

"GIVE ME ABUNDANCE"

(Councillor William Noble continues to contribute his valuable series of weekly articles to the "Stockport Express" under the title "As a Labour Man Sees It." The following article appeared in a recent issue of that paper.)



COUNCILLOR W. NOBLE.

Thomas More, in his wonderful book *Utopia*, shows that there was unemployment in his day, and his day was the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the next. They dealt very effectively with the unemployed in his day, even if they did not deal with unemployment. They hanged the unemployed in batches. The young bloods of the aristocracy went out and rounded them up. If we are to believe the authors of modern detective novels man-hunting is the most exhilarating of sports. It must have been "great." It may not be true that "Dead men tell no tales," but it is certain that dead men do not look for work.

Thomas More did not approve. He was one of those annoying people, a social reformer. He loved justice and, worse still, he showed how unemployment was manufactured day by day. Wretch that he was, he pointed out that land was being deliberately thrown out of proper use and men made to suffer want. They executed him eventually. What a peck o' trouble it would save if they executed all good men, and did it quietly before they had time to write Utopias.

We do not now hang the unemployed. New times require new methods. Twenty-five years ago it was the fashion with comfortable people who had no intention of being soldiers to say a "good" war was needed. How they sighed for conscription such as they had in militarist-ridden France and Germany. Well, we had a war, but to call it "good" would sound like blasphemy. However, it was so huge that it turned Europe into a shambles. It was so huge that about a million of the bravest and youngest of our men were slaughtered, and yet we have unemployment. It was so huge that other millions, the bravest and youngest of the men of Europe were sacrificed, yet unemployment is worse to-day than ever, throughout most of the civilized world. Evidently a "good" war is a failure as a business-getter. Something more is needed.

Good customers are evidently not the cause of bad

trade. Enough good customers were killed in 1914-1918 to prove that. All we have got is a national debt costing a million pounds a day and the greatest army of unemployed in our history. Evidently the need of a "good" war wasn't the cause of bad trade. The pundits were wrong. Of course, the pundits do not confess their error. Pundits never do. Pundits start some other "gag." And the pundits' latest slogan is Shortage of Gold. This old world of ours has had mankind on it for millions of years, and man must have traded since man was man, but it is only in 1930 of our era that the pundits have discovered that shortage of gold is the cause of bad trade and unemployment. Shortage of gold! Doesn't it sound so beautifully abstruse. It is not so very many years ago since they told us bad trade and unemployment arose from spots on the sun. Now it is "Gold Shortage," and when that has served its turn in deluding the dispossessed the pundits will find something else. Their ingenuity is equal to anything.

To make trade good it is only necessary to break down the man-made barriers which keep the people from the bounties of the earth. We need only to tax land according to its value. Landlordism would then find it impossible to prevent production. The unemployed would find their services in instant demand, they would find themselves busy as fuel getters, as builders, as food producers, or as clothing makers, each actively exchanging their products for those of others. So long as the people have the goods, the gold can take care of itself. A witty Frenchman once said: "Give me the luxuries of life and anyone who likes may have the necessaries." Every intelligent person will say: Give me food, clothing, fuel and shelter in abundance, give me access to the source of all, and he who likes may sit on sovereigns and mumble, "Gold Shortage."

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