

NATURAL RESOURCES

T. Edwin Smith, Yetwood, Alberta, Canada.

Natural resources have no value, the statements of the Single Taxers to the contrary notwithstanding. We can see this quite plainly in the conditions existing under savagery though the fact is blurred under civilization because of the fact that between man and nature there is a gigantic array of complicated machinery.

All value is produced by labor. When we say value in this connection we mean exchange value, there is also use value which is inseparably connected with it. That is, there is no exchange value without use value. In other words an article must be capable of satisfying some natural human want before it becomes exchangeable. There are of course certain articles such as old books, relics and paintings by famous artists, which are outside the scope of this article.

Unless an article is of some use, no one will buy it and therefore it has no exchange value. The natural resources of this earth judged by this standard have no value because nothing in nature is capable of satisfying any normal human need without some work being done first. And the value of the article is great or slight, will be determined as a general rule by the amount of social labor time necessary to bring it to a point where it is capable of satisfying human needs.

The land is not capable of satisfying any human need without labor being applied to it. We can not eat this prairie. We even cannot wear it, we cannot live in it as a rule. Before we can eat we must plow, sow and reap the fruits which have grown. Before we can wear it we must do even more than that to it. Before we can live on the land, the simplest thing we can do is to plow a strip and build a sod house or else make a "dugout". All of these necessitate the application of labor and without labor the earth is useless to us. There are some parts of the earth where a man can get a living with less work than we can here, but there seems always to be some drawback to such countries so that they are not so desirable as living places.

Without men the most fertile land on earth is valueless. Before the settler came, and took up homesteads in Alberta, the land was to be had for the asking. Without the ability of men to work on the land it is without value, no matter how fertile or prolific it may be.

The value of the land, so called, is in the hides and carcasses of workmen. They give it value no matter what form that land takes.

Some one will object "But I can sell land and get paid for it, therefore it must have a value." A coal lease will sell for a lot more than a farm, therefore, it must have greater value.

Let us analyze a coal lease and see where the value is and later take up the matter of farm lands.

All natural resources present one unusual feature in the matter of buying and selling them. They are bought and sold on the strength of their potentialities. That is, on the strength of the profit that can be made out of them by those who work them, and it is this possibility of profit that enables one man to sell a piece of land, a coal seam or a power site and make money by so doing.

Let us take up a coal seam, or rather a coal lease. It makes no difference to us at this point whether the owner has a clean title to that section of the earth under which the coal seam is located, or whether he merely has a lease on it. Ownership is the power to keep others off, rather than the privilege of using the thing owned. In the light of this definition a lease on a parcel of coal land is as much property as a clear title to it all.

Let us assume that the owner of this parcel of land sells it to a syndicate or to a mining company for any amount you please. He has not sold the land, for they do not want the land. He has not sold the coal, for the coal is of no value as it is. The coal in its present position has no value because it is not capable of satisfying any human want. Before it can be made capable of satisfying those human wants it must be dug out, hoisted to the top and marketed. All this takes labor, and the coal will only have a value after these operations have been performed. Now the syndicate or the members of the company do not want to dig the coal themselves. In all probability they do not know how. So it is not the land, it is not the coal, it is not the privilege of digging coal that was sold; but the possibility of the profit to be made out of men's labor. This potentiality was bought and sold. It may be bought and sold a dozen times at a little higher price each time, but that does not mean that the value of the resources has increased. It merely means that the greater part of the profit is already being gambled away and that the last purchaser will have to be content with a little less profit than he would otherwise have had.

Now let us suppose the company develops the property. Men erect a tangle, install machinery, dig a shaft and run the entries, and then the mine is said to be ready for work. Men dig coal and by the terms of their agreement, all the coal they dig is to belong to the owner of the mine, and they agree to accept in lieu, thereof, a sum of money called wages. The coal is sold on the world's market at a price fixed by supply and demand, and the coal mine owner under ordinary circumstances has made a profit. He has made a profit because he has paid the men for digging the coal less than the coal was worth. Taken on an average, coal in Canada, last year, was worth \$2.48 per ton, and it sold for that. The wages of the men who took part in producing the coal amounted to only \$1.42 per ton, so that there was a profit made on every ton of coal mined and sold of \$1.06. In Alberta the figures are almost exactly the same. The value of the coal per ton was \$2.41. The labor cost per ton was \$1.41. The profit was almost exactly \$1.00 per ton.

If there was a three or three and a half seam there would be about three millions of tons per section, and hence there is the possibility of a profit of three millions of dollars. But the man who owns the coal land cannot get that much for it. He must wait. It will be a work of years to get that coal out and if he were to try to hog the whole profit there would remain no incentive for the syndicate to buy.

They may take the land over on a royalty basis. Say give him ten per cent of the profits as fast as they are made. In this case his total profits will amount to \$300,000 but he may be years in getting it. More often he will sell his share of the potentialities of profit in that coal land for a lump sum, no matter what it be. He has traded his ownership of the land for a part of the profits to be made out of the coal miners' labor power later on. He has sold the possibilities of profit and profit can only be made out of the miners who work the mine.

The company bought not land, coal or the privilege of working, but the power to exploit men. The value of that piece of property was in men and not in land or coal.

This same trend of thought explains all kinds of mines or timber limits.

There is another kind of natural resources which are bought and sold pretty generally, that is farm land of various descriptions. To arrive at the true relation there, let us first analyze land bought by a speculator. He will buy a quarter of land not for the purpose of making a living by working it, but for making a profit either by renting it out, or selling it at a rise in price. Suppose he rents it out to a farmer on condition that he (the owner) is to have one half or one third of the produce of the crops. In that case the share that is the owner's, has been produced by labor and enjoyed by some one else. He may keep the farm and hire the farm work done on it either by contract at so much per acre or by hiring men and buying machinery. In this case it is a purely capitalist enterprise and he expects to get all the work done and to allow for depreciation and repairs for less money than he will get for the produce when it is sold. The difference in this case between the wages paid and depreciation and repairs, and profit on the investment, will be profit. He will make a profit out of the men on the farm.

He bought the land with this expectation in the first place and he was willing to pay out in a lump sum of money at the beginning a share of this profit. How many years profit he would trade for the land would depend upon supply and demand. In older and more fertile countries where the market for farm land is as constant as the market for wheat is here, land will sell for twenty times the yearly profit.

That means that the buyer is willing to give twenty annual profits for the previous owner's position on the backs of some agricultural workers. This is one reason for land having a price.

Now in the case of a farmer buying a piece of land to live on, it is a little different. Human labor has become a fluid commodity now-a-days and will flow to any opening presenting higher wages than another. There is always a great and constantly growing army of unemployed who are clamoring for jobs at any price. As the competition becomes keener especially in the winter time, we find men offering to pay out good money for a job to an employment agency. I have seen ads in newspapers where a man has offered as high as \$20 for a four month's job. A farmer who buys land upon which to work, buys a job and pays for it a sum of money, great or small, depending upon whether he can make much or little by working that land.

A working man working for wages, allows a boss to have part of the proceeds. That same man working on the farm for a non-working owner, gives part of his produce to the owner. The farmer sees an opportunity to escape this dividing up by buying his job. He buys his own freedom and will pay for it a sum of money great in proportion to the amount he can make per year over his ordinary wages. Land is valuable to the farmer according as he can make more money in a year when working on the land, than he can by working at any other job. He pays part of what he will afterwards produce. He is buying back part of his own produce or rather buying back in advance part of the wealth he will afterwards produce. As the competition for jobs gets keen the amount a man will pay for a job grows and so the price of land rises.

The owner demands a greater share each year for getting off his back. The land has no value, the value is in the man. Labor produces all value and all value is the produce of labor, though in the case of farm lands it is pretty well disguised.

There is still another kind of natural resource, the analysis of which, presents some difficulties to the Socialist student. A water power site will sell for a very large sum of money compared to other portions of the earth's surface. On this account some think that the power site has value that has not been produced by human labor. In this age of manufacture and other industries which make use of the water motive power, any power commands a market. A river falling over a rock displaces a tremendous amount of energy, but it is of no use to man until it has been harnessed and made available when and where it is desired. The most general form of utilizing a water power is to lead the current through turbines which in turn are connected with dynamos, and in this way transform the energy of the falling water into electrical current. The electricity can be utilized when and where desired, and so is a commodity.

Any power to-day is a commodity on the market and like every other commodity its value is determined by the amount of social labor time necessary to its production or reproduction. Power at the present time is generated mainly from a coal burned under boilers. To produce power in this manner requires the efforts of a number of men, some of them highly skilled who command large salaries. Engineers, firemen, coal handlers, laborers and mechanics. Though the price of power is determined in the long run by its value and though its value is determined by the labor time necessary to produce it in comparison with other commodities, a profit is made by selling the power at its value. This is because the men have been paid wages which are less than the value of their product.

In a water power plant there are fewer men employed, and of these a smaller proportion are highly paid so that the cost of producing power per unit is less than it is in the case of a steam plant. Though water power cost is less and the amount of labor time taken to produce it is less, than in the case of a steam plant, the power so produced will sell on the world's markets for the same price. This is because the value of a commodity is determined by the necessary labor time (and that means average labor time). Since the greater part of the power is produced in plants operated by steam, it is the steam plants which set the price, although the influence of the water power will be to pull the price of steam generated power down a little nearer the cost of production by water power.

All this means that the profit to be made by the operation of a water power plant will be greater than that to be made by a steam plant (remember that water power sites are limited) the company planning to erect it will be willing to give a share of the profits to be made to the owner for the privilege of skinning the workers for years to come. The owner will hold the company for the greatest possible price, and the greatest possible price will be a share in the profits of the company for a term of years. Just how many years will depend upon supply and demand. Of course

the extreme price above of which it would be impossible to go, is the excess of profits in a steam power plant for the life of the former. In actual practice this limit is never reached for obvious reasons.

What is sold is not land, is not water, is not power, is not the privilege of building, but is the profits to be made later. The purchasers trade for the site part of the swag they will take later. The land owner's price is taken from labor and labor has given the site its value even through the labor, has not yet been applied.

To sum up the whole subject of natural resources. They have no value in themselves. When they are sold for money it is the possibility of making profits out of human beings that is sold; it is the possibility of making profits out of human beings that is exchanged. The value does not lie in the land but in the hides and carcasses of the working men.

If we keep this in mind we will not be so apt to get the worst of an argument when we come to discuss value with a speculator or the average prosperous farmer in the west. All value is produced by labor and there is no value that is not the produce of labor and this holds true in the case of a timber limit, a farm or a bale of hay.

Society's Lord High Executioner

To eat or not to eat—aye, there's the rub! And we haven't the privilege of a Hamlet to speculate on the matter. The foreman decides for us. If he says we work, then we eat; if he says we are laid off, or fired, then we don't eat; or if we do, so sparingly.

Of course, Mr. Foreman is a mere puppet; he doesn't act from motives of his own. Nevertheless, he is the instrument by which we are tortured, and even if we may be charged with short-sightedness for parrying the sword rather than the arm which wields it, we are justified in any resistance.

Quite naturally—or unnaturally—that man is chosen for foreman who displays the least regard for the rights or necessities of his fellowmen. The man who would think of a worker's family, picture the sheriff's visit, the children scattering to charitable "homes", the wife seeking a job—he wouldn't make a good foreman from the boss' standpoint—and needless to say, never gets the job.

The fellow who has a mania for reducing expenses—dispensing with help, making a small force do the work of a larger one, keeping out unionists and the like—he is the man usually selected to pronounce society's edicts as to whether or not we—the workers—shall eat.

Take the moulder or the hatter; select any town where there are several foundries or hat factories; picture the man who gets fired or laid off. Is the condemned murderer better or worse off than he?

The latter, after sentence is pronounced, needs worry no more about rats or dependents, but the poor moulder or hatter condemned to live without his job has to worry considerably about both. If he can get another job it will probably be in a distant city, "disgrace" of being fired or laid off is not known, and if he holds his family together until he gets such a job, and then pays transportation charges to the various trusts for the moving of his family and chattels, he will be a considerable time in getting on his feet again.

Such a waste of energy—and all traceable to the bad temper or indisposition of a foreman, whose only qualifications for the "honor" of deciding whether we may eat or not are characteristics which are and by right ought to be, foreign to all warm blooded human beings.

He is the maker of tramps; the real homebreaker; the one evil that wrecks more havoc among the workers than does Demon Alcohol.

What are we going to do about it? Well, the "Recall" will one day apply to foremen—and then maybe we can work in peace. And the Socialist party is the party which will apply the "recall" in shop management as well as in municipal and national government.

Chains

By Arthur Stringer.

I watched the man at work on the stubborn rock. But mostly the one man poised on a drill Above the steam that hissed and billowed about his hips, where the lordly house would stand. Majestic, muscular, high like a god, he stood. And then he stopped and started his thundering drill. Offhanded and careless and lordly as Thor, Begrimed and solemn and crowned with sweat, Where the great steel chains swung over the buckets of rocks.

Then out of a nearby house came a youth, All gloved and incased in fur, and touched with content. Thin shoulders and frail and finished. Leading a house dog on a silver chain. He peered at the figure that fought with the drill. Above the billowing steam and tumult of sound. Peered up for a moment impassive, with almost pitying eyes. And then he pensive down the avenue's calm. In the cold white light of the noonday sun, Not holding, but held by his silvery chain!

The simple matter of voting away all the misery and unemployment in Canada appears to be the hardest matter which is yet faced the voters of the country. The beast to be slaughtered invariably puts up a fight for its life at the smell of blood. The worker to be slaughtered walks up to the polls and calmly votes away his liberty and life for the benefit of the master class butchers. Are we a sane people, or are we just simply stupid?

The two old parties are at Ottawa busy goldbricking the public with their apparent quarrels and accusations against each other. What does it all amount to? Nothing. They will do nothing to benefit the country, or any part of it. When they get the public excited with their lapdog through their hired and subsidized press they will quietly do the business of their masters in the most approved and accountant-proof style.

This is the day of toll, toll, toll. Every move a worker makes he must pay toll or something for which he gets no return. This is the law of capitalism, and was made by the votes of the toll-paying working class.

Good morning, how is that private fortune you were saving up coming along?

A FRIENDLY LETTER

A Comrade writes as follows—

"We find it very difficult to get subs for 'Cotton's' these days. Some give excuse of being on short time. Others do not like the paper, citing certain articles that displeased and angered them, such as that article headed 'Thieves' on the front page of an issue some months ago, also a letter by a Comrade appearing on page two of an issue last fall on 'Free Love.' Some readers seemed to take that as an endorsement by the Socialists of 'free love.'

"That article on 'Sedition' in a recent issue contained some statements that are sure to rouse opposition and antagonize non-Socialists and half-baked Socialists. Even few Socialists, coming right down to the scratch would stand for the policy of electing revolutionaries to the legislative bodies for the purpose of 'expropriating all the wealth—away from the master class.' Then again the wish that 'more McConnells would spring up to advocate stealing' sounds lawless and rabidly anarchistic, and would be misunderstood by all but the relatively few deep students of Socialism and sociology. Such expressions are well enough in papers like the 'New Review', 'Masses', of the 'Conservator', but are decidedly out of place in a propaganda paper circulating largely among non-Socialists and supposed to win them over."

This Comrade suggests that Cotton's adopt headlines with an up-to-the-minute flavor to the masses, screaming headlines, to attract the masses.

POSITION OF COTTON'S.

No doubt this Comrade's sentiments are felt by many others who approach prospective subscribers and are turned down because Cotton's language and ideas do not suit them. He might build a bigger circulation by being more moderate. However, we are watching closely the trend of events, and are shaping our policy accordingly.

The question is, shall Cotton's Weekly be ahead of the people, or shall it fall behind? The Social Service Congress, which recently met at the city of Ottawa, was a remarkable testimony to the progress of social reform ideas throughout Canada. Ten years ago, even five years ago, such a congress would have been impossible.

Capitalism develops. As it develops it smells to the nose of rottenness. Even ministers can smell the stench in which it is carried.

Ministers got up and declared themselves to be revolutionary Socialists. The present system was denounced as rotten from the ground up. Ministers present made more radical speeches than the speeches given by some Socialists who attended.

The Christian Guardian, organ of the Methodist Church, in its issue of March 11th, opens its report on this assembly as follows: "The Social Service Congress, which has just been held at the city of Ottawa, was a remarkable testimony to the progress of social reform ideas throughout Canada. Ten years ago, even five years ago, such a congress would have been impossible."

Capitalism develops. As it develops it smells to the nose of rottenness. Even ministers can smell the stench in which it is carried. When ministers, politicians, purity leaguers, farmers' economic associations, etc., are denouncing the system, is it policy for a revolutionary party to be mild and lamblike? No, rather the Socialist, paper be so redhot as to burn the mail bags in which it is carried.

We have been watching closely the progress of the Appeal to Reason. In 1908 Wayland told us the policy of his paper. He filled it full of scandal and muckraking in order to attract the mass of readers. Then he drove hammer and sickle, paragraph, after he had caught their attention.

In 1910 he told us that a change had come. He declared that the rottenness of the system was apparent, and that Socialists would have to adopt a constructive platform, and do constructive work. Wayland had never read Marx's Capital and did not fully realize that reforms within the capitalist system would not give us Socialism. Or he may have realized it and intended to advocate state capitalism as a necessary phase before industrial democracy.

This is the position we are in to-day. The people realize the system is rotten, but do not connect the individual capitalists as drawing a living from the rotten mess and therefore are smirched by the putrid way they live.

Is it not the duty of Cotton's to, waken the workers to a realization of this fact? We know the old saying, "Measures not men," but measures do not bring themselves about. Men support them and men oppose them. The capitalists oppose Socialism. The loan shark is looked upon with loathing. The white slave is a creature despised. Why? Because the people realize that these creatures fatten upon vice and misery and extortion.

What Cotton's would like to do would be to convince the public of Canada that our eminent rich, our respectable philanthropists, our big capitalists, such men as Sir Wm. C. Macdonald who supports McGill University with gifts of millions of dollars, the late Lord Strathcona, Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann, Mr. George Perley, the lumber king cabinet minister, and all our most eminent gentlemen are in the same class as the loan shark and the white slave, that they are just as much to be despised as these low creatures.

At the Social Service Congress, after their radical talk, the principle was enunciated that Christian principles should be applied in the relations between capital and labor. A most foolish resolution. The heads that organized that resolution were either suffering from profound ignorance or the owners of those heads were knowingly supporting prostitution, poverty, misery, degradation.

Christian principles cannot be applied to the relations between capital and labor, or else the Christian principles are spawmed in hell.

The capitalist is a robber. The working class are robbed. Can Christian principles be applied in the relations between a thief and his victim?

You see, Cotton's has to be strong; has to hit hard. We are being overrun by a host of middleheaded reformers who want to Christianize thievery, who want to moralize the conditions that produce prostitution, who want to place a glamor of righteousness over the slave system, which produces industrial

tyrants and servile workers. Woe betide Canada if the lie that capital and labor can be made righteous in their relations ever hypnotizes the people.

As for the supporters of Cotton's not being able to get subscriptions because of our language or the matter placed in the columns of the paper, let us turn to the experience of a man who was endeavoring to propagate a new system. Luke 9, verses 4 and 5; And abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them."

In other words if you meet a bonehead who wants to be a bonehead, leave him be. He is a dead one. Go to the live ones for subs.

Get at the Cause

Vice, crime and graft seem to be running riot all over this world of late. Everywhere bloodshed, everywhere vice, everywhere graft.

The capitalist press is filled daily with the stories of investigations which implicate those who have been trusted with affairs of state.

Business men turning all kinds of tricks to cheat people out of their money. The seduction of young girls to be used as white slaves.

Murder of one individual by another in order to carry out some scheme to attain desired ends.

Wholesale murder carried on by governments to satisfy commercial greed.

The killing and crippling of workers through lack of proper safety precautions. These are the daily happenings which fill the columns of the daily press to the exclusion of everything else.

A recent issue of one of our daily papers took up the whole of the first page with this kind of news, every article bearing on death and crime.

It seems that everywhere people are ready and willing to listen to the effects of the capitalist system under which we are trying to live, but they are just as much afraid to listen to or discuss the cause of it all.

Watch the fellow who drives an auto and you will notice that at the least click that sounds out of the ordinary he will investigate, and if he knows anything about autos he will spend no time monkeying with effects but will strain his neck looking for the cause.

After discovering the cause he knows that there is only one way to make the machine go right, and that is to correct the fault. He does not tie a string around it or try magic. He might call it some names borrowed from other languages, but with that machine he deals only with cause and effect.

The same with men in the shop, if a piece of machinery does not perform its function the cause of the function must be found and remedied before it will resume.

Everybody leans toward the practical way in production, but the lack of common judgment in the conduct of society is discouraging.

You will hear people whom you think are possessed of at least average intelligence rave about the lack of the individual in the most vicious manner and never once think of the cause of the individual's action.

The system of society which makes it an advantage for people to commit crime is to blame.

Let's us change the system.—Buffalo Socialist.

How to Earn Money

By Dr. Edwin F. Bowers.

There are millions of humans hurrying themselves into untimely graves, or starving, just because they are too stubborn and stiff-necked to take advantage of one of the surest and safest ways ever devised of "earning money." In fact, this method is so absolutely simple that one hesitates to make it public, for fear of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

Still, some people are sufficiently altruistic to want to share a good thing. So briefly. Buy two or three thousand shares of Standard Oil stock, and then lose your mind. Have yourself committed to a lunatic asylum and let the shares grow to a luscious and copious maturity.

That's what Mrs. Ida Flagler, widow of H. H. Flagler, did. When she entered a private sanitarium in 1906, her stock fortune was a mere bagatelle of \$2,532,497. Now after five years of hard work—building block houses, drawing charcoal cabinet designs on the wall, and tabulating a chronological record of the growth of her nose—she is worth \$4,039,226. She had an extra busy year in 1913 "making" \$295,540.

This doesn't demonstrate the blessedness of private property, and the perfect development of our economic system, I arise to demand, "What does it?"

When one can—by simply making a small purchase of a few thousand shares of stock in one's halcyon days of mental vigor, and then becoming non compos—accumulate a vast fortune, why should any being need it is so easy to be ridiculous. However, let's pass the good thing along to Professor Taft. He doesn't know it yet, or he would never have answered "God knows."

Yale Review and Wall Street Journal, please copy.—New York Call.

Not One Dissatisfied

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained. I stand and look at them long and long. They do not sweat and whine about their condition.

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins. They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God.

Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demoralized with the mania of owning things, not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lives thousands of years ago.

Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

—Walt Whitman.

Big business has turned its attention to exploiting the farmer. Ask any farmer the difference between his revenues now and a few years ago. The farmer does more work, has more expenses, and a harder time to meet his obligations than formerly, and if he ekes out a bare living wage for himself he is lucky. The farmer is easier to exploit, for as a general rule he does not count the help of his wife and family, who if they were paid wages, would set the farmer back so far he could never recover.

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