

of mines, which is an entirely different proposition. To nationalise the mines would mean the management of the mines by Government or by committees—a hopeless and ruinous proposition; whereas the nationalisation of the coal would merely mean the collection of a tax in proportion to value of the coal, whereby the whole community would be benefited, and efficiency of management maintained. By this method the mines blessed with coal of rich quality and in favourable situations would contribute heavily to the burdens of the State, while those of a poorer quality would be spared, and equally enabled to produce coal for the public benefit, the capital expended in both cases getting a fair return and labour well rewarded. Indeed, the question of the coal industry is merely a part of the great land question, where, I am firmly convinced, the only just and possible solution lies in the Taxation of Land Values, apart from all improvements on the land

## LIBERAL PARTY POLITICS

### A Lead from Manchester

After prolonged consideration, the Manchester Liberal Federation has issued a Programme of Liberal Policy which was finally adopted at a Conference of Representatives from the ten Manchester parliamentary divisions on May 23rd and 24th. Copies of this radical pronouncement can be had, price 1d. each, from the Secretary of the Federation, 16, Princess Street, Manchester. On Finance and the Land Question the following declarations are made:—

As far as possible, taxation should be direct and derived mainly from the following sources: Income Tax, Super-Tax, Death Duties, Taxation of Land Values, Excise, Amusements.

There should be no extension or renewal of the subsidy on corn, which should be abolished as early as possible.

The duties on tea, sugar, and all foodstuffs should be abolished.

An early measure should be introduced to make better provision for rendering the land accessible to the people.

The present cumbersome and expensive procedure for the sale and transfer of land should be simplified and cheapened, and in order to check the abuses arising from the withholding of land from its proper use, all land should be taxed and rated on its unimproved value. The said value to be fixed by the owners thereof, subject to the right of the Local Authority or the State to purchase the same compulsorily at the price fixed by the owner, without specifying the purpose for which it is required.

Land value and building value should be separately assessed, rated, and taxed, the building and other improvements to be gradually freed from the burden of rating and taxation by the transfer of their proportion of the burden to the land.

The compulsory acquisition of land immediately required by the State, or Local Authority, for the housing of the people, and for small holdings and allotments, should be on the basis of the pre-war Government valuation, and not at the present artificially inflated value.

In order to liquidate "a large part of the War Debt," the Federation advocates a graduated capital levy on all personal capital above a £2,000 minimum, and payable if necessary over a term of years.

The Conference resolved that the Programme in its final form, as endorsed and adopted by this Conference, be forwarded to the National Liberal Federation, with a request that it be given earnest consideration, with a view to its being placed before the Council of the National Liberal Federation for adoption at the forthcoming annual meeting of that Federation.

## MR. PHILIP SNOWDEN ON THE LAND QUESTION

Mr. Philip Snowden, speaking at a public Conference held on May 24th, under the auspices of the Land Nationalisation Society in the Memorial Hall, London, said he could not remember any previous propagandism which made such a great impression as the Coal Mines Commission. He had been studying the speeches made by certain notorious politicians during the last five years, made for the purpose of encouraging the people not to be down-hearted, and he noted innumerable promises that when the war drums ceased to throb a New Jerusalem would be established in England. They were there that afternoon to demand the redemption of these promises, and they put forward this proposal because they knew there could be no New Jerusalem whose foundations were not built upon the principle of common ownership of the land.

This question was, with the exception of the placing of international relations upon a basis of justice, the most important of all problems. There could be no reconstruction to benefit the people, nothing more than tinkering, except by dealing drastically with the land problem. The evils of the land system were patent even to any wayfarer.

He was not concerned to argue the people's claim to the land except upon the one broad principle of human justice. He was not concerned to prove whether God gave the land to the people by the promise in His Book, or whether the land was given by some dissolute monarch to the sons of a favourite mistress. He cared not to discuss the methods by which the barons obtained possession of the land. He cared not whether the landowner could produce formidable parchment deeds.

He based the people's claim to the land upon this straight principle of justice, that where the people's rights were menaced or injured by the existence of individual rights, that fact alone was the supreme justification for the revocation of all individual rights.

Until they had abolished landlordism root and branch, every other attempt at reform was building upon the sands. Every reform not based on common ownership of the land was simply subsidising landlordism. Every social reform increased the economic rent of land. Therefore, unless they were going to continue to waste their efforts by tinkering with social questions as in the past, they must concentrate upon this fundamental question, to secure the land for the people.—(From the "Land Nationaliser," June, 1919.)

The tenants of 300 municipal houses at Dudley petitioned the Town Council yesterday against the Council's proposal to increase the rents by 6d. to meet the increased rates. They stated that they were unanimously resolved to strike if the demand were persisted in, as the houses were not worth the rent now being charged.—*The Times*, May 7th, 1919.