

The Liberal Ideal

Completely independent parcels of resources captured by individual owners and used in bargain for distinctly personal advantage.

(1) Management of production

This is a method of management, producing the greatest possible sum of individual satisfaction (in a relation to a method certain order of property) a method which can keep up an almost infinite degree of division of labour, because its circle of exchange is as wide as the publicity of a market.

A method which distributes a given product to the maximum satisfaction of millions day by day; adjusting itself to the incessant individual variations of preferences in millions of persons of all ages, of men, women, children, in all fluctuations of health, sickness, childbirth, upbringing, work and leisure.

A method which also constantly provides major adjustments of the lines of production to changing needs and by use of new material and mental resources.

A method of continuous expansion and improvement of the tools of humanity, of its capital equipment and technical skills.

(2) Rewards and incentive; property.

It is also a method of rewards. Each parcel of resources will exact for its reward precisely the amount of goods which its contribution is worth: competition will tend to exclude all but ideally equal bargains. No exchange of goods will take place which could be replaced by one, giving greater satisfaction to either partner, without reducing the other's advantage. Thus each will obtain his maximum reward, which is his just reward.

Accordingly, the system of property growing from such distributions of rewards, is also thought to be a just one, because it is the result of unspent residues of incomes, justly gained.

It is also a system of proper incentives: i.e. rewards which are not only just but also indispensable. Unless they are offered, there will be no stimulus for production.

(3) The method eliminates all fear or favour from the relations of men jointly engaged in production. The cash nexus favours no personal contact. Agreement to a bargain implies no other agreement of any kind whatever. It can be made between the people of entirely different tastes, education, religious and political convictions. A business connection establishes no sort of community between the partners. "Businesslike" methods represent, in fact, a completely detached intercourse, as between fellow hermits.

The only responsibility is to dependents: to the family and to things: the property. Caring for no interests but his own, the individualist knows that he has to rely on himself alone. Personal independence, individual acquisitiveness and fullest self reliance, are the corollaries of this method.