

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Labour and Nationalisation.

The Press reported last week that the Labour Party were busy working out a scheme for compensating private enterprises which shall become State enterprises under a Socialist Government.

The original idea about nationalisation was that it would be established by a majority vote in Parliament, and that in its operation it would transmute private profits into State revenue, thereby expanding the wage fund, which would thenceforth provide incomes only in return for services rendered to the economic system.

Later—soon after the War ended—the idea of the Capital Levy was announced and canvassed. The notion was to bleed private enterprise of profit for the benefit of labour, instead of, or as a step towards, formal nationalisation. The difference here would have been that the legitimacy of profit-making would be still recognised in principle, but would be contracted in scope to some equitable relationship with wages and salaries.

The inspiration of the nationalisation policy in both these forms may be said to have proceeded from Mr. (afterwards Sir) Leo Chiozza-Money, whose book, *Riches and Poverty*, was first published in 1905, and ran to four editions by 1908. His thesis was based on a broad analysis of the national income, which he presented in the following form.

"BRITISH INCOMES IN 1904."
"Rich, 1½ million persons.....£585 millions.
"Comfortable, 3½ million persons...£245 millions.
"Poor, 38 million persons.....£880 millions."

Veteran reformers who are now Social-Credit advocates, and who happen to have copies of this old book somewhere at home, will find it an immense help to them if and when the Socialists start to canvass their new scheme. Sir Leo did his job thoroughly. In a space of over 320 pages he packed every kind of statistical matter bearing on the distribution of income and the

presumed sociological consequences thereof. Some of his chapter-headings will whet the appetites of our readers; thus:

The National Income.
The Estates of Rich and Poor.
The National Accumulations.
The Monopoly of Capital.
Profits, Bad Trade, and Unemployment.
The Waste of Capital.
The Golden Key ["better distribution"].
A Popular Income Tax [steep graduation].
The Death Duties [suggested new scales].

And everyone who knows even the elements of the Social-Credit analysis will sigh over the reflection that such an immensely valuable speakers' handbook as this should now be out of print. If re-published, it would require only a series of annotations from Social-Credit commentators to turn the whole thesis of the author into a demonstration of the necessity for the National Dividend and the Just Price. And not the least effective feature of those annotations would be the recording of the bankers' voluntary and successful efforts to implement some of the author's chief recommendations, particularly those affecting the taxation of incomes and estates, since 1905, and particularly since 1918.* The last two sections of the last chapter in the book were indexed: "The appeal to the few," and: "The appeal to the people." Well, at any rate, the "few" responded, and right nobly! Sir Leo Chiozza-Money might well paraphrase words of Sir William Holden about Mr. Lloyd George, and say: "They did everything I asked them to do"—and the Money Monopolists might paraphrase them some more and say of Sir Leo: "He asked us to do everything we wanted to do." Oh dear, dear; what a pity that this precious book is beyond the reach of the younger generation of Social-Credit advocates.

* Mr. Charles Henry Garton, of Banstead Wood, Surrey, chairman of Garton, Sons and Co., a director of Manbre and Garton, Ltd., and of Thomas Wethered and Sons, Ltd., left £2,867,302 16s. 1d., "so far as at present can be ascertained," with net personality £2,709,702 16s. 1d. The estate duty amounts to £1,406,910 8s. 2d. His brother, who died on April 22 last, left £2,641,364 19s. 7d., on which Estate Duty of £1,282,497 14s. 5d. was paid, making a total of £2,689,318 2s. 7d. in respect of these two estates.—*Star*, July 13.

While on the subject we must again recall another valuable work now out of print, namely *The Party System*, by Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton. This was first published in 1911, a second edition being produced in 1913. Both books, it will be seen, were contemporary handbooks for Socialists. More important still is the fact that they were both in vogue years before there was a Parliamentary Labour Party worth the name, let alone a Labour Government in power. It was precisely because those were the days when the Socialists could voice and argue their aspirations, principles and policies without responsibility for producing methods of implementing them, that the authors of these books were able to write with the candour and force which characterise them. Thus, while Chiozza-Money was busy proving that one-thirtieth of the population took one-third the national income, Belloc and Chesterton were equally busy proving that the so-called "Conservative" and "Liberal" Governments were one and the same thing, and that what the country was ruled by was a "Front-Bench" Government inspired by Ministers and ex-Ministers of both party-persuasions, and functioning in the interests of the rich without reference to the needs of the poor. What these writers were really demonstrating was the centralisation of the control of money on the one hand, and of the control of political policy on the other. They did not apprehend the ultimate reason for the centralisation, or the ultimate nature of the control, but so far as they pursued their respective analyses they built up an overwhelming case for the return to power of a third party which should supersede the Front-Bench caucus and thereby (as was thought) gain power to redistribute money on principles of justice.

No wonder that, to-day, these two books are no longer available. Since they were published the Labour Party came, saw, and joined the Caucus. The very term "National Government" affirms and denotes the principle and practice of "Front-Bench" Government. And at the head of that Government is the man who, above all, climbed to his position on the rungs of the polemical ladder so competently constructed by the three iconoclasts of whom we speak. The man who was to smash the Caucus is to-day its Chairman. The ladder has served its purpose and has been kicked down. *Riches and Poverty* and *The Party System*, once the inspiration of the Socialist Movement, would now be an embarrassment to a Labour Government, and have been left reposing in the lost-luggage department of some wayside station somewhere along the line from Llossiemouth to Westminster. It is about time for the authors to hunt them up and place them, this time, at the disposal of the growing Social-Credit Movement, which may be relied on to grasp their deepest import, and to make sure that the aims which animated their authors will be pursued along sound and effective lines. Mr. Belloc, for one, has generously sponsored the credentials of the Movement. What about munitioning it with a new edition of his book?

Economics of the School Age.

The raising of the school-leaving age from fourteen to fifteen is indefinitely postponed. There was such a heavy birth-rate just after the war that to keep the older children at school another year would create the grave problem of finding money to provide extra accommodation. Happily the birth-rate fell away subsequently, so that if we wait until 1938 we shall find the present accommodation sufficient to cope with the extra scholars if we then decide to raise the age limit. In the meantime the problem will be lightened by the spread of birth-control methods, and in some slight degree by the juvenile "toll of the roads" which is maintaining its healthy proportions; and for all one knows it may be found possible, in 1938, to close down redundant schools. In any case, there is the comforting assurance that the child who leaves school at fourteen, young as he is, is privileged to start contributions

to the unemployment insurance fund at once. On the other hand the affront to his self-esteem which would be involved in his drawing benefits is spared to him by the thoughtful provision that he shall not qualify for them until he is sixteen. Again, he hasn't got to leave school at fourteen if his dad likes to keep him there at his own expense. And although in a sense the authorities might make out a constructive case that the child was being paid wages by his dad for improving his mind, they have generously decided that they will credit the child with unemployment contributions during this period without collecting them from either the child or his parental "employer." The knowledge by the parent that in recompense for his merely laying out hard cash on his son's education the State assumes a contingent liability to insure the boy against missing the job he is being educated for, must fill his heart with thanksgiving over the social solicitude characteristic of the National Government. Then, to cap this beatific situation, there are the Juvenile Training Centres. The boy may join one of these for goodness knows how long; and lest dad should feel ashamed of procuring for his boy anything for nothing, the State has permitted the local authorities to finance these centres out of the rates to which dad has the privilege of contributing.

There is one practical suggestion which it occurs to us to offer in respect of the school-congestion problem. It is derived from Mr. Morland's address on transport problems which we commented upon on July 5. He said that 70 per cent. of the buses were idle in garages during the morning and evening peak-hours of traffic. Why not substitute the garages for the schools, and use the buses as class-rooms? Look at the huge economy in overheads alone. It would easily cover the cost of taking the children for rides. Class-room instead: playground on top—what could be better? A juvenile University on wheels. This idea needs no further elaboration. It must most certainly be worked out, or, as Mr. Montagu Tigg would have said, "Society will not be satisfied."

Company Registrations.

Messrs. Jordan and Sons' half-yearly report of company registrations is just to hand. The most striking feature of it is the fact that total capital registrations for the first six months of this year come to £82½ millions, compared with £42½ millions for the first half of 1933, and £34 millions and £28 millions for the corresponding periods in 1932 and 1931. The capitalisations of public companies and private companies are respectively £43½ millions and £39½ millions. The largest capitalisations are as follows:—

	Millions.
Investment, Finance and Banks	£14½
Shipping	8½
Mines and Quarries	8½
Engineering	7½
Land and Buildings	3
Food	2½
Drink	2½
Electricity, Gas and Water	2½
Builders	1

The following is a list of the largest single flotations:

Name.	Capital £ millions.	Group.
Cunard White Star, Ltd.	10	Shipping
Morgan, Grenfell and Co., Ltd.	5	Investment
Morgan Crucible Co., Ltd.	4½	Engineering
Raleigh Cycle Holdings Co., Ltd.	2½	Investment
Banque Belge pour l'Étranger.	2	
Commonwealth Mining and Finance Co., Ltd.	1	Mines
Caribonum Trust Ltd.	1	Stationery

In the report it is pointed out that most of the capital under "Mines and Quarries" reflects the interest in

* Messrs. Jordan and Sons, Ltd., Company Registration Agents, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

gold-mining properties, only a negligible amount referring to quarries.

Under the section headed "Finance" the report says that the Group "Investment, Finance and Banking" contains three concerns with capital ranging from £5 millions to £1½ millions, and several others of half a million and upwards.

The Shipping Group's capital is, of course, swollen by the Cunard White Star issue.

In a general summary, Messrs. Jordan and Sons remark that the advance in the total registration

"has been chiefly in 'private' companies, which may owe their existence as much to adversity, or fear of adversity, as to prosperity, or anticipation of prosperity."

The capitalisations of public companies advanced from £16 millions to £43½ millions between 1933 and 1934, while private companies advanced from £26½ millions to £39½ millions. The number of registrations rose in respect of public companies from 155 to 230, and in respect of private companies from 5,485 to 6,340.

Banksters and Gun-Running.

While firemen were beating out a heath fire at Tadworth, Surrey, on the night of July 5 one of them was shot when a cartridge exploded in the flames. Several reports had been heard earlier, but it was thought they were blank cartridges. The accident happened near to the home of Sir John Simon. The fireman, Mr. J. Leathers, was taken to Epsom Cottage Hospital (*News-Chronicle*, July 6).

One swallow does not make a summer, but this incident fits in with a rumour that was going round the millionaires' clubs on the Rand six months ago to the effect that in England the country houses of key men in finance and politics had been provisioned with machine guns and ammunition. Why this should be gossiped about in South Africa will seem strange so far, but another part of the same rumour was that special gold coins (or small ingots) had been distributed at these key centres under the same scheme. Here is a tip for an amateur cinder-beaters near Tadworth to join in a treasure hunt. Their chance of success is remote, for while bullets may be lost and not missed, bullion is checked with the same solicitude as that which Providence was once said to bestow on sparrows. Moreover, while the finding of a few cartridges scattered about a heath would not occasion any gossip to speak of, the finding of a piece of gold of a novel pattern and weight would make an embarrassingly prominent Press story from the point of view of the coin-runners.

Whether there is any foundation for the story is of no immediate consequence; but the fact that it was in circulation as stated is undeniable, as is also the fact that it was soberly canvassed in quarters far removed from revolutionary politics or heterodox financial theory. Therefore, it needs to be recorded as an item of news to be pigeon-holed by students in case future developments tend to confirm it or clarify its significance. In the meantime those of them who have ingenious minds and a taste for detective work may find some intellectual amusement in assessing the antecedent probability or otherwise of the story being true. Why guns? That is not difficult to answer. But why gold as well, is a pretty little conundrum for their wits to bite on.

Leaving the story apart, and surveying the historical and contemporary background against which it presents itself, there is a grim relationship between bullion and bullets. Some years ago we came across an old magazine for girls (published long before the War) in which a lady writer told them all about the risks, triumphs, and romances of the banking business. Among the items of her story were some which the authoress re-

counted in an engagingly serene spirit, namely, accounts of how banking officials had successfully repelled raids by depositors with the aid of bullets or molten lead. Not only the suppression of panics by force, but the allaying of panics by fraud, did this inspirer and instructor of maiden youth relate, and with the nearest approach to gusto that decorum would allow. Thus a banker disguised as a depositor would come and hand in "cash" over the counter before the eyes of the panic-stricken customers: the same "cash" would be sneaked out of the back door, and be ostentatiously brought in at the front by another disguised banker: and so on until the panic-stricken customers wilted under the contemptuous stares of the tellers behind the grilles, which as good as told them that they were guilty of cowardly treachery to their country in seeking tangible fulfilment of the bank's contractual obligations to them. And, upon the soul of us, the non-chalance with which the authoress described and surveyed these scenes almost persuaded us that banks were ordained by God to prevent the laying up of treasures on earth by collecting and transmitting them in treasures in heaven. To draw your deposit was to de-sanctify your treasure and thereby to confess the profanity of your heart and its aspirations. Yes, we had to pinch ourselves and take a strong nip of *Economic Democracy* to shake off the illusion that the prime function of a bank is to prevent or punish anxiety among its customers just as that of a Government is to prevent or punish disorder among its subjects without removing the occasion for it.

In a financial vacuum human nature becomes unnatural and inhumane. During the past fortnight places so far apart as Munich, Antwerp, Rotterdam and San Francisco have come into prominence as centres of disorder and its suppression ranging from bullets for mutineers to tear-gas for strikers and batons for careless sightseers. The nature of the common factor in all these troubles was well indicated by the report from Germany that as soon as the last of the "plotters" in the slaughter-queue had been taken inside, the first few housewives in the potato-queue began to form up. On the heels of the bludgeoning comes the rationing; and the two phenomena might easily have appeared in the reverse order, for the occasion of each is embodied in the policy of finance and the mechanics of the cost-system. Every problem on every plane of public controversy, domestic or international, is a row about rations. And since the immediate cause is not the scarcity of the rations, but their price—not their availability, but their accessibility—every row about rations is an incipient revolt against the Money Monopoly.

The Crisis in San Francisco.

It is significant to note how quickly major events of this sort are succeeding each other, and how steadily the danger-curve described by them is rising. Even allowing a large discount for newspaper exaggeration, the situation in San Francisco is hardly less serious than that alleged to have been the situation in Germany. Last Sunday's newspapers report the imminence of famine conditions in that city, and already an outbreak of dysentery following the eating of unsound food. Business is suspended, and families who can do so are moving out of the menaced area. President Roosevelt's Labour Board has failed to get the employers to submit to arbitration, and the precipitation of a general strike is spoken of as an immediate certainty.

The tragic feature about this lies in the reflection that when President Roosevelt assumed his dictatorial powers he was better placed than had been any head of any political Government before him to deal with the root cause of civil disorder. The banking community at that moment were so discredited by the breakdown of their system, and by the sensational (even if irrelevant) disclosures of "corruption" among Ministers (private

loan-accommodation by banks) that any scheme of financial reform which the President had promulgated would have received general acclamation, not to speak of general collaboration if it had followed the principles laid down in *Economic Democracy* and other Social-Credit publications. But the chance was not taken; and the width of the angle at which the President's omnibus programme of reconstruction diverged from the true line of recovery is unmistakably indicated by a report last week that Mr. Bernard Baruch was giving up Stock-Exchange operations with the view, so it was reasonably inferred, of taking over the official regulation of the Stock Markets. Linked with this news is the account in the papers last week of the first visit of Governor Harrison, of the Federal Reserve Board, to the Bank for International Settlements.

* * *

To regulate Stock Markets is to regulate commodity markets, and ultimately to regulate the rations receivable by the individual. This was pointed out several years ago in our article (afterwards reprinted) *The Key to World Politics*, where we made the forecast, illustrated by diagram, of the establishment of a "central bank for Europe" whose function was designed to be that of "rationing markets" through the instrumentality partly of the League of Nations, but chiefly of the financial machinery then being built up under the control of the Money Monopoly, and protected from obstruction by the civil and military forces of the nations involved. That bank was to be the world's super-national rationing authority—which is what the Bank for International Settlements already is in a consultative sense, and is preparing to be in an executive sense.

Basel and "The Nameless Order."

The sources of inspiration shaping the policy of this Bank cannot be traced to any given group of individuals, but it is not necessary that they should be. They are human beings like the rest of us, and although they are not of the world, they are in the world; so that there is no ground for anyone to interpret their anonymity as superhumanity. Many readers will remember a book we reviewed some years ago entitled *The Nameless Order*. This title can be appropriately used to designate the anonymous consultative cosmopolitan group of which the directorate of the Bank for International Settlements are the visible core. The Nameless Order are the stewards of what may be called The Nameless Doctrine; and its essence may be best defined by the statement that it reverses the doctrine which the famous Rev. R. J. Campbell startled the world with a generation or longer ago, namely, that of "Divine Immanence," a doctrine which, in its extreme form, held that the worst man committed his worst acts in obedience to a divine principle within him. (For example, the rake, in an act of seduction, was "seeking God.") "The Nameless Doctrine," conversely, is that of Diabolic Immanence, and holds, in its extreme form, that the best man, when performing deeds according to his own nature, is obeying the behests of the Devil. It is well called a "nameless" doctrine; for it is an unavowable doctrine: it is one which logically requires the complete subjugation of personal initiative and freedom, and the denial of every aspiration towards personal economic security. Man must be cleansed by the exorcism of imposed tasks performed under taskmasters. The eclipse of his soul must be averted by hard work just as the eclipse of the sun is averted (!) by the beating of tin trays in the Far East. "He is one of nature's gentlemen," remarks a character in one of Oscar Wilde's plays. "The worst kind of gentleman I know," cynically retorts another. And that retort sums up the attitude of the Nameless Order to every manifestation of what we mean by "the free expansion of human personality." Leisure is licentiousness: vocations are vile.

* * *

Under the cosmic dome of this miasma lies the city of San Francisco. The Governor, General Merriam, is

making preparations to shed blood. The longshoremen had first come out on strike for the right to control the conditions of their work. The employers had, of course, claimed that right for themselves. What was the "right" for? it was to control the measuring out of rations. General Merriam tried to get the issue referred to arbitration. That is to say, a third party was to control the measuring out of rations. But that third party, whoever they might have been, had no more power to exercise control in an effective and permanent sense than had either of the parties to the dispute. They might pronounce impartial judgment—but their impartiality would be entirely irrelevant to the problem, and their judgment incapable of solving it. They would be unable to do more than rule that one party should have access to rations belonging to the other, or that both parties should have access to the rations of parties outside the area of the dispute. Such specific rectifications of ration-measuring would leave unaltered the general system of ration-measurements governing the economy of San Francisco, of the United States of America, and of the whole world. The system works ingeniously. The masters and men, when collaborating, find difficulty in gaining financial access to rations. When they cease to collaborate, the rations themselves physically disappear. We notice that among the strikers who have since come out are 250 wholesale butchers and slaughterers, 1,022 retail butchers, 200 sausage makers, 2,500 lorry drivers, and 375 retail delivery drivers. That is, the production and distribution of rations has been suspended as the automatic result of the fight for access to them. It looks at first like a natural paradox; but it is a contrived paradox resulting from the Nameless Policy of regulating the production of rations on a scarcity basis, and, when that fails, of destroying the marginal surplus, immobilising it, or pooling it in inaccessible centres. That Plenty exists side by side with Poverty is true as a general statement, but the Plenty is not exposed to the risks of raids by the poverty-stricken. Mobs might sack shops on one day, but the shops would not be re-stocked for re-sacking on the next. The production of rations may be generous as to quantity, but its transportation is regulated by time. The "Plenty," though collectively available, is not accessible *as, when, and where required* by those who need it, but only accessible *as, when, and where* the master-regulators decide to authorise its delivery. The process is, of course, voluntarily facilitated by the psychology of those who earn their living by making and selling rations: they won't work for the whole economy robbed. For this and deeper reasons the whole actual system runs under conditions which precipitate actual scarcity at the points where is slackness or obstruction. Scarcity is a pre-determined reprisal on "obstructionists" and their innocent neighbours; and the power of exercising such reprisals resides in what Kipling makes one of his characters say, namely: "the control of communications." The master-key of such control is Financial Credit. And the effect of its use can be graphically pictured by the parallel of the tube railways where the turning of a single switch can hold up every train along the line from the City to Uxbridge. Thus as the newspapers report from San Francisco, there is held-up line of shipping stretching from Seattle to the Mexican border at a cost of £20 millions. It is true that the ships are not standing off by the direct compulsion of the bankers, but they are standing off by the indirect compulsion of the bankers' system.

Is War a Moral Tonic?

In the light of the "victories of peace" which we are being attempted (or celebrated?) before our eyes, the question of whether war is good for us or not sounds a trifle academic. But Major Yeats-Brown has taken his fate by writing a book called *The Dogs of War*, in which he takes the affirmative side; and fate has fallen on him in the persons of J. B. Priestley and Beverley Nichols. We deal here only with Mr. Priestley, whose article ap-

peared in the *News Chronicle* of July 12. We have not seen the book, and can only guess what was in it from what is there said about it. We should have thought that by this time of day it would be impossible for a practical journalist to write a long centre-page article on war without noticing a single point of relationship between militarism and trade competition. Yet Mr. Priestley accomplishes this. It is a comparable achievement to that of the editor of a London financial paper who published a leading article on the Labour Party's "Report on the Douglas-NEW AGE" Scheme without mentioning the name of Douglas, or Orage (the then editor of THE NEW AGE) or THE NEW AGE, and without saying more apropos of the scheme than would suggest that it aimed at nationalising the banks. Really, all that you can gather from Mr. Priestley's attack is that the idea of war gives him a nasty feeling whereas the same idea gives Major Yeats-Brown a nice feeling. Such arguments as Mr. Priestley uses centre round this issue of "feelings." Thus the only causative factor that he mentions is this: that some "muddle-headed enthusiasts like Major Yeats-Brown" talk "panicky nonsense about defending one's sister, and about conflict being valuable to humanity" and that this nonsense stirs some "military" man to press a button and start the war machine moving. For the rest it would appear that in his view war serves no other purpose than to requite the militarist's love of adventure—in which case of course he is entitled to revive, as he does, Carlyle's reference to the stupidity and callousness involved in the picture of two bodies of men who have no quarrel with each other engaged in slaughtering each other. That Major Yeats-Brown set the controversy going on this superficial plane we can well believe: for example he is quoted as saying that "Conflict is valuable to humanity" and that the "divinity in man, yearning for perfection, sometimes demands war to throw off conditions of impurity and injustice." But that does not excuse Mr. Priestley, who does know something about finance and economics, for neglecting to expand the scope of the debate to constructive dimensions.

* * *

Peace hath her casualties and anxieties no less renowned than war, as Major Douglas's graph of the bankruptcy and suicide curves attests. Physical discomfort, pain, disablement and death are the outstanding risks in war; and subjection to rigorous discipline is the outstanding condition of military service. Yet in peace most of these evils persist in various degrees, some on the physical, but most on the mental, plane. Which set of conditions is the worse could be argued *ad infinitum* without settling anything; because the matter is one of feeling. For that reason writers, orators, and other representatives of the intelligentsia are the last people to settle the point: they are too imaginative, and therefore squeamish, to weigh up the factors in the balanced, comprehensive way in which the wayfaring majority of men are able to. You wouldn't ask a Pekinese dog to express a view on the morality of setting a hound to tackle a badger.

* * *

No; to arrive at a definite judgment on war you must enquire into its practical use and implications. We were to say much more about it. All we will do is to indicate a line of approach. Go to any large industrialist and ask him this:

"Would you like to have larger orders, with five hundred fewer men drawing wages from you as employees or tapping you for doles through taxation?" Who wouldn't say yes, provided he was not going to be kept short of the labour he wanted to hire? Very well; that was what happened in the last war. Five million men came off this country's wage-roll but remained customers by reason of their army-pay and of the equipment and rations bought for them by the War

Office and Admiralty. Inventors got to work and installed machines which, attended by old men and young girls, more than made good the missing services of the soldiers at the front. From an industrial point of view the war was a grand success. However, arising out of this comes a good argument against war: and it is that when workers go away on military service the opportunity is provided for their employers to take measures behind their backs to dispense with them permanently, and an inexpugnable reason for taking such measures, namely the necessity to expand output to the huge volume rendered imperative by the war. Take the looms-per-minder controversy between the employers and unions. Another war would settle that at once; the operatives would not be there to resist; and when they came back they would find the number of looms per minder stabilised at the Japanese level and perhaps higher. This line of argument is, of course, not valid in the framework of the Social-Credit analysis; for under Social Credit the displacement would be compensated by the dividend. But it is cogent and effective in the prevailing conditions and therefore appropriate to the present controversy.

The Point of the Pen.

By R. Laugier.

No. 5.—SCARCITY AND POVERTY.

I may be wrong, but I fancy I have discovered in the writings of various Social Credit authors, statements which may be interpreted like this: "Once upon a time there was real scarcity, and consequently authentic poverty; then came the machines, scarcity vanished, and poverty was artificially contrived and social injustice imposed."

As I have said, I may be wrong: I have never seen historical date quoted to support such contention; phraseology has been a little vague; the authors would appear uncertain just when scarcity was due to Nature, and when it was due to Man. The point is worth examination.

Personally, in recorded history, I can find nothing which satisfies me that civilised communities have suffered indigence because of the paucity of Nature. Ancient civilisations were based upon slavery—and hence the pyramids. Plague and flood might decimate a population, but killing people is a different thing to making them poor: according to Malthusianism, the survivors of a plague-stricken land should have more of this world's goods. Allowing for dislocation, and for less working hands, there are still less mouths to fill. Even among primitive tribes, where fear of crop-failures appears to have been prevalent, it must be granted that, if scarcity came, it would be due to ignorance rather than Nature; primitive peoples frequently sacrifice large quantities of foodstuffs, to appease the wrath of gods. On the whole Nature seems to know her job.

When the machines came—let us say with the invention of steam—brutality of artificially-created scarcity and imposed poverty became plain to people who would never otherwise have seen the truth. But the truth was seen long before. The cry of "over-population" was raised in the days of Elizabeth, and was answered, sensibly, by Harrison of the *Holinshed Chronicle*.

"Some also doo grudge at the great increase of people in these daies, thinking a necessarie brood of cattell farre better than a superfluous augmentation of mankind. But I can liden such men best of all unto the pope and the divell, who practise the hinderance of the furniture of the number of the elect to their uttermost, to the end the authoritie of the one upon earth, the deferring of the locking up of the other in everlasting chaines, and the great gaines of the first, may continue and indure the longer. But if it should come to passe that any forren invasion should be made, which the Lord God forbid for his mercies sake!—then should these men find that a wall of men is farre better than stackes of corne and

SIDESHOWS, DANCING, THEATRE
at the
GREEN SHIRT GALA

to be held at
KING ALFRED'S SCHOOL
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