

WHAT MR. LLOYD GEORGE HAS SAID

The Landowner's Function

What is the landlord's increment? Who is the landlord? The landlord is a gentleman who does not earn his wealth. He does not even take the trouble to receive his wealth. He does not even take the trouble to spend his wealth. He has a host of people around him to do the actual spending for him. He never sees it until he comes to enjoy it. His sole function, his chief pride, is stately consumption of wealth produced by others.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Limehouse, 30th July, 1909.*

Dukes at £250,000 a Year

Only one stock has gone down badly: there has been a great slump in dukes. They used to stand rather high in the market, especially in the Tory market; but the Tory Press has discovered that they are of no value. They have been making speeches recently. One especially expensive duke made a speech, and all the Tory Press said: Well, now, really, is that the sort of thing we are spending £250,000 a year upon? Because a fully equipped duke costs as much to keep up as two Dreadnoughts, and dukes are just as great a terror and last longer.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Newcastle, 30th September, 1909.*

The Rest of Us are Trespassers

Who ordained that a few should have the land of Britain as a perquisite; who made 10,000 people owners of the soil and the rest of us trespassers in the land of our birth; who is it? Who is responsible for the scheme of things whereby one man is engaged through life in grinding labour, to win a bare and precarious subsistence for himself . . . and another man who does not toil receives every hour of the day, every hour of the night whilst he slumbers, more than his poor neighbour receives in a whole year of toil? Where did the table of the law come from? Whose finger inscribed it? These are the questions that will be asked. The answers are charged with peril for the order of things the Peers represent.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Newcastle, 30th September, 1909.*

The Selfish Monopoly

The greatest provision of all for unemployment, in my judgment, is contained in the land clauses of the Budget. This provision must have the effect eventually of destroying the selfish and stupid monopoly which now so egregiously mismanages the land. Only the business community in this country, and those who have been associated with it all their lives, can fully appreciate the extent to which the present ownership of land hampers and embarrasses trade and industry.—*Mr. Lloyd George: Preface to "The Budget, the Land and the People," published December, 1909.*

Has the "Hedgehog" Won?

Take the land question. Every Liberal tells you that it is the root of everything. But up to the present we have just dealt with it as if we were handling a hedgehog. . . . Landlords exercise more despotic sway in their little dominions than the King does in any quarter of his huge Empire. They can deprive a man of his livelihood or his opinions. What king can do that? They can exile a man from the home of his fathers—a home consecrated by every tradition, and all because of his political or religious opinions. They have done it! . . . I will tell you what is the matter with this country. There is one limited monarchy here, but also 10,000 little Tsars. They hold absolutely autocratic sway. Who gave it to them? We mean to examine the conditions. A fight full of hope for the democracy, we are asking nothing unreasonable.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Swansea, 28th May, 1912.*

"Let's Burst It"

Search out every problem, look into these questions thoroughly, and the more thoroughly you look into them you will find that the land is at the root of most of them. Housing, wages, food, health, the development of a virile, independent, manly, Imperial race—you must have a free land system as an essential condition of these. To use a gardening phrase, our social and economic condition is root-bound by the feudal system. It has no room to develop, but its roots are breaking through. Well, let's burst it.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Aberdeen, 29th November, 1912.*

Tariffs Are Landlords' Endowments

For the landlord, all the sacrifices—the burdens on his estate shouldered by the State; the value of his land put up by hundreds of millions at the expense of the State. An open mind for the labourer and an open mouth for the landlord.

The real peril is that powerful interests will dominate the Legislature, dominate the Executive, in order to carry through proposals which will prey on the community. That is where tariffs will come in—tariffs, landlords' endowments.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at the National Liberal Club, 2nd July, 1913.*

The Iniquity of Land Purchase

Lord Lansdowne has put forward his proposals, and I venture at the first opportunity to challenge them. What is his plan? His plan is that you should use public credit and public money to buy such land as the landlords see fit to part with. That is not good enough. There is no compulsion. The landlord is to pick and choose, not the country that finds the money. . . . Don't let us break that wand (the credit of the country); don't let us smash it in merely raising up huge sums of money in order to enrich a class which, whatever may be said about it in its past, at any rate is not a class that deserves that England should sink herself deep under burdens in order that you should enrich.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Sydenham, 5th July, 1913.*

"Organising a Great Attack"

Every time the Tory Party contemplate the wreckage, with the overturned trucks full of food taxes and other good things for themselves and their friends, they cannot talk without a snarl of the person whom they imagine is largely responsible for the catastrophe. Now they are under the impression that I have been carefully organising a great attack on the arbitrary powers which they possess, through the land and other monopolies. And they are right.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Carnarvon, 31st July, 1913.*

Vested Interests to be Beaten

When they enclosed the commons they did it through Commissioners, and those Commissioners did the work they were set out to accomplish so neatly, so completely, so thoroughly, that we decided that, the Commissioners having deprived the people of their interest in the land, Commissioners are just the people to restore the land to the people. It is a great undertaking. It is a gigantic one, but we mean to put it through. It is one that may take time; it is one that may involve us in a struggle with great interests. We are accustomed to that. We have beaten vested interests and we will do it again.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Swindon, 22nd October, 1913.*

Ulster and the Land Question

There is one section of the Tory Party—the reflective section, the responsible section. But there is another section who mean to use Ulster for the purpose of checking social reform in this country. Now I mean to deal faithfully with that lot. Things are looking ominous. People are getting

tired of privilege and monopoly, and they mean to get redress at last. They have been put off generation after generation. At last they are coming to business, and things are looking a little troublesome, so they say, "Here, do not you worry about these things. Lift your eyes to the horizon, concentrate your thoughts on Ulster." And when you don't, they get angry. . . . The victories emblazoned on the Tory flag are those of intolerance, bigotry, and religious persecution. They are not the people to defend religious equality in Ireland or anywhere else. . . . That is why I am telling you that when I talk about Ulster, I am not very far from the land question.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Holloway, 29th November, 1913.*

The "Friendship" of Landlord and Labourer

The landlord, Mr. Walter Long said, the tenant, and the labourer are the best of friends. . . . The labourer is scourged by tens of thousands from the villages. They are fleeing before it to Canada. Ah, is not the lash gripped by the gentle hand of a friend? They are his best friends. The labourer's freehold in the commons—they are as ancient as the landlord's freehold in his estate—which made him an independent man in the village. He has been stripped of it all.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Holloway, 29th November, 1913.*

On the Taxation of Land Values

You cannot build houses without land; you cannot lay down trams, for the purpose of spreading the population over a wider area, without land. As long as the landlords are allowed to charge prohibitive prices for a bit of land, even waste land, without contributing anything to local resources, so long will this terrible congestion remain in our towns. That is the first great trust to deal with, and for another reason—the resources of local taxation are almost exhausted. It is essential that you should get some new resources for this purpose. What better resources can you get than this wealth created by the community, and how better can it be used than for the benefit of the community?

Take the question of overcrowding. This land question in the towns bears upon that. It is all very well to produce Housing of the Working Classes Bills. They will never be effective until you tackle the taxation of land values.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Newcastle, 4th March, 1903.*

Year by year the value of that land and house passes out of the man that built it, who sweated for it, who raised money for it, into the hands of the man who never spent a penny in erecting that house. What do we say? We say the country has need of money and we are looking out for someone to tax. We do not want to tax food; we will tax no man's raiment; we will not tax the house that shelters him and his family. What shall we tax? We do not want to tax industry; we do not want to tax enterprise; we do not want to tax commerce. What shall we tax? We will tax the man who is getting something he never earned, that he never produced, and that by no law of justice and fairness ought ever to belong to him.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Carnarvon, 8th December, 1909.*

I mean to raise these taxes in a way that will not interfere with any productive industry in this country, and I am not going to butter anybody's bread with taxes. . . . Do not let us have false remedies. We want to do something to bring the land within the grasp of the people. We want to put an end to the system whereby the land of this country is retailed by the ounce, so that there should not be an extra grain of breathing spaces. . . . No; I tell you what we want. The resources of the land are frozen by the old feudal system. I am looking forward to the spring time, when the thaw will set in, and when the people and the children of the people shall enter into the inheritance that has been given them from on high.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Liverpool, 21st December, 1909.*

The great criticism against rating is not merely that it lacks uniformity and is unfair between the parties, but that it is unfair in the class of property that you tax and rate. This is the greatest grievance of all—that it taxes improvements. The more a landlord improves his property the higher he is rated; the more he neglects his property the less he is rated. . . . If he allows his cottages to fall into decay and become empty, his rates are less; but if he is a good, sound landlord, who repairs ruinous cottages and builds new ones, up go his rates. The man who trusts to obsolete machinery in his business can keep his rates low; but the man who puts in new machinery and improves his buildings has to pay a higher contribution to the rates.—*Mr. Lloyd George, in the House of Commons, 28th April, 1913.*

We want new rating. I don't profess to know your rating system in Scotland, but I know the rating system in England and Wales very well, and certainly in England and Wales we want first a complete change in the methods of our valuation for assessment purposes. They are crude, inefficient, and open at the present moment to a grave suspicion of partiality. The valuation under the Act of 1909 secures, for the first time, a real valuation of the land and of the structures thereon separately, and I can assure you we mean to make use of that valuation. . . . Now the Government have already, through their chief, accepted the principle of the rating of land values, and they intend to give effect to it by legislation.—*Mr. Lloyd George, at Glasgow, 4th February, 1914.*

We are of the opinion that a national system of valuation for local taxation must be set up—a system which is fair and more equitable and more impartial between classes and localities than the present. We propose that this valuation should be the valuation on the assessment of the real value of the property, separating the site from the improvements; and, to prevent any misconception, let me say there is no intention to transfer the whole burden from the composite subject of site and hereditament to the site. But we do intend that the taxation of site values shall henceforth form an integral part of the system of local taxation. That was what I meant by broadening the basis of taxation.—*Mr. Lloyd George, in the House of Commons, 4th May, 1914.*

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