

the Government had driven a wedge between agriculture and other industrial interests by granting subsidies and bonuses, all of which have to be provided in the annual Finance Act and are added to taxation. Farmers were rapidly becoming the most unpopular members of the community.

Although the chairman referred to the devaluation of the franc as an important step towards the breaking down of trade barriers, he proceeded to advocate a protective tariff for agriculture, and the meeting passed a resolution representing to the Government that (except in the case of wheat) the assistance and protection given to agriculture had not been sufficient to enable the primary producer to meet the necessary costs of production, and at the same time attract labour to the land and maintain the fertility of the soil. It pressed for assistance by protective tariffs or otherwise to meet the difference between costs of production and market prices.

### Stop the Dear Food Policy

A very plausible resolution and in line with much talk current to-day about economic planning. But what are the necessary costs of production? Is rent a necessary cost of production? And how are the advocates of this policy going to prevent rent increasing still further and the alleged gap between costs and prices remaining as it is? Everyone is aware that the price of agricultural land is rising again, and one of the causes is the subsidies, tariffs and quotas which have already been established for the benefit of agriculture.

It is little wonder that farmers are becoming the "most unpopular members of the community" when they persist in identifying their interests with those of landowners, and keep on demanding that the price of food shall be increased. If they wish to regain their popularity, a preferable policy would be: No taxes on food or any other product of labour, and taxation of land values to keep down rent.

### Abundance is the Divine Law

"We ought now to sweep away for good all the laws that bar, hamper, or penalize the production of more food—milk, potatoes, beef, bacon, sugar beet are all subject to one restriction or another. In the Book of Common Prayer there is a prayer that says, 'Grant that scarcity and dearth may be mercifully turned to cheapness and plenty.' There's another one in the same sense, but you'll look in vain for any request to the Almighty to organize dearth and limitation."

A remarkable leaderette in Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*, 22nd August, notorious for its advocacy of protective tariffs and other monopoly-serving legislation. If Lord Beaverbrook has really begun to see the error of his ways, the Lord God Almighty whom his mouthpiece invokes will surely be merciful to the repentant sinner.

### The Results of Tariffs

A striking example of the results of protection was given at the meeting of the Public Utilities Committee of Edinburgh Town Council on 23rd October. Tenders had been invited for a new turbo-alternator for the Portobello Electricity Power Station. The lowest tender price was £70,663 from Messrs Brown Boveri & Co. of Baden, Switzerland. The second lowest offer was from Messrs. Richardsons Westgarth-Brown Boveri Ltd., of West Hartlepool, which was associated with the Swiss firm. This company offered exactly the same machine, but at a price £18,556 in excess of the lowest tender. The Central Electricity Board, it was stated, was opposed to the acceptance of the foreign tender, and the Committee decided to accept the higher tender!

### Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman

Monday, the 7th September, was the centenary of the birth of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman the greatest Liberal statesman that this country has known. It is a cheerless sign of the state of Liberalism that his fame and the undying services he rendered his fellow-men have not been widely commemorated; and that in his name a challenging note has not rung through the land against the forces that are menacing democracy and economic freedom. Only the Scottish Liberals at their recent annual meeting paid tribute to his memory, and that in a quiet and almost unnoticed demonstration.

We honour Sir Henry for his many outspoken declarations on the land question, interpreting the true message of liberalism as it was not spoken before and has not been spoken since. If the party leaders who have succeeded him had been true to that message and that policy, the course of domestic history would have been different and the world would not have known the rocks and shallows of the false and wicked policies which are to-day threatening shipwreck for civilization. Unless the social problem is solved at home by action taken that will destroy monopoly and privilege there is little hope of averting international strife. So we can go back to Campbell-Bannerman's many speeches on the land question and think of their bearing on the problems of the present. We give an extract of one of them—at Leeds in March, 1903:—"There is practically but one great impediment in the way of a sweeping improvement which would elevate the physical and moral welfare of the people. It is the interest and overdue regard to the interest of the landowner and the political and social influence that he and his class can exercise. . . . You have the public interest and in antagonism with it the interest of the individual. You and I side with the public interest. Let the value of land be assessed independently of the buildings upon it, and upon such valuation let contribution be made to those public services which create the value. This is not to disturb the balance of equity but to redress it. The unfairness is in the present state of things. Why should one man reap what another man sows? We should give to the landowner all that is his, but we would prevent him taking something which belongs to other people. Here you have, perhaps, the clearest example in present politics of the cardinal, abiding, and necessary difference between the Liberal party and our opponents. It is here that lies the chasm yawning between us, athwart almost every public question."

The party label is out of date. It does not have the same texture or toughness and not even the same colour as it had when that utterance was made; but, leaving party labels only to attract those who elevate their political affiliations above righteous principles, we look in vain for a leader within any of the parties whose statesmanship is of the order of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

### How Transport is Taxed

The Report of the London Passenger Transport Board for the year ending 30th June shows that the total liability for taxation, excluding income tax, was £2,665,829.

"The expenditure," states the Board, "represents 8.52 per cent of the Board's receipts from all sources; 10.35 per cent of the total working expenses. And of the total liability, 75 per cent represents taxation in the form of fuel duty and licensed vehicle duty."

"This onerous taxation," the report continues, "imposes a serious drain upon the Board's financial