

4.
recorded for other parties were 13,088,867 - a total of 1,074,201 against Labour. These figures indicate the wishes of the electors in 1945, and a democratic allocation of seats in the House of Commons would have been as follows: Labour 299 (instead of 389) Conservatives 249 (instead of 209), and Liberals 57 (instead of 11).

Apparently, however, this unjust electoral system suits the politicians since no party has attempted, when in office, to change it for the better. People who denounce the Iron and Steel Bill and other recent measures should reflect that with fair representation in Parliament they would not have been adopted. And, going back a few years, with fair representation the 1931 Budget Tax on Land Values would not have been repealed by the Tories, and continued Free Trade would probably have avoided the International friction which led to the outbreak of war in 1939. It is high time that democratic government was established in this country, and the facts here mentioned should stimulate a demand for a measure such as Proportional Representation which would prevent the continued frustration of the people's will.

GOD and POVERTY In the preface to his book "Agrarian Justice" (1796) Thomas Paine says he was induced to publish it by a sermon preached by Bishop Atton of Llandaff. The sermon was entitled: "The Wisdom and Goodness of God in having made Both Rich and Poor." "It is wrong" said Paine, "to say God made rich and poor; He made only male and female, and gave them the earth for their inheritance. Instead of preaching to encourage one part of mankind in insolence, it would be better that the priests employed their time in rendering the condition of men less miserable than it is. Practical religion consists in doing good; and the only way of serving God is that of endeavouring to make His creation happy. All preaching that has not this for its object is nonsense and hypocrisy."

Many modern preachers see the need for something to be done about undeserved poverty - and call upon somebody else to do it. Plauding their own other-worldliness as an excuse for not understanding and endeavouring to solve the social problem, they look to governments to right the wrongs they deplore, wrongs which neglect of Christian duty has helped to establish.

Ignorance of human laws is not accepted as an excuse for their infringement, and still less can avoidable ignorance of the facts of social wrongs be pleaded in extenuation of personal inaction while others fight for social justice. The root cause and the cure of poverty can be found in "Progress & Poverty" by Henry George.

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THE PORCUPINE

(WITH SOME TELLING POINTS)

No. 214

Jan. & Feb. 1949.

NEW YEAR, 1949: The Outlook: "We have a long fight and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably for many of us, we may never see it come to success. But what of That? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle. This we may know, that it is but a part of that great, world-wide, long-continued struggle in which the just and the good of every age have been engaged and that we, in taking part in it, are doing something in our humble way to bring on earth the kingdom of God; to make the conditions of life for those who come afterward, those which we trust will prevail in heaven." (Henry George)
The "Doing something!" "We would simply take for the community

what belongs to the community, the value that attaches to land & the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual; and, treating necessary monopolies as functions of the State, abolish all restrictions and prohibitions save those required for public health, safety, morals and convenience."

The Effect: "To abolish the taxation which, acting and reacting, now hampers every wheel of exchange and presses upon every form of industry, would be like removing an immense weight from a powerful spring. Imbued with fresh energy, production would start into new life, and trade would receive a stimulus which would be felt in the remotest arteries." (Henry George)

THEOLOGY and SOCIOLOGY The Dean of Canterbury is reported to have told a Canadian audience recently that the spread of an idea such as Communism, "in which everyone is given according to his need," would help to speed the coming of God. Although theology is outside the scope of the "Porcupine" it may be permitted to express surprise at the Dean's idea of God delaying his "coming" (whatever that may mean) until Communism is established.

Perhaps Karl Marx ought to be regarded as a second John the Baptist. In the more mundane sphere of economics, however, men may examine and criticise the utterances of church dignitaries, without fear, favour or prejudice.

Givers and Receivers

It has been said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that is true when what is given is rightly the property of the giver. For an example of this we may turn to the story of the Israelites who were miraculously fed with manna in the wilderness, but that giving according to the need of each was not planned and carried into effect by men. It is not in the power of governments to bestow free food and other necessities without violating the command: Thou shalt not steal. In the world of to-day all things necessary to maintain life are produced by labour applied to the natural resources (land), and these things rightly belong to those whose labour, skill or service has contributed to their production. The State produces nothing and owns nothing in its own right, and therefore the State cannot bestow charity unless it has first committed robbery. If "robbery" in this statement seems too harsh a word, it should be remembered that to deprive people of what they produce (their earnings) is to rob them. When this is done by a pickpocket or confidence-trickster the robbery is obvious, but when it is done by a government under the sanction of an Act of Parliament it is no less a robbery. The State's appropriation (by means of taxation) and re-distribution of individual earnings involves the enslavement of the people, and the Dean's ideal social system cannot be established without a ruthless violation of the natural right of man and women freely to direct their own lives and enjoy the fruits of their own exertions.

The Alternative

No normal human being wishes to be un-free, though some may be willing to sacrifice freedom in order to get what is otherwise unobtainable. There are people in the unhappy position of not knowing the freedom-solution of economic problems and seeking remedies in restrictions and controls. The Dean is not one of them. There are others who, for some unaccountable reason, ignore the truth they know, namely that all men are equal in their rights; that God's provision for humanity in Mother Earth is more than sufficient to satisfy the material needs of the living and future generations; that if equal rights were understood and respected, there would be no poverty and no wars. Unfortunately, not all of the truth is recognised and expounded by the churches, but "there was a man sent from God" whose name was Henry George, and in his book "Progress and Poverty" the truth is revealed in all its simple beauty.

This book can be obtained from the "Porcupine" office - 3/6

DEMOCRACY versus COMMUNISM

"You cannot stop the spread of an idea by passing a law against it. The best weapons with which to fight Communism are laws fulfilling the rights of little men to homes, health, schooling, security, good jobs, fair wages, and brakes on inflation. This is the lesson of democracy; these are the goals of abundance. The nation which reaches these goals will never succumb to the evils of Communism." (Pres. Truman)

A practical policy

Even good ideals are worthless if human rights are not understood and unless practical policies for their achievements are available. The economic rights of all men to earn and enjoy a good living can be fulfilled if the age-long barriers of Land Monopoly and Trade Prevention (Protection) are removed, but not otherwise. This can be done by means of Land Values Taxation and Free Trade. After that, any other steps necessary to enable people to get homes, good jobs, fair wages and other good things will be easy and effective. Without the removal of these barriers, the "goals of abundance" will exist only in the platform orations of politicians.

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SEAM DEMOCRACY The word "democracy" has been so over-worked that it has become almost meaningless. Conservatives, Liberals and Socialists all profess to be democratic, though a correct understanding of the word would exclude some of them. A dictionary definition of democracy is: "A form of government in which the sovereignty of the State is vested in and exercised by the people." With this in mind, there is no difficulty in answering the question: Are we democratically governed?

The Sovereignty of the State can be exercised by the people only through Parliament, and Parliament cannot be democratic unless it represents the opinions and expresses the wishes of the electors. It is a popular delusion that the House of Commons represents public opinion, and this belief is fostered by the politicians for reasons of their own. Mr. Herbert Morrison, for example, recently denied an assertion that the majority of the people were opposed to the Iron and Steel Bill, but neither he nor the Conservative newspapers who had made the assertion have produced evidence of its truth or falsity. There were people, said Mr. Morrison, who were determined to resist economic democracy, whereas the Labour party believed it to be practicable and desirable, and attainable by constitutional means. This seems to mean that the Labour Government is using its majority to establish economic democracy.

Mis-representation

The question should be asked, seriously: Does the House of Commons truly represent the electors? In the General Election of 1945 the votes recorded for Labour were, 12,014,666, while those