

on principles and policies for ensuring the country's welfare. Press articles, manifestos and speeches provide a wealth of valuable material. In the election symposium of the *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Copenhagen's Christian daily paper, Dr. Starcke spoke for the Justice Party. These are some of the passages:—

"The earth was created by God as a gift for all people, not only the old but also the young, not only the rich but also the poor. The relation between man and nature, its working place, its raw materials and its forces, is the most important fundamental question which lies beneath most of our social troubles. It has long been the case that our poorer neighbours have meekly accepted their poverty, their lack of house room, their tax burdens and their deprivation. But it is written that the meek will inherit the earth.

"Denmark is not poor. But our thoughts and ideas so blunted that we torture ourselves and each other with our whole misguided taxation system and our complicated restriction apparatus. Perhaps that is done with the best intentions but the common people are being slowly helped to death.

"We have our good land, our favourable geographical position, our industrious population. Our export goods are in demand and are of high quality. There should, therefore, be every possibility of raising ourselves, if we only set about it sensibly. In the material sense, we could better our living conditions with increased production and greater importation. But production is hampered partly because the land and the working places are monopolised and partly because tax methods have made it punishable to be capable, energetic and thrifty. Importation is limited partly by the shortages in the world market and partly by our own restrictions and import prohibitions which result in our obtaining less in goods as payment for the exports we can provide.

"We do not obtain more goods by taking food and clothes from each other and dealing them out in public assistance. Subsidies are an emergency help, but they are a bad resort, a kind of inverted Christianity, if we allow the causes to persist which makes that succour necessary. So long as we are content to cry, 'With what shall I be fed and with what shall I clothe myself?' we shall never put things to rights. Yet it is sure that without food and clothing the people perish. If, however, we start with justice and order our land and our realm according to its clear command, then it will be shown that existence is so rich and good that there is enough of these things for us all.

"Justice says that I cannot have any privilege to enjoy what no one has created—it belongs to all of equal right. But that which the individual produces by his own labour belongs to him of right. How could it possibly be otherwise? Therefore justice is more than a word. It is the first, if not the only, thing. I believe it is true that all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be satisfied when it is attained."

2s. 6d. LAND VALUE RATING. Theory and practice; a handbook for all interested in municipal finance and the rating question. By F. C. R. Douglas, M.A.

2s. 6d. PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE. The tariff question considered with especial regard to the interests of Labour. Carries the discussion to a point not dealt with in other books on this question. The most popular and most scientific exposition of the subject which has ever been written. Lord Snowden. By Henry George. Abridged. Red cloth 2s. 6d. Paper covers 1s. 6d.

LET TRADE BE FREE

From an article by Mr. S. W. Alexander, Editor of the CITY PRESS, in EVERYBODY'S of August 9th.

THE closing of the British ports to foreign competition has been a direct cause of the growth of vast combinations of capital and of labour. In the closed market, price rings of all kinds have flourished, and in the past ten years over two thousand price rings of one kind or another have been formed. It is a natural thing for well-intentioned people with little knowledge of economics, to say that it is wrong that the profits of monopoly and special interest should go into the pockets of sections of the community. Their answer to the so-called private monopolies is to nationalise them, to make them State monopolies.

But a State monopoly is just as evil as any other form of monopoly. In fact, it is worse—because it has behind it the power of the State. We say that the answer to monopolies is to eliminate the primary cause of them—the closed market-tariffs.

Closely allied with this question of Free Trade and anti-nationalisation is the question of the freedom of the individual. We are an island nation of 47,000,000, brought on to this small piece of land by free trade with all peoples of all colours without discrimination. Once we stopped Free Trade, we set in motion powerful forces which have contributed more and more to our present desperately serious condition. We created the Totalitarian "climate" in Britain.

First—duties at the ports required more officials. Then we set up organisations to decide how much and from what countries we should buy certain things and how much of certain articles we should produce ourselves. So we set up marketing boards. That required more officials. And, to-day, we are, as it were, completely gummed up. We find Conservatives and others fighting for freedom and at the same time approving of County Agricultural Committees.

These ideas are completely and utterly inconsistent. The Agricultural Committees are pillars of national Socialism. They are the very reverse of the free market, and of freedom.

Power is given to these bodies to take over the properties and livelihoods of men on the assumption that they are not good cultivators. And yet we have seen terrible mistakes made by such organisations. No man who believes in freedom can support policies which approve of County Agricultural Committees.

All these tariff developments have been a prime cause of the immense growth of the size and power of the bureaucracy, and in its fundamentals the tariff policy is a Socialist policy.

It is contended by some that the days of Free Trade are over and that it is impossible for us as a debtor nation to return to the Free Trade policy. But as a debtor nation it is imperative that we should make use of every device to enable us to return to a sound condition and pay our way—and those devices can only come into operation as a result of Free Trade which in an island nation is the key-stone of all free enterprise.

An aspect of the protectionist policy which to-day is much open to discussion is that of Imperial Preference. We are told that this preference on imports from the Empire is to-day more desirable and that it will bind the Empire together. But we Free Traders consider ourselves to be amongst the strongest supporters of the British Empire. We believe that the British people have ren-

dered immense service to the world and can continue to do so.

At the same time we are convinced that Empire Preference has done more to undermine the British Empire than anything else—and that to restore the Empire we must abandon all preferences. Why do we say this? Because Britain is the centre of the Empire, and without strength at the heart of the Empire, which is Britain, the rest of the Empire must break up.

A strong Britain requires that we should buy in the cheapest market, and that we should trade freely with people of all colours and creeds, and that we should supply

the world with the one market place where goods of all kinds can be freely exchanged for good money.

There are many aspects of this tariff discussion, but there is a final one which is important. The policy of tariffs results in a widespread national decline in morality, whereas the policy of sound money and Free Trade brings into operation certain natural discipline. People have to conduct themselves in such a manner as to survive and to flourish in the face of continually changing conditions and influences. They get no special privileges at someone else's expense. The one thing that all men get under those conditions is freedom of opportunity.

LONDON BOROUGHS AND THE RATING OF LAND VALUES

A REPORT of the Finance Committee of the Battersea Borough Council, submitted to that Council on September 22nd helps us to know the outcome of the consideration which the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee has been giving to the question of the Rating of Land Values. The Finance Committee recited the Report which it had received from the "Joint Committee," that report having been adopted at the meeting of the "Joint Committee," held on July 28th, 1947. We give that report in brief, italicising its important passages :

In October, 1946, the Rating Advisory Body of the "Joint Committee" was requested to make a report on the question of the Rating of Site Values. In February, 1947, that report was received and the Rating Advisory Body was further asked for a memorandum on the effect of the proposals contained in the Town and Country Planning Bill. The report and the memorandum were then sent to each of the Metropolitan Borough Councils for their observations.

"Replies have now been received to the effect that twenty Borough Councils are in favour of the principle of rating of site values, five are not in favour, two have no observations to make and two have deferred consideration until such time as Government policy is declared."

The various statements made as to the Government's view regarding the future of rating generally, together with the fact that the proposals contained in the Town and Country Planning Bill, had an important bearing on the question of the taxation of land values, made it difficult for detailed consideration to be given to the matter at the present time.

"Having regard, however, to the fact that a large majority of the Borough Councils are in favour of the principle, we recommend (i) that the Minister of Health be informed that the Committee are in favour of the principle of the rating of site values and would be glad to have the opportunity at a later date of submitting proposals which the Government may formulate thereon; and (ii) that the attention of constituent Councils be specially directed to this paragraph."

Although it is gratifying to know that so many London Borough Councils have "in principle" approved of the Rating of Site Values and that the "Joint Committee" has itself passed a resolution favouring the principle, a certain mystery attaches to the whole matter. The report has not been publicly circulated, nor have the documents relating to it been made available to the general public. Our enquiries give rise to the impression that the "Joint Committee" is delaying publicity pending further con-

sideration; yet surely its own resolution adopted on the 28th July cannot be repudiated.

A FALSE DIRECTIVE

There is one essential matter which it is important to clarify. *What does the Joint Committee mean by the Rating of Site Values?* The documents circulated by the Rating Advisory Body of the "Joint Committee," with their outline of the policy, the arguments for and against, the sketch of previous legislative proposals, reports of Commissions and Committees, practical operation in other countries, are altogether laudable. The understanding reader looks at the "recommendations" which follow upon so much instruction and he finds that the whole thing collapses in one little significant sentence, namely: "That the annual site value should be limited to the annual value of the site as then actually and physically developed and as if it were permanently restricted against any other development than that then existing"—which, of course, is not the rating of land values at all, but a complete travesty of it. In making this fantastic suggestion, the Rating Advisory Body perhaps had its eyes upon the Town and Country Planning Act, with its provisions for condemning all land to its present use unless permission to develop is granted and a so-called "development charge" is paid—provisions which exempt landowners from taxation of the "development value" of the land (since under the Act they no longer possess that value, but the "Central Land Board" does). But the complexities, absurdities and injustices of the Town and Country Planning Act are another matter and raise other questions when the Taxation or Rating of Land Values *rightly understood* takes effect. If the Town and Country Planning Act is not suspended, or repealed as it should be, the Central Land Board will have to be treated as a party interested in the value of land, the value of the restriction it imposes will have to be assessed and it will pay its proportionate part of the tax or rate just as would any landowner who places a restriction, for his own advantage, on the unrestricted use of land.

In its definition of annual site value, the Rating Advisory Body repeats the nonsense that appeared in the report of the Uthwatt Committee, when it considered something which it called rating of site values. All it portends is a ridiculous if not impossible splitting of the rent or rateable values of properties as they are used to-day, so that one would see something dubbed "site value" varying from point to point according as a new or old or a large or small building stands upon lands which (apart from the building) have precisely the same value. The result would be the imposition of a higher tax the better any land is developed and the putting of a premium upon neglect and deterioration.