

crease in rent. Even if we suppose the miracle of a one hundred per cent remission of the present impost, the result of the remission could only be to add all present government revenues to the present revenues of land holders.

But the public collection of land rent has this double aspect: it is not only the imposition of a particular tax, that on land values, but it is also a hundred per cent remission of all other taxes. Since the remission of those other taxes must swell by exactly their own bulk the fund from which the new taxes are to be drawn, evidently the single tax on land values or the public appropriation of rent must yield a revenue at least equal to the present one. So long as the decreases of other taxes all enhance rents by just the amount of the decrease, the yield of a land value tax can never be less than the yield of an alternative tax. The land value tax must, indeed, yield a revenue superior to the present one by the amount of present unappropriated rent, and superior also by the difference in cost of collection; for of course the machinery necessary to collect the single tax exists already in form nearly as costly as would be necessary under the new system, while under the new system all other expensive tax machinery might be dispensed with and its cost saved.

Thus since there is reason to believe that, in the long run, rent cannot exceed public revenues under the single tax system, and reason to believe the revenues can never exceed rent under the system, it follows that the rent fund and the tax fund tend to be equal.

When the War Ends

THE fifty Members of Parliament comprising the Parliamentary Land Values Group in England have a plan to meet post-war problems, according to a letter received recently by Mrs. Anna George de Mille from R. R. Stokes, M. P. This plan is set forth in seven articles, as follows:

1. When the war ends concerted efforts will need to be made to absorb both munition workers and demobilized soldiers into productive work. This will mean embarking upon vast schemes of public works which will lead to a rise in land values in the immediate vicinity. This value, unless otherwise provided, will go to the benefit of local landlords and not to the community whose efforts will have gone to create the value. A tax on site values will meet this point.

2. Each one of these schemes will entail the purchase by the Government of greater or lesser areas of land. A tax on site values will keep the purchase price down.

3. In addition to public works, private owners of land should be made to help by putting all land to its best use. A tax on site values of all land whether used or idle will make

it unprofitable to the landlord to put any land to its wrong use or to keep it idle.

4. Vast credits will be needed to finance schemes of development. From a business point of view there will be no difficulty about obtaining such credits provided it can be shown that the benefits are going to the borrower thereby proving the means of repayment. A tax on site values will ensure that the borrower (i.e. the community) gets the benefit.

5. Slums must be removed and Garden Cities built. A tax on site values will make it impossible for slum landlords to keep filthy dwellings in the midst of towns on valuable sites: they themselves will be forced to put up modern up-to-date buildings. Equally, such a tax will keep down the purchase price of land needed for Garden Cities.

6. There need be no unemployment and no enforced poverty arising therefrom if the natural resources are used in the common interest. Until these resources are exhausted it should be possible to create a state of society wherein there are more jobs than people—at present this state is only likely to arrive in wartime—and wherein the laborer will get his fair hire. This can be brought about by freeing natural resources by the one just, quick and efficacious way: *taxing site values of all land used or unused.*

7. The Exchequer would ultimately receive at least £500,000,000 a year which now goes tax free to individual owners. Unemployment and the evils arising therefrom would disappear. There are only three ways of getting the land back for the people—confiscation, purchase or taxation. The first would be unjust to the present owners: the second would be unjust to the people who would by such a method have to pay interest on the purchase price for ever after: the third, a graduated tax over a period of years, would be unjust to no one and provision should be made *now* so that it may be made effective as soon as the war ends.

A LITTLE insight into the land question of Puerto Rico is gained from a letter received recently by Sr. Rogelio Casas Cadilla from Sr. Miguel Guerra-Mondragon, prominent attorney of San Juan, P. R. We quote from this letter, through the kindness of Sr. Casas:

“The land question becomes more acute daily in Puerto Rico. Fortunately, a new party with pronounced agrarian principles has just been elected to the legislative chambers. Much is expected of them by every one. On the other hand, the Washington authorities do not endorse very enthusiastically our efforts to break up land monopoly and distribute the land among the greatest possible number of farmers. Only in this manner can land monopoly and absentee landlordism be killed.”