

INDUSTRY'S SPEED LIMIT

The President of the American Motion Picture Association, Mr. Eric Johnston, tells an interesting story of slow motion in industry. A Branch of a United States business concern wanted to erect a building in London which would cost £4,000,000. In reply to advertisements for workers the firm was asked if Saturdays were free, if pensions were provided, how many days vacation were allowed and what salaries were offered. Enquiries revealed the fact that building operations could not begin for four years, it would take twelve months to get the title to the property approved and to obtain the right to erect a taller building on the site than the existing two-story structure. Not for eighteen months could the plans be approved, and priorities for steel and cement would be granted a year later.

Human Nature

Men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion, and this means that they do as little as possible in order to obtain as much as possible. As this is a natural human instinct, it is not wrong. But besides instincts, men are gifted with intelligence, and if this is exercised they discover that doing little to obtain much does not always - in the long run - produce the desired results. It is easier to spend ten days in doing a job than only two days, but men work for the results of toil and therefore include homes and all things necessary to sustain life. In the case described above the result was that the building was not erected, fewer men got jobs, and the fantastic policy of the workers and the public authorities was injurious to everybody concerned. Only when the fear of unemployment is banished will it be realised that the best interests of all the partners in industry are mutual and identical. Then common sense will guide human conduct.

FIFTY VILLAGERS SOLD

A Yorkshire village, for centuries the property of one family, is for sale. In the newspaper reports only the number of houses and the value of the property is mentioned. But such properties are valuable, not because of the buildings or industrial developments, but because of the populations on and around them. It is the people who have lived and toiled there for centuries who have made it worth while for this privileged family to own the estate. Without population, the village would be worthless.

An element of novelty in announcing the sale would attract attention and, perhaps, enlighten the public. Thus: "Fifty revenue-producing residents, with houses and shops, for sale."

"COBDEN SAID: 'Free Trade is the best peacemaker.' We may confidently affirm: 'Free Trade is the peacemaker.'" (Henri Lambert)

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THE PORCUPINE

(WITH SOME TELLING POINTS)

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THE CRIME OF "PROTECTION"

"There are hundreds of thousands of men and women in India and Pakistan who cannot leave their homes by daylight because they cannot buy clothes." This statement was made by Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, High Commissioner for Ceylon at a meeting in Manchester on 15th May. He went on to say that cheap cotton goods must be made available, and that Japanese textile industries should be allowed to return to their pre-war position in the East. If that was not done, the volcano of Communist Revolution would erupt violently.

Protection from satisfaction

In the countries mentioned above are poor people wishing to buy cheap cotton goods which people in a near-by country are anxious to supply. And on the other side of the world there are people who can acquire wealth by preventing such trade and perpetuating the misery of these natives.

Right or Might

Britons would not tolerate such treatment applied to themselves by foreigners; they would denounce it if another power treated helpless people in this way. But the iniquity described by Sir Oliver is likely to continue under the British flag because the British public do not know the facts.

The usual excuse

It is usually argued by those who profit by Protection that the masses would suffer if cheap goods were allowed to enter their countries. That stale lie could be answered by the wretched natives of India and Pakistan. In more highly civilised countries, including Britain, many otherwise intelligent people are deceived by it.

LOCAL "PROTECTION"

Residents in the Lake District are enjoying the privilege of protection from cheap vegetables, in the words of the "Manchester Guardian," they are being

protected from themselves. The situation can be described in still plainer language: The Local Council - on which local tradesmen are strongly represented - has adopted a policy which will rob the residents to enrich the shopkeepers. The excuse for this curtailment of liberty is that the sale of vegetables from carts and barrows is unfair competition against local traders who pay local rates which their perambulating competitors escape.

Its real purpose

Whether local or national, "Protection" is a device to compel purchasers of commodities to pay higher prices than they would otherwise pay, and this is as dishonest as would be the taking of money by force or fraud out of people's pockets; it is legalised plunder, and the pretence that it is good for a town or country, or for a "protected" people is sheer humbug. It is good only for those gain what the people lose.

Protecting employers

Another example of this dishonest policy appears in Rochdale. It has been proposed to establish a new enterprise near Rochdale which would employ 200 men and 1,800 women and girls, but the Minister of Labour has been asked by the Rochdale Employment Committee to stop it. In the opinion of the Committee the setting up of new industries requiring many workers in that area should be discouraged because new firms could get labour only from existing industries which are handicapped by a shortage of labour.

Employers' fear of competition

Figures published by the Ministry of Labour show that in March there were in Britain 347,283 registered unemployed persons. There were also many unregistered unemployed persons. The Rochdale Committee's contribution to the solution of this problem is their effort to prevent the employment of 2,000 people likely to be required in a new industry. If - as asserted by the Committee - the new enterprise would attract workers from the existing industries, it would only be because the new jobs would be more attractive or better paid than the old ones. The solution of such a problem is obvious; employers in the old industries should meet the new competition by making the conditions and wages they offer equally attractive to the workers.

Official control of industry is totalitarian in character; it leads to enslavement of both employers and workers. The true solution of economic problems and the only foundation of general prosperity and peace is freedom, and the first steps towards economic freedom are the destruction of the land monopoly, and the removal of all obstacles to trade - Land Values Taxation and Free Trade.

"UNIVERSAL AND PERMANENT PEACE will be established upon the basis of justice - or never at all." (Henry Lambert)

BENEVOLENT GOVERNMENT

It is reported that the Government of New Zealand will discontinue food rationing and reduce subsidies by £12,000,000 a year. Consequently, the prices of many commodities will be higher: Butter will cost 2/- a pound instead of 1/6. Bread 7¹/₂d. for a two-pound loaf instead of 5¹/₂d. and Milk 8d. a quart instead of 6d. In addition, railway fares, passenger and freight, will be dearer and telephone charges higher. This seems to mean a considerable increase in the cost of living, and hardship to wage-earners, but the Government proposes a simple remedy: they will raise wages with a cost-of-living bonus and increase social-security benefits and grants to farmers.

How it may be done

We may assume that the wages-bonus will be provided by the Government, and that the £12,000,000 a year saved by reducing food subsidies will cover the cost of the bonus and the increased benefits; in that case the people will have arrived at the same position by a different route - they will be able to pay more money for the same quantity of goods and services as before. Whether this or some other plan is adopted, the fact remains that whatever the people receive from the Government and whatever it may be called, it will have come out of their own pockets.

Governments cannot be benevolent to the governed. What may appear to be their gifts is what they give back to the public in grants, subsidies and doles, and this is a part of what has first been taken from the public in taxation. The remainder provides the salaries of the various officials who manage and control the lives of the general public.

The alternative to this make-belief is economic freedom, but that cannot be established until Land Monopoly and Trade Barriers have been removed. This can be done by means of Land Values Taxation and Free Trade.

OUR "MOTHER EARTH"

"Land Monopoly is the denial of life's basic law, whether regarded from the standpoint of the individual or of the species; and by no human ingenuity can we successfully evade that law. So long as certain individuals are allowed to corner land on or by which others have to live, those others are at their mercy. They are helpless and, therefore, helplessly enslaved. They are robbed and cannot escape the robbery. They are ruled and cannot get away from the rule. They must work on the terms offered them, or starve. From this fate no organisation, however complete, no skill or learning however profound, no private virtue or public philanthropy can rescue them. Here, if anywhere, action is needed. A huge boulder blocks the path, and until that boulder is removed, progress remains unthinkable." (Wm. C. Owen)