

given power to prosecute and punish those who sell goods at higher prices than the Government allows. Only when we have the wisdom to bring the land of the country within the reach of those who are able and willing to apply their labour to it can thoughtful students see the end of the injustice which lies at the root of the labour troubles.

LAND VALUE DUTIES

Threatened Break-up of Commons Committee

The Lobby Correspondent of the *DAILY NEWS* (October 30th) states: The Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Land Values Duties sat in private yesterday—Sir Thomas Whittaker, M.P., presiding—to consider their terms of reference. They have not agreed on the points at issue, and have adjourned for a fortnight. It is possible the Committee may break up.

The exact terms of reference are to consider the continuance, retention, or alteration of the existing land values duties. Does the word "alteration" cover a complete change, such as the substitution of a new land values tax? This was the question on which there was considerable discussion. Mr. Raffan pointed out that he was interested in the general question whether there should be a contribution from the land values of the country to rating and taxation. If the Committee had no power to explore this wider question, he doubted whether he should remain a member of the Committee. This view was supported by one or two others.

Captain Pretymann thought that if the wider interpretation were adopted he should not be willing to go on.

Mr. Raffan said those who, like himself, wished the increment duty, reversion duty, and undeveloped land tax merged into one duty, could not accept the findings of the Committee if the wider question were not examined.

Sir Watson Rutherford said he might favour some scheme which would secure the same valuation for purchase as for rating.

The Chairman, during the adjournment of the Committee, will consult the authorities.

"THE RUSHOLME ELECTION."—Mr. Douglas J. J. Owen writes from 651, Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey: It is instructive to note that the candidate in Rusholme who doubled his party's poll was the one who put land values taxation in the very forefront of his programme, both in election address and on the platform. Mr. Pringle, as well as Dr. Dunstan, affirmed his belief in this, the "acid test" of progressive politics. Dr. Dunstan alone relied on it to arouse the enthusiasm of the electors. His confidence was justified in the result. As one of his canvassers, my experience was that no subject secured such a ready response as the clear-cut, thoroughgoing land taxation policy. Additional evidence of this was found in the spirit evoked at Dr. Dunstan's meetings. He himself, in the interview you report on the 21st inst., gives as the first and chief reason for the large increase in the Labour vote his "advocacy of the wholesale land tax."—*Manchester Guardian*, October 23rd, 1919.

At the Autumn Conference of the Scottish Liberal Federation resolutions were adopted urging that the price to be paid for land for housing should be based on its value for local rating purposes and that local authorities be empowered to acquire land compulsorily at not more than 20 years' purchase on such valuation: and in favour of the immediate institution of the taxing and rating of land values, condemning the Land Acquisition Act as in reality a landlords' endowment Act.

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Manchester Land Values Leagues have followed the lead of the Birmingham League by issuing a special leaflet, *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*, contrasting the system of Sydney rating, where the municipal rates fall on land values alone, no rates imposed on houses, shops, factories, workshops, machinery or offices, with our own practice. These informing leaflets along with similar literature have had a wide circulation and have provoked the most favourable comment.

The London County Council yesterday agreed to let the island site between the Strand and Aldwych to the Bush Company (Limited) for 99 years at a rent of £55,000 a year. The site has an area of about 124,000 square feet. The company is associated with the Bush Terminal Company of New York. It is proposed to use the site for establishing an exchange which will provide permanent exhibition and sale room space for manufactured articles, with a commercial intelligence bureau, commercial or trades libraries, and a buyers' club.—*The "Times"*, October 15th.

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