

part of the subject which was the result of labour and the expenditure of capital, rather than giving it to the land as such, which must inure to the advantage of the landowner when transfers take place and leases fall in. Even if we take the Minister's own statement that by giving an absolute relief to agriculture you stimulate the industry, what would be the net result? It only means that if you stimulate agriculture you are stimulating the demand for land, and when you stimulate the demand for land and the tenants are crowding in to get more land for expansion and farming, the landowner is now in a supreme position to exact such a rent from the tenant as he could not have exacted if the tenant had been paying that quarter of the rates.

(17th July)

Supporting the Amendment to reject the Third Reading of the Rating and Valuation (Apportionment) Bill,

Mr A. V. ALEXANDER (Co-operative) said: We on these benches hold that if you really want to relieve industry you must deal with the purchasing power of the people, and if you want to deal with the rating problem you must deal with it not by relieving this particular class of the community from rating on improvements and leaving the burden to be borne by all the rest of the ratepayers who continue to be rated upon their improvements, but if you are to deal with the rating problem properly you should deal with it by the rating of land values. We are quite prepared to argue that question on another occasion and to show why that is the efficacious remedy and why this remedy proposed by the Government will be completely inadequate.

(Other informing speeches showing that the Government's scheme of relieving local taxation would but increase land values for the benefit of landowners and injure rather than help industry were made on various stages of the Bill on 6th, 7th, 18th and 19th June and 2nd and 17th July by Messrs A. MacLaren, J. Sexton, T. Griffiths, B. Riley, Noel Buxton, T. Williams, P. Harris (Liberal), John Scurr, G. Barker, T. Johnston, G. Hardie and others. The Bill was rushed through by means of the closure and by permitting discussion only of Amendments selected at the discretion of the Chairman.)

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN SCOTLAND

### DEBATE ON THE SCOTTISH ESTIMATES

(31st July)

Mr ADAMSON (Labour), former Secretary for Scotland: We see the unemployed persons, who are idle month after month and in some cases year after year, steadily deteriorating, their material resources steadily going one by one, until, as was the case in one instance that came to my own notice within the last week, they are compelled to pass from occupying a house of their own and to become inhabitants of the common lodging house in the locality in which they have formerly resided.

For the year ending May, 1928, the maintenance of unemployed persons is costing the parish of Glasgow no less than £521,181, and when I add to the burden that has fallen in this respect upon the parish of Glasgow itself the other parishes that come within the city boundary, the figure amounts to no less than £821,181.

The number of registered unemployed persons not in receipt of unemployment insurance benefit in Birmingham last year was 7 per cent; in Newcastle, it was 28·2 per cent; and in Tynemouth, it was 14·2 per cent; whereas in Glasgow the figure was 46·15 per cent.

Mr DUNCAN GRAHAM (Labour): A very large proportion of the most intelligent members of the Scottish public are not sufficiently paid, have not sufficient wealth to enable them to take advantage of the houses that are built, or to get better medical attention and treatment.

In Lanarkshire, including Glasgow, you have practically one-third of the total population of Scotland. Three-fourths of the wealth of the country is produced there, and nine-tenths of its poverty is to be found there.

During the period between 1922 and 1927, our parishes have had to pay £7,184,832 in relief to destitute able-bodied

unemployed workmen and their dependants—an amount equal, roughly speaking, to 25 per cent of the average annual valuation for the whole of Scotland.

Mr BUCHANAN (Labour): There are men in my Division whom I have known since boyhood. I have seen them out of work since 1920, week by week, year by year, diminishing in their standard of comfort, and gradually declining from a fair, physical state into consumption and then into a form of lingering death.

Mr SCRYMGEOUR (Independent): What strikes me about this question is not a matter of criticism of parties or of Governments, but how it really comes about that the Scottish Board of Health has presented a Report, which we all agree is a wonderful compendium, of agonizing sorrow, misery, pain and hunger.

Mr W. M. WATSON (Labour): It is tragic to think that millions of pounds have been spent in able-bodied relief during the past few years in Scotland and that we have absolutely nothing to show for it.

Some of our local authorities, who have been building houses under the Housing Acts, are finding the greatest difficulty in getting tenants. The tenants cannot pay the rents which are charged for these new houses. Recently two districts in the county council area of Fife have asked for a reconsideration of the question of rents that were being charged. These particular houses are standing empty. The purses of those who would be occupying these houses do not allow them to occupy the houses that have been built and that require to be built.

Mr T. HENDERSON (Labour): No matter what part of the Report we may consider we shall be forced to the conclusion that it is the lack of purchasing power on the part of the people of the country which is the cause of all this misery and degradation.

Mr JOHNSTON (Labour): The House knows the story of the Harris raiders, but they do not know the latest development of that story. At the end of the War, ex-service men in those far islands were promised land officially. Eight years have passed, and they have again and again made appeals, but it was no use. These men went on to cultivate the land, and offered rent for it. The Secretary of State says that he cannot complete the deal—the landlord wants too much; but, instead of coming to the House of Commons to get powers against the landlord, he proceeds to put these ex-service men in gaol for three months. After private negotiations, these men are released from prison, and they go straight back to the islands, to Scaristaveg. They proceed to cultivate the land again. For eight months they were left undisturbed. At the end of the harvest they were taken to gaol again, and three of them are in gaol now for another three months. It is almost incredible. They are in gaol for trying to produce food, offering rent, and sponging on no one. The Secretary of State has declared that, in addition to their punishment, he has struck them off the list of possible land holders for ever. They are never to get land.

This Government pretends to be the friend of agriculture, but they have no interest in agriculture except to rob it. It is rent they are interested in and not agriculture.

Rev JAMES BARR (Labour): On the farm on which I was brought up, we laboured from early morning till late at night and had to lay the money at the end of the year at the feet of the opulent landlord. I sometimes recall the words of Burns when he said:—

“We labour soon, we labour late,  
To feed the titled knave, man!  
And a' the comfort we're tae get,  
Is that ayont the grave, man!”

I should have wished that this Committee had dealt more with the amount of land that was available for small holdings. The Brand Commission which sat from 1892 to 1895 reported on the question of deer forests. There were altogether 1,782,785 acres of land suitable for new small holdings or for enlargements.

Mr MACLEAN (Labour): You are willing to spend money voted by this House to drain the Highlands of Scotland of the best of its blood and send the people to Canada and Australia and New Zealand. Apparently there

is plenty of room in the wide spaces of the Empire for the people of Scotland, but there is no place for them in their own land. Great areas are to be made derelict and nothing but grouse and deer placed there, for the sport of the Englishman or the American or the Indian Maharajahs who will travel up to Scotland next month to shoot over the Highlands for six weeks' pleasure. The present Secretary of State is carrying on the policy of his predecessors in turning the Highlands into a pleasure ground for Americans, Englishmen and foreigners, while the Scotsman who wants to live on his own soil and bring up his family in the decency and with the few comforts that can be got there, is to be denied the right to live upon the land upon which he first saw the light of day.

Mr WRIGHT (Labour): If we turned Scotland into a garden instead of vast spaces which are scarcely of any agricultural value at all, we could absorb every single unemployed man and woman in Scotland. The great hope of the future as far as Scotland is concerned is to develop its agricultural resources to a very much greater extent.

My only regret is that the vast number of men in Scotland do not seize the land and cultivate it, and take the risk and, if necessary, go to prison. If 56,000 men would do that as they went to the War abroad to fight for another land, we might yet have the land of Scotland belonging to the people of Scotland and the land of England belonging to the people of England.

The SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir J. Gilmour): In regard to the Outer Isles, the bulk of the land there is already divided and settled, and the opportunity of still further dividing is very small indeed. With the best will in the world, whether the applications were made in 1912 or last week, it is clear that there might be men asking for land in that particular part who cannot be provided.

This farm at Scaristaveg is of such a size that it is outwith the compulsory application of the Acts, and it can only be taken by agreement. One of the first things that happened was that some of these men raided the land and took forcible possession. That appears to have been a thing of which the hon. Gentleman approved.

Mr MACLEAN: I did not approve of it: you forced them to it.

Sir J. GILMOUR: I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that he approved of it, for he said he wished that everybody, not only in Scotland but in England, would raid the land.

Mr WRIGHT: Yes, if they are starving, and I would be one to do it.

Sir J. GILMOUR: These men forcibly took possession of the land. Throughout the whole of these proceedings I have had no part in this action, and it is a matter outside my jurisdiction. As far as these cases are concerned, they were in the first place dealt with by the Court. The men were imprisoned, it is true. They gave certain undertakings and were released, but they broke those undertakings and repeated the offence. Action was taken against these individuals, and they were again imprisoned.

Mr JOHNSTON: Illegally.

Sir J. GILMOUR: What happened was that they were released *ad interim* by the Court of Session, and since that the judgment of imprisonment was affirmed, so that they were not improperly imprisoned.

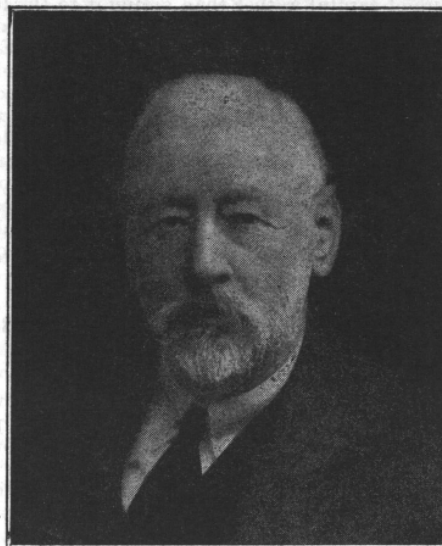
Mr MACLEAN: Here is the Court of Session decision, and it says that they were imprisoned illegally.

Read the decision of the Court of Session on 27th June, where the Judge said it was illegal.

Sir J. GILMOUR: The hon. Member must permit me after I have consulted my Law Officers and considered this case fully, to make it perfectly clear to the House that what he states is not the case.

Whatever the hon. Member may think of this matter I am sure that on due consideration the Committee as a whole will agree with me when I say that it is not by forcible means, by raiding land, by breaking the law, that either these men or any others are going to benefit in the long run.

## SIR HENRY BALLANTYNE



The movement for Land Value Taxation in the East of Scotland has had for many years among its most stalwart supporters Sir Henry Ballantyne. He has been a constant reader of *Land & Liberty*, and in business, political and municipal circles he has always stood by the cause the paper seeks to promote. As Provost of Peebles for a number of years he had many opportunities of proving the need for the Rating of Land Values.

Sir Henry never sought position in Parliament, although as a broad-minded statesman he could have represented any constituency in the South of Scotland if he had had the leisure and the inclination. One of his notable contributions to public work was as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland, the Report of which was published in 1918 and is testimony to the strength of conviction in Scotland for the Land Value policy. Sir Henry's radical view of the land question has been expressed on many occasions and with emphasis, as at the Annual Conference of the Scottish Liberal Federation, Inverness, on 9th October, 1925. He said they talked about a housing question; they talked about unemployment. Let them free the land so that men could employ themselves. There was surely enough land in Scotland to give employment to all the unemployed in the country. If the Liberal leaders in 1909 had gone straight for the Taxation of Land Values he did not believe that the Liberal Party would have been in its present position. It was a very dangerous thing to preach anything in the nature of nationalization or government interference with the individual, and he was afraid that Mr Lloyd George's *Coal and Power* and land programmes were tending in that direction. If they thought by advocating policies of that kind they would get back some of their best radicals—who had been driven out very largely, he believed, because of the failure of the Liberal Party on the Taxation of Land Values—he thought they would find themselves bitterly mistaken.

Among the events in a long association with the movement, one may recall the Bazaar of the Scottish League in 1902 with its many workers, of whom Lady Ballantyne was one of the most industrious. In Sir Henry Ballantyne we are glad to greet the friend of Charles E. Price and of the late Harry S. Murray. It was an unusual pleasure to have Sir Henry among those who were present at the 21st Anniversary Dinner of the United Committee. We wish him many more years of active work.