

MAY - 1 1906

NEW ZEALAND'S REPLY TO PESSIMISM

BY ALLAN L. BENSON



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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✓ THE VANGUARD—LITERARY NUMBER

VOLUME 4.

APRIL, 1906.

NUMBER 6..

Social-Democratic Publishing Company

344 Sixth Street, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

FIFTY CENTS A YEAR.

PER COPY, FIVE CENTS.

THE VANGUARD.

A Magazine of Modern Thought and Social Progress.

J. M. A. SPENCE, Editor, Green Bay, Wis.

The Vanguard is published monthly by the Milwaukee Social-Democratic Publishing Co., 344 Sixth Street, Milwaukee, Wis. Entered as second-class matter August 24, 1904 at the post office at Milwaukee, Wis., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

The subscription price is Fifty cents a year to any address in the United States, Canada, Mexico, or any other country in the Postal Union. Clubs of four, \$1.50.

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THE VANGUARD.

"We're beaten back in many a fray,
Yet newer strength we borrow,
And where the Vanguard camps to-day,
The rear shall rest tomorrow."

Vol. 4. No. 6.

MILWAUKEE, WIS., APRIL, 1906.

Whole Number 38.

Pointed Paragraphs.

BY FREDERIC HEATH.

The Social-Democratic movement all over the world is working to crown labor the real king, to make those who work the masters of the wealth they create. You wouldn't stand for any such nonsense as that, now would you? The capitalists might make fun of you!

When Hull, England, installed a municipal telephone system the rates came tumbling down. 'Twere ever thus!

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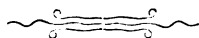
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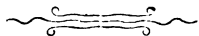
New Zealand's Reply to Pessimism

By ALLAN L. BENSON

Author of *Socialism Made Plain*, *Confessions of Capitalism*, *Honest Answers to Honest Questions*, etc.



A story of value to City or Country Dwellers, Wage Workers, Farmers, Tradesmen, and all others of our present American Victim Class. How New Zealand rose from bankruptcy and class oppression, and what it must still do in order to complete its efforts to restore to the people their full rights of citizenship.



MILWAUKEE.
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PUBLISHING CO.
344 Sixth Street.

PREFACE.

Wage-workers and farmers can obtain vastly more for their labor than they are now receiving, the moment they get ready to unite at the ballot-box and vote for it.

To prove this statement by the experience of New Zealand is the purpose of this pamphlet.

There is another phase of the experience of New Zealand to which the attention of the reader is respectfully directed. New Zealand began experimenting with the public ownership of public utilities in 1842, and after an experience of 48 years, those of her inhabitants who were not fleeing to other parts of the world to seek work were living in tents and eating in soup kitchens provided by the government.

Socialists are by no means opposed to the public ownership of public utilities, even under capitalistic government. On the contrary, they favor it. Public ownership of public utilities even now has its uses. But it does not abolish poverty. It leaves the wage-worker as poor as it found him. And it is therefore not a remedy for the economic ills from which the working class is suffering.

We Socialists desire to emphasize these facts merely because Democratic politicians are trying to convince the people of the country that public ownership of the railroads and certain other public utilities will result in immediate financial advantage to the farmers and the wage-workers of the cities. New Zealand hugged this delusion for nearly half a century until it was starved out of her. Most European countries, including Russia, own their railroads, yet such ownership has not improved the financial condition of labor.

Still, municipal ownership has its uses and we are glad to see as much of it come as possible. But we do not want to have it preceded by heralds proclaiming it as a remedy for poverty. It is not a remedy. And needing a remedy for poverty, we shall make a grave mistake, if we accept it as such, as New Zealand did to her sorrow.

Detroit, Mich.

Allan L. Benson.

New Zealand's Reply to Pessimism.

By ALLAN L. BENSON.

Author of "SOCIALISM MADE PLAIN" etc.

A colony that was writhing in poverty in 1890 is today the most prosperous country on earth.

It is prosperous solely because the farmers and the wage-workers have united at the ballot box.

The colony is New Zealand. And the story of its wonderful progress during the last 15 years is to be told for the benefit of a class that is very numerous in the United States. It is the class of well disposed men of good intellect, warm impulses, and little or no capital, who repel every attempt to interest them in Socialism by saying: "What's the use? The aims of Socialism are noble. Its ideals are high. And, perhaps in a thousand years or so, something like Socialism will be in existence. But it is idle to try to bring about any radical change in our day. The world moves slowly. It has always moved slowly. To hope to bring about any radical improvement in conditions during the lifetime of anyone now living is folly."

The experience of New Zealand during the last 15 years affords concrete proof of the unsoundness of such reasoning. New Zealand's experience proves that whatever the wealth-producers may desire in the form of legislation, they may have, provided only that they want it enough to combine and vote for it. Be their desire in this respect wise or otherwise, their will must be law when expressed in the form of a united command at the ballot box. But not otherwise. When the wealth-makers divide at the ballot box and fight each other, then the wealth-takers—the capitalists—carry the day. That is the way the wealth-makers do in the United States. And that is the reason why the wealth-makers of little New Zealand have in 15 years outstripped the wealth-makers in this great country in all that goes to make real prosperity.

NEW ZEALAND SPEEDING TOWARD SOCIALISM.

Yet New Zealand is not a Socialist colony. It never has been a Socialist colony. Nor are all its vexed economic questions settled. New Zealand is simply a sturdy little colony that is striving manfully to give the common people justice. It is succeeding in greater measure every year. The remedies that it has applied and is applying with such remarkable success are strongly Socialistic; that is to say, they are not Socialist remedies, but they partake of the principles of Socialism. And every year, these remedies become more Socialistic in their character. Socialist cabinet ministers are now administering these remedies. In fact, New Zealand is speeding so rapidly toward Socialism that it bids fair to become the first Socialist state.

Before proceeding however to the consideration of what New Zealand was, what it is and what brought about the change, let this fact be stated — a fact that will be abundantly proved in what is to follow :

New Zealand has improved its material conditions during the last 15 years only to the extent that it has realized the Socialist aim to give the workers free access to the land and the machinery with which wealth is produced, while also enabling them to exchange their products upon an equitable basis.

And the economic wrongs and inequalities that are still pressing upon New Zealand for settlement, are the wrongs and inequalities that arise from her failure, up to this time, to attain in full measure these ideals of Socialism.

CAPITALISM BROUGHT A PLAGUE OF POVERTY.

What then, was the condition of New Zealand in 1890? Let the Hon. Richard J. Seddon, prime minister of the colony, speak, quoting from a statement made by him to Prof. Frank Parsons, author of a most excellent work entitled "The Story of New Zealand."

"We had soup kitchens, shelter sheds, empty houses, men out of work, women and children wanting bread. It was a country where a few were wealthy and the rest were degraded and poverty stricken."

Speaking of the accumulated wrongs that brought about the political revolution of 1890, Prof. Parsons says :

"The feeling that something was radically wrong*****was intensified to the bursting point of political action by the knowledge that the colony had lost population. From 1885 to 1890, twenty thousand people left New Zealand; that was the excess of departures over arrivals in that time. ***It was not a flitting of travellers to visit other lands, and then return. It was a transportation, or transplantation of homes. ***The unemployed problem rose to the overflow, and working people went over seas from a population of 600,000 in a land where 20 million and more could live in comfort under just conditions. A country, easily capable of sustaining thirty times the population it possessed, witnessed the astounding spectacle of an exodus of vigorous and industrious people because they could not get homes or work."

It will thus be seen that New Zealand, in 1890, was in a most deplorable condition. Then the farmers in the country and the wage-workers in the city combined at the ballot box and began to make their own laws. They have been in combination at the ballot box ever since. And the result of their 15 years of united voting can best be described by quoting two letters that the writer has recently received from Hon. Edward Tregear, Secretary of Labor, in New Zealand. The letters will be given in full because they can best be understood if quoted in their entirety, although they contain personal references that could not be presented without violation of good taste, were there not other reasons why the letters should appear as they were written. It may be explained that the writer had been in correspondence with Secretary Tregear for a year. Here are the letters :

LETTERS FROM A SOCIALIST CABINET MINISTER.

"Department of Labor.

"Wellington, Dec. 14, 1905.

"My dear Mr. Benson:

"I write to you in abject humiliation, I have just discovered a letter to you which I wrote five months ago and which I thought had been sent. Now I remember that at the time of writing it, I had for a moment mislaid your address, and it has been swept away in the vortex of parliamentary papers which have established a maelstrom on my writing table during a heavy session of parliament. I feel disgusted with myself, but have to acknowledge that if I have not any literary ability, I have the literary weakness of loving a disorderly writing table. I have sinned—and repent—and shall assuredly do the same thing with others tomorrow. So please forgive. It is atavism. Some arboreal ancestor must have liked heaping up leaves to sleep on, and I follow him with my papers. If anything is official, my faithful officers save me, but if it is personal—then chaos, but chaos with potentialities, with germs of cosmos hereafter.

"We have had a glorious election, with utter rout of the forces of individualism and privilege. I trust that the Liberal and Labor party will rise to its magnificent occasion and do things worth doing. We had beforehand many wailings of the Cassandra type, but unlike those of that ancient princess, the wailings were not prophetic and our Troy remains. The enemy could not build a big enough 'wooden horse' to take our city, though they exhausted the materials of their heads therefor.

"I send the lost letter, hoping that even now it may be of interest to you. Wishing you all good things and much that Rockefeller has missed, I am,

"Yours truly,

"EDWARD TREGEAR."

The first part of the following "lost letter" is quoted only because in it Secretary Tregear declares himself a Socialist and makes a number of interesting remarks about Socialism:

Department of Labor.

"Wellington, July 15, 1905.

"My dear Mr. Benson:

"I hope you will pardon me for not at once acknowledging the receipt of your book, 'Socialism Made Plain.' Believe me, I feel deeply grateful to you, not only for sending me an author's copy, but for the very, very kind words you wrote in the book when sending it. We Socialists, who consider the money-reward for work somewhat tainted by the similar or greater wage obtained by others for very doubtful services, find our true recompense in the appreciation of those whose opinions we value. Judged by such a standard, you stand high in the universal commonwealth of free souls.

"If I did not reply at once, it was because I wanted to ruminate over some of the arguments you use. They are clear and practical enough, but a thinking writer's harvest in new fields has to be con-

sidered as seed corn for others to use; each sentence of his sermon is a text upon which others can compose their own disquisition. *I am one of those so fully convinced of the truth of what you say that it seems to me sometimes we are the only sane persons in a world of lunatics.* Of course, the world retorts that it is we who are mad—that it the way things go in ‘mental hospitals.’ Nevertheless, there is great hope for us. Our ranks are being augmented every hour in the most astonishing way, and I, who agreed with Henry George and Bellamy in their day, but thought the realization of their dreams to be a matter for our posterity centuries hence, see in my own short life-time the advent of social rights coming up like a thunderstorm against the wind.

“Here in New Zealand we keep pegging away, sapping little by little the foundations of one monstrous privilege after another. We got compulsory arbitration upon its sturdy legs, and I know you have followed its career with interested eyes. Now I have begun a campaign against the landlords in cities and suburbs, because every advantage in wages, etc., gained for the workers by arbitration is being exploited and neutralized by robber rents. The premier is backing me up nobly and bringing in bills (Hurrah! We got them through and the homes are being built, E. T. December, 1905) to enable us to take, volutarily by sale, or compulsorily, lands near towns for workmen’s homes and to supply funds to enable the holder to erect houses, etc., thereon, secured, of course, on the lands and improvements themselves. We did this before for the farmers, to enable them to pay off strangling mortgages, by supplying them with cheap money, borrowed at a low rate on a government guarantee. *The result is that no country in the world is as prosperous at the present time as New Zealand.*

WAGE SYSTEM MUST GO TO ABOLISH POVERTY.

“Let no man think, however, that our prosperity leaves us without evils to combat. *We have barely touched the fringe of the soiled economic garment. So long as the wage-system endures, so long as capital holds the land, machinery and means of production, so long is the bulk of our population only a collection of well-fed, well-clothed slaves!*

“I am glad to see that in your book, you have thus driven your shafts *right at the heart of the matter.* The only question is this: In a world consisting of men trained in the wolf-laws of the competitive system, is it best to accept nothing, to let the evils ‘stew in their own gravy,’ till their fetid loathsomeness drives men in despair, to rebellion and to breaking up the whole order of things to build anew? There is much to be said for this. Theoretically, I believe it right. Indeed, it may be that in this path is truly the ‘line of least resistance.’ Or shall we slowly feel our way—by national railways, telegraphs, insurance, steamers, mines, etc.,—as we are doing in New Zealand—and gradually educate those who differ until we break through their prejudices by conviction? This is evolution. But, you understand, that in doing so, we also *build up our own difficulties as*

we go. For instance: We have made our factories clean, pleasant places to work in; looked after the wages, the hours and the over-time pay, the holidays, the health of the women and children particularly. Result: Carelessness as to the real problems; fat, well-contented acquiescence in things as they are—the wage-earner satisfied with his position and ready to consider Tregear fussing over theoretical economic matters of little importance. Only when I show them (as in the case of rack-rents) how they are being robbed, does the ‘pleasant afternoon’ feeling give way sufficiently to take them to the ballot-box.

“Enough of my small troubles. When, when, when will the great American people learn that the Republican is nothing, the Democrat nothing and that there is only one issue, viz.—*that between the robber and his victim?* Moreover, that the ballot-box is the only social weapon?”

“Long life and health to you. May you strike many a giant blow for the Great Cause.

“Yours always,

“EDWARD TREGEAR,

“Secretary for Labor.”

WHAT A LITTLE SOCIALISM DID.

These then, are the facts, as set forth by the Premier and the Secretary for Labor of New Zealand, respectively:

In 1890, New Zealand was a wretched little colony, in which most of the wealth was held by a few.

In 1906, it is the “most prosperous country on earth,” to use the words of Secretary Tregear.

In order that we may profit from the experience of New Zealand, however, if we have the wisdom to do so, it becomes necessary to inquire into the conditions that existed when times were becoming worse from year to year, as well as to examine the laws that brought about improved conditions. And it is even of greater importance to investigate the remedial legislation enacted prior to 1890 that failed to bring relief. For it should not be understood that the New Zealanders were apathetic while the common people were sinking into the depths of poverty. On the other hand, they were anxiously seeking a solution of the problem—seeking as earnestly as we Americans are today seeking to solve the economic problems that are bewildering us. But the wealth-makers, meanwhile, were dividing their forces at the polls, some voting for the candidates of one capitalist party and the rest for another—just as we Americans are doing today.

Of the conditions that existed in the colony prior to 1890, this may be said: Nobody had a *right* to work. The opportunity to work was not something to be demanded as a right, but rather something to be sought as a privilege. In other words, a few individuals owned all of the land and machinery, and since no one can work without land or machinery, it became necessary for everyone to go to the owners of land and machinery and ask for the privilege of working. Naturally, the owners of the land and machinery hired only those who would work for the lowest wages, and since there was always a large army of unemployed persons who were willing to work

for wages that represented only a bare living, those who worked were compelled to accept the same wages or make way for the unemployed.

WORKERS SLOW TO DISCOVER THE WRONGS.

This inability of the population to labor without giving to the capitalists all of the product except that which was necessary to support the laborers and their families, naturally reduced the laborers to poverty. Yet the laborers, in the beginning, did not realize that there was anything prejudicial to their own interests in permitting a few men to own the land upon which all must live and work—at least, they did not interfere with the capitalist governments who were giving a few capitalists an opportunity to secure the bulk of the land. They looked upon the land question as most Americans look upon the question of the ownership of the railroads, factories and other machinery with which American laborers, who are not farmers, must work. They saw nothing dangerous in the principle of permitting a few individuals to own *both* the land and the machinery—just as most Americans, to this day, fail to see the danger of permitting a few to own the tools that must be used by all.

So the great capitalists had little difficulty in getting the land. The first form of exploitation was to buy big tracts of land from the natives for small sums and sell farms to settlers at greatly increased prices. The New Zealand Land Company obtained a charter from the British government in the early '40's to engage in this sort of speculation. This company bought a vast tract of the natives for \$45,000, and then began to bring over settlers, from Europe to buy the land. To the first group of settlers, the company sold one-two-hundredth part of the land it claimed to have bought from the natives, for \$500,000. Even the government sold the public lands freely, without taking adequate precaution to prevent them from falling into the hands of speculators. Capitalists bent on establishing a colonial aristocracy, also bought the holdings of small settlers.

A FEW OWNED MOST OF THE LAND.

"By 1890," says Prof. Parsons, in his "Story of New Zealand," "more than 80 per cent of the people had no land. Only 14 per cent of the white population were landlords, while one per cent of the landowners possessed 40 per cent of the realty values. Six companies having estates of 150,000 acres or more each, held 1,321,000 acres of real property worth \$13,000,000**** Sixteen hundred and fifteen land holders had 18,000,000 acres; 107 persons owned land of the value of \$35,000,000, and 11 holders had land worth \$24,000,000. This in a nation of 626,000 people with only \$450,000,000 of realty, land buildings and improvements all told."

Such conditions inevitably produced poverty. The people cried for relief. No one seemed to suspect, however, that the ownership by a few of the land and machinery had anything to do with the poverty. So looking for a remedy for the situation, no one suggested that the people should take over the ownership of all the land

and machinery. On the contrary, the New Zealanders approached the solution of the subject in much the same manner that we Americans are now trying to solve our economic problems. There was a popular demand for the government ownership of certain public utilities.

EARLY EXPERIMENTS IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Hopefully the New Zealanders went to work to bring about these reforms. Government ownership of a few public utilities was the thing. The land and the factories might still remain the property of a few individuals, but the government must own the "public utilities"—that would end all the distress. And this the New Zealanders believed—just as many Americans now believe that the government ownership of the railroads and a few gas plants, street car lines, etc., will settle our troubles. Yet nobody in New Zealand at that time said a word about the public ownership of the government—the massing of the labor vote of city and country to control the government. On this point there was silence—just as there is silence on this point in this country today wherever exploiters gather. The New Zealanders did not bother themselves about owning the government, but they wanted to own the railways, and the wealth-makers continued to fight each other at the polls—just as American wealth-makers have long done and are still doing.

But the principle of the ownership, by a capitalist government, of a few public utilities made progress. The first step in this direction was an ordinance drafted by Gov. Hobson in 1842, which gave New Zealand cities the right to light their own streets. In 1872 was passed an act giving the municipalities the right, after a favorable referendum, to acquire the title to their street railway tracks, though the right to operate the cars was not conferred until 1886. The government took over the ownership of the telegraph lines in 1865. Postal savings banks, for which we Americans have long been clamoring but have not yet obtained, were established the same year. In 1870, Sir Julius Vogel, treasurer of the colony, proposed an ambitious scheme to spend \$50,000,000 during the next 10 years in the building of railroads, telegraphs, water works and other public works. There was only 46 miles of railroad in the colony, and better transportation facilities were sorely needed, but the plan was nevertheless opposed—by the capitalists. One of the opposition leaders in parliament called the bill a "monstrous bubble" and declared that if passed, it would bankrupt the colony. Yet notwithstanding the fact that the appropriation of \$50,000,000 was as much for a little colony of 250,000 population as twenty billions would be for the United States, the bill was passed, and the railroads were built. Several private corporations afterward built railroads, but all but two of these privately owned concerns have gone out of existence. Prof. Parsons says in his book that after an experience of 35 years, nobody in New Zealand would be in favor of going back to the private ownership of railroads.

In 1870 the government also established a life insurance department, in competition with the private companies that were operating in the colony. This department has since gained the confidence of the people to such an extent that in 1906 it has in force more insurance than all of its three competitors, two of which are American companies. The government insurance rates are somewhat lower than the rates of the private companies and the dividends paid to policy holders are larger. The government also has a fire insurance department which is equally successful.

In 1884, the government took over the ownership of the telephone lines. In 1887, a parcels post was established, which charges less than half what the American express companies charge for carrying packages.

WORKERS STARVED THOUGH NATION OWNED PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Americans will recognize in the foregoing reform legislation, many measures that American politicians assure us will most certainly remove *all* of the economic wrongs from which we are suffering. But the fact remains that New Zealand had had government ownership of railroads for 20 years when, in 1890, the colony was in such poverty that the people were fleeing from it as if from a plague. Municipal ownership of public utilities had been for years an accomplished fact, only to demonstrate as it has in Liverpool, Glasgow, and other European cities that, *of itself*, municipal ownership can do very little toward making the people prosperous. In short New Zealand had thoroughly tried out every so-called important remedial law that is now being urged as a positive cure for similar economic diseases here in the United States, when the deepest distress of the colony's existence overtook it in 1890.

This completes the survey of the New Zealand laws that existed prior to 1890 concerning the ownership of land and the machinery of production, as well as of the laws not touching broadly either land or machinery that were enacted to improve the economic condition of the wealth-producers—and that failed even to stem the tide of adversity that was setting so strongly against labor. At this point in the history of the colony, the wage-workers in the cities and the farmers united at the ballot box and gained control of the government. This done, the wealth-producers were in a position to make their own laws. This they did. And since the laws thus passed have in 15 years transformed the colony from an economic plague-spot into the most prosperous country in the world, it becomes of importance to ascertain what were these laws.

THE REAL REMEDY APPLIED TO THE LAND.

They were simple enough. They aimed only to put the means of production in the hands of the people. Nobody could till the soil without making terms with the landlords. So laws were enacted to get rid of the landlords. Nobody could use the machinery in the factories without making terms with the men who owned it. If the

capitalists refused to pay for overtime, to provide sanitary workshops, or to pay more than bare living wages, the workers had no redress except to strike and their strikes usually failed, for the same reason that strikes usually fail in this country—because the capitalists have the most money and can hold out the longest. Laws were enacted compelling the capitalists to keep their factories in a sanitary condition, to pay for overtime, and in the event of a disagreement over wages or anything else that would lead to a strike in the United States, both sides were compelled to submit to arbitration by a government tribunal.

HOW THE PEOPLE DROVE OUT THE LANDLORDS.

But New Zealand has grappled with the land problem more seriously than she has the machinery problem. She has sought and is still seeking to restore the land to the people. Her course has not been marked by any consistency of method, because she has not followed any method to the exclusion of all other methods. The first step was to impose a progressive tax upon the great landlords, increasing rapidly with the size of the estate, with a provision for an extraordinary tax upon the holdings of all non-resident owners. This tax, as it was intended that it should be, soon became so burdensome that many of the large landlords offered their holdings for sale. Another law was enacted giving the government the power to compel obstinate landlords to sell their holdings to the government at a price to be fixed by a government tribunal. In this way, the large estates are constantly being broken up. The land again in the possession of the government, it is being placed at the disposal of the people. The government will sell the land outright, if desired, a limitation being placed upon the amount that any one person may hold, the limit depending upon the quality of the land. This was the plan at first adopted, and it is still in practice to some extent, although the government is now trying to discourage the holding of land by deed even by actual settlers. It prefers to dispose of the land either on a short term lease, with the privilege of buying at the end of 25 years, or to lease it for 999 years, the tenant paying a rental of 4 per cent of the actual value of the land, exclusive of all improvements. And as the average farming land can be bought for \$5 an acre, the annual rental for 500 acres of land amounts only to \$100. It is now the policy of the government to encourage the leasing of land for 999 years, because it recognizes the dangerous principle involved in permitting anybody to obtain the actual ownership of a foot of the soil, because ownership involves the right to sell the land to another, and thus the door is opened to the accumulation of large estates. The government is therefore breaking up the large estates as rapidly as possible, obtaining the title to these lands and leasing in practical perpetuity to settlers. One estate of 85,000 acres, which was formerly owned by one man, and upon which only 80 employees lived, now affords homes for 380 families, or about 1,500 persons. The government borrows money abroad at a low rate of interest and lends it to the farmers at 5 per cent, shaving this to 4½

per cent provided the interest be paid promptly. Prior to this innovation on the part of the government, farmers were compelled to pay 8 and 10 per cent to private bankers. Loans are also made to workingmen on the same terms, on freehold or leasehold security. The farmers and wage-workers thus save about \$6,000,000 a year in interest. Prof. Parsons says that a similar saving in the United States, in proportion to population would amount to \$600,000,000 a year.

That is the way the government is grappling with the land question. The tendency is to restore the land to the people. The tide of migration has already turned from the cities to the country. And with the reduction of the congestion in the cities, the competition of laborers for factory positions has diminished and the wages of factory employes have increased.

MACHINERY QUESTION REMAINS TO BE SETTLED.

But the government has not done so well in restoring the other means of production—the machinery—to the people. A citizen can now get access to the land without begging it as a privilege—he can lease a farm and obtain a loan from the government to give him a start. But the same citizen cannot get access to the machinery, *which is as necessary a part of modern civilization as the land*, without asking the owner of the machinery for the privilege of using it; in other words, without “asking for a job,” which, even if obtained, means only a wage representing a part of the worker’s product, the remainder going to the capitalist who owns the machinery. It is therefore plain that while the New Zealand government has made a good start toward the solution of the land question, that it has as yet done practically nothing toward the solution of what may be called the “machinery question.” And since a large part of the population of the colony must find employment in the use of machinery, it is apparent that the users of machinery are still at the mercy of the capitalists who own it. They cannot work unless the capitalists will hire them—they cannot demand as a right the opportunity to labor as can the farmer who leases land and gets a loan from the government, to which he is entitled under the laws. They must first be hired before they can work at all, and having been hired, they must agree to give the capitalists who own the machinery all of their product except that which is returned to them in the form of wages.

The means of production in New Zealand are not yet in the possession of those who wish to work with machinery, just as the means of production were not in possession of those who wished to work upon the land until the government began to drive out big landlords and vest the ownership of the lands in the people themselves, through the government. And since the problem of giving the producer his product is solely dependent upon giving the producer the right to use the thing with which the product is made, it follows that New Zealand has attained economic justice only to the extent that she has made the land accessible to the people, and fallen short of economic justice to the extent that she has failed to make machinery as accessible to the operatives as the land is to the farmers. And this can be done only by eliminating the private

capitalist who is bent upon the acquisition of profits, and substituting the government as a public capitalist. There is no other method, because economical production necessitates production on a large scale with much machinery. One man can run a small farm, but one man cannot make steel rails, nor can he, if he be a laborer, own a little steel plant of his own. Modern production requires huge investments of capital in machinery and the associated labor of many men.

BUT NEW ZEALAND WILL TAKE THE MACHINERY NEXT.

It was the failure of New Zealand thus far to grapple with the machinery question that Secretary Tregear had in mind when, in the letter we quoted he said that "We have barely touched the fringe of the soiled economic garment" and that "So long as the wage-system endures, so long as capital holds the land, machinery and means of production, *so long is the bulk of our population only a collection of well-fed, well-clothed slaves.*" No one knows better than Secretary Tregear that the workers in New Zealand will not get their product until the government takes over the ownership of the machinery as well as of the land. He and his associates in the government are laboring under no misapprehension. He tells in his letter how the landlords who owned the workingmen's homes gobbled up in increased rents all that the government obtained for the wage-workers in the form of increased wages. And although the government is now building homes for workingmen, he knows this will result only in a temporary benefit to the toilers—that in the end, the decreased cost of living will reduce wages and thus help the capitalists. Because wages are always based upon the lowest sum upon which the workers will consent to exist and reproduce their kind. Wages always increase *after* the cost of living increases, and go down *after* the cost of living goes down. No one can work for less than a living and when the cost of living increases, wages *must* increase. On the other hand, when the cost of living decreases, some member of the great world-wide army of the unemployed is always willing to take the job of the employed man at a wage representing the reduced cost of living. And since capital always pays as little as possible for labor, the employed man is compelled to suffer a reduction of wages, or give way to the unemployed man. This explains why the municipal ownership of public utilities never improves the financial condition of workingmen—a fact that has been proved not only in New Zealand, but wherever it has been tried. London has made extensive investments in public utilities, yet in no civilized part of the world is poverty so appalling as it is in London. Yet such experiments are not without their value, because they tend to suggest to the public mind what *could* be accomplished if all industries were owned by the people through their governments and the great unearned sums that now go to private capitalists retained by those who create them.

NOW AT THE DOOR OF SOCIALISM.

Going back to New Zealand, it is plain that since the farmers and wage-workers have combined at the polls, capitalism is being hunted out of one hole into another until it has nearly reached its last

hiding place. The landlords having gobbled what the government was able to obtain for the wage-workers in the form of increased wages, the capitalists who own the factories will now take from the wage-workers what the government saves them by providing them with homes. The next step will logically be to prevent the capitalists who own the factories from committing this latest robbery, and this can be done only by depriving the capitalists of paying any wages at all. which means the government ownership of the factories, and all other means of production.

That will be Socialism.

And all indications point to the conclusion that the government of New Zealand will not be long in taking this last final step toward the emancipation of those who toil.

What then, is the answer that New Zealand gives to those American citizens who, conceding the high ideals of Socialism, nevertheless contend that it is hardly worth while to advocate it or to vote for it because it "cannot be attained at all in less than a thousand years" and who look forward to no material change in existing conditions during the life time of anyone now living because "the world always moves slowly?"

Has it been "worth while" for the farmers and wage-workers to unite at the ballot box to transform the colony in 15 years from a poverty-stricken group of islands into the most prosperous country on earth?

Although New Zealand's task is well on toward completion, the bulk of the benefits that are in store for her will not come until she takes over the ownership of the factories as well as of the land, which she will surely do during the next few years. But even if nothing more were to be done, is what she has already obtained worth having?

WHAT WE HAVE; WHAT THEY HAVE.

Think of what the people of New Zealand have in comparison with what we have in the United States! This is the way Prof. Parsons puts it in "The Story of New Zealand:"

United States.	New Zealand.
Nominations by machine.	Nominations by petition.
Government by party.	Government by the people.
Spoils system.	Merit system.
Political corruption.	No political corruption.
Monopoly pressure to control government.	Government pressure to control monopoly.
Concentration of wealth.	Diffusion of wealth.
Dollar the king.	Manhood the king.
Government loans to banks.	Government loans to farmers.
Unjust discrimination in freight rates.	No discrimination.
Railroads and telegraphs for private profit.	Railroads and telegraphs for public use.
Organization of capital in the lead.	Organization of men in the lead.

Frequent and costly strikes and lockouts.	No strikes or lockouts.
Industrial conflicts; disputes of labor and capital settled by battle.	Industrial peace; disputes of labor and capital settled by judicial decision.
10-hour day.	8-hour day.
Contractor system in public works.	Direct employment and co-operative methods.
Taxation for revenue.	Taxation for the public good.
Farmers and workingmen divided at the ballot box.	Farmers and workingmen united at the ballot box.
Monopolists and politicians in control.	The common people in control.

A SOLID LABOR VOTE DID IT ALL.

Surely, no one will contend that the contrast is to our credit. No one will deny that New Zealand has many things not possessed by the American people that are worth having. No one can deny that New Zealand had none of these things 15 years ago and that she has obtained them merely because the wealth-producers have united at the ballot box to get them. Is it not therefore worth while to profit by her experience—to avoid her mistakes and to emulate her wisdom? Her greatest mistake was in expecting the public ownership of public utilities to improve the financial condition of the working class. She spent 50 years trying to find prosperity along this line and brought herself to the lowest depths of poverty. She made herself the most prosperous country in the world when she began to place the means of production in the hands of the people. Her prosperity has increased in exact proportion to the extent that she has substituted public capital for private capital in industry.

And it is idle to suggest that what New Zealand has done we cannot do. It is folly to say that New Zealand is only a small colony and that the ordinary economic laws do not apply in her case as they do in our country. If New Zealand were as small as a garden patch and contained as inhabitants only two men, one of these men would be in a pitiable plight if the other owned the garden and the hoe, had food enough to last him a year, and would not let the other man use his hoe to till the garden unless he would agree to take barely enough of the vegetables that he raised to keep soul and body together and give the rest to his "employer" for the use of the land and the hoe.

Even a housewife would be likely to go hungry sometimes if she could not go into her kitchen to prepare a meal without obtaining permission from some of the neighbors to use the kitchen stove and the cooking utensils. Wage-earners often *do* go hungry in this country because they are compelled to seek permission from capitalists to use the tools with which they must work if they work at all.

Let not the future historian record the sorry fact that the nation that first established the political equality of its citizens refused to establish their economic equality. American citizens, with their wonderful genius for creation and organization can, if given the op-

portunity, make the material successes of New Zealand look poor indeed. The little colony that is showing the world the way has wrought her victories out of rocky islands, comparatively barren of natural resources. We have the greatest natural resources in the world.

But we also have the greatest concentration of machinery in the world. Our machinery is in much the same position, so far as ownership is concerned, as the land of New Zealand was in 1890. A few capitalists owned nearly all of the New Zealand land. A few capitalists own the bulk of the American machinery. Fewer than a dozen men control all of our railroads. Rockefeller alone controls the oil, copper, steel and a number of other industries. Other trust magnates control the rest of the great industries. The great bulk of the wage-working class of the cities work for these trusts. The few men who control the trusts have it in their power to say who shall be given employment, how many hours he shall work and when he shall be dismissed. Millions of wage-workers are at their mercy. And like the New Zealand landlords who would not hire the starving people to till their lands, or permit them to till it for themselves merely because the products could not be sold at a profit, these American capitalists who own the machinery will not let anybody work unless his products can be sold at a profit by the capitalists.

But we have seen how New Zealand restored the land to the people by kicking out the landlords and vesting the ownership of the land in the people themselves, through the government. The same action in this country with regard to machinery would solve the problem of the wage-worker, giving him all of his product, instead of a mere part of it and make industrial panics impossible. We should no longer have to go hungry because we had made more food than the capitalists could sell at a profit.

The pessimist is wrong. It is worth while to try to do something for ourselves and to do it now. And we should proceed to our task with the slogan ringing in our ears that Secretary Tregear enunciated in 1896, when he took charge of the New Zealand Department of Labor:

"The wage-payer is the master of the wage-earner; the landholder is the master of the landless; and the owner of the machinery is the owner of the machinist."

If it were within the bounds of possibility, we would supply Benson's "Socialism Made Plain" free to all who asked, so important is it to get its message into the heads of the people. But you can get it for a dime, or fifteen cents by mail, and that is cheap for a big book. Put as many into the people's hands as you can.

The trust capitalists who are riding on the backs of labor are not near so dangerous to our liberties as the fellows who are mad at the trusts for keeping them from getting up on labor's back also.

Our objection to the trusts is that the people are not on the inside of them.

Why I am a Socialist.

By Father A. L. Byron-Curtiss.

No one acknowledges the failures, the shortcomings of the Church quicker than I. But, conceiving the Church to be a Divine Institution and its teachings of divinity, the relation of the Divine to the human, and the human to the Divine, as scientific truths, I make no apologies to anyone for adhering to my theology while at the same time accepting Socialism and joining hands with the Socialists of the world. Just as I make no apologies to my ecclesiastical superiors and equals, for espousing Socialism. It is purely a material science, the knowledge and putting in force of which will redound to human comfort, happiness and advancement, exactly as the appropriating any and all other material scientific facts hitherto has done.

In Socialism I find, not theories, but also as in Catholic theology, facts. Economic facts, mathematically arranged and scientifically presented, which, when adjusted to human life and order, will bring a material peace and harmony not present or possible under the competitive system of production. I perceive the practicability of Socialism. I see the tremendous leap forward the human race will make under the new order. I conceive the possibility of men living closer to the precepts and ideals of Christianity than they have ever yet been able to do. Above all, I see the doom of the present capitalist system of production within the next one hundred years and the inevitable adoption of *social production and distribution* of the necessities, comforts and conveniences of life.

All this Socialism shows me, therefore I unhesitatingly adopt it. But why if I believe in it so thoroughly, do I not give all my time to its propaganda, instead of remaining active in the priesthood? I have already given a hint, in the exposition of what I consider the truths the Church possesses. Another reason, which I have learned from theology, is that great movements cannot be forced. Next, I know that neither the success or failure of the Church, nor the success or failure of the Socialist movement rests on one man's shoulders. If the propagating of any social truth, i. e., truth that concerns the whole world, were to rest on one individual the world would speedily come to grief.

Lastly, it is my profound conviction that the success of the Socialist movement rests alone with the non-possessing class. Man is so constituted that like Oliver Twist he "wants more." With the aid of a telescope he discovers a new star. Not content he builds a more powerful instrument that he may discover another. Just so with the proletariat. He cannot and will not be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. He is awakening; and with an increasing intelligence will move on to the possession of his own at the fall of capitalism and the ushering in of the co-operative commonwealth. And so I stand by to assist in his awakening. My conscience and my reason tell me my theology is true. Likewise, my conscience and my reason tell me of the truth of Socialism and its inevitableness. Therefore I am also a Socialist propagandist.
—Rome, N. Y.

Why the Post Office Loses Money.

The postal deficit for the last fiscal year was about \$15,000,000.

Ed. VANGUARD.

The United States pays more money every year for the transportation of mail than all the other countries of the world combined. The bulk of this transportation is by railroad. Yet freight and passenger rates are cheaper to private individuals in the United States than in any other country.

Notwithstanding the cheapness of American railroad rates on other traffic than mail, foreign post-offices, taken altogether, handle more mail than ours, send it farther over a greater number of post-routes, and pay less for the service. It cost our government in 1901, in round numbers, \$38,500,000 for railroad transportation alone; *the rest of the world for all their domestic transportation, by railroad, by wagon, and by messenger, paid but \$37,000,000—\$1,500,000 less.*

The railroads are carrying mail today under a schedule in force January 1, 1874, which, according to the secret history of that time, was drawn up with the assistance of Thomas Scott, *president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.*

The United States Post-Office Department reports a deficit for 1904 of \$4,000,000. The real deficit is about \$1,000,000 greater, for in the peculiar bookkeeping used in recording postal accounts, the salaries of the Post-Office Department, the rent of large city post-offices, and other postal items are not charged as postal expenses. But even at \$4,000,000 the postal deficit is a national disgrace when we consider the inadequacies of the postal service. The postal department of every other country in the world,

except ten small nations and colonies of the rank of Chile, Korea, and the Dutch East Indies, pays a profit. The statistics of the International Postal Union on this point betray startling comparisons. Even Russia, with its vast stretch of country to serve, makes its postal service pay.

By the antiquated law of 1873 the railroads—whether they operate at great expense over mountain grades or cheaply over prairie country, whether their other traffic is great or small, whether their other rates are low or high—receive a uniform graduated scale of rates according to the average daily weight carried and according to distance. The mail is weighed every four years, and the average for thirty days over each route establishes the rate to prevail for the next four years. The rate runs from \$42.75 a year on 200 pounds for each mile carried daily down to \$21.37 a ton for weights in excess of 5,000 pounds carried one mile daily. In addition, the Government pays for the use of the postal cars from \$25 to \$50 a year for each mile traveled every day, according to the size of the car.

Under this arrangement the transportation item grew from \$6,500,000 in 1873 to \$15,500,000 in 1886.

Yet nothing has been done to lower the rates that the Government pays, and the present post-office administration is making no effort to lower them. A joint commission of the Senate and the House investigated railroad mail pay from 1898 to 1901 and—recommended nothing.

ing. The fruit of their labors consists of volumes containing a welter *of the most disorganized, contradictory and inconclusive statistics ever published.* Railroad officials and railroad attorneys presented arguments that sounded as conclusive as the rule of three until the committee began to analyze them. Nobody knew just what it cost to carry the mails. Prof. Henry C. Adams, however, reported to the commission the results of an investigation that he had been commissioned to make.

First, the statistics showed that, through the enormous increase in the volume of mail since 1873, the sliding scale of compensation has brought the average pay for each ton carried one mile, including postal-car pay, down from twenty-six cents in 1873 to eleven cents in 1898. At the same time the increase in volume has brought the average sum paid the railroads for each mile of line up from \$130 a year to \$200 a year, and the earnings from the mail carrying have increased from 1½ per cent. to 2 7-10 per cent. of the gross earnings of the railroads. This makes it clear that mail transportation is becoming a greater and greater part of railroad business—growing faster than freight and passenger traffic.

The operating expenses of American railroads from 1881 to 1898 increased 222 per cent. The number of passengers carried one mile increased 225 per cent. If the passenger business bore its due proportion of the operating expenses, it is difficult to see how the average passenger rate could be lowered much. Yet the rate was lowered 21 per cent. Competition and the

increase of business, with resulting economy of operation, brought it down.

Next, as compared with the 225 per cent. increase in operating expenses, the number of tons of freight carried one mile increased 313 per cent. If the freight bore only its own proportion of the operating expenses, it is clear that rates might well be reduced. At all events, freight rates fell 44 per cent..

Mail, on the other hand, increased in the number of tons carried one mile 555 per cent. but the mail rate *has* not shared in the general decline in rates.

Certain railroad officials who testified before the congressional commission thought it right to charge to the mail the expense of a mail-train containing some express and some passenger cars. One railroad official—of the Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad—testified that carrying the mail resulted in a deficit to the railroad of \$28,000 a year looked at one way, \$46,000 looked at another way. He was asked if he would like to have his road relieved of this triply unprofitable business. His reply was that the road *would rather keep it.* This is a type of the testimony of railroad officials before the commission. An important official in the Second Assistant Postmaster - General's office declared to me that the railroads run their trains to suit their business needs and the Department necessarily *conforms to their schedule.*

The real test of the fairness, or unfairness of mail-transportation rates lies in a comparison between those rates and the rates that the railroads grant to the express companies for similar service.

Here are figures secured by Prof. Adams:

	TABLE OF EXPRESS AND MAIL RATES.	
	Mail per ton	Express per ton
New York to San Francisco	\$285.63	\$135.00
New York to Chicago . . .	71.39	25.00
New York to Boston . . .	17.99	10.00
New York to New Orleans .	117.18	50.00
New York to Philadelphia .	6.57	7.50

The express pay is calculated at 50 per cent. of the freight charges to the public. The usual arrangement is 40 per cent., but Prof. Adams adds 10 per cent. to cover payment to railroad employees by the express companies for incidental services.

By the last annual report of the New York Central Railroad the total earnings on express matter was about \$1,870,000; on mail, \$2,380,000. The railroad takes out of New York every day an average of twenty-four and a half mail-cars. There are more than twice as many express cars. The mail pays better than either express or passengers on a *space* basis as well as on a *weight* basis.

According to Prof. Adams, more than half the mail carried on the railroads goes over but thirty-two comparatively short routes between great cities—Boston, New York, Buffalo, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and places of such magnitude. The reason is obvious—the business is in the cities and the bulk of the mail is business mail.

All railroads make very low commutation rates to passengers going daily into the city and out again; the express companies make low rates from city to city—one express company now as low as twenty-five cents for 100 pounds between New York and Boston—50 per cent. of which allotted to the railroad would make a rate of but twelve and one-half cents as against

eighty-nine cents which the Post-Office Department pays; and even the freight rates are lower than between small towns because full carloads can more easily be made up. As the law stands now, a postmaster-general might ask for bids on carrying full cars of mail from New York to Philadelphia—the densest routes—from several competing companies. *No postmaster-general dare do this*; yet that is how the express companies secure their rates. On these dense routes, moreover, much of the railway-mail distribution is done, and here are the greatest number of postal cars with their accompanying cost. Payment could be better adjusted on all of them and on at least twenty six others.

Then there is the question of postal-car pay. A passenger travels and is not charged with the seat and the car he rides in, nor does a shipper of freight pay extra for the freight-car in which his goods travel. But the post-office must pay for postal cars an annual sum *that would be more than enough to buy every postal car in the country*. According to the superintendent of the railway mail service, the sum paid in 1897 was \$6,250 a car. The cars cost, according to the comparatively high estimate of the superintendent of the Pullman Company, \$5,500. The total sum paid in 1902 for the use of the postal cars was about \$4,660,000. **THIS WOULD DO MORE THAN WIPE OUT THE POST-OFFICE DEFICIT.**

The general policy of the Post-Office Department itself has been to preserve that system. *Railroad men are not uncommon in the Second Assistant's position*—the bureau in charge of the railroad transportation. Second Assistant Postmaster-General Neilson came into office

from a railroad position, and after retiring was at once employed as agent for a company with services to sell to the Second Assistant's office. His predecessor, J. Lowrie Bell, was a railroad official when he entered the office, and resumed a railroad position when he left.

The attitude of such men is sum-

med up in a remark which I quote from a railway-mail official. He recommended to a Second Assistant, his chief, that effort be made to reduce the railway-mail pay. The chief replied:

"Why, we *want* to pay the railroads this money."—*World's Work*.

As workingmen, do we think we have ever had what are called "good times?" What are "good times," anyhow? As a matter of fact, what sort of times have we had? The following from the United States census reports is a record of the average wage rate from 1850 to 1900:

Average wage in 1850 was ..	\$2.48
Average wage in 1860 was ..	2.92
Average wage in 1870 was ..	3.10
Average wage in 1880 was ..	3.46
Average wage in 1890 was ..	4.00
Average wage in 1900 was ..	4.40

Now take notice that the above represents the condition of labor under free silver and the gold standard, under high tariff and low tariff. While wages show a slight increase for each decade, they have absolutely declined when measured by the work done; that is, by the values produced. To illustrate: From 1850 to 1900 our productivity increased tenfold; the average worker produced in 1900 ten times as much wealth as in 1850; but in that half century of time his average wage did not even double.

What sort of an industrial system is it in which the great bulk of the wealth produced goes to a small class, while the conditions of the producers, compared with the cost of living, is scarcely improved at all?—*Metal Worker*.

Twenty-six cities of Great Britain (not including London and Glasgow) contribute annually more than \$3,000,000 from the various municipal enterprises toward the reduction of municipal taxes, besides saving vast sums to their citizens, in reduced cost of gas, electricity, street-car fares, etc. Thus the people have secured double economy from their standpoint—reduction of cost to the consumers and reduction of the tax levy. Some of the principle cities have adopted the Socialist idea—notably Glasgow — of devoting the entire profits from such sources to public improvements and the acquirement of other utilities.



A few weeks ago a delegation of labor men appeared before the judiciary committee in Washington to urge the passage of some labor measures. Considering that this country is principally peopled with laboring men it would seem to be about time for labor to put its men in congress, instead of sending them hat in hand, to beg from crooked capitalistic legislators for laws they will not get.



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