

# Dynamite

## FOR THE BRAIN

---

---

BY OSCAR AMERINGER



PUBLISHED BY THE STATE EXECUTIVE BOARD S.-D. P., BRISBANE  
HALL, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

---

---

PRICE FIVE CENTS

Deliberations  
H.C. 10  
29  
1901

## A Man-Made Wilderness

Within a ten hours' journey of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Minneapolis there is a desolate jungle covering almost a million acres of land. Not so very many years ago this territory was covered with a magnificent forest worth millions of dollars. All this wealth belonged to the people of Wisconsin. It was common wealth.

In the city of Madison, Wis., there stands a great building called the state capitol. This, too, is the property of the people. And in this building for over half a century the representatives of the people have met, ostensibly to administer to the well-being of the entire citizenship.

The voters were not very careful in the selection of their representatives. Neither did they pay them wages which would attract men capable of being administrators of great estates. Two hundred and fifty dollars per year is all that Wisconsin could afford to pay its lawmakers. To do the biggest kind of jobs the state selected cheap \$250 a year men; too cheap to be good, as the saying goes.

With every opening of the legislature other men came to Madison. There was nothing cheap about them. They stopped in the finest hotel and apparently had money to throw away. They were a fine looking, well groomed, shrewd, highly educated set, and their salaries ran into the tens of thousands. These were the representatives of eastern corporations, the seekers of special privileges. And the big \$10,000 men representing capital met the little \$250 men representing the people. Let's see what happened.

In the early days of Wisconsin the people needed railroads. One way to get them would have been for the government to issue bonds, use the proceeds to construct the roads and then sell the adjoining public land for enough to pay off the bonds. In this manner the people would have acquired their own railroads. But the big eastern men persuaded the little lawmakers of Wisconsin that the proper way to do this thing was for the people to bond themselves, turn the money and the public land over to the corporations, who then, with the people's wealth, would build the railroads for themselves. This method is called "getting something for nothing," and it is the easiest way to get rich without work.

For many years afterwards the railroad bonds issued by the state, counties and towns of Wisconsin made their appearance in the tax bill of every sovereign citizen. So, after all, it was not the state, but the dear people, who paid for the railroads belonging to the eastern crowd.

The railroad companies obtained the land for nothing, then they sold it to the lumber companies for something, who sold it to the land companies for a little bit more, who sold it to the settlers for a good, stiff price. Everybody was made

happy. The railroad companies got their roads for nothing; the lumber companies obtained the timber gratis; the land companies got more from the settlers than they paid for the land.

*Everybody got something for nothing except the settlers, who finally footed the whole bill by paying a big price for the land that their own government had given away.*

### **Timber Thieves**

The lumber barons developed the country by cutting down the timber. That is, they did precious little cutting themselves, but engaged working people for the task. The lumberjack received enough for his winter's toil that by spring he could purchase a railroad ticket to the Dakota harvest fields, where, by thrift and frugality, he could accumulate the price of another ticket that would bring him back to the lumber camp in the fall. The lumber companies did not take all the wood off the land. They kindly left the stumps, slashings, barks, limbs, branches and twigs behind them to furnish the fuel for forest fires which burned the top soil away from the stumps and rocks. This made it easy for the settlers to locate the places to plant the dynamite later on.

Not all of the timber grew on the land of the lumber companies. Some of it stood on state or government land. In such cases the lumber barons purchased a forty or an eighty in the heart of the public forest to locate a lumber camp. But what is a lumber camp without a road leading to it? Consequently they would send one of their smooth lobbyists to Madison to persuade the little legislators to grant a special permit for a logging road from the aforesaid camp to civilization. It is not known that such a modest and reasonable request was ever turned down.

The result was marvelous. You may have heard of the World's Seven Wonders. The Pyramids of Egypt are one of them. The logging roads of Wisconsin are the other six. If the Old Romans may boast of having built the longest roads in the world, the honor of having built the widest ones belongs to the lumber companies of the sovereign state of Wisconsin, for they were often wider than long. They usually extended from one road to the other. And the timber—? Well, that obstacle to good roads was floated down the nearest stream to the company's sawmill, where it was converted into beams, boards and shingles and sold at a more or less reasonable sum to the people who elected the men who gave the permission to build the logging road.

### **Corporations and Corruption**

The La Crosse and Milwaukee railroad was chartered by the Wisconsin legislature in 1852, to build a railroad from Milwaukee to La Crosse. The stockholders and directors

lived in New York. The sackholders in Wisconsin. For, as is customary in such cases, the promoters furnished the hot air, whereas the people furnished the cold cash.

The state, counties, towns and cities bonded themselves to raise the money for the building of the road. Then the proceeds from the bond sales were turned over to New York politicians and bankers who paraded as the directors and financiers of the great enterprise.

With the people's money they started to build the road. Or at least they let on like they were going to.

The directors of the La Crosse & Milwaukee railroad organized a construction company. Next they bought material and property as individuals and sold it to the construction company at outrageous prices. Then the construction company charged even more outrageous prices to this railroad company so that the concern was bankrupt before the road was halfway built. About that time congress resolved itself into an investigation committee and reported that the directors had robbed their own road of nearly \$1,700,000.

These gentlemen (?) had obtained money under false pretenses and should have been sent to jail. But Uncle Sam always loved big thieves. Instead of prosecuting the rascals, congress passed a bill in 1856 granting to the state of Wisconsin 2,800,000 of public land to be distributed among the railroad companies. It was now up to the enterprising directors of the La Crosse & Milwaukee road to obtain a slice of that land.

### \$1,000,000 for \$500 Men

To get this land grant, the La Crosse & Milwaukee railroad directors debauched the whole legislature, the governor and other state officers and a large number of editors of newspapers and politicians.

According to the report of the president of the La Crosse & Milwaukee Railroad company to the stockholders, it cost about \$1,000,000 to buy the state government of that time. In his annual report of 1858 the president of the company bewailed the fact that the passage of this land-grant act had cost so much. He itemized the expense incurred.

Construction bonds of 1852, issued for <i>Charter Expenses</i> .....	\$1,000,000
To get 847,000 acres of land awarded to the St. Croix & Lake Superior railroad.....	1,000,000
Stock issued for <i>Charter Expenses</i> at Madison....	90,000
For services in getting a charter for a branch called the Milwaukee & Watertown railroad..	210,000

We must remember that these vast sums were not spent in construction work, but in bribing and debauching the representatives of the people. Millions went to corruption before

a cent went to construction. Yet large as these expenditures were, they were trivial as compared to the value of the land grants received. In his annual report of 1857 the land commissioner of Wisconsin gives the value of the land as \$17,345,600.

### Who Got the Bribe?

The legislature of 1858 appointed a "Joint Select Committee" to investigate the land-grant frauds. It reported that for the passage of the land-grant act of 1856 \$175,000 in bonds were distributed among thirteen specified senators, the individual bribes of whom ranged from \$10,000 to \$20,000; that \$355,000 in bonds had been given in bribes to seventy specified assemblymen—an average bribe of \$5,000—that \$50,000 in bonds were given as a bribe to Coles Bashford, Governor of Wisconsin, and \$16,000 to other state officials, and that \$246,000 had been variously paid out to certain specified editors and to other persons of influence. "The evidence taken," the committee concluded, establishes the fact that the La Crosse & Milwaukee Railroad company have been guilty of numerous and unparalleled acts of mismanagement, gross violation of duty, fraud and plunder. In fact, corruption, and wholesale plundering are common features."

What I have set down here in regard to the carnival of corruption existing in the early days of Wisconsin, I have taken from Gustavus Myers' "History of the Great American Fortunes," a painstaking, scholarly work that should be in the hands of every student of economic questions.

---

### Horse-Trading Wisconsin

How would you like to have 25,000 horses, who, without food, whip or currycomb, work 24 hours per day and 365 days in the year. Would you be willing to build a barn for them if you could have 'em just for the asking? Sure, you would. Well, the state of Wisconsin has many such horses; it has more than 25,000. Yes, more than 10 times 25,000, and the little men at Madison gave them away for nothing. There were enough of them to light every city in Wisconsin with electricity. But instead of doing work for the people, as they should, they are turning the wheels in sawmills and paper mills and make dividends for innocent investors, widows and orphans who are too darned busy hauling pet poodles around Central park, New York, to worry about your light bill. Certainly, if you're a farmer you don't care how much them city folks pay for their electric lights. It's none of your concern. Only the lights that twinkle in the tannery, the shoe factory, the jobbing house, and the retail store have a habit of reflecting from the shoe you buy. That big electric bill is

right in that shoe on your foot. You can't see it, but it's there just the same. Somehow the cat comes home to "roost" on your big toe, and in a roundabout way you're paying for that campaign cigar which the little politician gave you for sending him down to the legislature, where he gave the water powers of the state to the corporations for a song or something that looks green and long.

The water powers of Wisconsin, coupled with a supply of cheap wood, have been a great blessing to the paper trust. In fact, it was this possession of cheap power which made it possible for the water power paper mills to drive the steam power mills out of business. As soon as this was accomplished the water mills entered into a combination known as the paper trust, and proceeded to skin the dear people for having been dense enough to turn common wealth into private wealth.

### **The Busy Sawmill Towns of Yore**

The sawmills were a great blessing to the people—while they lasted. Only they didn't last. When the timber was gone the sawmills left, too. And the folks who bought a little stock in the company, and town lots from the company, and put up little homes and stores to boost the town and to encourage foreign capital to come in and walk away with home-made dollars, now take you to a sawdust mill and show you the tumbled down smoke stack, a rusty boiler, and a cracked buzz saw as the earthly remains of the pride of days gone by. The capitalists developed the country until there was no more development in sight, and then developed themselves into United States senators to round out their career.

The sawmill towns are gone or going, and their inhabitants are fervently praying for settlers to take up the land, trade in their lonesome stores, sleep in their deserted hotels, and help to pay the debts they made when they raised the money to boost "home industry."

---

### **Wild and Woolly Wisconsin**

Why don't people go back to the soil?

Why do Wisconsin farmer boys and girls desert the glorious Badger state and seek land in Alberta, Montana and New Mexico?

Here are millions of acres of virgin soil, right under our noses. We have the finest climate in the world. Splendid transportation facilities on land and water and a market right before our doors.

Thus runs the refrain in hundredth variations. Strange that people should disregard all such valuable advice and persist in moving to the most outlandish places rather than

to stay in Wisconsin, where, according to all the big and little writers, all the good things of life are concentrated.

Let me tell you.

The movement of the masses are determined by economic forces. What's an economic force? The thing that makes people turn their noses in the direction where they make the easiest living.

If Wisconsin farmer boys could make an easier living by settling on the cut-over land of the state, than they can in Alberta, then they would stay at home and tell the Dominion government and its agents to go to Halifax. The very fact that the farmers move from Wisconsin to Alberta is a *positive, conclusive proof that they find an easier living in Alberta.*

It is so easy to write "back to the soil," so easy to say "take up some wild land in the northern part of the state and grow up with the country." Pioneering was always hard work, the hardest of hard work, and the politicians of Wisconsin have done their level best to make the job harder than it ever was before.

## The Story of Abe and Sally

Abe Corncob and his blooming young wife, Sally, decide to have a farm of their own. They only have twelve hundred dollars. That is more than most young people have when they get married, but, still, it is not enough to buy a farm in a settled country where land brings one hundred dollars or more per acre. So they move on the wild land of the north, for which they pay \$15 per acre, or \$600 for forty acres. This land, let us remember, was given by a Republican legislature to a railroad company for nothing, who sold it to a lumber company for something, who sold it to a land company for more, who sold it to Abe and Sally for fifteen dollars per acre.

And these two young people pay the cool sum of \$600 to people whose sole service to society consisted in corrupting and bribing the \$250 a year lawmakers whom their daddies had sent to Madison.

Oh! what a price poor mortals must pay for campaign cigars, free beer and cheap men.

Half of Abe and Sally's hoardings are gone. No, it did not go toward improving the place, but went to a land speculator in some far-off city, whose business it is to get something for nothing. To him it meant but little. A new set of tires for the touring car, a sparkling stone for the soft fingers of his pretty wife. A champagne supper for chorus girls, a blooded dog; small things like that. But to Abe and Sally it meant a handicap race for life. What will they do with the rest of their savings?

A two-room house, \$200; a barn, \$200; two cows, \$100;

a team of horses, \$300; a stump puller, \$100; furniture, \$50; farm implements, \$50; barbed wire, \$25; one wagon, \$50; sundries, \$25.

But what's the use to go on? The total is already \$1,100, and Abe had but \$600 left after paying for the land.

Where is the money to come from? A mortgage. And so Abe and Sally start the race for life on a mortgaged jungle.

There was a time when Abe could have gone to the lumber camp; could have left Sally alone in the lonely shack in the wilderness during the long winters, and slaved for the lumber company to get enough money by spring to buy some dynamite to commence clearing. That time is passed. What the lumber people didn't take the forest fires did, and there is nothing left but stumps and rocks for Abe to blast.

There are many kinds of heroes in this world. Heroes who stand on the shell-swept deck of the man-o'-war; heroes who, rather than surrender, go down with the ship; heroes who carry the flag through the hail of bullets to death and victory. But, after all, what does it all amount to compared with the life-long, silent heroism of the men and women who carve farms out of the waste and jungle that men may live?

We give glory and monuments to those who kill, devastate and destroy; we give homes, riches, health, beauty, leisure, luxury, art and knowledge to the others who gamble and speculate in the very means of life; we wave palm branches to welcome the returning destroyer and throw roses on the path of destruction; we spread carpets for the feet of idlers and cast rocks in the road of the toiler.

But let us return to Abe and Sally.

The work and material expended in clearing an acre of Wisconsin jungle will amount to not less than \$40. To be fair and just, we should give the pioneer a premium of \$10 for every acre put in cultivation. Instead of doing this, we fine him \$15 for the privilege of converting waste into wealth, while the fine is paid to the lordly gentlemen who turned wealth into waste. We fine labor for the benefit of idleness.

## **How Society Fines Abe for Doing Things**

This is the beginning of an endless series of fines. After the hunger of an absentee land speculator has been appeased the state steps in. It fines Abe for the crime of building a home. It slaps another fine on him for rearing a shelter for his cows and horses, then fines him for owning them. Next he pays a fine for the unspeakable deed of clearing the land. For every improvement he makes he is fined. More improvement, more fines. He is fined for pulling stumps, for blasting rocks, for raising calves, for plowing land, for the plow, the harrow, and even the cream separator with which he separates himself from the cream to pay the fine on the cow that gave the milk. This fining process is called taxation. It is a

punishment for thrift and knocks "incentive" out of men more successfully than all the Socialism that ever came down the pike.

Labor creates all value, including land value, and while we are far from giving to labor the value of its creation, we do the next best thing by fining the laborer for having done something useful.

Who gets the benefit of Abe's toil?

But Abe's toil did not only increase the value, and incidentally the taxes on his small holding. It also increased the value of the jungle surrounding his clearing. Abe and his few scattered neighbors haul gravel on the road, and up goes the value of the jungle. They build a school house and the jungle receives another boost. Finally a church is erected and the jungle smiles and climbs on the tallest stump in the settlement. He's getting up in life, as it were. And in a faraway city a shop-sick workingman scans the big Sunday edition of a metropolitan daily. His eyes alight on the following:

*Cheap, cheap, cheap.* Finest farming land in the world; good roads; one mile from school, near new church, only \$20 per acre, in the great dairy state of Wisconsin; buy now; *today; don't wait;* Abe Corncob is talking about putting a bridge over Snake creek. *Do it now.* Send your money to The Jungle Bungle Boodle Land company, room 1313 Skiaemalive building, Chicago, Ill.

And so it happened that a shop-sick Pittsburgh molder paid an extra fine of \$5 per acre to a gouty capitalist in Syracuse, N. Y., who had never seen the jungle.

It may have been all right to punish Abe for making the world a better place to live in, but why on earth should we fine that Pittsburgh molder for having done nothing at all?

This is a queer world, the queerest world I ever got into. It's the greatest menagerie ever assembled under one tent. A few days ago I met a man in a monstrous big palace near Oshkosh who told me he was the pope. I didn't believe him then, but maybe he was the pope after all. I never had seen a pope before. Maybe he was, and maybe he wasn't. Maybe Abe Corncob is the queen of England and his Sally the last dauphin, son of King Louis XVI. of France, who lost his head because some people wanted bread to eat. Abe is developing a cracked necktie tenor that sounds like a lost chord in a tin can. His back is bent and he is ruptured in three places from trying to lift that mortgage. Blooming Sally lost all her bloom, next she lost her shape, and last her reason. She imagined that the heads of her children were beet tops and

tried to chop them off. They took her to the home for incurables near Peshtigo. It's a pity she can't enjoy the clean, pleasant home. It's so superior to anything she ever had before.

Abe is getting batty, too. He's continually telling folks to go back to the soil. And he votes the Republican ticket and helps to send the same little crooked men to Madison who gave the land to the railroads for nothing, who sold it to the lumber grabbers for something, who sold it to the land companies for more, who sold it to Abe and Saily for a price that robbed them of the joy of living, of youth, of health and reason.

## The Back-to-the-Soil Swindle

If men could live in hollow logs, nests or holes in the ground; if they could eat bugs, roots or grass, and if they could hibernate or raise a fur during the winter, then it would be easy to "go back to the soil."

But, alas and alack, and some more alack, there are too many "ifs." Men cannot live without food, clothing and shelter. And the jungle doesn't raise those things—at least, it doesn't during the first few years.

The sturdy settler of fifty years ago strutted boldly out into the wilderness with ax and gun in hand. But it may be well to mention that he strutted on *one hundred and sixty acres of free land*. He did not have to pay \$15 per acre to a hungry land company. What little money he had could go into improvements or to tide him over the first few hard years.

The settler on the cut-over land of the state rarely finds enough logs to erect a cabin. What the lumber trust didn't take was wiped out by forest fires. The latter agency also removed the top soil. So the settler is forced to buy lumber for his shack and barn. If he takes his trusty gun into the jungle to bag a deer to feed himself and family, he is liable to be yanked to the county seat by a game warden and fined \$50 and costs.

Deer are sacred cattle. They must be preserved to furnish two weeks' amusement for city sports. For the hard-struggling pioneer to shoot a deer for food is a crime. To kill the same animal for fun is a sacred right protected by the strong arm of the law. Incidentally, the game wardens, who are partly supported from taxes taken from the settlers, are used to support the same political machine that gave the land to the corporations, who sold it to the settler for \$15. What a jolly merry-go-round it is.

Pioneering is hard work, and the little \$250 a year men in Madison have done their level best to make it harder still.

Few industrial workers make successful pioneer farmers. To induce this class with glittering promises and lying

statements to give up factory work and put their meager savings into wild land, is nothing less than criminal. How many of them have sunk their all into a jungle forty, have slaved and starved for a few years and then returned, broken in health, purse and spirit, to the city? The land company pocketed the first payment on the land and improvements and sold them at an increased price to the next victim of the back-to-the-soil swindle. This process is repeated over and over again.

After carefully looking over the situation, I have come to the conclusion that after the settler has paid for the land he should have at least \$2,000 capital left. He may succeed with less, but if he does it will be only after a long and heart-breaking struggle. To spend a lifetime only to turn a forty-acre farm over to the children is too much. The game isn't worth the candle.

## The Market

It may be well to take a look at the much heralded market enjoyed by the farmers of Wisconsin. Imagine a great barrel, open on top with a faucet at the bottom. This barrel is the joint property of produce buyers, refrigerator car companies, commission merchants, and retailers. All these people are in business for profit. And profits are the difference between what the producer gets and what the consumer pays. It is, therefore, to the interest of the middle men to buy cheap and to sell high; to squeeze the producer and to soak the consumers. So it comes about that apples rot in the orchard of the farmer because they are too cheap to pick up, and city people go without them because they are too high in price.

There have been times when farmers could not give away potatoes, while folks in a city not a hundred miles away were sent to jail for stealing a few of the priceless tubers. Even this fall I have found a number of small towns in northern Wisconsin where potatoes could not be sold at any price.

Yes, the market is far from what it is cracked up to be. Some day there will be great publicly owned markets in the cities where the products of the fields will be placed in the hands of the consumers without toil, rakeoff and profits to a parasitic horde of middlemen interests.

One city would like to do this even now. It would go in business not so much for profit as to save money to producer and consumer. But it can't do it because the cities of Wisconsin are not run by the people who live in them, but by the little men in Madison. Five hundred dollars for a two-year term is not much of a salary. But when we consider what these people have done to the workers of Wisconsin, and are doing to them even now, then it seems that we have paid a terrible price for little things.

## Are the Farmers to Blame?

It has been said that the state of Wisconsin is run by the farmers. This is not true. It appears more that the state has been a private game preserve owned by corporations, in which state officials acted as head game keepers, assemblymen as retrievers and the farmers as game.

The powers of government have been used to further the interests of the exploiting class. The men elected to serve the people—all the people—squandered the natural resources like drunken sailors, with never a thought for tomorrow. They robbed the commonwealth to pile up private fortunes. They laid heavy burdens on the backs of the toilers that a few might have luxury and leisure.

For all this we can not blame the farmer. He didn't know any better. Without organization; without voice or press he became the easy tool of those who owned press and politician. The farmer does not advertise and the press is controlled by the advertisers. Many, many, newspapers are owned outright by the corporation. Popularity is a newspaper product. Statesmen are newspaper made. Let the papers be silent about a certain "peerless leader," and he will be dead as a door nail in no time. What we call public opinion is manufactured like tin horns and baby rattles. It is manufactured to order for the people, who pay the bill. The farmers didn't pay the bill. The corporations did. And while the paper made heroes the statesmen amused the crowd by fighting the civil war over, or by alternately waving old glory and the bloody shirt to the tune of "Marching Through Georgia," the corporations went through the pockets of the people and walked away with the plunder. But we still have the jungle.

---

## The Mortgaged Badger Farmer

Brother Farmer, I want you to sit down and do some hard figuring. Over one-half of all the farms of Wisconsin are mortgaged. Your home may still be unincumbered, but since the percentage of mortgaged farms is steadily increasing, you may be the next one to put a plaster on your place.

Mortgaged Farms in	No	Per Cent of Mortgaged Farms.
1890	55,242	42.9
1900	65,589	45.8
1910	72,129	51.1

According to the foregoing figures the relative number of farms operated by their owners which are mortgaged has increased quite regularly since 1890. From 1890 to 1910 the number increased 21.87 or 39.6 per cent.

From the above it may be easily seen that as a class you are getting more and more in debt. A mortgage is anything but a sign of prosperity. But wait—the worst is yet to come.

Average Mortgaged		
Debt per Farm.		Per Cent Increase.
1890....	\$1,001	
1910....	\$2,116	111.3

So we see that in 20 years the mortgaged farms increased 39.6 per cent, while the mortgaged indebtedness increased 111.8 per cent. Or, to put it differently: In 1890 the farmers of Wisconsin paid interests on a debt of \$55,305,000. In 1910 they paid interest on \$146,815,000.

All this looks bad for the Wisconsin farmers, and the census man, not wishing to cast a gloom over the prosperity blessed Badger state, produced another array of figures, which show that while the farmers are getting in debt more and more, they are becoming richer at the same time.

The wealth of the farmer, we are told, is accumulating in the form of land values. The census states that while the mortgaged indebtedness increased 111.8 per cent, land values increased 105.0 per cent in 20 years. But what the census man fails to prove is that the increase of land values are a benefit to the farmer.

### The Fetich of Land Values

The average value of land and buildings per acre was

1850.....	\$ 9.58
1860.....	16.61
1870.....	20.51
1880.....	23.30
1890.....	28.44
1900.....	34.54
1910.....	57.06

That's going some. "Getting richer all the time," you say. Now let me ask you a few questions.

If an acre of land, valued at \$9.58 in 1850, produced 50 bushels of corn, how many bushels will it produce in 1910, when its value has gone up to \$57.06?

If an acre of land worth \$16.61 in 1870 pastured two cows, how many cows will the same acre pasture in 1910, after its value has reached \$57.06?

The result of your meditation and calculation will be that while land values have increased, the productivity of the land has remained almost the same. And if, with the same expenditure of labor, you cannot get a bigger crop on a \$50 acre than you got on the same acre when it cost only \$10, how on earth is the rise of land values benefiting the actual tiller of the soil? Does the farmer draw interest on the value of his land?

When figuring your yearly income, do you state:

Value on land. . . . .	\$10,000
6 per cent interest on same. . . . .	\$ 600
Value of crop . . . . .	800
	<hr/>
Total income . . . . .	\$1400

Or do you put it this way—

Value of crop . . . . .	\$ 800
Taxes on \$10,000 farm. . . . .	70
	<hr/>
Net income . . . . .	\$ 730

When you look at it in the right light you will find that land values are a liability instead of an asset to the farmer who farms the farm. *Rising land values may increase your taxes, but they don't increase the product of the land.*

## Tenant Farming

The landlord robs the tenant and the tenant robs the soil. The result is an impoverished rural population and an impoverished soil. Landlordism is a curse, whether we find it in India, Ireland or Wisconsin. It produces miserable farm homes, overworked women and under-schooled children. Schools, churches and homes go down in the country, and a non-producing, non-progressing parasite class, composed of tired and retired farmers, hang around the county seat towns like flies around the bungholes of molasses barrels.

Landlordism is a survival of lordism or feudalism. The landlord is a parasite without an extenuating circumstance. In the scheme of life he fulfills no useful function. He is to agriculture what the mistletoe is to the tree. The rent money that flows from the farm to the towns is a fearful drain on the actual tillers of the soil. He finds himself short of the capital required for the purchase of the best farm animals and implements. Every improvement made in soil culture or by more scientific management is absorbed by the landlord in ever-rising rent.

The division of the farming class into landlords and land tillers, exploiter and exploited, produces the same effect noticed in the separation of ownership and labor in modern industrial life. The tenant, as his brother, the wage worker, will retain from the product of his toil only sufficient to keep himself in working condition. The surplus above the existence wage is confiscated by the landlord, even as the capitalist confiscates the surplus value produced by the wage worker.

Tenantry did not increase at the fearful rate as mortgaged indebtedness did in Wisconsin. But it does increase faster than the new farms out of the jungle have increased.

On the whole, it may be said that the higher the land values, the denser the population and the older the settlement, the greater is the number of tenants. The greatest percentage of tenants is found in the southern counties of the state. Tenantry gradually disappears as we move north towards the sparsely settled jungle. From this it may be deducted that if tenantry rises with age and land values, the northern part of Wisconsin will produce a lusty crop of renters as soon as the land has reached a state of cultivation where it will support two men—landlord and renter. Up to the present time the cheap land of the state has proven the only hindrance to the extension of landlordism. With the disappearance of free or cheap land, tenantry is bound to grow rapidly in the state. Says the census man:

### **Farm Tenure—1880—1910**

The following table shows the status of farm tenure by decades since 1880:

#### **Farms Operated by Tenants**

		Per Cent
1880	12,159	9.1
1890	16,728	11.4
1900	22,996	13.5
1910	24,659	13.9

#### **Farms Operated by Owners**

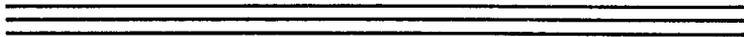
1880	122,163	90.9
1890	129,681	88.6
1900	146,799	86.5
1910	152,473	86.1

In thirty years the number of tenants doubled in the state. Tenantry increased 102.8 per cent, while the farms operated by their owners only increased 24.8 per cent. The later increase is almost exclusively due to the reclamation of cut-over land by the pioneer farmers.

### **The Remedy**

We find that our trouble started with the election of the \$250 per year men who made the laws in Madison. Therefore we may properly look in the same direction for the remedy. In the first place, we must pay salaries to our lawmakers that will allow bigger men to accept the job. Running the state of Wisconsin should not be a side line or a stepping

stone to something better. Only the best and ablest should be entrusted with the administration of the state. Two hundred and fifty dollars per year don't buy that kind of men. The first thing to do is to raise the wages of the law makers to not less than \$1,000 per year. This will allow working people and farmers to sit in the legislature, and it is this class that deserves special consideration from that body. So far it was for the lumber interests, the railroad companies and the water power sharks that legislation was enacted. In the future it must be the men who make, rather than the men who take, who will receive the benefit of lawmaking. To accomplish this the wage worker and farmer himself must invade the legislative field. The laws of the future must be in the interest of the toiler. By serving this class, we serve society. But neither the farmer nor the wage working class can accomplish much by its own efforts. Only when these two classes join their forces can a result be obtained. The Social-Democratic party of this state is well known for its constructive policy. It already has a strong representation in the Wisconsin legislature that voted in every instance for everything in the interests of the farmers. Come together, you workers of the field and shop. Capture the powers of the state and join hands with the many earnest and able scientists at your state university in reclaiming the political and economic jungle of Wisconsin.



Subscribe for the

## **“MILWAUKEE LEADER”**

a Daily Paper, \$5.00 a Year



Subscribe for the

## **“VORWAERTS”**

a German Weekly Paper, \$1.50 a Year