead Sea Fruit of Envy, Hatred and Malice.

So long as men and women believe that evil can overcome evil, and upon this moral violence base legislation, then bitter disappointment is bound to follow their enactments.

In Great Britain, in 1920, after a Peace of Vengeance, it was sullenly conceded that the Germans, who were said to be the real debtors, could not pay holders of Victory and Joy Loans without "dumping" commodities into the country, thus spoiling the market for the national profiteers.

The wolves of discord, who shrieked formerly at the thought of "Peace by Negotiation" and "open covenants openly arrived at," which would have preserved thousands of valuable lives, and which would have resulted in the National Debt being half what it eventually became, now turned their savage attention to other mischief. The superstitious idolaters of "Capital" said that the high prices were due to inflated wages, and they came into conflict with votaries of the rival deity "Labour," who contended that since burglars are put into prison for robbery, profiteers should be, at least, heavily fined.

The world being more unsafe for democracy than before the war, a greater army and navy establishment was needed

to keep order. Bureaucracy had presented the nation with several new broods of Civil Service tax-eaters, whose nourishment cost more than twice the pre-war imperial taxation. Although Germany as a supposed debtor was inconvenient, this was no reason why "the marauders at the rear" should have adopted as their debtors, instead, those who had already paid for the war in blood and labour, and call upon them to pay a second time with "interest."

It is not less remarkable to have to record that, possibly under the hypnotic influence of the usurers, this cool assumption should have been accepted "lying down." This hypnotism, if it did exist, must have been confirmed by the Fabian demagogues, who took the curious view that the landlords and idle-rich monopolists paid taxes, thus paying "interest" themselves upon the money they had so trustfully lent in the belief that the Germans would repay them!

Infamous Proposals.

As in ancient Egypt, like Joseph, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was deputed to tell the unfortunate people what to do in order to escape from financial disaster. Redemption necessitated the payment of fourteen hundred millions of pounds sterling per annum, or seven times pre-war imperial tribute. The Government must have new sources of "income."

"Divide and rule" is a maxim as well understood by modern Cabinet Ministers as by defunct Roman patricians. So occupied in mutual hatred were the factions that they fell easy victims of a colossal confidence trick. The Government had to find money somehow. So it was said.

The querulous newspapers, that complained of municipal rates, for which there was some return, if only to ground landlords, did not ask what value was received by the community for this heavy burden of imperial taxation. Not one inquired if the country had been at war with the right people, considering that it had been victorious!

The kill-joys found gratification in the increased taxes upon innocent amusements and harmless luxuries. Those who considered that the poor should contribute more out of bedraggled poverty had grim satisfaction in the imposition of increased "breakfast-table duties." The demagogues, in increased taxes upon incomes, thought they saw one step nearer their millennium of universal poverty. "Labour" noted with premature glee the wriggles of the Federation of British Industries, which weakly protested against the excess profits duties. What was the alternative? Would the manufacturers prefer a capital levy?

Evil cannot overcome evil. Labour, which had desired to see the profiteers in prison, was already there, its prison ration

wealth is possessed by the few, who profit according to their powers of obstruction? How can the nation redeem itself while incarcerated in a debtor's prison?

When a housebreaker is caught, he is punished once for his offence, but the builder, the clothier and the purveyor of necessities are punished perpetually. What encouragement is there for industry when it is treated as a criminal offence against the community?

The hollow minds echoing "Produce more" to-day will be reverberating "Overproduction" to-morrow (1921), as the morass of poverty creeps in upon the people, clambering high upon each other's backs. Farmers, manufacturers and captains of industry, who declaim against high wages, discover eventually that their existence depends upon purchasing power being well distributed throughout the population.

A millionaire cannot consume more bread than a mechanic, and a duchess cannot eat more pickles than a washerwoman!

Seeing the monopolist waxing fat upon the extreme necessities of his fellows, undergrown minds, obsessed with the narrow mania of owning things, imagine that for exchange to be profitable the seller must get from the buyer a greater measure of value of services than he gives in return. In fair exchange, which is the only profitable exchange, there is a bargain for every party. Fair exchange is no robbery.

In fair exchange, competition is manifested in cordial co-operation to serve consumers, who feel themselves bound to reciprocate. But when production and exchange, are made the vehicles of taxation, producers are handicapped, and competition is a selfish scramble in which everyone is for himself or herself. Some get something for nothing, while inevitably others get nothing for something. Hell is let loose, and the haves call in the police and the military to rescue them from the fury of the have-nots.

Instead of "a land fit for heroes to live in" of peace, plenty and happiness, there is, in a beautiful, fertile country full of natural resources, a terrible struggle for existence in which the weakest go to the wall and the strongest do not survive. Infant mortality increases, deaths from starvation, disease, immorality, despair, murder and the gallows swell the "wave of crime."

Labour, without vision, Lazarus-like, pleads for crumbs from the rich man's table, or "the endowment of motherhood by the State." It is appropriate that among their harmless May Day resolutions should be included one in favour of "the institution of State support for the blind." Is not every child endowed with an equal inalienable right to its Motherland? Why not resume possession of the common inheritance, if only for the sake of the children?

There would then be no need for the unions to restrict their numbers, for the members to restrict output and refuse admission of ex-Service men into industrial trades. It is the dread of unemployment and attendant depressed wages that causes them to act in this way.

But Labour has not seen the easy solution, and the leaders are blind leaders of the blind. Upon the erroneous assumption that profiteering can overcome profiteering, the Unions combine against the trusts and try to raise wages by force or "control" industry by "direct action." They go on strike "to reduce the cost of living." Alas, for Dead Sea fruit!

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Neither Capital nor Labour appears to know what it wants, and each gets what it cares for least. The labourers in the temple of Capital advocate freedom for private enterprise and choke private enterprise by Trusts. Trying also to serve God and Mammon, the labourers in the rival denomination of Labour demand freedom, and condemn private enterprise because they associate private enterprise with the Trusts.

As in a trance, following a glittering mirage of superstition, Capital and Labour are combining, without knowing what they do, in the setting up of a super-trust, in which there will be "discipline—iron discipline for all." It is the rigidity that precedes an orgy of "Bolshevism."

The folly is called "Socialism," and such measure as we now suffer is the origin of all our calamities of niggardly production and unfair exchange. In spurious Socialism, which is a denial of the natural right of men and women to themselves and the reward of their labour, do we find the origin of class hatred and strife.

Humanity before Property.

"Property in land, like property in slaves, is essentially different from property in things that are the result of labour. Rob a man or a people of money, or goods or cattle, and the robbery is finished there and then. The lapse of time does not, indeed, change wrong into right, but it obliterates the effects of the deed. That is done; it is over; and, unless it be very soon righted, it glides into the past, with the men who were parties to it, so swiftly that nothing save omniscience can trace its effects; and in attempting to right it we should be in danger of doing fresh wrong. The past is for ever beyond us. We can neither punish nor recompense the dead. But rob a people of the land on which they must live and the robbery is continuous. It is a fresh robbery every succeeding generation—a new robbery every year and every day; it is like the robbery which condemns to slavery the children of the slave. To apply to it the Statute of Limitations, to acknow-

ledge for it the title of prescription, is not to condone the past; it is to legalise robbery in the present, to justify it in the future" (Henry George).

Failing to differentiate, Capital has attempted to establish sacred rights of the individual to that which is everyone's but not one single one's. It has thereby tended to obscure the sacred right of the individual to his or her own property. Labour in similar confusion has tried to abolish private property in things that are the result of labour, and is stricken with chronic poverty because it is a party to robbery.

The labourers of the denomination Capital, like those of Labour, are heavily mortgaged in national, municipal and business debts to the usurious financiers. They are sinking continually and increasingly into the surrounding morass of poverty, because of their superstition, and the moneylenders on their backs go with them. Liberty Bonds, Land and Housing Bonds condemn to slavery the children of the slave. Those who enslave are themselves slaves. We *must* live and let live.

Unions of Labour, Trusts of Capital, Leagues of Nations, instituted for the purpose of "controlling" wages, prices and peoples, are impotent, inasmuch as they fail to conform with Natural Law. They attempt to build a dam of Power and Might against the operation of economic and moral laws. The pressure of necessity accumulates against their little propositions, and the God-Nature disposes that they shall be swept away in catastrophic chaos.

If we would avoid complete disaster, we must open the sluices. Is this remedy too simple? There is no other!

When humanity is placed before property, the sacred rights of humanity are respected. The earnings of the labourer are not then confiscated by means of compulsory taxes upon industry. The State or society of individuals collects its own property, which is the economic rent of land, a communal value separate from the wages of individuals or the prices of commodities.

Privilege gives way to equality of opportunity, and the bodies of men, women and children are not violated, nor their souls destroyed. The sacred right of individuals to themselves is apparent when the common right to the earth is asserted.

"Moral duty consists in the observance of those rules of conduct which contribute to the welfare of society, and by implication of the individuals who compose it.

"The end of society is peace and mutual protection, so that the individual may reach the fullest and highest life attainable by man. The rules of conduct by which this end is to be attained are discoverable—like the other so-called laws of Nature—by observation and experiment, and only in that way" (Huxley).

Industry cannot redeem itself whilst in Prison.

The lessons of the past have surely been severe enough to expose the folly of that quack legislation which would pile up heavier debt for the robbery of posterity. Give the labourers of mind and brawn room to work in and materials to work upon, and they would soon divest themselves of the loafers now being carried upon their backs. Work would become so pleasurable that no man or woman would be idle. They would work as children play, and no compulsion would be necessary.

It is a fact of common observation that persons who have been for a long period in prison lose in some measure the desire for freedom, especially if they have passed middle age. When the debtors' prisons were abolished in England, some of the poor old prisoners had almost to be driven away. Others came back after a while and asked if they might linger in the cage for the sake of old times. The delights of freedom soon, however, superseded this unnatural shyness in freer surroundings, and they were seen no more by their late keepers.

This psychological curiosity may explain why the senile "Aristocracy of Intellect" and the leaders of Labour, whose desire to replace the existing keepers is notorious, wish to remain in prison, and why they oppose so fiercely a policy which would open the sluice-gates of freedom. Many of them know that, given economic freedom, the labourer will be independent, able to walk upright, fearing no man.

The institution of the Rule of the Land does not mean that the present useful occupiers of land will be disturbed, but on the contrary that their discomforts will be dissipated, and their title to real private property strengthened. The abolition of taxes upon improvements means the restoration of property to its owner.

No one retains land, not using it and paying rent for it. Unwanted land is relinquished after a short period, when to retain it is a burden. It follows, therefore, that when the Rule of the Land is in operation the source of wealth will be made available to everyone on equal terms. The weak will no longer be handicapped in favour of the strong.

Profuse Production follows Emancipation of Industry.

The readers of former chapters will have no difficulty in visualising the effect of the change. After an Appointed Day upon which the rent of our estate is demanded, the activities awakened will resemble those occasioned at the outbreak of a great war, except that it will be a joyous jubilee and not a feverish display of forced optimism. It will be as though a great weight were removed from the springs of industry. A few persons may continue for a while to have misgivings, but as the benefits appear they will be reconciled and won over.

There will be a great and increasing demand for labour, and no one willing and able to work will be unemployed. So much requires to be done that is scotched in the present circumstances. There will be an enormous demand for the services of every farmer, engineer, builder, manufacturer of every kind, shipper, transporter, miner, quarryman, textile worker, shopkeeper and artisan. Teachers and instructors will be at a premium. Those who are performing work for which they have no aptitude will have opportunities from which to make a selection.

The rent of the land being available for public services, taxes upon improvements, such as buildings and machinery, should be repealed first of all. The municipalities need money badly, and as their claim is a premier one, allocations to the local governing bodies according to population or other essential factors will replace generously the niggardly sums obtained by penal taxation imposed upon private property. Herein lies the solution to the problem of the equalisation of the rates.

With the hostile tariff removed from the building industry, the housing problem will find a real solution because not only will sites become available, but raw materials for the houses also. The slums will melt away, and valuable sites for business premises will be opened up. The pressing needs of education as regards schools and colleges will at last find satisfaction.

The Effect of the Change upon the Disposition of Population.

The fundamental change in the incidence of taxation will have the effect of abolishing the invisible barrier of high-priced way-leave surrounding towns and villages and preventing their natural expansion. Land which should have houses and market gardens upon it will no longer be held up by some speculator growing grass at the best, and weeds and corruption at the worst. The speculator will be impelled either to convert himself into a useful member of society by building houses or growing crops intensively for the good adjacent market or in some way associating himself with legitimate public and private enterprise.

The great demand for labour and services will lead to the emancipation of the labourer of every degree. Wages and salaries and profits will rise to a natural level. There will be neither excess nor shortage. Everyone will get what he fairly earns, and no one will get more than he fairly earns, consequently there will be neither colossal fortunes nor underpaid merit. The deadly fear of poverty, said to be the only hell the Englishman fears, will cease to exist.

The unprofitable striving for illimitable wealth, which brings hollow misery upon family life and which the accredited

possessor least of anyone ever enjoys, will cease to mock departed youth. Loafers will be met with poverty as a consequence, but they will have every encouragement to be industrious and there will be no premium upon idleness.

State doles and bottles of medicine, sham housing schemes and pauperising quackeries in general will disappear, because they will be no longer necessary. Invalids, suffering from lack of fresh air and sunshine, when liberated from captivity will take up their beds and walk. The crutches and ambulances of compulsory communism, called "Protection," "Unis" and what not, will be thrown upon the scrap-heap, because they will be redundant in the New World of free production.

The old world is a battle-field!

Private and public enterprise are together quite competent to attend to their own particular fields, when the fences of vested interest are removed. The amiable amateur with Fabian theories and the flotsam and jetsam of the commercial world, who now compose a central bureaucracy and who pretend to control municipalities and private businesses, will be left high and dry.

Every citizen will be impelled to take an absorbing interest not only in his own private vocation, but also in the affairs of the community, because the issues will be no longer obscure. A warm spirit of patriotism will be recreated, not transitory and false, like the feeling aroused during war-time, but strong, genuine and lasting. Comradeship and goodfellowship will take the place of snobbery and hatred. Strikes will be unheard of.

The Raising of the Standard of Life.

The congested, petrified population will begin to move and grow out naturally. Those living on the outskirts of great towns, wishing to move further out, will be able to find sites, because the "dog in the manger" will be gone. They will make room for those whose ambition it is to move from the overcrowded centres to the suburbs. Petrified population will begin to spring into new life. The sap will flow into the dry channels of the race, and the C3 community of the Old World will be replaced by the A1 citizens of the New.

It is compulsory communism that builds barracks, and private enterprise that builds pretty and useful homes. Will not builders, with free access to the land and left to themselves, design and erect, for themselves and others, houses to suit the artistic tastes and utilitarian requirements of each occupier? Convenience will be placed before cost, because there will be room for it, and purchasing power will only be limited by the expanding standard of living. Improvements

will not be savagely fined, and the mildew will disappear from the landscape.

The yeomen of old England will be born again of the ground-down helots of agriculture when emancipation comes. They will bring the barren country-side into cultivation and have no dread that they can be robbed of the fruits of their industry. Garden cities and villages will be dotted richly throughout what are now deserted square miles of country-side, when population is permitted to dispose itself naturally.

Emulation in the raising of the standard of living for all will substitute the shabby competition of "doing without" for the many that the few may riot in extravagance. Monstrosities of all kinds, which we now shut our eyes to, or try to cover up with charity, or attribute to the niggardliness of Nature, will seem like half-forgotten nightmare. The Will to Life will inaugurate the Co-operative Commonwealth—the advent of Real Socialism founded upon Justice, the exodus of the false Socialism based upon wrong and robbery.

The Emancipation of Public Enterprise.

Public enterprise will be regulated as private enterprise will be regulated, namely, by the payment into the common fund of economic rent for the land occupied by public undertakings.¹ Way-leaves for circulatory services, freed from the obstruction of privilege, will be obtained with the same facility as sites for the activities of private enterprise. It will not be possible for selfish individuals to hold up much-needed public improvements, but reasonable compensation will be agreed to when individuals find that they only penalise themselves by inert tactics.

Pressing problems relating to motor, rail and common street and road services, the provision of water, gas and electricity supplies, and the disposal of sewage, will at last be freely solved. On the same terms as private enterprise, there will be no monopolies. When there is simple economic justice there will be no private or bureaucratic concessions for the exploitation of the consumer. Public opinion will be keenly interested in public affairs and the Government servants will not be allowed to become public masters.

Transitional Developments.

Such a change as we have outlined will not take place violently; rising from the roots upwards, a new fresh growth will spring, and some of the old wood will remain dry and sapless. There will be a natural evolutionary metamorphosis. The obsolete shell of the old will gradually crumble away and be assimilated into the young economy of the New World.

¹ A book entry in the case of national undertakings.

instead of matters going from bad to worse, as at present, there will be a series of developments ever leading to better conditions. During the transitional period, static minds, learning nothing and forgetting nothing, will receive many wholesome shocks, which, if they do no good, will do no harm.

They will see, with feeling akin to dismay, miners, agricultural labourers, chemical workers in dangerous occupations, common sweeps, scavengers and other heroes command such good wages that they can obtain all the necessaries of life, give their children a liberal education, do without health insurance, and laugh at the idea of old age pensions from the State. To the muddle-headed "experts" it will seem extraordinary that school-teachers, tutors, draughtsmen and clerks will suffer no longer from chronic underpayment.

Their impulse may be to secure Acts of Parliament for the limitation of wages, salaries, profits and incomes. They must be gently humoured until their reason returns. If they are unable to learn that any interference with the free play of economic forces leads to disaster for them as for others, they cannot hope to be taken seriously in the golden break of freedom.

After an Appointed Day, the bishop¹ who once said, "The housing question has always been a difficulty; it was so on the first Christmas morning, when Joseph could not find a room in the inn. But it will finish in Heaven, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' You who are inconvenienced here will not be inconvenienced there"—if happily he be alive—may be scandalised when the overcrowded and houseless provide themselves with mansions, instead of waiting until a merciful death overtakes them.

Habits of mind acquired in the Old World will persist for a while into the New, but it will not be long before saner and fitter thought prevails. It will be discovered that men and women do not work well in workhouses and that inefficiency attaches to unwieldy businesses. The growth of village industries, in which labourers co-operate as partners, will supersede the industrial slavery of the Trusts.

Real scientific management will substitute the unscientific task system. Expert loafers with stop-watches will find more attractive employment. There will be no masters holding the power of life and death, but leaders chosen with unanimity because they merit such recognition.

In industrial and domestic affairs, labour-saving methods and appliances will be eagerly adopted, and unpleasant occupations will be abolished by the liberated application of inventive skill, richly encouraged by a reward, which will not be stolen. Humanity will be placed before property because it will pay,

¹ Bishop Taylor-Smith, Chaplain-General, at a war memorial unveiling at Guildford, March, 1920.

and the labourer will be no longer a slave to some machine of his own creation.

In the Old World, when production exceeds purchasing power of unrequited labour, there is unemployment and distress for the wage slave and the employer, but in the New World of profuse production, "overproduction" will simply mean shorter hours of toil and more time for humanity to devote to physical and mental improvement.

Economic freedom, associated with wealth, health, security and leisure, is the sorely needed foundation for the Higher Endeavour of the human race. This endeavour is directed by the Intelligence impressed and manifested in us, but there is low mental visibility owing to superstitions in the atmosphere of the Old World. We shall begin to see clearly, in the New World, and understand what now is unaccountable.

The Freedom of the Seas.

Free production will make free trade between countries an obvious concomitant. Traders, realising that salaries and profits fall into the category of wages, will no longer talk of reducing wages in order to reduce the cost of production to meet foreign competition. Free exchange will be welcomed by free men as the handmaid of free production in reducing the cost of living for everyone.

Example is better than precept; therefore, in adopting the Rule of the Land, enlightened nations by their fruits will induce backward nations to follow. What militarism has signally failed to do, righteous dealing will do without effort. The Assertion of the Common Right is the True Internationale, and it leads inevitably to the universal adoption of the Open Door. Custom-houses will disappear as obsolete institutions and the foolish jealousies of nations will be forgotten.

There is no natural monopoly in overseas exchange, any more than in exchange overland. The high seas are the great international commons of the wide world. Monopolies in shipping only arise at present because fresh ventures are discouraged by custom duties and other unscientific taxation on shore. This unfairness is accentuated by Government concessions and by subsidies paid out of the national till upon various pretexts to established shipping lines.

Trade channels are furthermore narrowed when, in the hostile environment of penal taxation, the railway interests combine with the shipping companies to set up toll-gates upon land and ocean for the concerted plunder of the producer, trader and consumer.

Each national carrying system is backed up by its national taxpayer, who is bled while boasting of "our" mercantile marine. While busy paying custom dues out of one pocket,

the other pocket is picked by the profiteer shipping company!

What is extorted by fraud must be defended by force against the rival predatory system of other countries. Monopoly carries fire-arms because it is living dangerously. The "patriotic" national, threatened by a possible famine blockade, is therefore glad to be mulcted in taxes for the support of "a glorious navy to uphold the freedom of the seas." Tribute for this purpose exceeds the dividends paid out by the shipping trusts.

The world is made unsafe for democracy. Trade and Customs Commissions reveal in their reports how a miserable carrying trade in, say, the Pacific Islands, thousands of miles away, may be the bone of contention between rival shipping rings of different nationality, and the quarrel sow seeds of hatred for a harvest of madness to be reaped in a future world war.

Such is the unprofitable overseas commerce of the Old World of niggardly production and unfair exchange.

The adoption of the Rule of the Land heralds the advent of the real Freedom of the Seas.

When the land monopoly is abolished by the calling up notice asking all holders of land, used or unused, to pay rent to be devoted to the common needs, and improvements upon the land are exempted from taxation, railways, docks and shipyards will be multiplied. The wiredrawn stream of commerce will grow into a generous flow of activity, and with the vanished shortage of ships' bottoms will disappear the shipping trusts.

Passengers, owing to the beneficial competition to give them service, will obtain berths and courteous attention. Merchandise will find space at reasonable terms. Upon equal terms, the Trust giant is no match for private enterprise. Bands of slaves cannot succeed against the co-operation of free men; consequently, in accordance with Nature's fiat, there will be an assimilation of co-operative independence and a dissimilation of predatory combination because it will not pay.

Just as walled cities have become interesting archaeological curiosities, so the apparently indispensable armaments and navies will become objects of mild surprise in the New World of free production and free exchange.

Instead of each nation imagining that it can make the world safe for democracy by making it unsafe for all others, there will arise a universal Entente Cordiale, which is better than Leagues of Pickpockets, scraps-of-paper Treaties and Secret Agreements of Diplomats.

"I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice."

If the sluice-gates are opened in time and the Rule of the Land is put into operation, the community will magnanimously

look upon the past sins of individuals as the outcome of maladjustments for which, due to superstition, all are responsible.

Compensation to those who have been living rent free, or who have been receiving tribute from the industrious for the use of the earth, cannot be entertained. Indeed, the land has been redeemed in blood and labour many times over, and its restitution will bring compensation not only to those hitherto deprived of their birthright, but also to those now superstitiously believed to have some peculiar right to it.

The great majority of landlords are, as labourers, suffering severely from the effects of the present evil system, and all will gain immeasurable happiness in the absence around them of fellow-creatures struggling in poverty, disease, vice and misery. It is impossible to realise adequately to what great extent we are affected by the misfortunes of our fellows, misfortunes which cannot be remedied by charity, but only by justice.

When men were called up for sacrifice during the Great War to save the land, there were tribunals set up for the relief of dependents. The cases of bitter hardship they sat upon were many, and the quality of mercy was very strained.

But there will be no sacrifice when the land is mercifully conscripted to save the men. A tribunal will have cases few and far between of genuine hardship to consider, and mercy will be overflowing from a grateful community.

The Deflation of the National Bubble.

If the sluice-gates are opened in time and the labourers are liberated from the prison of land monopoly and given access to the Source of Wealth, they will free themselves from mortgages like national debts, and they will own the stocks and shares of industrial undertakings themselves.

In the last analysis, debts can only be repaid in goods, and if Great Britain, for example, can produce more than eight thousand millions of pounds sterling worth of goods during five years of war, the nation can produce an equivalent surplus of goods during a similar period of peace, given the opportunity. National debts will not long survive the abolition of the system from which they spring.

While there is an ethical principle involved which precludes any "buying back" of the land, that may not be bought and sold, there is none in the redemption of the folly known as the National Debt. If a "capital" levy, reduction of interest, or other partial repudiation is equitable, then a complete repudiation or cancellation is just.

In any case, the monstrous arrangements of a past generation of men are not binding by any rule of equity upon future

generations. The grandson of a creditor cannot reasonably expect repayment of a loan from the grandson of a debtor.

There is, however, a danger of doing fresh wrong by repudiating a national or other debt, if carried out during the generation in which it is created, unless a unanimous call be made for cancellation. It is safer to repay, and it can be quickly repaid if the Rule of the Land is adopted. Violence defeats its own object.

When justice is done, there will be no private property in persons or in our Mother Earth. True wealth, the product of labour applied to land, constantly tends to waste away. Labourers will determine the production of wealth to any amount, consequently a promissory note or bond will command service for value received, but will carry no power to enslave. While small bondholders may benefit by an immediate repayment, the large financiers will get a "white elephant." They will be so embarrassed by perishable wealth that they will ask for relief from superabundance!

Curses have a way of turning into blessings when justice is done.

The Abolition of Taxation.

After the Appointed Day in which the community enters the New World, there will be two distinct developments in taxation.

One development will be that valuable land, possessing high potential rent and at present under-used or unused, will be taken up and used to the fullest extent according to its location. The result will be that although land now in use will lose its speculative value and pay a rent truly economic, the Common Fund in the aggregate, as population disposes itself symmetrically, will increase rapidly. It will enormously exceed the "hut" tax or tax upon improvements imposed at the present day by the local authorities and municipalities, which will be the first tax to be abolished when ground rent is taken by the community.

The other development will be that, production of houses, food, raiment and all commodities being stimulated through land being forced into use, there will be a disappearance of poverty on the one hand and rich loafing on the other. Associated with these symptoms, vice, crime, violence and disease will succumb also. The heavy charges for the provision of poor relief, workhouses, prisons, reformatories, asylums, labour exchanges, and a multitude of palliative establishments, will diminish towards zero.

Not only will ordinary unemployment cease, but thousands of Civil Service officials, now doing what is really useless work and a charge upon industry, will become wealth

producers. The central administration will be curtailed, and bureaucrats, surrounded with opportunities of making a lucrative honest living, will be glad to quit ministries, as and when they become uncomfortable in their present quarters where it is obvious to them that their ministrations are no longer needed.

The national income being very large indeed, income and like taxes upon production will bring in an enormous revenue. After deflation of the National Debt, these taxes will have to be reduced and finally abolished because the people will begin to see very clearly their true incidence.

As the epoch of peace and prosperity advances, nation shall not rise up against nation any more. The huge cost of the upkeep of the Army and Navy, borne by productive industry, will gradually subside as these institutions become redundant. Free men will laugh as they think of the childish panics of the Dark Ages of the receding Old World of superstition.

The public rent of land, which is not really a tax, long before this consummation throughout the world, will have become sufficient to meet decreased public expenditure in leading nations. There will be a concentration of the Common Fund devoted to those legitimate public enterprises of the municipalities and local councils which we have called circulatory, and which will be increasingly necessary for our towns and villages, due to the vigorous intercourse awakened by the New Civilisation.

When Justice reigns, taxation will abolish itself. There will be firmly established the two principles of our Great Charter of Liberty:

- I. That all men have equal rights to the use and enjoyment of the elements provided by Nature.
- II. That each man has an exclusive right to the use and enjoyment of what is produced by his own labour" (Henry George).

THE END.



A NEW POLITICAL PARTY

THE COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

FREE PRODUCTION—FREE EXCHANGE— FREEDOM THROUGH JUSTICE.

Twice, after successful revolutions, Declarations of Independence and of the Rights of Man, have been made.

Now, after an upheaval of the world which has left the minds of men confused, the Commonwealth Land Party addresses the following Declaration to men of good-will everywhere, as indicating the foundation upon which alone Society can be made secure.

THE COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY DECLARES, following the statement of the Declaration of Independence of 1776, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French Assembly in 1798, that:

1. Every human being, by the mere fact of "being," has an equal and **inalienable** right to life (and therefore to access to the means of life), and a liberty bounded only by a like liberty of every other human being.
2. **No legal enactment can deprive any human being of these inalienable rights, even with the consent of the individual: they are always and forever inalienable.**
3. No human being, therefore, can have or obtain any exclusive right to ownership of the Earth. It is always and forever the **inalienable** property of all its inhabitants.
4. Security of tenure and exclusive occupation (**NOT OWNERSHIP**) of portions of the Earth are necessary for the better production, transportation, and exchange of those things (wealth) upon which mankind depends for its sustenance and enjoyment.
5. Security of tenure and exclusive occupation of portions of the Earth can be in conformity with the natural **inalienable** equal rights of all individual inhabitants thereof, only if:

The value of such exclusive occupation is taken annually by an Authority representing the whole Community, and expended by that Authority in the service of and for the benefit of the whole Community. This value is RENT (or economic

rent), and the measure of it is the difference in desirability from any cause of any portion of the Earth, as compared with the least desirable portion.

6. This RENT, or value of the bare site, appears as the result of the presence of human beings, and grows with the growth of the population. It is always ascertainable, and being the creation of all the people and not the creation of any individual, **the collection of it for the benefit of its creators would be a simple act of justice to all.**
7. The collection of this RENT for **private** use (as at present) is a denial of the right of access to the means of life; a denial of the justice of equality of opportunity; and has no sanction in equity or in natural (or moral) Law. It is, in fact, the assertion of "special privilege"—a greater right to life and liberty.
8. **This denial of equality of the right to life has led to a denial of the real right of property in the things produced by labour, viz.:**
The imposition of unequal, unjust, arbitrary taxation on Industry, to meet public needs, on the principle that "Necessity knows no Law," which is the denial of the right of the producer of wealth to retain it for his or her own use. This denial of the right of property, together with the failure to collect for public use the annual value created by the public, is the real cause of wars, revolutions, involuntary poverty, and most of the disease and crime of the world.
9. **The RENT created by the Community is sufficient in normal times, under just conditions, to meet the expenses of the public services, and to enable the managers of the public business to take care of the incompetent and the old, and to provide educational facilities for all alike—not as charity or benevolence, but as mere justice.**
10. **No generation can bind a following one, and it is the right and duty of the living to do justice, even if some who profit by unjust conditions suffer hardship.**
11. No legislative enactments of the past that are contrary to the natural Law of simple Justice can be regarded by the living as valid; if there are any such, they should be ignored or repealed.
12. No human being can purchase or otherwise acquire any valid title to the right to exact toll from other

human beings in exchange for permission to use the Earth. All claims to such, or for pecuniary compensation on the part of individuals claiming to "OWN" the Earth, for loss of power to confiscate public rent, as above defined, should be denied.

13. Whoever exercises labour on land after opportunities are equalised by the collection of the RENT of the bare land for the public Treasury, has an exclusive right to all the products of such labour, free from any arbitrary, confiscatory deductions by officials.
14. Proposals for the control of human activities by the State or Government are in the direction of economic slavery; any such, and any interference with the right of the individual to self-development and self-sustenance, are no substitutes for a freedom based on the foregoing principles and leading to a natural and voluntary extension of the co-operation under which alone Society can peacefully endure and prosper.

The COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY realises that the obstacles to the establishment of a just relationship between man and the Earth, and therefore between the individual units of Society, can be removed in an orderly, reasonable, just, and constitutional manner, only when and if the Electorate in sufficient majority see the principles upon which Society must be constituted; and, recognising that the only true and just solution of the Social Problem is to make all the land the common property of all the people, by diverting the rental value, which now flows into the pockets of the Land Lords, into the Common Treasury, calls for support for an attempt to return Members to Parliament pledged to carry out, at the earliest moment, the Will of the people to Freedom, through Justice and equality of opportunity.

The COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY invites all interested in the proper solution of the questions which now vex us, to join up and make a united effort to carry into effect the principles clearly defined and urged upon the world by HENRY GEORGE.

For further information address:—

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