

aerodrome sites constituted a scandal. In February 1936, a Conservative Member asked the Minister for Air "whether he is aware of the grave menace to British aviation by speculators of a certain type who are hindering and obstructing plans for airport construction by buying up useless adjoining land when airport plans become known, and demanding exorbitant prices?"

In 1936, land at Ringway, Manchester, for example, belonging to a county family, was offered at £24,000 for 128 acres; and another estate near by, of 203 acres, which had been bought in 1930 for £8,000 was offered to the Manchester Corporation for an aerodrome, and £92,000 demanded as the price. This process has continued up to and during the war period. The pages of *Land and Liberty*, the organ of our International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, regularly supply copious instances of the British land ramp. The July number carries quotations from the Fifth Report of the Select Committee on Public Expenditure exposing the waste of public money on the high cost of land for aerodromes and other public works.

In the various Budget debates these matters have been ventilated, one Member referring to the fact that as a result of the Government going into the country districts looking for sites for camps for evacuated children, the value of land had increased in those parts. When land in the city of Leicester was required for an Air Raid Shelter for infant pupils, £338 had to be paid for 427 square yards, which is at the rate of £3,831 per acre. Thus the nation's extremity is the county and city landowners' opportunity. Men like Mr. A. V. Alexander, M. P., when in opposition, have denounced these conditions and demanded land value taxation, but the Cabinet of which he is now a member turns a blind eye to the whole matter.

There are many aspects of county agricultural life that might be dwelt on:—the huge amounts taken for many years in agricultural subsidies; the large areas of rich land remaining undeveloped or underdeveloped, at a time when food production from our own land is so terribly urgent. But the outstanding fact that passes all understanding in a time of unprecedented peril for the country, is the continued immunity of land from a fair measure of taxation upon its value. All the talk about Fifth Column activities and other newspaper topics, even discussions concerning the rival blockades at sea, serve as a smoke-screen obscuring the silent, hidden blockade of the countryside instituted by the county interest against the interest of the country as a whole, a blockade that not even this emergency is permitted to modify.

It was this same county influence through its nominees in Parliament that secured the overthrow of the Labor government in 1931, and with it the repeal of the Land

Value Tax, with the consequence that the Chamberlain high tariff system was substituted in its place. Whilst these customs duties still further embittered European relationship and precipitated the rise of Hitlerism, they at the same time constituted a self-imposed blockade against ourselves which for nearly ten years has borne as heavily on the people of this country as the air and naval blockade now attempted by our German enemies.

We have submitted to the county interests for generations, but that they should prevail through ten months of desperate war and through three War Budgets is easy proof that the power of land monopoly is only equalled by its lack of patriotism. What a change there would be in the scene if Churchill, the scion of one of the greatest county families, became again the radical Churchill, brilliant advocate of the Taxation of Land Values!

The Unemployed

By HENRY A. COIT

MIDNIGHT dwells within the heart of those whose leaden feet
 Drag wearily from dawn 'till dark along an endless street —
 The heart from which all hope has fled and left despair complete.
 Pallor sits upon the cheek and dullness haunts the eye,
 The shoulders stoop, the muscles droop of those sad men who try
 To find some work for idle hands lest something in them die.
 'Tis sad to see a willing man who hungers for the soil
 Wear out his life on city streets in search of honest toil
 While, serpent like, both want and crime around about him coil.
 'Tis sad to see a man whose gaze is always downward cast—
 Who never looks at Heaven's sun—whose countenance seems masked
 A man who has no forward look—whose dreams are in the past.
 'Tis sad to see a beaten man whose hair is turning grey—
 Who seeks for honest work to do, and asks but honest pay—
 Whose brain and brawn are in their prime, and yet is turned away.
 'Tis sad to see that such a man must seek and ask in vain—
 To know those willing, eager hands may never work again.
 In such a man Ambition dies while Hope's already slain.
 'Tis sad to see such men as these dependent on a dole.
 Cold charity exacts from such a devastating toll.
 And while the heart lies dead in each, there's terror in each soul.
 Eleven million idle men and acres yet untilled;
 And thirty million underfed with hearts and bodies chilled;
 Is this the great Democracy for which our blood was spilled?
 With idle men on waiting lands—their feet upon the sod;
 With useful tools in willing hands to serve as staff and rod—
 Their heavy hearts would fill with song, and faces lift to God.

WE must learn to distinguish between natural and un-
 natural conditions, between health and disease. We
 must learn to seek causes and not take the apparent for the
 real. Our social evils are due to violations of natural law;
 they are as pathological as the acts of a mind deranged and
 as unreliable in determining conditions.—OSCAR H. GEIGER.