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All except the members starred(\*) are members of the Land Values Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The Amendment was not taken—the Government did not give it the facilities of debate. Speaking on the official Amendment of the Labour Party,

MR G. RIDLEY (Labour) said: Let me say a word or two about the Amendment which appears on the Order Paper in the names of other Hon. Members and myself, which draws attention to the question of land values. I have had in this matter a curiously informative experience. Fourteen years ago I lived in what we humorously described as the last house in London. From my doorstep there was six miles of open country to Harrow, the poorest grazing land around London and not worth more than £40 or £45 an acre. Great arterial roads were made, public authorities came along with plans and the Government gave grants. Huge fortunes have been flying into the pockets of people who have done nothing to provide any sort of public amenities or services and who have made no sensible contribution to the development of what is now a very thriving suburb. It has all gone to enrich the private speculator. The Treasury ought not to stand idly by in a matter like this and watch these huge fortunes being made without tapping this tremendous reservoir of wealth. A tax on land values would go a long way towards solving our present financial problems, would enable us to extend our social services and develop those things which bring happiness and comfort into the homes of our people.

## MILITARY TRAINING BILL

*Extracts from House of Commons Debate, 15th May*

[On Clause 7.—Simplification of procedure for obtaining possession of land taken under Defence Acts.]

MR ANDREW MACLAREN (Labour): Some of my hon. Friends and I have Amendments down which, I understand, are not to be called. But the Amendments which we have on the Order Paper are a distinct challenge to doing anything at all. The cardinal principle running through my mind is that as we are conscripting men to defend the land we should equally conscript the land.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN (COLONEL CLIFTON-BROWN): The hon. Member is now getting rather beyond the scope of the Clause, which, after all, is the simplification of the procedure.

MR MACLAREN: It is something more than that, if I may say so. It is an attempt to make sure that we are getting the land much more quickly than we did under the old procedure, and I say that with all its expedition the Clause is much too slow for me. Compensation will always be paid when it is a question of real property, but no arbitrator is called in to decide the value of a man's body when he is conscripted to defend that property. The difference is obvious. I do not suppose that, however much I talk in the Committee, I shall ever convince hon. Members that they ought forthwith to conscript land outright if they are going to call for a great sacrifice in the defence of that land. The Government adopt procedures of compensation. Under these arrangements they are not doing it openly and there will be no hue and cry from the public; but none the less, the owners of the land will get a toll out of this Amendment as it stands.

MR R. R. STOKES (Labour): I wish to put briefly four reasons why the Clause should not stand part of the Bill. First, as my hon. Friend the Member for Burslem (Mr MacLaren) has stated, what we are, in effect, doing to the young men of this country is to conscript them at a shilling a day and then ask them to buy the land before they can defend it. Secondly, they are to be asked, in effect, to come forward and sacrifice their lives in order that the landlords of the country may continue to draw not less than £500,000,000 a year in rent. It seems to me to be outrageous that the landlords should be paid anything more under this Clause or any other Clause passed by the Committee. Thirdly, I would endeavour to prevent the War Office from following the iniquities of the Air Ministry by paying fabulous sums for land which has hitherto been regarded as completely valueless, and for the guidance of the Secretary of State for War, I would point out that the Air Ministry already has paid over £1,000,000 for 5,600 acres of land hitherto considered valueless. Fourthly, the Committee may not have realised that in war-time the landlords in fact are the only people who stand to gain—

THE CHAIRMAN: The first three arguments of the hon. Member have not been in order, and I do not think his fourth is. I would point out to him that the Clause deals with a simplification of procedure for obtaining possession of land taken under the Defence Acts.

MR STOKES: If I should be completely out of order in continuing my remarks on the lines on which I have been speaking,

I will merely reiterate that I think it is outrageous that young men should be conscripted at a shilling a day and then should have to pay the landlords in order to be able to defend their land.

Mrs AGNES HARDIE (Labour): I also wish to protest against this Clause, even as amended. I think the same method should be applied in the case of land as is applied to the young militiamen. Land which is required should be taken, and hardship committees should be set up to which those suffering hardship could go, and could be given a little allowance if they were not very well off. I think it is outrageous to pass a Clause in this form. Everyone who has land, irrespective of his means, should be prepared to hand that land to the Government to use in the necessary way. I wish to join in the protest against this Clause being passed.

## LIBERAL POLICY

The Liberal Party Organization held its Annual Assembly at Scarborough, 11th and 12th May.

Resolution demanding the Taxation and Rating of Land Values was unanimously adopted as follows:—

“This Assembly reaffirms its conviction that by the derating of houses and improvements through the policy of Taxation of Land Values, the cost of houses and improvements would be reduced and the purchasing power of the people increased. It emphasises the right of tenants to make improvements with the assurance that they will get fair compensation out of the increased letting value of their holdings at the end of their leases. It urges upon the Party Leaders the need for putting this policy in the forefront of the Liberal programme as one of the most vital and far-reaching reforms necessary to achieve Social Justice.”

In the resolution on Unemployment it was declared that: “Having regard to the continuance of the dangerously high volume of unemployment, and the fact that the Protectionist and other schemes introduced by the Government since 1931 have not only proved futile as solutions of the problem, but have aggravated it, and believing that only by the application of Liberal principles can the problem be solved, this Assembly reiterates its demand for a Government which will apply these principles, particularly by freeing trade from the restrictions which are stifling it in this country and the Colonial Empire, and thus enable Britain to become the pioneer of a movement for the freeing of trade all over the world,” and the final paragraph called for “a coherent and well planned policy for reducing the volume of unemployment in times of depression . . . by a programme of national development carefully prepared beforehand.” (As to which it will be agreed that Land Value Taxation would so promote employment that it will stand by itself as an effective policy and should come first and foremost in whatever is planned.—EDITOR *Land & Liberty*.)

The resolution on Agriculture condemned the Government policy of protection, subsidies, quotas and the like; and proposing a number of plans for more efficient marketing, for restoring and increasing fertility, assuring to farmers security of tenure and fair rents, providing higher wages and better housing and working conditions to farm workers and the improvement of educational facilities, declared that this policy must “by the taxation of land values ensure that the benefits are not monopolized by the landowners.”

## Oxford University Liberals

An excellent expository article on the Taxation of Land Values appears in the May issue of the *Oxford Guardian*, organ of the Oxford University Liberal Club. It is so good that we propose to publish a large extract from it in an early issue.