

straight fight on our question and made excellent progress in a hostile country. Wedgwood was in good form and I greatly enjoyed his replies to a local landowner, who questioned him at one of the meetings. To have three Single Tax candidates fighting in that part of Staffordshire is surely a record. I never saw such election meetings as "Mac" gets in the Burslem Division."

In January last Mr. MacLaren founded the weekly paper, the *LABOUR CHRONICLE*, of which he is Editor. It has attained an influential local circulation and is held to have contributed immensely to the growth of opinion in the Potteries in favour of the Taxation of Land Values, as well as to the Parliamentary success of its advocates in that part of the country.

THE BATTLE OF THE SLUMS Horrors of No Man's Land

(*"Daily News" Special Correspondent*)

Something like a pitched battle is in progress here over housing.

On one side of the line the local authorities are entrenched. On the other side is a strong body of enthusiasts led by Major Leslie Hore-Belisha, the Liberal member.

Between the two forces, in No Man's Land, making the best of what little shelter they can find, are the unfortunate victims of the dispute.

To-day, however, there was a sort of armistice. Hostilities ceased at noon, when a remarkable party was formed, at the suggestion of Major Hore-Belisha, to explore No Man's Land. The party consisted of representatives of the War Office and Admiralty, an Inspector of the Ministry of Health, the local Medical Officer of Health, and the Housing Inspector.

Major Hore-Belisha led the party.

We found the same old No Man's Land, *the same squalid, dilapidated, insanitary houses that one sees all over the country, the same broken-hearted women struggling to make a home out of one room* (italics not ours), and the same children trying to find a place where they could play.

Big leaks in the roof (one man told me that he had to put a bath on the bed to catch rain in wet weather), 22 people sharing one lavatory, ceilings falling down, floors rotten, damp walls, whole families sleeping, feeding and washing in one room—the same old story.

Many of the houses have been condemned and closing orders have been issued. But the tenants remain, chiefly because no one cares for the job of turning them out. They would have nowhere else to go—except the workhouse.

"Council houses," said one woman to me, "are no good to us. They're too big and too dear. We can't pay 12s. 6d. Two or three rooms would be Heaven after this."

Council houses at 12s. 6d. may meet the needs of the skilled worker earning about £4 a week, but they are of little interest to the labourer who has to keep a family on about 30s. These are the people who are now living in the slums of Devonport.

In the Plymouth area it is estimated that about 4,000 new houses are needed. Fewer than 1,000 have been built. In Devonport alone 500 are needed.

All that happens is a war of words between the various forces concerned.

Probably, after to-day's armistice, hostilities will be resumed. And the tenants of No Man's Land, unable to escape, will creep deeper into their dilapidated dug-outs.—*DAILY NEWS*, 19th October.

And this after five years of "Housing Reform"—on the principle, too, that housing sites can be had at 1½d. a week! Major Hore-Belisha is the only Liberal returned at the election south of the Thames and Severn.

MR. PHILIP SNOWDEN ON FREE TRADE AND LAND VALUES

What Next Year's Budget Might Have Done

During the General Election Mr. Philip Snowden made frequent reference to the proposals he had in view for a tax on land values to be included in next year's Budget.

In his Address to the Electors of Colne Valley he stated:—

"In my Budget speech I gave a definite assurance that if I were in office next year I would deal with the question of the Taxation of Land Values. If we had not been interrupted by a General Election I should have introduced a Bill in the Autumn session for the restoration of the powers of the Land Valuation Department which were taken away by the last Tory Government. Considerable progress has been made in working out a scheme for the Taxation of Land Values, and if I am Chancellor of the Exchequer next spring I shall certainly bring forward this very important reform. The Liberals talk about the Taxation of Land Values. *The Labour Government can and will tax land values*, and by so doing will secure for the community what is rightfully its property, and which at the same time will open up the land of the country for beneficial and productive use."

In speech after speech Mr. Snowden showed that he had fully made up his mind to raise the land question and place Land Value Taxation in the forefront of politics in this country:

EDINBURGH, 16th October

"The votes of Liberals who supported the taxation of land values were to be given to a party which described that proposal as spoliation and robbery; and so in regard to every other item in the Liberal programme. That was the main issue at this election, and that was the main point that electors should bear in mind who were disposed to support a Liberal candidate at this election."

COLNE VALLEY, 21st October

"Mr. Lloyd George yesterday made a speech that was the most extraordinary travesty of political history I think I have ever heard, even from a politician of Mr. Lloyd George's notorious audacity. He made a statement that the Liberal Party had never taken its hand away from any work to which it had put it, that the Liberal Party had never put a thing in its programme but it had carried that proposal to a fruitful issue.

"People who make reckless and unfortunate statements like that usually contradict themselves. He was no exception to the rule when he dealt with the land question. Mr. Lloyd George is the last politician in this country who ought to say anything about the land question. The very mention of the land question from Mr. Lloyd George naturally turns one's thoughts to a record of broken promises and pledges in that respect which would be a discredit to any politician.

"Mr. Lloyd George had had the audacity also in his speech to advocate the taxation of land values. The taxation of land values was in the Liberal Newcastle programme of thirty years ago, and the Liberals had been in power with a big majority for a number of years since then. Where is taxation of land values? So far as the Liberal Party is concerned to-day it is nowhere but in Mr. Lloyd George's speeches. Mr. Lloyd George himself made a poor, feeble, ineffective attempt to deal with that question in his Budget of fifteen years ago.

"Mr. Asquith began his speech at Paisley by defending the pact between the Tories and the Liberals for the purpose, as he put it, of defeating 'the common enemy.' How long have we been the common enemy? How long is it since we were told that the Liberal Party and the Labour Party were agreed upon nine-tenths of the Labour programme? Now the Labour Party is the common enemy. It is a pathetic thing to see how the Liberal Party have fallen in so short a time from being a strong political party to becoming a negligible influence in British politics. The fall began when Mr. Lloyd George dragged the Liberal Party into the bosom of the Tory Party, and only quite recently the Labour Party had had to defend free trade and remove the protection duties which were left by the Liberal Government."

SHEFFIELD, 24th October

"There is no more pathetic spectacle to-day than the plight of that once great Liberal Party. I would ask earnest Liberals to try and think of the reasons and the explanations for the position in which the Liberal Party is to-day. Now what is the explanation? I am trying to reason with any Liberals who may be here. I am saying nothing at all against the principles of Liberalism."

"The reason why the Liberal Party is in its present plight is because it sacrificed the best principles of Liberalism, and under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George it formed an infamous coalition with the Tories. From that day the fate of the Liberal Party was sealed. To-day Mr. Lloyd George is trying to carry over what remains of the Liberal Party back to the position of 1918. He has told us plainly that if there be a Liberal Party in the next Parliament, its votes will not be used to keep the Labour Government in office. . . .

"Take any one of the principles or political questions for which the Liberal Party is supposed to stand. Take Free Trade. Is the Conservative Party a Free Trade Party? . . .

"Take any other of those reforms or political principles for which Liberalism has stood in the past. Take land reform. The Liberal Party a few days ago issued a manifesto on the land question, but I confess to you I don't understand what it means. It gives the idea that a new land programme of the Liberal Party is a sort of modified land national ownership. That is the Liberal policy, but what is the Tory policy? The Tory Party has always been especially the friend, the champion, the defender of landed interests and privileges. Therefore every vote given by a Liberal to a Tory is a vote for land monopoly, for permitting the landowners to continue to grow rich by their exploitation of the property of the community."

"Any Liberal who votes for a Tory candidate is violating every principle for which Liberalism has stood in the past. . . . There are hundreds of thousands of people who cannot sleep in their beds at night because of what is going to happen to them in my next Budget. Let me remind you that although we had only been in office 14 weeks when the first Budget was brought in, I reduced taxation on food by six times more than the Liberals had done in eight years."

"No Chancellor of the Exchequer discloses the contents of his next Budget beforehand, and the only thing I can promise in regard to taxation next year is that I shall introduce a drastic measure for the taxation of land values, and I know that there is no city in the country more keenly interested in this matter than the landlord-ridden city of Sheffield."

SKELMANTHORPE, 25th October

"Virtually all the Liberal members who would be returned next week would be returned by the Conservative vote. The Liberal Party stood for Free Trade, if it stood for anything, and if they were to believe the

manifesto which had been issued it stood for Land Reform, and it was supposed to stand for temperance. Mr. Lloyd George said they were going to turn out the Labour Government and join with the Tories. Mr. Asquith said the same thing, and by that they were sacrificing Free Trade, for Mr. Baldwin still advocates the principles of Protection through the extension of the Safeguarding of Industries Act."

"It was audacious that Mr. Lloyd George should talk about land reform. Did they remember the time when they used to sing, 'God gave the land to the people,' and yet it was Mr. Lloyd George who gave the land back to the landlords at the bidding of the Tory members of his Government?"

"The McKenna Duties were imposed during the war. Mr. Lloyd George's Government would not repeal these duties, and it was left to the Labour Government to undo in the interests of Free Trade what the Liberals had done in the interests of Protection. Every vote given at this election against the Labour Party would be a vote given for Protection, landlordism, and the brewer. Liberal principles would be handed over to the Tory Party just like so many sheep and cattle."

A special correspondent to THE TIMES of 25th October wrote:—

"Mr. Snowden is, at the moment, rather a disappointed man. It was a great wish with him to introduce a second Labour Budget before leaving office, and whatever his personal electoral fortune may be, he can scarcely hope now that he will be Chancellor of the Exchequer next April. He is seeking to impress on the electors that the defeat of the Government at the polls would cause the loss of many very beneficent measures which were before the late Parliament or would certainly be introduced in the next Session."

These words are all the more significant now that the Election has swept the Tories into power with an enormous majority. The public had no chance to consider reforms but only a series of scares and excitements, deliberately provoked to darken counsel. Mr. Snowden was one of the few that upheld the debate on the things that matter. Those responsible for precipitating the Election have indeed dealt a damaging blow to the cause of democracy and shattered for the time being the great expectations that both the Liberal and Labour Parties had held in view and had the power to fulfil.

The DAILY MAIL early this year had said in their editorial: "There should be power to levy adequate rates on eligible building sites, especially where those are in close proximity to land already built upon—the yield to go to meet the cost of housing." There was good Tory testimony.

Just before the war over one-third of the city of Edinburgh was rated as agricultural land, an amount sufficient to house over 150,000 persons. This third contributed one-seventh hundredth of the local town rates, "and while you and I, and our needs and the needs of our children were piling up the value of this land, which was wanted in great measure for building purposes for hospitals, schools, and houses, it was possible to hold it up for the big price which we were making and pay rates upon it as a cabbage patch—the lowest possible agricultural rate."

This was the land blockade and the barrier created on the boundaries of our cities against the possibilities of housing which drove the people into the rabbit-warren tenements which were such a festering sore to-day.—*Mr. D. Cleghorn Thomson, Liberal candidate for S. Edinburgh, 18th October.*