

the land in the United States not used for crops is equal in area to most of Michigan and Wisconsin, all the Atlantic seaboard States, plus all the Gulf States, plus all of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, plus all the Rocky Mountain States south of Montana, and plus all the Pacific coast States. Much of this area is productively used, of course, for other than crop purposes—mining, manufacturing, and town and city purposes; and much of it has no known productive possibilities. But after the most liberal allowances, it is evident from Colonel Owen's map, that the area of unused productive land in the United States challenges the power of the most expansive imagination.

The figures upon the basis of which his map is drawn, Colonel Owen obtains from the latest reports of the Department of Agriculture, and this is his editorial comment: "These estimates and comparisons are made for the purpose of showing that all the acres tillable in the older States are not yet tilled, and that the time when hunger need crowd men to the wall is still very far away. So long as the tilled land can be massed together in an area less than one-sixth that of the entire country, the chance to gather sustenance from the soil is good, and the opportunity to till new fields amid the old is yet present. The land hunger that is urging men to stake their future on poor and untried lands exists, not because of a lack of land, but because the land already under ownership has too many idle, speculative acres. This map and its accompanying figures are specially commended to those who seem to think that the limit of production has been about reached in the theoretically tilled portions of the country, and are therefore vigorously and nervously promoting the extension of our tillable area, in the apparent belief that great haste in that direction is necessary to avoid dire disaster to consumers of farm products on the one hand and to "landless farmers" on the other—landless because there is too little land to equip every would-be farmer with an adequate farm, in popular estimation. Than expansion of tillable area, concentration would be a much sounder economic policy. Contracting area would inevitably lead to larger yields per acre from fewer acres, which, in turn, would lead to denser rural population with its inevitably lower per capita cost for maintenance of highways, bridges, schools, churches and other things, and enor-

mously reduce the transportation tax which both producer and consumer are compelled to pay now."

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A Significant Speech.

George L. Record, leader of the "New Idea" Republicans of New Jersey, made a remarkably significant speech at Passaic recently, which the Daily News, a Republican paper of that city, reported in full. It was especially significant with reference to the land question which, now convulsing the politics of Great Britain, is in evidence in many influential ways in the United States. Mr. Record characterized it as the most important of the four problems he discussed in his speech. "The fundamental defect of our civilization," he declared his opinion to be, "is the mistake of applying to land, which is the gift of the Creator, the same law of private property that we apply to things which man creates by labor." From this fundamental doctrine, Mr. Record went on to say that private property in land "enables one man to absorb without any return the earnings of those who directly or indirectly use the land thus owned;" that it "also operates to hold vast tracts of land out of use which, if opened to actual productive use and the idle and the underpaid labor of the country applied thereto, would result in a large increase in the total annual wealth of the country;" that the "coal trust has absorbed legal title to all the anthracite coal mines in Pennsylvania" and "a very small part of these mines only is worked;" that if "in time of panic and enforced idleness a lot of idle workers anxious to work and unable to find work, go upon this land, either to extract coal or to use the surface for the production of a crop thereon which would add to the wealth of the world and enable them to earn a living, the law steps in, brushes them off the land and compels them to stand in idleness and poverty and want in the very presence of the land which their enforced idle labor could utilize for the production of wealth that would satisfy all their wants." Most truly did Mr. Record conclude that "the utter imbecility of such a legal theory is apparent to any man who will give it the least thoughtful consideration." Turning to the moral aspects of the question he denounced the system as "the simplest and the baldest form of robbery known to the law;" as a system whereby "a few appropriate the earnings of the many," in effect compelling every industrious man "to fall among thieves and to submit to the robbery of a part of his earnings." His favorable allusion to the single tax

as a method of reform was unmistakable. The annual value of all land "should go," he said, "into the municipal treasury by every dictate of fair play, of common honesty and of the interest of humanity." Many there be who deny this, but none have ever buttressed their denials with good logic, good sense or moral principle.



THE BRITISH REVOLUTION.

History sometimes and in some ways repeats itself.



While the King's government of France was in desperate financial straits in the second half of the eighteenth century, and Necker's candid accounts had revealed to all France the fact that *the nobility paid no taxes on their lands*, Necker was harassed by the courtiers into resigning his office of finance minister in 1781, as five years before had been the great Turgot, forerunner of Henry George.

Another five years had gone by when the growing financial necessities of the government evoked the King's call for an "Assembly of Notables." This body, which had been convened occasionally by French kings in the emergencies of previous centuries, met in February, 1787. Calonne, the finance minister of the day, urged a *land tax*; but, composed as the assembly was of the great untaxed landowners of France, it rejected that fair way out of the nation's dilemma and in three months was dissolved, having accomplished nothing.

Necker's help being again invoked, he caused a convocation of the "States General"—nobles, clergy and commons. It had not been assembled before for nearly 200 years, and was assembled on this occasion in May, 1789. The commons insisted upon having all three classes meet as one body upon an equal footing. But the nobles insisted upon sitting as a separate body, with veto powers upon the action of the commons. Stubbornly set against consenting to *land taxation*, this land-owning oligarchy of France were determined to fasten the financial burdens of the government, as well as the burdens of their own incomes, upon the very livelihood of the common people; and in order to fortify themselves they asserted a power of *veto* which the commons could not concede and survive. "In the sweat of *your* faces shall *we* eat cake," was the spirit of the nobility's demand upon the commons.

Thereupon the commons organized as the "National Assembly," and the French Revolution was on.

Had the more democratic elements in that Revolution been more patient with developments after the work of the National Assembly began, a firm foundation for normal and just economic development might have been laid in France, and the Revolution been peaceful and triumphant instead of sanguinary and disappointing. But out of impatience came slaughter, and out of slaughter the "man on horseback" and an empire.

In all this there is a great historical lesson for Great Britain in her present historic hour.



Great Britain is in financial straits as France was. Lloyd George, the finance minister of the day, has revealed to all her people, as Necker did to the people of France, the fact that *the nobility pay no taxes on their lands*. If he has not been ousted from the ministry in consequence, as Necker was, that is only because the great landed interests have been unable to oust him.

With the co-operation of his official associates, Lloyd George has brought into the House of Commons a measure designed to place some of the burdens of taxation upon the landed interests. The line of demarcation is not so strictly drawn between noble and commoner by landed interests in Great Britain in these early years of the twentieth century as it was in France in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and Lloyd George has found abundant opposition in the House of Commons itself. But after half a year of patient and considerate Parliamentary procedure, his bill for *the taxation of land values* goes to the House of Lords for their perfunctory approval. Instead of approving perfunctorily, that body of great land owners untaxed, asserts the very *veto* power which the French nobles claimed so unhappily to France and so disastrously to themselves, a hundred and twenty years ago.

The British House of Lords has defiantly vetoed a finance bill of the Commons. The Commons have appealed to the country, and not only for the finance bill with its *land tax*, but also for authority to extinguish the plenary *veto* of the House of Lords. The British Revolution is on, and under circumstances extremely analogous to those in which the French Revolution began.

Whether this revolution in Great Britain shall be a peaceful and deeply effective one as that of France might have been, or an aborted one as was that of France in great degree, and possibly sanguinary as well, as that one was, may depend upon the clear thought and patient skill in statesmanship of British radicals. Measured by what