

another lot of men, the landowners, pocket the increased value the expenditure of the money creates. So we trust that the construction of the South London Thames Embankment will be deferred until this has been altered, as there is every sign that it soon will be.

Extraordinary Price for Irish Land.

In the IRISH TIMES (Dublin, December 1st, 1912), under the above heading, it is stated that a small plot of land in the neighbourhood of Newry, a little over three Irish acres, and bought out under the Land Commission, subject to the yearly annuity of 30s., was sold for £400! This is very interesting, as well as very instructive. It shows that at least some of the tenant purchasers have made very good bargains; and that all the evils of landlordism, land gambling, rack-renting, dual ownership, and so on, are all certain to be perpetuated under the new order of things inaugurated by the beneficent "Emancipation Act," known as The Irish Land Purchase Act of 1903.

A Modest Proposal.

According to THE BELFAST NEWS LETTER (November 30th, 1912), at a meeting of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, held in the Bankers' Institute, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, on Friday, November 29th, Mr. Commissioner Lynch read a paper on "Land Purchase in Ireland." During the course of his address he reviewed the progress of Land Purchase since 1885. Coming "to the first report of the Estates Commissioners for the period from 1st November, 1903, to 31st December, 1904," he pointed out that:

They found that 31,140 agreements and applications for advances, amounting to £12,849,670, had been lodged. Comment on these figures was unnecessary. It was admitted on all sides that the results of the financial provisions of the Act of 1909 in so far as they were intended to accelerate the conversion of occupying tenants of agricultural and pastoral holdings into owners have not been a success. The Premier, replying to Sir J. Lonsdale, had said the Government were considering how best to expedite the completion of land purchase. The main difficulty was a financial one, and he suggested that they should revert to advances being made in cash as provided by the Act of 1903, or in three per cent. stock equivalent to its market value at the price of the day. He was of opinion that the Government must bear the entire loss consequent upon the stock being at a discount.

The calmness with which this proposal is put forward to further burden the patient and apathetic British taxpayer, in order to finance the transfer of the rural land of Ireland from one set of landlords to another set of landlords, is amazing.

Commissioner Lynch has either too little knowledge of economics or too much confidence in the protracted forbearance and long pockets of the taxpayers. We think he is a little behind the times, however. The land question is not to-day the closed book to the general public that it was a few years ago; and we rather fancy that the people who are now paying heavily in taxes to provide the interest on Irish Land Stock for the benefit of Irish landlords who sold out at fancy prices will kick pretty hard at any further proposal of the kind.

A Distinction with a Difference.

THE FARM AND HOME (November 27th, 1912) commenting on "The Rating of Land Values," says:—

Clearly, it cannot matter very much to the farmer how his contributions in the shape of rates and taxes

are calculated, provided that the sum is not increased, and from this point of view he may be indifferent to the suggestion that land value should form the basis of taxation. But it is of immense importance to him that the burden which he has to bear should not be made heavier, and it is of interest to him and to all connected with agriculture that the share of taxation borne by the land which he cultivates should not be made disproportionate. This being so, he cannot afford to ignore the movement in progress among so-called "advanced" politicians, who have for the main part no land of their own and are not cultivators, for placing all the taxation of the country upon the land.

The Editor of FARM AND HOME ought to know, and he plainly, in so many words, indicates that he does know, that the proposal is not to place all the taxation of the country upon the land, for does he not contend that if the farmer's burden be not made heavier he can afford to remain "indifferent to the suggestion that land value should form the basis of taxation." This cry of putting taxation on land is but the loose and misleading language of the partisan politician, ignorant or otherwise, out to make opinion against those who dare to talk of radical land reform, and against an opposing political party, the Liberal party, who in the land clauses of the great Budget have pointed to the only way to bring relief to farmers and all other workers. The farmers can certainly afford to remain coldly indifferent as to taxation being placed on the value of land for the vast majority of them know well enough that whoever else may pocket the land values of the country they do not. When they get a taste of this just and expedient system of raising rates and taxes the farmers will wonder why they ever remained indifferent about it.

The True Individualism.

Professor L. T. Hobhouse, in the course of an able address on "Social Theory and Liberal Reforms" before the Cambridge Liberal Club on November 22nd, made statements that deserve to be noticed. He said:—

Greater State control is needed, not so much for the purpose of putting fresh burdens on to individuals and compelling them to be happy, and wise, and good, but for the purpose of preventing one class from putting burdens on another. This understood, social reform is not antagonistic to liberty, but is essential to economic emancipation. The real tyranny of the existing social system is no longer political but economic, and it is the business of Liberalism to secure economic liberty to the people. . . . The object of social reform is to restore property as an institution enjoyed by the mass of the people. It would seek to abolish, not property, but the proletariat—the mass of people without property. . . . For the people as a whole it involves, on the one side an extension of collective ownership, on the other side the recognition of the claim of the citizen upon the common funds for security in periods of misfortune or helplessness. . . . To carry out this principle wisely requires, not only careful constructive legislation, but a fiscal system which will render to the individual the value which he creates and the surplus to the community. This seems the true solution in the economic sphere of the relations between the individual and the State, between the principles of liberty and individuality on the one side, and of co-operation and mutual aid on the other.

A fiscal system which would "render to the individual the value he creates and the surplus to the community" expresses in other words the policy we exist to promote, viz., "to take for the community what belongs to the community the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual what belongs to the individual." Professor Hobhouse is not clear that in endeavouring to apply this principle,

social reform could very well dispense with the "careful constructive legislation" to provide against misfortune or helplessness, or to provide for other things mentioned by him such as a minimum wage for agricultural labourers. The fiscal change will not only appropriate the value of the land for the community. It will put an end to penal taxation upon industry, and by freeing all the natural resources of the country from the grip of privilege and monopoly, raise wages to actual earning point. The independence of each individual labourer will be the best safeguard against oppression, and secure employment will make him free enough and rich enough to provide for his own needs without any meddlesome "constructive legislation," just as everyone can do to-day who is able to earn a competence.

A Sound Principle.

Professor Hobhouse had a good word for the Single Taxers, even though considering them a "school of extremists":—

The basis of taxation proposed by the Single Taxers is indeed reasonable enough. It is a sound principle that site values should be separated for fiscal purposes from improvements, and that they should in the first place bear the brunt of the burden of local taxation. It is equally sound that, in view of the difference between capital and annual values, it is the former which should be taxed as the basis of taxation. On both these points it will be found that the Liberal party as a whole will go with the Single Taxers.

The Professor goes on to indicate that the single tax policy is on the one hand too radical in that "it would differentiate land from all other classes of property," and on the other hand that the policy is not radical enough for "land is not the only form in which property takes the form of monopoly," moreover "the taxation of land values would not by itself effect the changes that are necessary for the proper development of a modern town."

The reasons for differentiating land from other things have been stated over and over again and they admit of no compromise. Public revenues can be derived only from two sources: (1) from wealth rightfully belonging to the community, and (2) from wealth rightfully belonging to the individual. Vested interests deserve no consideration, for as Henry George has said, "just in proportion as the interests of the landholders are conserved, just in that proportion must general interests and general rights be disregarded, and if landholders are to lose nothing of their special privileges, the people at large can gain nothing."

We grant Professor Hobhouse's contention that there are other monopolies than land, and that there are other reforms than the establishment of the single tax basis of taxation. But the overthrow of land monopoly comes first, for short of that no other social reform can succeed. The taxation of land values is the road to the economic emancipation of which the Professor spoke—to freedom to men to work out their own salvation, either in their individual or in their collective capacity, and bring about any changes or reforms they may desire.

Joseph Fels' Policy.

"If a man doesn't put his land to the best use," says Mr. Fels, "he must be choked until he lets go." And if he *does* put it to the best use, Mr. Fels wants him heavily taxed—especially if he make soap which competes with Mr. Fels's own American commodity. Fight

your British competitors fairly, Mr. Fels. Think what a hullabaloo would greet the proposal, made in the United States, that American manufacturers should be more heavily taxed, in order to cripple them in their struggle against British rivals! What shall we say, then, of Mr. Fels's money poured out in thousands in support of the land-taxing campaign, in the effort to cripple his British competitors?—FINANCIAL NEWS.

The FINANCIAL NEWS has got a look at the wrong side of Mr. Fels' policy. He is simply tireless in his endeavours to make it plain that he stands for untaxing the man who makes the best use of his land. He is out against the existing system of taxation, not for it, as the FINANCIAL NEWS ought to know. This policy of untaxing the industrious man is Mr. Fels' one aim and object in life and his thousands are being poured out for this cause in a dozen different countries, not excluding his own country, the United States. Mr. Fels knows, or wants to know, only one class of competitor, namely, those who will compete with him in putting up money to advocate the freeing of industry from the monopoly which injures and strangles it everywhere.

The State of To-morrow.

"Those Socialists," writes D. V. B., "who complain that Single Tax would not go far enough are invited to study the following passage from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb's admirable pamphlet, WHAT SYNDICALISM MEANS:—

The real distinction, as it seems to us, between the Capitalist State and the State of To-morrow lies not so much in the work done by any set of workers, whether managers or doctors or coal-hewers or engine-drivers, all of which must always be with us, nor yet in the conditions of their employment, which might conceivably, even in the Capitalist State, be greatly humanised, but in the disposal of that large proportion of the total product which is economically of the nature of rent, or (to use the classic phrase of Karl Marx) surplus value. It is impossible, for reasons that we need not explain, consistently with any approach to equality of income, for this part of the product to be shared out as weekly wages. [The italics are ours.] At present, for the most part, it provides the means of existence for the idle rich, and the disproportionate private consumption of the principal managers of industry. In an ideal State, after providing for the widows and orphans, the sick and the aged, it would be devoted, we may assume, to a thousand objects of common good.

"Now the above might very well be read as a not-too-sanguine forecast of the Single Tax State, and it is only from other passages in the pamphlet that the reader can gather that Mr. and Mrs. Webb seek to bring the State of To-morrow into being, not by the simple, safe, and economic method of land value taxation, but by the complex, uncertain and wasteful process of State acquisition of industries and State control of production and consumption. Surely, if Fabianism has led two of its ablest exponents to a position where they can see that the disposal of economic rent is the main question of the near future, they must soon range themselves with us in the endeavour to concentrate the forces of reform upon that one point. They will thus help to give our country more than the advantages of Socialism, without the attendant evils of Bureaucracy."

THE FOUNDATION OF JUSTICE.—Whatever may be effected by other reforms the foundation of justice and universal prosperity can be well and truly laid only by the Taxation of Land Values.—"Emeritus" in THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREEDOM.