

**TENANT'S GAIN NOT
LANDLORD'S LOSS: AND SOME
OTHER ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF
THE LAND QUESTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649216109

Tenant's gain not landlord's loss: and some other economic aspects of the land question by
Joseph Shield Nicholson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOSEPH SHIELD NICHOLSON

**TENANT'S GAIN NOT
LANDLORD'S LOSS: AND SOME
OTHER ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF
THE LAND QUESTION**

TENANT'S GAIN

NOT

LANDLORD'S LOSS

Cum igitur animum ad Politicam applicuerim, nihil quod novum vel inauditum est, sed tantum ea quae cum praxi optime conveniant demonstrare intendi: et ut ea, quae ad hanc scientiam spectant, eadem animi libertate, qua res Mathematicas solemus, inquirerem, sedulo curavi humanas actiones non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere.—SPINOZA.

PREFACE.

My apology for adding to the number of books on the Land Question is the hope that the application of some leading principles of Political Economy to the subject may be of service. Although constant references are made to the principles of that science, it is very rarely that a writer or a speaker condescends to details, and yet it can hardly be doubted that the labours of Adam Smith and his successors (and no subject has a wider literature than Political Economy) have done something towards the solution of the difficult problems connected with land. The vitality of popular fallacies is remarkable, and the old mercantile notion of trade that one man's gain is necessarily another man's loss still prevails as regards compensation for agricultural improvements. The exposure of this and other fallacies is one of the principal aims of this volume; but.

at the same time, I have attempted to contribute something positive to the controversy, by suggesting the abandonment of the time-honoured division of 'improvements' into "permanent" and "temporary," and the adoption of a more logical and important ground of distinction.¹ I have also ventured to express my own opinion on other matters of practical importance, and I hope that the statement of principles generally accepted by economists will not lose in force on account of deductions for which I must take the whole responsibility. I have to express my great obligation to Mr. Henry H. Scott, Alnham House, Alnwick, for his kind assistance in the more practical parts of the work, and to Mr. W. C. Smith, Advocate, for suggestions and corrections as the book was going through the Press.

J. S. N.

THE UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH,
11th May 1883.

¹ Cf. Chap. x.

CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

THE PLACE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM.

	PAGE
Agriculture shown statistically to be the most important industry, and this view confirmed theoretically by the nature of rent, and other peculiarities of agricultural wealth.	1

CHAPTER II.

ON THE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS OF LEGISLATION IN REGARD TO LAND.

Presumption is always against Governmental interference, but large exceptions are made. Hence necessary to discover what should be the aim of Government in interfering with property in land, or with the relations of landlord and tenant. The principal aims suggested are : The landlord to have

	PAGE
as much power as possible; the land for the people; maximum gross produce; political independence in the supply of food; a large rural population; maximum net surplus. All of these contain an element of good, and object of present work to show how far they can be reconciled.	8

CHAPTER III.

ON THE ECONOMIC RESULTS OF A SIMPLE SYSTEM OF TRANSFER OF PROPERTY IN LAND.

A natural system of transfer would benefit all classes of the community, though, at first sight, it appears that present landowners might suffer.	26
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURN TO LAND.

Agricultural produce cannot be increased beyond a cer- tain point, except at an increasing cost; this is the basis of Ricardo's <i>Theory of Rent</i> , and Malthus' <i>Theory of Population</i>	36
---	----

CHAPTER V.

MALTHUS AND THE CROFTERS.

The tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence is counteracted either by pre-	
--	--

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
ventive or by positive checks ; over-population liable to occur in small holdings ; suggestion to apply the principle of the Factory Acts to crofters.	44

CHAPTER VI.

RICARDO'S THEORY OF RENT.

Ricardo's theory explains the differences in rents at any time, but fails to account for the increase of rent in the past, and its possible increase in the future.	60
---	----

CHAPTER VII.

THE NATIONALISATION OF LAND.

Nationalisation with compensation undesirable, at any rate so long as the National Debt is unpaid ; Mr. George's scheme not merely unjust, but useless for the end in view.	75
---	----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAUSES WHICH DETERMINE THE FAIR RENT OF LAND.

These causes may be divided into three groups, according as they affect the amount of the produce, the prices of the produce, and the expenses of production.	83
---	----