

As far as we knew! We would be put out of office if we did so!

Did you ascertain whether in Exchange and trade all citizens had like facilities afforded?

Certainly not; that is a commercial consideration.

Did you see that all citizens had an equal opportunity to profit by their own labour, and that no one could profit by the labour of another without consent?

By no means; that is an ethical question.

Did you know that many people were out of food and clothing, and had no means of obtaining any but by begging or stealing?

We have heard of such; but are told by those who say they know that those people are of the very lowest class, very few of whom have votes, and who spend what they earn in excursions, dances, tobacco, ribbons, beer and lodge dues, and are therefore poor.

But why did you not enquire into the matter with a view to rectifying it?

Because that is work for the philanthropists, and out of our line.

Do you use beer and tobacco?

Only the best brands of tobacco and very little beer; wine is much nicer.

What do you define as the duty of the Government?

To levy, collect and expend a revenue so that there shall be no deficit and very little surplus.

For what is a revenue required?

To maintain the Government in office.

How do you obtain your revenue?

By the sale of assets and by a tax on imports.

Who pays the tax on imports?

The foreign exporter.

Is there a tax on imports of goods for the use of members of the Government?

No; they come in free.

Are you not discriminating in favour of the foreign exporter?

Well—ah!—ch?—that is to say, to understand the matter thoroughly you will require to understand and read up political economy and international law.

What assets are at your disposal?

Oh! we are all right there. We have exclusive privileges and licenses, fishing rights, timber, ore and agricultural lands

that we sell annually, and always have plenty left. This we do in the interests of the whole nation.

How much of any of these privileges may a person buy?

All that we have to sell, if he has the money.

How will that help those who cannot buy? Please trace the transactions through all its branches.

We sell to a large capitalist in large blocks for cash down. He lets the contract—say, of cutting timber—to smaller capitalists, or hires direct himself and gives employment to the working classes.

What aid does your selling the timber to the capitalist give to the worker? Could he not cut the timber without the help you speak of?

Of course it's not clear to the uninitiated how his buying from us would help the worker; but we think, even if he did cut timber and kept himself in food in the meantime, there might be great danger of violence: working men could never agree as to the sharing of the profits. One man would cut more than another, and so get more profit, or, if they tried to do it collectively, would waste time and treasure quarrelling over it.

Then it is to keep the peace and prevent monopoly that you sell to the capitalist?

I could hardly give a direct answer that would meet the case, and I would move that the court do now adjourn, as I wish to look into the matter more fully; besides it is unprecedented that a gentleman with legal training should be badgered by a humpkin, who, if I had him in my court as a witness, could be made to perjure himself without trouble.

THE COURT. We have noted your objection, and we now rule that you do not move from the box till you have answered the question. We further observe that we do not require or desire that you perjure yourself, but that you speak the truth and help us out of this trouble. Proceed.

The timber, like all other public assets, is sold to secure to all in the country the equal right to the wealth of the country.