

High Rents and Low Wages.

SINGLE TAX LEAFLET, No. 7

I DON'T know what the country is coming to ; I work from morning till night every day of my life and yet it's as much as I can do to make ends meet.

I am Simply Working for the Landlord!!!

How often do we hear such a declaration ; yet, how few, even among those who make it, pause to consider its full significance ? There appears to be a mysterious tacit mental agreement that, above all things, no matter who else may go short,

The Landlord Must Be Paid.

Why the LANDLORD more than the butcher, baker, grocer, or other persons, who furnish us with one or other of the daily necessities of existence ? IS IT BECAUSE THE LANDLORD NEEDS THE MONEY MORE than others ? No ! for, as a matter of fact, he needs it LESS than any of them, for he generally has plenty and to spare. IS IT THAT HE GIVES US MORE of the good things of the world in return for money than any of the others ? No ! for, as a matter of fact, he gives us nothing, except permission to continue to occupy a certain portion of God's earth, and he raises the rent as often as possible, and still gives nothing in return.

IS IT BECAUSE WE HAVE A GREATER AFFECTION FOR HIM as an individual than for anyone else ? Hardly ! for, in point of fact, our feelings towards him have rather an opposite tendency.

What Then is the Reason ?

Simply that the landlord, by reason of his ownership of the site upon which we live, or carry on business, has THE POWER TO BRING RUIN AND DESTRUCTION UPON US if we refuse to pay the tribute he exacts from us.

This is a very serious matter to every householder, every shopkeeper, and shop employé, every business man and clerk, and, in short, every worker, whether by hand or brain, throughout the length and breadth of the land ; for, in the power of the landlord to exact from each and all rent tribute for the

Permission to Occupy a Piece of the Earth

lies the secret of trade depression, industrial inactivity, low wages, and scarcity of employment. This may not at first sight be apparent, but a little enquiry into the operation of the law of rent will soon reveal the fact. Here is an illustration :

Twenty years ago, the owner of a vacant lot in George-street built thereon a shop and dwelling, which, when completed, was let on a three-years' lease at a rent of £2 per week, the tenant to keep the place in good repair. Upon the renewal of the lease for a further short term, the rent was raised on the unhappy tenant (who had just got fairly established and could not afford to leave) to £4 per week, although the landlord had done nothing at all to increase the comfort or accommodation of the building. The extra rent almost ruined the shopkeeper, who had to reduce the wages of an assistant, whom he had engaged, as well as to deny himself and family of certain articles of food and clothing, to which they had hitherto been accustomed ; but, by dint of close attention and untiring energy, he managed to improve his business, and ultimately, after he had earned the £4 tribute for his landlord, he had a little for himself, even after paying wages to the additional hands he had engaged to assist. But he did not

enjoy the advantage of his extra work, worry, and anxiety long. The lease expired, and once more up went the rent and swallowed all the extra profits, entailing further reductions in working expenses and

Another Lowering of Wages.

And so the process has gone on until to-day, the rent of that one shop is £12 per week, although not a shilling has been spent upon it by the landlord since the day it was completed. Just think of the shame and the monstrosity of the thing. The tenant

Must now Earn £12 for the Landlord

every week before he can earn ONE SHILLING FOR HIMSELF, and he gets nothing in return, except the wretched accommodation of a structure that when new paid the owner 10 per cent. interest on his capital at a rental of £2 per week, and which now, after twenty years wear and tear, would not realise £100 if pulled down and sold as old material.

It is self-evident that with such a

Heavy Incubus of Rent

to meet weekly the price of his goods must be raised to the highest point which competition with other shopkeepers in the same locality will permit, whilst the wages of employes will be reduced in a corresponding degree. And when we consider that the SAME PRINCIPLE IS IN OPERATION in every branch of industry we can form some idea of the share of the earnings of every member of the community which is annually appropriated by landlords in rent.

Every advance in Rent

means a corresponding reduction in wages, for even when wages are not directly reduced by the rack-rented employer, the purchasing power is lessened by the ever advancing tide of rent. Rent is added to the cost of every commodity, and consequently every purchaser, in addition to paying rent directly to his own landlord is compelled to contribute his quota to the rent of every person with whom he deals.

And when we reflect that

Rent has to be Deducted from the Wages

of the men who get the raw material, the men who fashion it into a finished product, the men engaged in conveying the product to market, the wholesale and retail dealers and the clerks, storemen, shopmen and others in their employ, it is tolerably certain that rent absorbs an enormous proportion of the annual wealth production of the community; and the larger the proportion that is absorbed by the landlord in rent the smaller must necessarily be the proportion that remains available for distribution in wages to employes and profits to employers, and in inverse ratio, the smaller the proportion that is absorbed in rent the larger is the balance available for division between wages and profits.

Obviously then it is to the interests of employers and employes alike to bring about a REDUCTION OF RENT.

The Single Tax

will do it, for the value of land fictitiously inflated by private monopoly is the main factor in determining rent.

The taxation of land values will destroy land monopoly and thus reduce the value of land. And as by the destruction of monopoly a corresponding increase in the available supply of land will take place, it necessarily follows that rents will fall in corresponding ratio, wages will rise with the increased avenues open to the employment of labor and a HEALTHY ACTIVITY WILL SOON MANIFEST ITSELF IN EVERY BRANCH OF INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

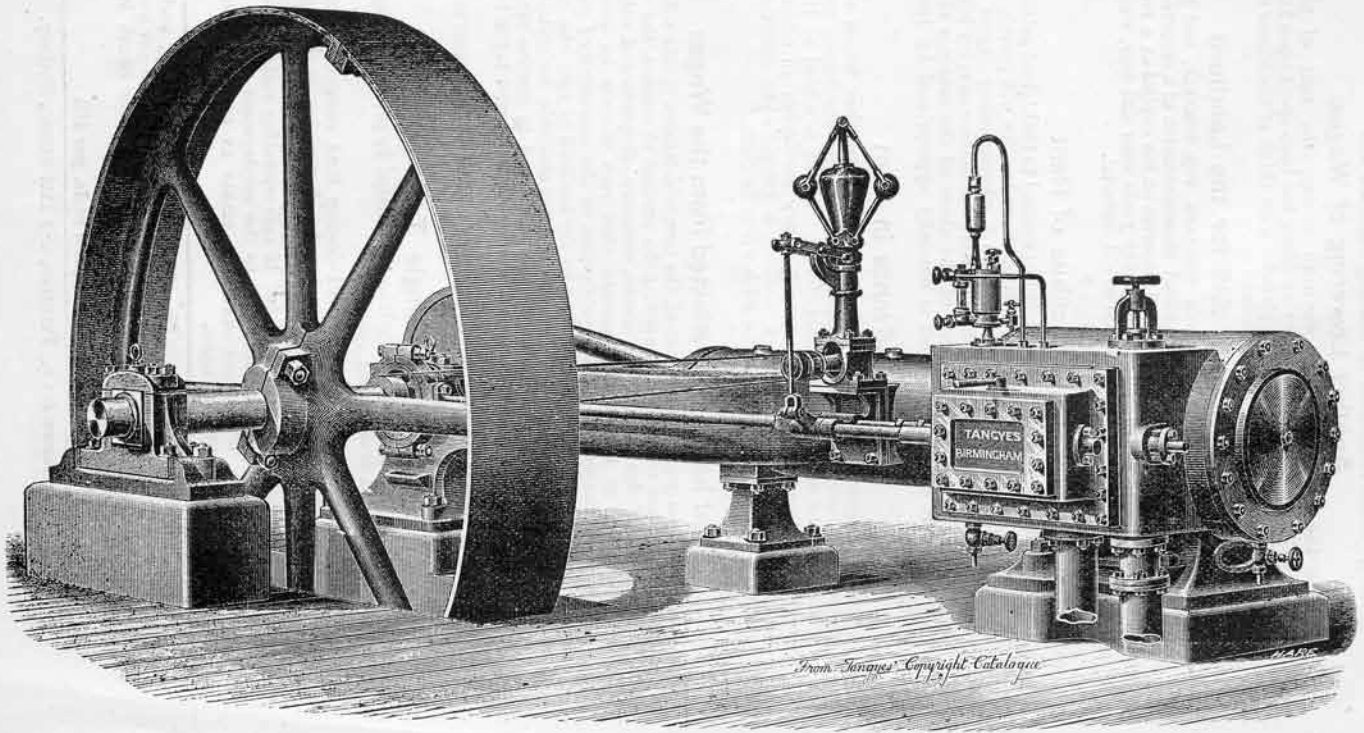
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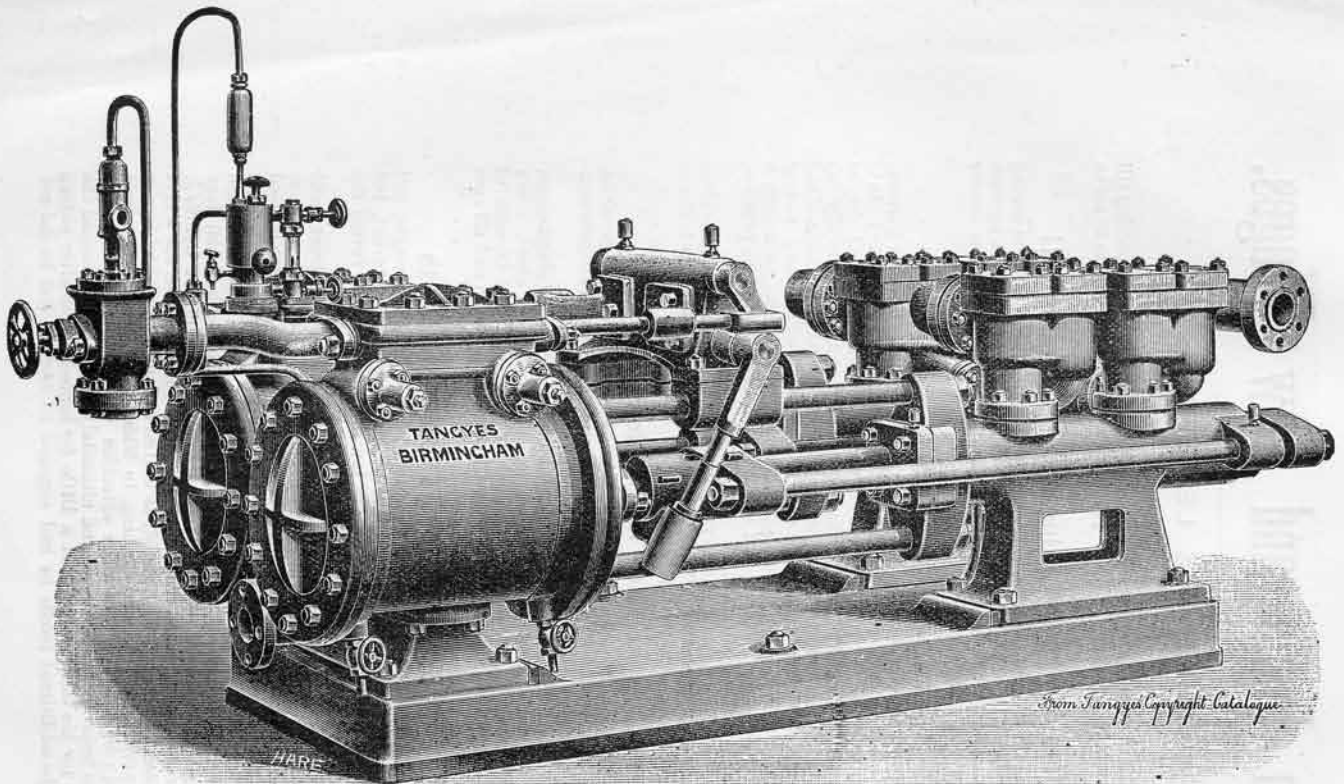
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