

It has been denied that "the community in any special sense creates value of land." Newport supplies the answer, and it will be seen that not only does the community create value in land, but that the community is subsequently penalised for doing so.

In the Corporation Road district, for instance, on the opposite side of the Usk, land was let at 30s. and 40s. per acre—the equivalent of £40 to £50 value. Some years ago the Corporation, *i.e.*, the community, offered inducements to Messrs. J. Lysaght, Ltd., to erect works there. They promised them cheaper water than was sold to other consumers as well as cross-river communication. This latter promise cost the town £100,000 in erecting the transporter bridge, with the result that Messrs. Lysaght established their works at East Usk.

The erection of the sheet mills created a demand for houses, and the Corporation, in order to relieve congested areas, spent over £30,000 in laying out the roads, etc., there.

Immediately this was done the value of the land skirting the main road largely increased. When later, as a result of the development of the district, the tramways undertaking was extended, the Corporation sought land for car sheds and a power station at East Usk. An exorbitant sum was asked for a site. The Corporation protested on the ground that they had spent over £30,000 in improving the value of the land. This was, however, of no avail and they were obliged to "compromise" on the price and pay over £1,000 an acre for the land which they had improved, and which prior to the improvement had been let at 30s. and 40s. per acre.

Not only did the Corporation spend £100,000 in erecting the bridge but for the five years ended March 31st, 1918, according to the Borough Treasurer's figures, there had been a net loss on running the bridge of £29,216. In order to reduce the loss on the bridge, the Corporation, in November, 1918, increased the tolls for crossing it.

BURNLEY

THE BURNLEY NEWS, November 26th, gives over a column report to an address by Mr. Fred Skirrow, of the Yorkshire League, on the subject of "More Production." In the course of an able and informing address Mr. Skirrow, referring to the rating of Burnley, quoted figures from the House of Commons White Paper 119 of 1913 which were highly appreciated. He said that this official document stated that the town contained 4,015 acres, and that for rating purposes no less than 1,775 acres was rated as agricultural land by means of which it escaped its fair burden of public expenditure. The total rates, quoted by this paper as being collected from the whole area, was £127,470, whilst 1,775 acres of "agricultural land" within the borough only contributed to this sum the small amount of £273. This "agricultural land" was the land for which the citizens of this town were asked to pay as much as £400 an acre. The speaker contended that the great inducement to increased production must be the right of the producer to the results of his labour. This accepted and acted upon brought us up against the fact that the land was the basis of all industry. That being so, the Government could assist best by opening up the natural opportunities instead of contracting them. The mass of the people were wage slaves because of the legal restrictions on the natural means of production. The one thing needed was access to the natural media. Ill-will, hatred and class warfare followed on want and misery that was the painful outcome of social injustice. The words of Henry George on the subject, spoken forty years ago, had a bearing on the circumstances of the

day: "What change may come, no mortal man can tell, but that some great change must come, thoughtful men begin to feel. The civilized world is trembling on the verge of a great movement. Either it must be a leap forward which will open the way to advances yet undreamed of, or it must be a plunge downward, which will carry us back towards barbarism."

An interesting discussion followed by votes of thanks terminated the proceedings.

PROFITEERING IN TREASURY NOTES

At the Oxford Profiteering Committee on November 14th, Dr. Edwin Cannan, the well-known economist, lodged a complaint against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, he said, was making the unreasonable profit of 23,900 per cent. on the sale of one pound currency notes. The complaint was heard in private.

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN of November 15th says in a leading article: Oxford's Profiteering Tribunal held its first sitting yesterday, and was presented in the course of its inquiries with a problem that seems to have knocked its members spinning. The traditional home of lost causes is well used to voices crying in the wilderness, but they have never made themselves heard with more startling effect than Dr. Edwin Cannan's protest yesterday on behalf of the extremely unfashionable principles of sound national finance. Before the astonished members of the Profiteering Committee Dr. Cannan preferred the complaint that a currency note that costs less than one penny to produce was being foisted on the public at the cost of a pound—profiteering by the Treasury at something like 23,900 per cent. He asked the Committee to refer the case to the Board of Trade with a view to securing an immediate prosecution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by the side of whose enormities the brigands who reckon their percentage of illicit profits by the mere hundred are the mildest mannered men that ever slipped a fist into a neighbour's pocket. By this means he hoped that the manufacture of the Treasury notes in question would be stopped, and with it their disastrous influence in the maintenance of the present high prices. The puzzled Profiteering Committee seems to have decided to treat the matter as a learned joke, and dismissed the complaint. But Dr. Cannan's jest, if jest it be, is one with a basis of the very hardest fact, and his method of drawing attention to the truth may be applauded without reserve. The wholesale issue of paper money without any corresponding gold reserves to back it is not the only cause of high prices, but it is a very potent one, and prices will not come down while the system is continued. The actual gold behind the Treasury notes that have been issued is trifling—that is to say, their issue has dumped upon the country a great amount of fictitious wealth that has no relation to the product of any human labour. On the other hand, the actual commodities that this apparent wealth has to purchase are fewer, if only for the reason that vast quantities of the results of human labour have been literally blown into the air during the last five years. With more apparent money to purchase less things prices must inevitably be high. Dr. Cannan's test case will have done very good work if it sets more minds on the track of this important truth.

CORRESPONDENCE

We have received a further letter from Sir Charles Starnier, dated November 27th, too late for insertion in this issue. We hope to notice this communication next month.