

Land Values

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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

The Coal Strike.

On February 29th the miners of the country came out on strike in a body for a Minimum Wage, and as we go to press the strike, which has lasted for the intervening four weeks, seems about at an end.

The serious nature of this crisis, which has threatened to dislocate and paralyse the industries of the country, has forced the Government to intervene and attempt to settle the differences between the miners and the owners by legislation. The strike has been precipitated by the grievance known as the "abnormal place" and the consequent risk of getting little or no wages for work done. For these workers, and for the day workers and boys, numbering it is said but a fraction of the whole, an army of a million miners have deserted the mines and ceased producing. The demand was made that a minimum wage, according to stated schedules in the various districts, should be paid to all coal hewers, while the day workers should be paid a minimum wage of 5s. per day and boys 2s. per day.

The Government have rushed through Parliament a Minimum Wage Bill which is considered to be a compromise. They have refused to insert the Miners' Schedule, or to add the 5s. and the 2s. wage rates to the Act. All they can see fit to do is to provide machinery for wages to be settled by negotiation between the miners and the owners. This measure is only a temporary expedient, and it is absurd to suppose that anyone can or will be bound by it, for while the demands we have mentioned are the points immediately at issue, this strike is undoubtedly a sign of much deeper and more fundamental grievances. Like the railway, dock and transport strikes of last autumn, it is an outbreak of the general unrest and discontent among the working section of the population, who are becoming alive to the fact that for all their toil they get

but a miserable share of the wealth produced and have to submit to conditions of veritable slavery which rob them of the comforts and many necessities of life.

The cessation of this strike does not mean an end of industrial troubles, even for a time. The dissatisfaction on all sides is too keen and the recognition of the injustice of the existing social order is too widespread for any permanent peace. The problem of low wages, poverty, unemployment, and of the hard struggle most men have to earn a living, has been put to the nation and that problem will not rest until the solution is found.

As Ruskin has well said, "Society must settle this problem, or it will settle society." In land valuation and Taxation of Land Values the Government have the solution in the hollow of their hands. The miner and the other overworked and underfed millions want their place in the sun, and how they can obtain this in the teeth of a close and cruel monopoly of the natural reservoirs of all wealth is difficult to see. The mining question, like the housing question, is but a different name for the land question, and any attempted partial solution is just so much patch-work doomed to come to pieces in the hands of its ill-informed promoters. The lesson of all such partial schemes is writ plain in past legislation; they who would solve social problems must go to the root cause of their existence.

Debates in Parliament.

In the Supplement to the current issue we report two important debates, one on rating reform, and the other on housing, which have been held in the House of Commons during the past month. On the 6th March Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood moved a resolution, seconded by Sir Wm. P. Byles, urging that local authorities should be given power to raise local revenues by rates upon land values only, the present rates upon buildings and improvements to be entirely removed. This proposal, Mr. Wedgwood said,

merely followed out the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill, 1906, which declared in favour of blotting out entirely from the assessment rolls the value of buildings, erections of all kinds, and fixed machinery, and levying rates on the value of the land alone. He wanted the House of Commons to endorse the report of that Committee, and urged upon the Government the adoption of legislation which would provide the local authorities with the new powers. An interesting debate followed, but the motion was "talked out" at the instance of a Liberal member, Mr. Handel Booth. The House was thus deprived of an opportunity of showing how its members now stand on this most urgent reform. The position of the Government was stated by Sir Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney-General. However much they might agree with Mr. Wedgwood in principle they could not declare any opinion until they had the report of the Departmental Committee on Local and Imperial Taxation, who were making full inquiry into the whole subject.

It may be true that the hands of the Government are tied at the present moment, but despite their decision to await the report of a "Committee of Experts," they are pledged over and over again, by the statements of their responsible Ministers, to the reform in rating Mr. Wedgwood and his colleagues have urged upon them.

The Government's Pledges.

In February, 1906, Mr. Asquith, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, said in reply to a deputation of local rating bodies who presented a petition in favour of the rating of land values signed by 518 local councils:—

I have always regarded this movement properly understood as being not a derogation from, but as an assertion of, the rights of property. The two principles upon which it is founded seem to me to be based on common sense and equity. The first is that those who benefit by public improvements, those who especially benefit by public improvements, should contribute their fair share to the cost of them. The next is—and I think it right and just—that the community should reap the benefit of the increased values which are due to its own expenditure and its own growth. We (the Government) desire to have time to carefully consider the best way of giving effect to the principles I have enunciated. I believe we shall arrive at a more satisfactory and more permanent result if we allow ourselves a little time and patience for the consideration of this problem than if we were to introduce a comparatively small and piecemeal instalment of the reform we all desire.

That statement was made six years ago, and the local authorities are still waiting for the "satisfactory and permanent result," unless perhaps they are to be hoodwinked into believing that the share they were promised of the truly "small and piecemeal" Budget land value duties is a fulfilment of this pledge. But how much more time does the Government require? Far from giving effect to the principle of the Rating of Land Values, they make the plea at this late date that the whole question is *sub judice*, and that their judgment, even on the merits of the case, is suspended until the "Committee of Experts" has submitted its report. This Committee should not be sitting now. The time is long overdue for the appointment of a Committee, not to manufacture opinion for the Government, but to discuss the practical application of the principle and draft a Government Bill to put it into effect without delay.

How Much Longer?

The history of the matter is well within recollection. The Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill was read a second time on the 23rd March, 1906, by a majority of 258. At the end of the same year the Select Committee recom-

mended that that Bill be not further proceeded with, but that a measure be introduced to make provision for a valuation of all land in Scotland, apart from the buildings and improvements upon it. This Bill was introduced on 13th May, 1907. The Bill stipulated for the valuation being made year by year (the established system in Scotland since 1854), and it contained the excellent and salutary provision that landowners were obliged, according to the principle of the 1854 Act, to return in the first instance the value of their land. It was twice passed by the House of Commons and twice rejected by the House of Lords. A similar measure was promised for England, but for reasons which need not be discussed was never introduced. In 1909 there came the Budget with its provision for a complete and separate valuation over the whole Kingdom, which the Government, yielding to the pressure of the landed interest, undertook to carry out themselves. Three more years have gone by, and it is becoming daily more evident that the whole scheme will have to be drastically revised. The valuation, owing to the difficulties and complexities which the Government have foolishly allowed to be introduced, and owing to its failure to oblige the owners to return their own valuation, has hardly passed the initial stage. At the present rate of progress it is officially stated the valuation will not be completed till about March 1915, more than nine years after Mr. Asquith asked for time to "consider the best way to give effect to the principle." This means that in 1915 we shall have the value of the land as at 1909. It will be out of date and useless for the purpose of local rating reform or for a national levy upon land values over the whole kingdom. How much more time does the Government want? If it is true to its pledges, an inquiry into the valuation is imperative so that steps may be taken at once to expedite it, to bring it up to date, and to have it periodically revised so that the Treasury and the local authorities may have the machinery for carrying out those reforms that are so long overdue.

The Unionist Housing Bill.

On the 15th March the Second Reading of the Housing of the Working Classes Bill, introduced by Sir Griffith Boscawen, was taken. The main features of this Bill are (1) the appointment of three Housing Commissioners under the Local Government Board, with wide powers to speed up the administration of existing Acts, and to supervise and direct the operations of the local authorities under these Acts; (2) the provision of a State grant of £500,000 a year to assist local authorities in improvement and reconstruction schemes and to provide compensation to slum owners in certain circumstances; (3) the payment by the Treasury of the salaries of the Commissioners and all expenses incurred by them; (4) power to a local authority to advance 90 per cent. of a workman's dwelling instead of 80 per cent. as provided in the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899.

The supporters of the Bill built their case on the appalling evils of bad housing which previous legislation had altogether failed to alleviate, and quoted numerous instances of overcrowding and disgraceful conditions. In particular, emphasis was laid on the fact that under the Housing and Town Planning Act only 116 cottages had been built by local authorities, and in the last three years 1,344 houses had been closed. Therefore more encouragement must be given for the construction of housing accommodation to replace the condemned dwellings. There was no sin in devoting half a million to this purpose if it was right to spend £1,000,000 in straightening roads or £1,000,000 for sanatoria, or £9,000,000 for cottages in Ireland. To our mind there is no difference in principle. This Conservative Bill is only a leaf out of the book of recent Liberal legislation: State aid in every direction and State subsidies to help the victims of an unjust social order. So-called reformers, led astray on this dangerous road, have no reply to the plausible and alluring

arguments of the Conservatives, and it is little wonder that as many as twenty-eight Liberal and Labour Members went into the Lobby in favour of the Bill.

A Bad Principle.

The rejection of the Second Reading of the Bill was moved by Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, and we congratulate him on his able analysis of this abortive attempt to patch up the futile housing legislation for which the Liberal, Conservative and Labour parties have alike been responsible. We cannot do better than commend our readers to study his exposure of the finance and the economics of this measure. It is an example of the autocratic and reactionary rut into which modern legislation is leading—the principle that the industrial classes can only remain in poverty and comparative destitution and be content to share the charitable gifts of an all-wise Parliament, subsidised by taxes levied indiscriminately upon rich and poor, while its officials, clothed in the authority of the State, regulate the lives of the least fortunate.

The solution of the housing question is to be found only in the solution of the poverty question, and until the Liberal and Labour parties see this they can offer nothing to the working classes in the way of better houses than the Conservatives have not offered in this Bill. The cause of bad housing, of low wages and the poverty that robs the people, lies altogether in unjust taxation, and the solution is admirably stated by Mr. Wedgwood in this debate:—

If you really want to see cheap and good houses you must do as you did in 1846. When you wanted cheap and good bread, you took off the Bread Tax. Will you now take off the House Tax? At present, where the rates amount to 10s. in the £ that equals a 50 per cent. tax on every new house. Take off that tax, remove the rate from the house, and then see whether you do not get cheap and good houses. Go further, and do not only take off the rate from the house, but put a stop to the privilege which people at present enjoy of keeping back land which is wanted for building. Stop that privilege by putting a substantial tax and a substantial rate upon the value which they ask for their land, and which they keep back until the building trade is willing to buy. In that way you would break down the land monopoly, you would let houses be built freely, and you would encourage building throughout the length and breadth of the country, instead of spasmodically here and there dealing with a particular slum area. We want to put a stop to those bad laws of the past which strangled building, and are strangling building enterprise to-day, and which were made by landlords for the benefit of landlords.

The Backsliding of the "Daily News."

In dealing with Mr. J. C. Wedgwood's motion for the reform of Local Taxation by the Rating of Land Values, in the House of Commons on 6th March (reported on another page), the DAILY NEWS of the following day stated its disagreement with his view that the whole of local rating should be levied on land value. It was not always thus with the DAILY NEWS. As we quoted in our January issue, ten years ago it strenuously advocated the complete transfer of all rates to site value and advised the Progressive Party in municipal politics to press for this full step. This bold and radical pronouncement of the NEWS so long ago greatly encouraged those working in the municipal movement for the Rating of Land Values, which culminated in the convincing Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, 1908.

Our readers, and the readers of the DAILY NEWS, know the history of the case. The Lords' mutilation of the Government Bill arising out of this Report was directly responsible for the Land Clause of the 1909 Budget, which

in turn provided the motive for the drawing of the Lords' teeth. We are puzzled to know, and many Progressives we are sure will be in a like frame of mind, why the DAILY NEWS should go back on its former clear lead, and lag behind the Report of a House of Commons Committee appointed by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and presided over by the Lord Advocate.

A Bonus to Slum Landlords.

Confirmation of this weakening in principle on the part of the NEWS is furnished in its issue of March 15th. Commenting on Sir Griffith Boscawen's Housing of the Working Classes Bill, it bestows a certain measure of praise on this effort of "Tory democracy." "Though imperfect," it says, "Sir A. Griffith Boscawen's measure is easily improvable, and we are strongly of opinion that it should be accorded the encouragement of a second reading."

So short a time ago as December 9th last, in a long editorial the NEWS condemned the Bill in no uncertain manner. This criticism was reproduced in January LAND VALUES. It wisely pointed out that there can be no solution of the Housing Question if it is treated "atomically," and that every housing reform scheme must be related to the Budget which is going to give us a universal valuation of the land.

Why this *volte face*? Why should the Bill with its million pound fund be in December 1911 "simply a bonus to the slum landlords which would not carry housing reform very far," and in March 1912 be accorded the encouragement of a second reading? In December the NEWS said:—

We shall have the correct measure provided by the land valuation under Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. . . . If housing is treated atomically without relation to other parts of a general scheme of social repair, the treatment is certain to be costly and futile. Housing must be related to the Budget, which will give us a universal land valuation, which has given us land taxes designed to drive building land into the market, and which has provided a precedent for extension to agricultural land.

The Yawning Chasm.

Whatever has come over the NEWS that it blows hot and cold on the Taxation of Land Values? We do wish it would make up its mind on the subject. The question is quite simple. Can the housing problem or any part of it be solved apart from the Taxation of Land Values? If not, then it is the duty of the NEWS to measure every proposal by that standard. If Liberal journals are to countenance Tory Purchase Bills for the solution of the housing problem, which "in essence are proposals for bonuses to slum landlords," wherein lies the dividing line between Liberalism and Toryism? "Here," said Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, speaking on the question at Leeds in 1903, "you have perhaps the clearest example in present politics of the cardinal, abiding, and necessary difference between the Liberal Party and our opponents. It is here that lies the chasm yawning between us athwart almost every public question." Why cannot the DAILY NEWS come down on one side of this chasm and stay there? There is no middle course. A policy of vacillation on a matter of cardinal and abiding difference between Liberalism and Toryism can lead to nowhere but opposition to sound Liberal views on the subject.

"Labour Loaves!"

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, at Radcliffe near Bury, on Sunday, March 10th, told his audience that—"Labour Loaves were becoming the loaves which the Liberal and Tory parties alike would have to make use of in whatever baking they made themselves responsible for." Such a conclusion may be highly satisfactory to Labour leaders and the Labour Party; but they would do well constantly

to bear in mind that the nutritive value of loaves does not depend upon the brand or label but the quality of the flour of which they are composed. They should, therefore, see to it that the flour is of the right quality, or the loaves are likely to prove of little or no value, whoever may be responsible for the baking.

A Hastings Rating Anomaly.

The announcement in our advertisement columns that there is freehold land to be bought in Lower Park Road, Braybrooke Road, and Cornwallis Gardens, will come as a surprise to those who thought that the ground landlords would retain this land as leasehold till the end of time. The price mentioned (£4 10s. a foot frontage, with a depth of 150 feet) cannot possibly be considered as anything but cheap. It is doubtful whether there are other towns of sixty thousand inhabitants where land within three-quarters of a mile of its very centre, facing a public road and overlooking a charming park, can be bought at anything like this figure. The complaint about the impossibility of obtaining freehold land for modern houses is gone, and it is to be hoped that within a comparatively short period all these sites may be covered with the style of dwellings wanted in Hastings.—
HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS OBSERVER, 16th March.

We are informed by a local correspondent that the plots referred to by the OBSERVER have been assessed for local rates at an annual value of 25s. to 30s. per acre. The selling price works out at over £1,300 per acre, or at 860 to 1,120 times the annual value for rating purposes. The question is not whether the land is cheap or dear. An owner who studies his own interests will sell his land at the best price it will command, and he should be perfectly free to do so. But he should not be exempt from taxation so long as he prefers to withhold his land from its best use while waiting for someone to buy it from him at its real value. This case illustrates clearly the injustice of the existing method of taxation and rating. If £1,300 is the actual value of the land, the owner should have been paying rates and taxes on that basis. The value of his land is due to nothing he has done, but is due to the growth and enterprise of the community, and it should therefore be the standard of his contribution, both to the State and to the local authority. But the present system gives him an unfair advantage, taxing and rating him only on the value of the use to which he decides to put his land. Exemption from rates and taxes encourages him to speculate with his land and prevents the application of labour and capital to it on the part of others who have quite as much right to use it as he has.

The Surveyors' Institution—Continued.

Mr. Edwin Savill's further statement on the Single Tax on Land Values at the Surveyors' Institution (*vide* the ESTATES GAZETTE, 16th March) has the appearance of a pathetic breakdown compared with what at first seemed to be a searching, if a professional, examination into the policy of the United Committee. Mr. Savill takes the Committee and LAND VALUES a trifle seriously. We think he is quite right, and wish him success in his very laudable attempt to waken up his fellow surveyors on the subject. Land Values Taxation must be quite a new survey for them, and he must not complain, nor be downhearted, if at first they fail to grasp its relationship to their ordinary duties. We know what this wakening up of dull minds is, and Mr. Savill has our sympathy. Nor is this an empty platitude, for we posted a copy of the March issue of LAND VALUES, along with other explanatory literature, to some 4,600 members of the Surveyors' Institution. This by way of doing what we could to help Mr. Savill in his endeavour to reveal to his "comrades" the why and wherefore of our policy, and in the hope of making new friends and adding to our subscribers' list.

The Surveyors' Institution was to us a new and uncultivated field, and like all such, when the gate is open to us, we are always ready to step inside. And we have succeeded, as we usually do. We have helped Mr. Savill, we have discovered new friends, and won some promising new subscribers.

The Surveyors' Institute has published Mr. Savill's address and the debate following in a 42-page pamphlet, with an attractive cover. Some 23 pages are devoted to the discussion which followed the reading of the paper. The best we can say about this "criticism" of the Single Tax movement—both paper and discussion—is that we have heard it all before, not once but often, during the past twenty years, at literary debating societies. The views of those societies, often graced with much literary merit, never saw the light of day. No doubt they would have done so if the members could have afforded the luxury of seeing their "deliverance" in print. Nevertheless, we enjoyed reading this publication from cover to cover.

In the course of the discussion Mr. Pollock, K.C., M.P. (Visitor), said:—

No movement of recent years had been conducted so continuously with such a sustained effort, by means so subtle and supported by so much energy and acumen as the campaign to throw all the taxes upon the land. The real need at that time was for some sort of primer, synopsis, or small book, which would convey to members of the general public, who had not their opportunities, some intimation of the fallacies contained in the proposal before they cast in their lot and started with others down the slippery slope.

If we may, we cordially second this passionate cry for some "sort of primer, synopsis, or small book." If it is prepared by our critics at the Surveyors' Institution it will be a welcome contribution to the literature of the movement, which hitherto, as the Lord Advocate has often declared, has assumed such dry, arid, argumentative ground that the subject must appear to his fellow countrymen to be a dull and dreary business.

The State's Deep Pocket.

Speaking at the Mansion House on the 28th February in support of the London School of Tropical Medicine, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, Colonial Secretary, said:—

There was a curious popular misconception of the riches and resources of the State; it was regarded by many as a sort of anonymous millionaire with a bottomless purse. As a matter of fact, the State was an incorporeal entity in a condition of chronic bankruptcy, and was only saved from insolvency by frequent and legalised raids on the pockets of the taxpayers. It was only by the imposition of new and higher taxes that these demands for vicarious generosity could be fulfilled.

The curious misconception is by no means purely a "popular" one, for the idea has been advertised from the housetops by eminent politicians and by all the good, kind, clever people who wish to make it appear that social reform begins and ends with State assistance to the poor by making raids upon State funds. The question as to whether these "legalised" raids are obtained through just or unjust taxation does not enter their heads. Mr. Lewis Harcourt might suitably repeat his shrewd statement to his colleagues in the Liberal Cabinet who have in recent years prostituted Liberalism before the false gods of "money for social reform," and whose latest experiment in the "vicarious generosity" he has condemned is the State contribution of "2d. per week" for the insurance of the sick and the unemployed. This and other doles have rendered necessary not only the imposition of new and higher taxation, based largely on no satisfactory principle, but has prevented the abolition of sources of revenue which oppress the poor, restrict trade, and do the gravest harm to industry.

Liberal Ministers have more than once made the great schemes of "social reform," by distributing State moneys on a liberal scale, the excuse for maintaining the tea duty and the sugar tax, and wild excursions into a bastard kind of Fabian Socialism have hidden and all but strangled the true work of Liberalism. A Government which came into power to remove burdens, to abolish unjust taxation, to set free the springs of industry and to fight the monopolies which still hold their grip upon the nation has succeeded only in maintaining taxation, adding to the burdens upon industry and leaving the power of monopoly pretty much as they found it.

The "Times" on the Position of the Labour Party.

Commenting on Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's attack on Mr. Asquith, THE TIMES (March 12th, 1912) says:—

What is evident is that the Labour Party is in a very awkward position, and somebody must be made a scapegoat. . . . Mr. Asquith has at least laboured earnestly to secure a settlement. What has Mr. Macdonald done? What have the Labour Party done? They have cut the same ridiculous figure as in the railway strike, and have been revealed to the public gaze as perfectly helpless when anything real happens, and with no more influence over the actual labour movement than a private citizen.

Others, more partial to the Labour Party than THE TIMES, are making the same comments, are asking the same questions. Why do they seem so helpless "when anything real happens"? The answer, we think, is perfectly obvious. Like so many other well-meaning publicists and politicians, the Labour Party have no reliable guidance to offer, for they have yet to learn to discriminate between what the working classes generally have a right to demand as men, as citizens, and what they can only more humbly ask for as alms or as doles, and on humanitarian grounds. The present system of land-tenure and taxation places them at a great disadvantage, impoverishes them, and enthrals them. They are in revolt against the conditions of life and industry thus created. They know they are impoverished and denied their share of the good things of life, of the things that make life human and worth living. They know they are wronged, disinherited, and dispossessed; but they know not how their rights as men and as citizens can be restored to them. Vague talk about the necessity to nationalise, socialise, municipalise, or even inter-nationalise, all the means of production and exchange, does not satisfy them. Nor are they willing to await the inevitable (?) passing away of "the capitalistic system of production." They want something now and at once, and something to which they can show an indisputable moral claim. Until the Labour Party can tell them what this is and how it can be secured, they will necessarily remain "with no more influence over the actual labour movement than a private citizen." When they learn to do so, they will no longer be open to the reproach of being "perfectly helpless when anything real happens"—and many real things will happen.

Disobedience to Law.

On Sunday, March 10th, the Archbishop of Canterbury preached in Westminster Abbey, by invitation of the Dean, with special reference to the present economic crisis. Save admitting, "as outside the range of question, four facts: the existence or immediate prospect of distress; its purely human origin; its widespread, almost universal, ramification; and, lastly, the discredit or even shamefulness of a Christian community being powerless, peaceably and Christianly, to set it right"—we do not think the Primate's eloquent discourse threw much light on his subject. One point, however, he raised well worthy the earnest consideration of all thoughtful men, when he said:—"I do not think it can be denied that in recent years in this country the sense of the reverence due to law—written and unwritten—to law as law—has become weakened to a curious degree."

The Primate might even have used a stronger word than "curious," say dangerous. Nor is the reason far to seek. Existing laws—the more important and far-reaching of which we have inherited from a bygone age, when might alone made right and conferred rights, or, more truly, privileges—are not based upon reason nor upon justice; but upon established habits, mere use and wont. Hence reverence for them, for law as law, necessarily becomes weakened as soon as men commence to subject to the test of reason the social or political customs, laws, and institutions which so powerfully affect their lives, determining as they do their social, economic, and industrial conditions. As George Eliot makes one of her favourite characters say:—"I reverence the law, but not where it is a pretext for wrong, which it should be the very object of law to hinder. . . . I hold it blasphemy to say that a man ought not to fight against authority: there is no great religion and no great freedom that has not done it, in the beginning." To our mind this open revolt against unjust laws is a sign of virility, a sign that "England's greatness is *not* on the wane," that, to use the Primate's words, "at the core our nation's faith and courage are genuine and strong, and that the call of duty can evoke them still." For we hold that:—

"While one wrong cries for redress and finds
A soul to answer, still the world is young."

"My Story."

A correspondent who has just read Tom L. Johnson's MY STORY writes:—"Tom L. was a big man. I fear I never fully appreciated his worth whilst he was alive. I saw no solution of anything in '3 cent fares.' But he knew 'what he was fighting for, and loved what he knew!' Good man."

We direct our readers' attention to the review of this entrancing book in another column by Lewis H. Berens. MY STORY is a fascinating book; it is a great man's faithful account of himself and his efforts to serve the people he loved so well. Tom L. Johnson was essentially human; he had made up his mind what to do, and he had to wade through a sea of misunderstanding and misrepresentation from the moment he threw up "big business" to devote himself and his fortune to the cause of human progress. "It is sad reading the lives of men," says Henry George, somewhere, "who would have done something for their fellows." In a sense Tom L. Johnson came into that category, for he was sometimes a lonely man: lonely because he could send his soul ahead of his day. He was fated to be too soon for those around him, but he was not "too soon for human kind." He had almost to finish his work before he could be understood; no, not to finish his work—that will continue in our day and generation, and beyond—he had but to pass to his own well-earned rest to be understood and recognised as a loyal, brave and far-seeing leader in the fight for freedom. For long years he was but a name to us in Great Britain; now we know how he fought and the kind of fight he had to make. "MY STORY" will remain to inspire others so long as land monopoly and its evil brood of social evils remain. Ideas are all powerful in a community ready to accept them, and the idea of union in equality, Henry George's law of human progress, is here to stay. Tom L. Johnson's life counts for much in our campaign, and his own graphic story of it is at once an inspiration and a call to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The New China and the Single Tax.

A cable dispatch to the CHICAGO TRIBUNE, dated 9th March, states that President Yuan Shi Kai will urge his Cabinet "to impose a land or single tax in order to raise money for the Government. The President believes this plan of taxation will be the best for the country."

So do we.

"OUR POLICY."

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—Henry George.

THE AFTERMATH OF A WHIG VICTORY.

Three years ago, in the days when Mr. Lloyd George was framing his Budget, the Liberal Party had before it the straight high level road leading upward and onward towards the promised land of economic justice and equal opportunity. Behind the closed doors of the Cabinet chamber the worst, because the concealed, foes of democracy forced the Chancellor of the Exchequer from his course, and for the ordered march against monopoly substituted a feigned attack to cover a turning aside into the realms of opportunism. Ministers repudiated the disciples of Henry George who had pioneered and prepared the victorious way and found sanctuary with Messrs. Sidney Webb and Chiozza Money. The industrial army that was preparing to march against the common enemy has been left to engage in a general warfare of strikes with secondary foes, and now labour fights capital, whilst monopoly, secure and unscathed, Caesar-like looks down upon the gladiatorial show and the Government sets up rules to regulate the conflict.

The nation demanded freedom, the right to enter into its own, access to the earth and all that therein is, entrance to the treasure house—it has got a Minimum Wage Act as a cure for chaos. Those who scented "revolution" in a measure of just finance, which incidentally made for the widening of opportunities to labour, have been compelled to legislate in panic because the workers have determined to wait no longer on politicians but to seek redress by shaking the fabric of a social state that only rests secure so long as they accept subjection. The bowed Atlas of the coal pit threw off for a few weeks his load, stretched his cramped limbs, saw the sun and the green fields. Desolation spread throughout the land. Awe-stricken legislators hastened to assure him that if he would return to his labour before hunger compelled him, the law would secure him a pittance. What haste to bring labour back beneath the earth on the part of those who, unaffected, see its surface idle and refuse to realise that millions agonise in consequence!

The declension from a crusade of "restoration" to a Minimum Wage Act is all the more clear when the precedent on which it has been framed is considered. The Wage Board of Victoria was the child of Protection. A time came when the long befooled workers declared that they must be secured a greater share of the "plunder" than the sweating dens provided or they would overthrow the system. So it was enacted that 10 per cent. of the workers should not be utterly ground to dust between the upper and nether

stones of protection and land monopoly. But vain would have been the work of rescue had not the abolition of inter-colonial tariffs and land values taxation provided concurrently a measure of economic freedom.

In this country monopoly has precipitated the present struggle of the miner to get assurance of some return for his labour wherever he may be directed to apply it. The coal he hews is tolled again and again by monopoly. The landowners by way of royalties, dead rents, and wayleaves, exact their millions; the railroad monopolists levy a monopoly tribute probably more gigantic in its dimensions, a tribute that in part goes to them as holders of watered stock, in part goes to pay interest on "capital" which in reality represents the debt created by the payment of extortionate prices for land. But monopoly in a far more disastrous way hampers the miner in his fight to secure that he shall never be compelled to work for nothing. He is in the main affected in that monopoly, by withholding mineral land from use, limits the demand for his labour, and by withholding agricultural land from use, floods the coal-fields with men whose wage has been from 12s. to 15s. a week. The special representative of the WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, writing from the South Wales coal-fields, stated that the housing problem had been complicated there by the influx during the last few years of some 40,000 workers from rural districts.

Had land monopoly not driven 40,000 men from the villages, to sell themselves on the South Wales coal-fields, the conditions that have arisen there would never have come into existence. A "capitalist" tyranny was established because of the crowding in of the serfs from the villages to sell themselves. Another press correspondent traced the disaffection to the inrush of men from the West of England countryside. South Wales has brought this tribulation on the nation, the villager has been revenged in shaking the national fabric, the pressure of his demand in other spheres is going to keep the sore open and the spirit of revolt alive. He has left the village where his fate was unheeded to provide a problem that no Minimum Wage Act will solve.

It can be solved in only one way, and that is, by raising the wage of labour at the primary source of employment. Force into full use all rural land and all land now held idle or put to inferior uses, and a wage rate will be established there which will ensure that no labourer will leave the land to sell himself to the pit, the factory, the docks, the foundry, or the railway as a cheap worker. Under such conditions of freedom the wage necessary to induce a man to cease, or to forego, tilling the soil will be established by natural law in all spheres of employment where low wages now prevail. So a universal minimum rate of wage would be established by economic law; it would never be less than what a man could earn by applying his labour to the land, and that would be more than any Wage Board would dare to endeavour to enforce universally under present conditions.

Here, then, we arrive at the root of the matter and at an understanding of the tragedy that has resulted from Whig opportunists defeating the endeavour which, but for them, would have fructified in a national Land Values Tax in the Budget of 1909. The highway has been left, and a dangerous path is being taken.

From the enactment of the Statute of Labourers after the Black Death, labour fought for centuries to win freedom from the Courts. Compulsory Arbitration is the logical outcome of the legal minimum wage, for what the employer is forced to concede, it is logical the worker shall be forced to accept. The workers of New South Wales proclaimed that Compulsory Arbitration had reduced them to "slavery," it landed the leaders of the coal miners' strike in gaol, it took the recent return of a Labour Party on the issue, to free them, and annul the Act. And it must ever be remembered that compulsory arbitration and the legal minimum wage in Australia have gone with drastic land values taxation, and the consequent opening of natural opportunities to labour. There the soil is the great sphere of employment. The wage fixed by legislation is in consonance with the operation of a natural law.

Let wages be fixed by legislative enactment in Britain in the presence of economic forces that over-supply the industrial labour market, and then one or two things will happen. Wages will be fixed at somewhere about the present standard and the workers will have to fight their employers in defiance of the law to better their condition. Or wages may be fixed above the standard and outside will be a multitude of unemployed men, who will proclaim that the State is denying them the right to work by refusing to allow them to sell themselves at any rate rather than starve.

In a small community such as Victoria it was not impossible to give men special permits to work for less than the minimum rate established, but it would be a perilous task in Britain. Here the first duty of the State is to open up the natural opportunities to labour that are withheld by monopoly. It is imperatively and urgently necessary to begin where Australian legislatures have been forced to end, and woe betide the Liberal Party if it betrays the cause of Democracy and seeks to apply palliatives to wrongs that only justice can remedy. It will go the way of other Liberal Parties in other States, who have betrayed Liberalism at the dictation of the Whigs whom Cobden described as the buffers standing between the people and the freedom and justice they righteously demand.

R. L. O.

"It is the nature of truth never to fail."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

"So obsessed have we become with the idea of property rights that we are constantly forgetting that in the last analysis we are dealing with men and women and children, and not with things."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

"The greatest privilege monopolists own is the privilege of making other people pay their taxes for them."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

THE RATING OF SEWERS.

In the January number of LAND VALUES (p. 195) we called attention to a recent decision of the House of Lords, to the effect that underground sewers were rateable, and to the perturbation of the London County Council at this decision. It now appears that the Council has been in correspondence with the Local Government Board on the matter, and that the Board doubts whether there is any prospect of legislation on the subject at the present time. The Council is therefore appealing to the principal provincial local government authorities who are also drainage authorities, asking them to co-operate with the Council in endeavouring to secure the exemption of underground sewers from rating.

There is every reason why we should be grateful to the House of Lords for thus reducing our rating system to absurdity, and for doing it by the most effective possible method, viz., by carrying an illogical system to its "logical" conclusion. If the Progressives on the Council were in dead earnest about rating reform, they could make such use of this object-lesson as might convince even a Moderate Council of the folly of our present method of raising rates.

We should have some respect for the objections raised by the Moderates if they were based on any intelligent and intelligible principle. They make no protest against the rating of improvements as such. Their protest is only against the rating of one form of improvement, which is of such a sort that only a public body like the Council is likely to make or to own it. "It's really good fun tying a kettle to a dog's tail," we can fancy them saying, "so long as it isn't our dog."

Their remark that "a complete change of rating practice is involved" is demonstrably silly. The present "practice" is to rate all improvements made in or on land. Those portions of their main sewers which come out to and above the surface in the low-lying districts to the East of London, are already rated. They state the fact, and make no protest against it. The House of Lords insists, with admirable logic, that sewers are sewers, and that if the part above the surface is rateable, the continuation under the surface is rateable also. That the Woolwich Union should rate the County Council's main sewers lying under its district does not involve a "complete change of rating policy." The Borough of Hackney and the London County Council rate a Council School belonging to the Middlesex County Council, because it lies just within the County of London. Various rating authorities levy rates upon the London County Council's great asylums which are dotted about the Home Counties; and so on. Schools and sewers are useful forms of improvement constructed in or on the land. But so are dwelling-houses and shops and factories. They should all be exempted from rating.

Moreover, the Council's Committee tells us,

a valuation and assessment of all underground sewers throughout the country will have to take place. A vast amount of work will be necessitated, and many very difficult questions will arise, the settlement of which will involve legal and other expenses to local authorities.

But this is true, and always has been true, of the whole business of assessing improvement values. Have the Council never heard of the numberless and costly legal adventures of the "hypothetical tenant"? Now we suppose he is to make a new underground excursion. How much per annum would he pay to "occupy" one of the Council's main sewers? "In the houses of the poor," wrote the schoolboy in a famous essay, "the drains are in a fearful state, and quite unfit for human habitation." Perhaps that is why the Council thinks it will be so difficult to assess them.

FRED. VERINDER.

"If a movement is really based upon a principle of right, upon a fundamental truth, nothing injures it. Its progress may be checked, but it cannot be permanently stayed. Its enemies aid it in the long run."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

"I am but an instrument, I am but an agent in promoting that greater love, that love of big things, that love of justice, which at last must win the world."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

SOCIAL PALLIATIVES.

AUSTRALIAN EXPERIMENTS.

BY MAX HIRSCH.

[This article was forwarded to Mr. R. L. Outhwaite by the writer not long before his lamented death, and is now published for the first time. Subsequently the officials of the New South Wales Miners' Association were sent to gaol for promoting a strike, and a Labour Government was returned to release them and restore the "right to strike." This illuminating statement by Max Hirsch has been justified by subsequent events.]

When a nation arrives at the stage in which the existence of social injustice forces itself upon general recognition and demands a remedy, the courage required to apply the only possible remedy is lacking. The removal of the causes which have produced social injustice is far too radical an undertaking to be adopted at once. Instead recourse is had to palliatives; to measures directed to remove one or the other symptom of the social disease which by its unsightliness is particularly offensive to the increasing susceptibility of the nation. The far-famed social legislation of Australia is mostly of this character. These new countries are experimental stations in social legislation, may in time experiment in radical reforms; but as yet their experiments are mere palliatives. Some no doubt achieve such success as mere palliatives can; others, and the greater number must, in the nature of the case, fail to achieve even their limited objects. Yet even so they are of value to the world, if only as warnings against diverting time and energy into channels that lead nowhere when they are so urgently wanted for those that lead out of bondage.

Judge's Help against Self-Help.

Of the latter kind is the much lauded legislation to secure a fair wage for workers. Two systems having this object in view have been developed in Australia. One is the Wages Board system prevailing as yet only in the State of Victoria, but which it is now proposed to adopt in New South Wales as well. The other, Compulsory Arbitration, originated in New Zealand, but was subsequently adopted, with variations, in Western Australia, New South Wales and, for disputes extending beyond the confines of one State, by the Australian Commonwealth. While these two systems differ in many respects, they have in common one fundamental feature. That is, they both ultimately substitute the verdict of a lawyer-judge for "collective bargaining." The law exacts of employers and employed alike, that they shall not fight each other, but that disputes as to wages and conditions of work shall be decided in Court, on such evidence as may be available and according to such principles as the law—interpreted by the judges—may direct. The Unions are to bury the sword which has served them during nigh a century, the strike, and are to rely upon legal argument to secure improvement of conditions. That the judges are human beings, with all the class bias of other human beings; that their training, moreover, must of necessity give greater weight to such bias in their mind than in that of other men, is disregarded. And this disregard is one of the main causes of the failure of both systems, a failure greater in the case of the Compulsory Arbitration Acts than in that of Wages Boards, precisely because every decision rests with a judge in the former system, while in the latter he acts merely as a Court of Appeal.

Compulsory Arbitration.

Scarcely a day passes without news being published, illustrating the unsatisfactory nature of this attempt to substitute the verdict of a Court, *i.e.*, of judges, for the efforts of Trades Unions to improve the condition of workers. To-day's papers, for instance, dealing with the strike of the Sydney wharf labourers, afford such an illustration. The working rates of wages in this trade were 1s. per hour for day labour and 1s. 6d. per hour for night work, when the Union applied to the Arbitration Court for an award to materially increase them.

The Court, however, while slightly increasing the day wages, *i.e.*, to 1s. 1½d. per hour, reduced the night wages to 1s. 4d. per hour, thus breaking through the long established practice of paying 50 per cent. more for night labour than for day labour. Naturally the men were indignant

and even most of the employers recognised the award as unsatisfactory. Conferences were held between the Union and the employers, and the great body of the latter, the owners of inter-state and of deep-sea steamers, agreed to pay 1s. 8d. per hour for night work, leaving the price of day-work as fixed by the Court. One section of the employers, however, the owners of coastal steamers trading between New South Wales ports, refused the concession on the ground, that as the men had applied to the Court they were bound by the verdict given. As the Union refused to be so bound, the employers engaged non-unionists, and have ever since carried on their business without employing a single unionist. In order to terminate this condition, the Unions, less than a week ago, declared a strike against the companies who pay the higher wages, in the hope that these would bring pressure to bear upon the coastal companies. This has failed; the only employers who have not suffered being those employing non-unionists, and after three days the strike has been declared off, and other means to coerce the coastal companies are to be tried.

On the same day on which this announcement appeared (March 16th) a similarly illustrative fact was reported from New Zealand. The Blackhall miners had gone on strike in spite of a decision of the Arbitration Court, alleging that the employers had broken the award by dismissing men and creating a lock-out. The matter was brought before the Court, both sides promising to accept its award. This award has now been given to the effect that the men's Union is the guilty party and fining it £75. The men now refuse to go to work, which in all probability will subject them to further fines.

The Landlord the Only Winner.

Not all the awards of the Arbitration Court are against the men. In fact, during a long period of advancing prosperity most of the awards of the New Zealand Court have been in the direction of raising wages. But now this has turned out to the disadvantage of the workers. For in order to contest the actions brought by the latter, the employers in every trade had to organise, and this organisation, combined with the policy of Protection, has enabled them to raise prices, not only in the same ratio as the Court raised wages, but to a much greater extent.

A most instructive report on this subject has been made officially by Mr. Edward Tregear, who, as Secretary for Labour, is charged with the administration of the Act. In it he states that the necessities of life and rent have advanced in price by more than the rise in wages amounts to, and that the class "who alone will rise a winner in the end" is "the non-producing landlord of city and suburban property." Very significant admissions these, from one who has been an ardent advocate of the Arbitration Act for years before it was enacted.

For these and other reasons too numerous to mention here, the workers have already lost faith in this kind of legislation. Thus the Sydney Labour Council, early last year, carried a resolution condemnatory of the Act, and the Government of New South Wales has just proposed a Bill to supersede the Arbitration Act by a Wages Board Act,

Wages Boards.

For the reasons given Wages Boards have not been such a conspicuous failure as the Arbitration Acts. They have undoubtedly raised wages in the sweated trades, mainly employing females. It is, however, doubtful whether the same or even a better result would not have been achieved without them. For their operation has coincided with a period of advancing prosperity, during which female labour has gradually become very scarce. For some years employers have been unable to obtain all the labour required. Every trade depending largely upon female labour is voicing this complaint, and a rise of female wages was therefore inevitable, Wages Boards or no Wages Boards. In other respects, however, the Boards have not been so satisfactory, mainly again because a lawyer-judge is the ultimate arbiter. The following cases will illustrate this phase of the subject.

In the middle of last year the employers of starch factories appealed to the Wages Board for higher wages. The Board being unable to come to a decision, the Chief Secretary referred the matter to the Industrial Court. The undisputed facts were that the wages in this trade were lower in Melbourne than in Sydney or Adelaide, and were disgracefully low in spite of enormous tariff

protection for the manufacturers. During the trial the employers offered an increase of 20 per cent. instead of the 60 per cent. increase demanded by the workers. The Court's decision was that the employers' offer be the award of the Court, on the ground that the employers could not afford to pay more, though the Court admitted the insufficiency of the wages thus decided upon.

Shortly afterwards the Bakers' Wages Board increased the wages of bakers from £2 10s. to £2 14s. per week on the ground that the cost of living had greatly increased, a fact not disputed. The employers appealed to the Industrial Court, which annulled the award of the Wages Board. The men thereupon declared a strike, and within a week every employer decided to pay the wages awarded by the Wages Board and refused by the Court.

Self-Help Prevailing.

The cases cited are only a few out of many. Where the Courts award an increase of wages the workers accept, and where they refuse an increase the workers fall back on their proved remedy, the strike, and defy the Court. As long as the country is increasing in prosperity and only the workers set the law in motion not much harm is done. But such times cannot last for ever. Presently times of depression will come and the employers will take a hand in the game by applying for reduction in wages. Everyone can see what the outcome will be. Reductions which would have been accepted as inevitable if they had been the outcome of free conferences between the two parties, will be violently resisted when imposed by judicial authority. Avoidable strife, deepening the depression and still further lowering wages, and a general weakening of Unionism must be the inevitable result. Australian experience has amply proved that not in this direction can the emancipation of the workers be found.

TO A PIECE OF COAL.

Bread of the furnace! baked in the ages;
Cooled in the hurricane's ancient might;
Bought with terror and death and wages,
Tears and the widow's plight!

Snatched from the gloom with stars unkindled,
Part of the childhood of the sun!
Fragment of all the aeons mingled,
Darkness and light in one!

Saw you the miner's lamp steal past you,
Stirring the sunblood of your veins
Into revolt that thundering cast you,
Free from his pigmy chains!

Heard you the song that left him dying,
Deep where the rainless water flows?
Watched you his lampless spirit flying
Down where the deathwind blows?

Into that under-night he sought you,
Out of the dripping murk of hell,
Out from the grip of death he brought you;
Lord! I would pay him well!

—JAS. BLACKHALL,
in the DAILY NEWS, 14th March.

A PROPOSED POLITICAL ECONOMY CLASS FOR LONDON.

Mr. Harry de Pass writes:—

It seems to me that in London we lack a band of enthusiastic young workers such as is to be found in Glasgow, Manchester, and other towns.

I would like to see 11, Tothill Street, made the headquarters of an army of keen, energetic and well-informed propagandists, and with this object in view I propose to hold a political economy class once a week to study the land question, provided I can obtain sufficient promises of regular attendance.

We have a comfortable room at our disposal and all the books required are available.

Will those who would care to join such a class in order to pursue their studies of political economy and social problems, kindly communicate with me?

HARRY DE PASS.

11, Tothill Street, Westminster

POLITICAL ECONOMY CLASSES.



WILLIAM REID.

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING LECTURE DELIVERED BY MR. REID AT LEEDS, HUDDERSFIELD, AND SHEFFIELD.

Thomas Carlyle called Political Economy the dismal science and not without reason. As taught in universities it had sheltered vested interests which every thoughtful man considered ought to be challenged. It was not like other sciences which set out without bias to discover what was true. Those who read the writings of its accredited authorities ought to keep an eye open for the bias of Political Economy as well as for its principles.

Some business men said they had put the so-called science up the chimney and had found it profitable to do so. If business men had little use for the principles of Political Economy as taught in schools, working men had still less interest in them. The professors of Political Economy could lecture working men on their thriftless and intemperate habits, but they could show them no cure for involuntary poverty.

The science was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. There were men who lived at the time of Adam Smith, such men as Thomas Paine, Thomas Spence, Robert Burns and Professor Ogilvie of King's College, Aberdeen, who tried to awaken the people as to the iniquity of our land laws. Such men had all been "snuffed out" by the people in authority. A gentleman in Edinburgh was banished from the country, his only known crime being that he possessed works by Thomas Paine and had attended meetings for the enfranchisement of the people. Burns in a song traced to the same date makes a "cryptic" reference to proud Edward's powers, although this monarch had gone to his account four centuries before then. Thomas Spence was kicked out of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society for an essay he read on the restoration of land a year prior to the publication of the WEALTH OF NATIONS. That was the time referred to by Charles Dickens as the period when timber was growing in northern latitudes that was destined to be used in the building of a guillotine. The first sect who tried to promote a science of Political Economy believed in free land and that taxes should be on land. Two gentlemen who had an opportunity of studying this

sect—the French Physiocrats—were Professors Adam Smith and William Ogilvie. Both were travelling companions to Dukes—the one to the Duke of Buccleuch and the other to the Duke of Gordon. Professor Ogilvie published an unaccepted essay on *PROPERTY IN LAND*, and Adam Smith published his *WEALTH OF NATIONS*. It looked as if Adam Smith had not said all he might have said, but it is quite clear from the fate of others that he would have found great difficulty in saying any more.

The points he left clear have since been obscured, and those he left dark have not been much improved on, more especially by his modern successors. There was a central truth in the doctrine of the Physiocrats, however crude their conception of it may have been. They believed that the production of wealth—sometimes, at least—yielded a surplus that in equity belonged to no individual. Later, Ricardo showed what this surplus was in his theory of rent. He discovered a Law of Rent without discovering a Law of Wages. Henry George in the closing years of the nineteenth century had developed and correlated these crude ideas, and it was to him we must go for light and leading on such questions.

As soon as an individual awakens to consciousness he realises that he wants to be fed and to be kept warm. He can do, if necessary, without books, pictures, musical instruments, jewellery and luxuries of every kind, but he has no choice in the matter of physical necessities. These must be found, and they consist—in our climate—of four things, namely food, clothing, fuel and shelter. Originally, people satisfy their wants by gathering freely. They have the fruits or roots of the earth for food, skins for clothing, branches for fuel, and caves and hollow trees for shelter. In civilisation all these things are got, not freely, but by permission. Not only do animals object to be taken, but there are owners of such animals who also raise objection. Caves and hollow trees are owned and there is hardly anything that can be had for the picking up.

The individual may learn from his own experience what he is permitted to do, but authoritative works on Political Economy pretend to teach him why he must act as he does.

The *WEALTH OF NATIONS* and subsequent works teach him that freedom is good if we want to produce much in the way of comforts. These works do not explain why the freedom to use all the resources of the earth is limited. The bias begins to act at this stage of the explanation, and a great many questions are left unanswered.

Adam Smith tells the story of a boy who had to open and shut a valve of an engine by hand power, and who tied a stick to a wheel and was able to get the valve to open and shut automatically. This boy was demonstrating the basic law of Political Economy—that man seeks to gratify his desires with the least possible energy. Such a law explains why some people evade labour and impose this labour on other people.

From the number of "buts" and "excepts" in authoritative writings one might gather that there were no invariable laws in Political Economy. Wealth is produced and distributed in accordance with Natural Law, but human arrangements by ignoring such laws can injure the interests of the community, just as surely as the person who ignores the law of gravitation will find that he cannot swim in air.

If Political Economy as taught had been a true science, it could have told and foretold many useful things. So far it has only been a matter of corrections and disputes.

The chemist can tell us that an insoluble compound will form where it can form. If we know the direction of a current of electricity over a piece of iron we can tell where each pole of the magnet will be. An astronomer can tell when there will be an eclipse, and probably an economist—if he were as free to state the truth—could tell the effect of a tariff, an Eight Hours Bill, or a tax on land values. Instead of attempting this they turn their science into a question of history in which there are often two sides. To such men Free Trade or Free Land may have been good at some place or in some time. You must take each case separately and examine it. We have tried by human laws to do certain things; we have tried to protect the farmer and failed. That is an illustration of a human law which did something

else than it was intended to do. Natural Laws do what they were intended to do, and men are poor because they do not pay attention to the Natural Laws which govern the distribution of wealth. The earth is the natural storehouse of all the raw materials of wealth and the doors should be kept open. Instead of that some of the doors are locked and double barred. When they had got the length of discussing the beginning and rise of rent they would see that a perfectly Natural Law had in conjunction with an unwise human arrangement brought trouble on the human race.

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES.

[Text Book: *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, by Henry George.]

I.—Introductory Lecture—The Scope of Political Economy.

The individual's awakening to his surroundings.

Physical wants call for satisfaction.

What is necessary to the satisfaction of physical wants?

How necessities are secured originally.

How the same necessities are secured in civilised society.

What the individual may learn from his own experience.

What is taught by books, such as *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*, and subsequent works on Political Economy.

Man seeks to gratify his desires with the least possible energy.

The distinction between Natural Laws and Human Laws.

Illustrations of Natural Laws.

Illustrations of Human Laws.

II.—Value.

Value in use.

Value in exchange.

What is called intrinsic value.

Real intrinsic value.

Adam Smith's discovery of the real basis of value.

Subsequent change of ground on the question of value.

Do things get value because they are exchanged, or are things exchanged because they have value?

Importance of the distinction.

WEALTH OF NATIONS, Chapter V., Book I, says "Labour therefore is the real measure of the exchangeable value of commodities."

How is this reconciled with the fact that certain articles cannot be produced?

Value from production.

Value from obligation.

III.—The Production of Wealth.

What is production?

What is wealth?

All wealth has value.

All that has value is not wealth.

Increase in wealth, not the same as increase in value.

Definitions of the terms—land, labour, and capital.

Land and labour essential to the production of wealth.

Capital helpful, but not essential.

IV.—Trade—Home and Foreign.

What is trade?

Is there any difference in principle between home and foreign trade?

In rude states of society goods are bartered.

In civilised society goods are bought and sold.

The values of different goods or services are not measured with each other, but with a common denominator called money.

Buying and selling is another form of barter.

How goods or services are paid for by goods or services in our home trade.

How goods and services are exchanged in our foreign trade.

Illustrations of completed transactions showing that goods pay for goods both in home and foreign trade.

V.—Distribution of Wealth.

"In that original state which precedes both the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock, the whole produce of labour belongs to the labourer."—*WEALTH OF NATIONS*, Chapter VIII., Book I.

In civilised Society wealth is divided into rent for land, interest on capital, and the wages of labour.

Definition of terms—rent, interest and wages.

No rent at the margin of cultivation. See Book of Genesis, chap. xiii.

Why rent is paid—The law of rent.

Why wages are affected by rent—The law of wages.

Why interest is paid on capital.

Different grades of labour and different degrees of wages, and the things which affect these.

VI.—Taxes and their effects on Production.

The State has to find revenue as well as the individuals in the State.

The Municipality has also to find revenue.

Revenues are got by taxing individuals, and from the profits of public works.

Direct and indirect taxation.

Taxes for revenue.

Taxes for protection.

The effect of taxes on trade—home and foreign.

VII.—Material Progress—The Industrial Revolution.

The effect of progress in conjunction with private property in land.

Want in the midst of plenty.

Evils which progress has not eliminated.

Problems intensified by increase in rent.

Fluctuations in trade, and some necessary causes.

Trade depression, and its unnecessary cause.

VIII.—Land Values Taxation.

The justice of land values taxation.

How land gets its value.

Why it increases in value.

Those who give it value, and those who appropriate the value.

The necessity for taxing land values.

The beneficent effect of taxing land values.

Reasons for relieving the products of industry from taxation.

Objections considered and answered.

NEW CAPITAL OF INDIA.

GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF LAND NEAR DELHI.

MARKET VALUE AND INCREMENT.

The announcement that Delhi would be the new capital of India had the effect of increasing the demand for the land in the vicinity and raising its value. Arising out of that, Mr. Wedgwood, M.P., put a question in the House of Commons on the 20th of February, as to what steps were being taken to secure the resulting increase of value for the benefit of the people of India. The following is from the official report of what passed :—

INDIA (REMOVAL OF CAPITAL TO DELHI).

Mr. Wedgwood asked whether the Under-Secretary of State for India can lay papers showing what steps the Government of India are taking to obtain for the people of India the increase in the value of land due to the change of the capital to Delhi, and to the erection of Behar into a Lieutenant-Governorship with a capital at Patna ?

Mr. Newman also asked whether, before the decision to remove the seat of Indian Government to Delhi was announced, steps had been taken to acquire at reasonable price such sites for the erection of Government offices as will be necessary, and to provide accommodation in adequate cantonments for the increased white population now obliged to reside in Delhi ; and whether, in the event of the answer being in the negative, it will be possible for the Government to obtain by compulsory method any sites which may have recently been acquired with a view to resale by native or other land speculators ?

The Under-Secretary for India (Mr. Montagu) : It was not practicable to acquire land for the new capital at Delhi in anticipation of the Durbar announcement ; but immediately after the announcement a notification under the Indian Land Acquisition Act was issued, notifying the intention of the Government to acquire compulsory lands to the aggregate amount of about 180 square miles in the vicinity of the present city of Delhi. The Act enables the State to purchase lands so notified at the price based on the market value at the date

of the notification, with reasonable compensation for severance and for compulsory dispossession ; but in settling the compensation the Courts may not take account of any prospective increase of value. In view of these provisions and of the large area notified for acquisition, the Indian Government hope to secure a substantial part of the increment value resulting from the transfer of the capital. Similar proceedings to acquire land for a Government House and for offices have been taken in the neighbourhood of Patna. There are no papers on the subject to present.

Mr. Wedgwood : May I ask whether the price of the land on the date of the declaration means before the declaration was made or immediately after, and whether anything is being done in a similar line at Patna ?

Mr. Montagu : The market value of the land means the value when the notification was made. I think it was made the same day as the announcement of Delhi.

Mr. Wedgwood : Does that mean before the change of circumstances arose or after ?

Mr. Montagu : It means on the same day or the day after the change of circumstances arose.

Mr. Newman : Can the right hon. Gentleman undertake that there shall be no extra expense in cost of living for those officials who are compelled to change their residence from Calcutta to Delhi ?

Mr. Montagu : The land has been acquired by the State at the value it had when the transfer was made, and therefore any increase in the value of the land will accrue to the State.

Marquess of Tullibardine : Does the Under-Secretary not think the Indian Government are quite capable of managing Indian affairs without any interference from here ?

Mr. Montagu : In such matters as this the Government of India had to obtain the sanction of the Secretary of State, as the noble Lord is well aware.

On the 6th March, Mr. Dundas White, M.P., put a further question to the Under-Secretary of State for India :—

INDIAN LAND ACQUISITION ACT.

Mr. Dundas White asked the Under-Secretary of State for India if he will grant a return setting out the provisions of the Indian Land Acquisition Act or Acts, and the terms of the notification recently issued thereunder in relation to the purchase of about 180 square miles of land in the neighbourhood of Delhi ?

Mr. Montagu : I propose to place a copy of the Indian Land Acquisition Act and of the PUNJAB GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 22nd December, 1911, containing the notification in question, in the library.

This was, of course, duly done, and we are now able to publish the material sections of the Act referred to, and the terms of notification made under it, which are as follows :—

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, 1894.

(ACT I. OF 1894).

PART II. ACQUISITION.

Declaration that Land is required for a public purpose.

6. (1) Subject to the provisions of Part VII. of this Act, whenever it appears to the Local Government that any particular land is needed for a public purpose, or for a Company, a declaration shall be made to that effect under the signature of a Secretary to such Government or of some officer duly authorised to certify its orders :

Provided that no such declaration shall be made unless the compensation to be awarded for such property is to be paid by a Company, or wholly or partly out of public revenues or some fund controlled or managed by a local authority.

(2) The declaration shall be published in the official GAZETTE, and shall state the district or other territorial division in which the land is situate, the purpose for which it is needed, its approximate area, and, where a plan shall have been made of the land, the place where such plan may be inspected.

(3) The said declaration shall be conclusive evidence that the land is needed for a public purpose or for a Company, as the case may be ; and, after making such declaration, the Local Government may acquire the land in manner hereinafter appearing.

After declaration, Collector to take order for acquisition.

7. Whenever any land shall have been so declared to be needed for a public purpose, or for a Company, the Local Government, or some officer authorised by the Local Government in this behalf, shall direct the Collector to take order for the acquisition of the land.

(These sections are followed by others with supplementary provisions.)

The notification under this Act was published in the PUNJAB GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 22nd December, 1911, and is as follows:—

*Department of Revenue and Agriculture.
General.*

The 21st December, 1911.

No. 775.—Notification—Whereas it appears to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and its dependencies that land is required by Government for a public purpose, namely, for the new capital of India at Delhi, it is hereby declared that the undermentioned land is required for the said purpose.

This declaration is made under the provisions of Section 6 of Act I. of 1894, and under Section 7 of the said Act the Collector of the Delhi district is hereby directed to take order for the acquisition of the said land.

(Here follows the Specification of the land in respect of which the Notification is given).

FOR STUDENTS AND OTHERS.

CAN WAGES BE RAISED BY "FORCE."

In the debate on the 15th February in the House of Commons on the Labour Party Amendment to the Address in reply to the King's Speech, Sir Frederick Banbury said:—

The strike in Liverpool raised the wages of the seamen and dockers, and of all people connected with transport and the docks. The consequence of that was that freights were raised and the consumers had to pay an increased price. That will always follow. If you raise wages artificially, by force, you are bound to raise the costs of what those wages produce, and the result of course will be that the consuming classes will have to pay more than they had to pay before the rise in wages and consequently no one is benefited.

In last month's issue we printed the above and invited correspondence on it. The following replies have been received:—

(To the Editor, LAND VALUES.)

SIR,—Sir Frederick Banbury's statement contains so many half-truths and fallacious conclusions that adequately to unravel them all would involve the writing of an elementary text-book of Political Economy. Some light on them, however, may be thrown by the following considerations.

If all the wealth produced by the community were distributed as "wages" amongst those whose brains, muscles and enterprise contribute to the necessary work—the workers—then it would be true that any increase in the "wages" of one section of the workers would necessarily have to be found out of the portion accruing to the rest. To-day, however, this wealth is not thus distributed. Many have special legal claims upon it who in no way contribute to the necessary labour. Hence the wages of any section of the workers, or of the whole of them, might be increased to the full amount to-day taken by these latter privileged classes without the wages of any other of the workers being in any way reduced, or the price of the things they consumed being necessarily increased.

The following well-known passages from Adam Smith's WEALTH OF NATIONS have a direct bearing on the questions raised by Sir Frederick Banbury:—

The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessities and conveniences of life, which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that

labour, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations.

The produce of labour constitutes the natural recompense or wages of labour. . . . As soon as land becomes private property, the landlord demands a share of almost all the produce which the labourer can either raise or collect from it. His rent makes the first deduction from the produce of the labour which is employed upon land.

As all human labour is necessarily employed upon land, the landlord's rent "makes the first deduction from the produce" of all labour. And, manifestly, the full amount of such deductions could be restored to the labourers, and "wages" be increased by this amount, without involving any increase in the cost of production or involving any rise in prices.

So much for the general principles underlying Sir Frederick's conclusions. Let me now briefly examine the conclusions themselves. He tells us that "the strike in Liverpool raised the wages of all people connected with transport and the docks"; and that the consequence of that was (A) "that freights were raised." Well, they may have been; and so they might have been had no such strike taken place. For, as Sir Frederick and all others who have ever shipped goods know well enough, the freights obtainable do not depend upon the wishes or demands of shipowners, nor upon the wages they have to pay to their "hands," but upon a thousand different circumstances, the relative supply of ships and of goods that are ready for shipment, amongst others. He continues—(B) "and the consumers had to pay an increased price." An increased price? What for? For the freight, or for the goods shipped as freight? The former I have shown to be questionable; the latter is still more questionable. For the value or price of any goods, of any staple product, does not depend upon the cost of producing it and placing it on the market by the best means and from the best sources of supply, but upon its cost of production by the worst means and from the poorest sources to which the demand of the market necessitate the community to have recourse. Thus, the price or value of coal or of corn does not depend upon its cost of production from the best mine or the most fertile land, but upon its cost from the poorest or worst situated mine, or the poorest or worst situated land, to which the community has to have recourse. Hence, when the consumer buys a ton of coal or a sack of wheat, the price he has to pay is not necessarily all payment to the workers, agriculturists, seamen, dockers, &c., who have contributed towards its production; some of it goes to pay rent to those owning or controlling the use of the better mines or the most fertile land, and of land specially suitable for railways, docks, and so on. All of which latter could be absorbed for public purposes, or for the benefit of the workers, without increasing by a single fraction the price they would have to pay for any commodity. The price of all commodities would be kept at their natural or economic level, temporarily affected by supply and demand; and the price, wages or earnings of labour would be kept at its natural level. And thus Adam Smith's ideal would be reached, and the labourers secured "the full natural recompense or wages of labour," viz., the produce of their labour.

To my mind, strikes are better than dumb acquiescence in the lot to which the present system of land tenure and taxation condemn the labouring classes. Of course, the far better method would be an organised movement to alter the present system of land tenure and taxation, so as to secure equal opportunities to all, favours to none. And to-day there are abundant signs that such a movement cannot long be delayed.—Yours, &c.,

8, Dawson Place,
London, W.

LEWIS H. BERENS.

(To the Editor, LAND VALUES.)

DEAR SIR,—

As invited, I beg to contribute as a student of Economics an answer to the question put forward in your March number of LAND VALUES.

If the suggestion that wages could be raised by force was a true one, we should, I think, find the condition of the masses at the present day materially better. Economically we know a strike or other forceable methods cannot

permanently effect a rise in wages, because, where the supply of labour is so conditioned that there is an overflow of workers as compared with employers the result in a rise of any particular branch has the effect of causing outside competition from that class which is unemployed, as well as from classes of labour which work for a less wage.

When any one particular branch of labour does artificially raise its wages, it necessarily follows that the cost of production of the materials which pass through its hands are increased. This rise in the price of the goods to the consumer consequently lessens his purchasing power in the same proportion. In lessening the purchasing power of the consumer you ultimately lessen production, because as trade is only the exchange of commodities, by lessening the production of one class you consequently lessen the production of all other classes.

The only permanent method of raising the condition of the masses through an increase in wages is not by making the cost of the production of wealth greater, but by making it cheaper. To do this we must first have greater access to that factor of production which is essential to both capital and labour, namely, the land. To make land more accessible to labour and capital we must so arrange to make the withholding of land out of use unprofitable. To bring this about we have simply to relieve labour, industry, and thrift from the fetters which now limit them. These fetters are the taxation imposed, and we must put this taxation upon the unimproved value of the land, which value essentially belongs to the state, being created by the industry and growth of the community.

We would thus, by making the retention of unused land unprofitable, cause more land to be put into use, giving more scope for the use of capital and the employment of labour. The production of wealth would be greatly increased, commodities become cheaper, less unemployment caused by greater opportunities to work, and a decrease in rents caused by the greater competition between landowners to have their land put to use.

A greater prosperity of the community would thus be attained, labour able to demand its just reward in proportion to production, the lot of the general consumer become better on account of the decrease in the cost of living.

Yours truly,

M. WARRINER, JUN.

7, Avenue Elmers, Surbiton, Surrey.

(To the Editor, LAND VALUES.)

SIR,—

The statement which you quote from Sir F. Banbury and on which you invite comment amounts to the assertion that it is impossible for a real rise in wages to take place because such rise will always be neutralised by increased cost of goods. On the face of it there seems something wrong here. Take the miners who are now on strike for higher wage. The mining industry pays toll of £6,000,000 annually to royalty owners. In return for this £6,000,000 no service is performed. Supposing now, this fund were drawn on to satisfy the demands of the miners. Clearly a rise in wage would then occur without adding to the price of coal.

Go a step further and remit the miners' breakfast-table taxes by another dig at this £6,000,000, and wages would rise again.

Now apply this principle to all other industries, *i.e.*, let increased wages be paid out of ground rents (whether ground rents in towns or ground rents in the country) and a general rise in wages will result. Simply draw on ground rents for the difference. The Taxation of Land Values will do it, and that is the answer to the riddle. This plan of action would tend to raise wages in yet another way, because labour would become more productive, so that there would exist a greater fund from which labour would be paid. The stimulating effect of the tax in forcing all land to its most productive use would mean the calling into being of wealth which is not now produced, owing to the restrictive effect of present land laws.

Thus wages would rise without causing increased prices, because :—

(A) There would be more to share out, and (B) the parasite who now shares with the producer in the present restricted production would be gone.—Yours truly,

W. R. LESTER.

Clifton Lodge, Biggleswade, Beds.

To the Editor, LAND VALUES.

SIR,—As it seems to me, Sir Frederick Banbury's contention practically amounts to the assertion that you cannot "raise wages artificially, by force," of any one group of workers save at the expense of the rest of the workers. And this would undoubtedly be true if the full fruits of the toil of the workers of the community were without deduction of any kind distributed amongst them. As everybody knows, however, this is not the case yet; as an ever-increasing portion and proportion of these results is to-day legally claimed by those who do not necessarily take any part in the co-operative labour. Hence it is that any increase in the wages of any one group of workers may be secured *either* at the expense of the rest of the workers, in increased prices, *or* at the expense of the non-workers to-day claiming a share of the wealth produced without taking any part in the necessary work. In other words, if all "consumers" were necessarily "producers," or engaged in rendering services to producers, Sir Frederick Banbury's contentions would be necessarily true. But as to-day some are permitted to consume without producing anything, it is not necessarily true; since the share accruing to these people may thereby be reduced, and correspondingly the share of the workers increased.

The market, from which we all draw such supplies of the necessities and conveniences of life as we can command, may be likened to a huge reservoir, which the labour of the community is employed keeping filled by the best means and from such natural sources as are available to its activities. Day and night the creaking of the pumps may be heard, keeping the reservoir supplied with all sorts of commodities and in every stage of production, according to "the demands of the market." Day by day some may be seen sinking exhausted, dying from nervous strain and overwork, whilst others are perishing from lack of work, or rather from lack of the good things with which the reservoir is abundantly supplied, but from which the great body of the workers can only draw when at work. Strange to say, however, neither all the natural sources are in use, nor are all the workers, capable, ready and willing to work, fully and constantly employed.

It is the command of these sources by others, which enslaves and impoverishes labour; it is the command of these sources by others than the workers, which produces poverty in the midst of plenty; it is the command of these sources by others, which prevent the workers enjoying the full fruits of their own activities, and from replenishing the reservoir with more than enough to satisfy the legitimate demands of all. The Taxation of Land Values will set free these sources of wealth, fill the reservoir to the brim and raise wages to the point of full earnings.

Yours, &c.,

A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

The following is taken from the House of Commons Debate on Sir A. Griffith Boscawen's Housing of the Working Classes Bill (15th March):—

VISCOUNT WOLMER: The unrating of houses or the rating of land. I do not know whether the hon. Member (Mr. Wedgwood) makes himself responsible for a leaflet issued by the Midland Land Values League. If he does, and if he believes what that leaflet states, I can quite understand why he thinks that his is the better alternative. I will read out a few of the hundred reasons put forward by that league. The first is that :—

It will encourage art.

Then :—

Diminish accidents to workmen, lessen bankruptcy, make wages genuine, abolish child labour, abolish food adulteration, diminish gambling, stop street noises, no worry.

If the hon. Members for Pontefract and Newcastle-under-Lyme really believe that by unrating houses or rating land, whichever they choose to call it, they will produce the millennium, then all we can say is the sooner they set to work the better.

HERE AND THERE.

"I will never put on my coat until this great question, the Rating of Land Values, is settled."—THE LORD ADVOCATE at Portsmouth, 18th March.

* * *

Lewisham guardians have been asked by a ratepayer to build him a cottage out of the rates received from him during many years. He sent them plans, which included a fountain in the garden.—THE PEOPLE, 17th March.

* * *

The inspiring news of the work being done in Yorkshire reported in this issue is a triumphant vindication of the opening of the Leeds office 15 months ago, and justifies fully the removal of William Reid to that part of the vineyard. In all this good work, with more to follow, we cordially pass a vote of confidence and warmest congratulations to our co-workers, Charles H. Smithson and Fred Skirrow. As the Chairman and as the Secretary of the Yorkshire League, which positions they hold by the right of long years service, and by the esteem and confidence of their fellow workers, they have been more than successful. Our ideas and our practical policy now hold an abiding and an enduring place in the public life of Yorkshire. This is recognised by friend and foe alike, and it is mainly due to the untiring efforts and brilliant leadership of our well esteemed and faithful colleagues. Years ago they fought single handed and alone; to-day they have their reward in a growing movement which is not slowly altering the political outlook in the direction of their ideal. Yesterday they stood alone; to-day they are surrounded by scores of interested and informed co-workers, while each day brings fresh recruits inspired with the knowledge and enthusiasm that counts in our fight for industrial freedom.

* * *

The Right Hon. T. M'Kinnon Wood, M.P., Secretary for Scotland, has appointed Mr. J. Dundas White, M.P., to be his Parliamentary Private Secretary (unpaid).

* * *

Among the events and good news chronicled in this issue we direct attention to Councillor Wm. D. Hamilton's Motor Van Crusade. Mr. Hamilton is out for the full gospel, which will be preached from his van apart from party politics, or any other like consideration. He is in earnest and profoundly believes that in this way he can best do his share of the work. We heartily wish him well in this venture, and would suggest to all who approve that it costs money for upkeep, repairs, petrol, &c. Mr. Hamilton asks for no help that can be otherwise used or is being used to advance the movement; but his outfit has been to him no small sacrifice, and we feel sure he would welcome a friendly and helping hand to keep his "Institute" on wheels.

* * *

Mr. Joseph Fels recently posted a copy of PROGRESS AND POVERTY (Dent's Everyman's Library Edition, 1s.) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and received the following acknowledgment:—

Lambeth Palace, S.E.
February 22nd, 1912.

My dear Sir,

The Archbishop of Canterbury bids me thank you for your letter of February 13th, and the copy of Henry George's PROGRESS AND POVERTY which you sent him. He is glad to have in such a handy form a book with which he has long been acquainted, and of which he has a well-thumbed copy on his shelves.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

J. V. MACMILLAN
(Chaplain).

* * *

Speaking at the Surveyors' Institution on 11th March, during the continued debate on Mr. Savill's paper on the Single Tax, Mr. Trustram Eve said, according to the ESTATES

GAZETTE of 16th March, that he went to the United Committee offices, and he spent a little money on their leaflets—in fact, there was more literature to be got at the offices for 5s. than at any other place in London. One pamphlet took his fancy. It was "100 Reasons for Taxing Land Values." He would only read a portion of the table of contents, which included "Accidents to Workers" diminished, "Antiquarian Remains" preserved, "Art" encouraged, "Bankruptcies" lessened, "Charities" made genuine, "Church Disestablishment" if desired, "Factory Acts" unnecessary, "Gambling" diminished, "Insanity" diminished, and numerous other reasons.

* * *

Some 4,600 members of the Surveyors' Institution had posted to them last month a copy of the March issue of LAND VALUES, other explanatory literature, and an invitation to become a regular subscriber. A Yorkshire correspondent writes, March 17th: "A member of the Surveyors' Institution was complimenting our headquarters (the United Committee) to-day on the smart activity displayed in sending out so promptly our literature in reply to the paper read before their Society last month."

* * *

At a meeting of the Wigan Borough Council, reported in the WIGAN OBSERVER of 9th March, it was stated that the Finance Committee had practically carried a resolution supporting the Glasgow Town Council's petition to Parliament for powers for local authorities to rate land values, when "suddenly a member of the committee asked what it would cost them." The Town Clerk replied that it would cost a guinea, whereupon an amendment was moved, seconded, and carried that no action be taken. The Council decided to refer the matter back for further consideration. If the Manchester Land Values League happen to be in funds we hope they will send on that guinea. It may help to soften the hard hearts of the Council who regard the price too big to pay for a change in the system of rating that would put the Wigan people in possession of their own publicly earned values.

* * *

When the State abolishes the privilege of private taxation the demand for labour will become greater than the supply, and wage earners will be in a position to bargain efficiently without organisation. Those who now enjoy the privilege will cry "Confiscation," but the Act would be one of restitution.

Let us carry our respect for property rights to its logical conclusion and restore to society the property in land values which it creates. No amount of legal subtlety can excuse the continuance of enactments which deny the equal rights of all men to the bounties of nature.—F. W. GARRISON in the DAILY NEWS, 20th March.

* * *

The root remedy for the conditions worse than slavery now existing in village or town slums is not the provision of shelters for the slaves, but setting the slaves at liberty. Take off the enormous taxes on all homes, and capital will soon be attracted back to so natural and (if freed) stable a security as homes for a free people.—From a letter by "Builder" to the NATION of 24th February.

* * *

According to the PORTSMOUTH EVENING NEWS of 8th March, marked improvements have been effected at the new Hilsea allotment grounds. A sum of nearly £200 has been spent in drainage, &c., incidentally giving work to the unemployed, and by the filling in of a long ditch and some low-lying land four acres have been added for public use. The War Department are so appreciative of the way the Corporation has improved their land at Hilsea that they want to raise the rent £7 for 24 acres!

* * *

"I come to tell you," said a city tenant to his landlord, "that my cellar is full of water." "Well," responded the landlord indignantly, "what do you expect to get for £2 a month—a cellar full of beer?"—FRASERBURGH ADVERTISER.

RURAL NEWS.

See yonder poor, o'er-laboured wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil.

And see his lordly fellow worm
The poor petition spurn
Unmindful though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm designed yon lordling's slave
By Nature's law designed,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?

If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn,
Oh, why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

—Robert Burns.

This month we are devoting eight pages in *LAND VALUES* to our rural campaign, which will be published separately for circulation in Wiltshire and other country districts. From the reports furnished by Miss Ponking and Mr. R. C. Orr, it will be seen that the campaign proceeds encouragingly. The Coal Strike with all its unhappy attendant evils, the unfavourable weather and the activities of the Insurance Act lecturers, have all been in the way of our missionaries, but notwithstanding these obstacles, which we trust will soon pass out of sight, the reports we publish indicate an open and developing field for our good news. The rural people are not just so simple as some folk would lead us to believe, nor are they slow to reason out the case for themselves. They know they are already on the land, but in a poor way. They want better conditions and they know by experience and by the very nature of their employment that only cruel land laws stand between them and freedom from the slavery they now so patiently endure. The land they know is their natural employer. There is no complicated "capitalistic system," as in the towns, obscuring their vision of what the Land Question means to them.

The idle acres everywhere around speak to them daily of what might be done, of the wages unearned that might be earned, and of ideal housing conditions. The dream of the rural labourer is to marry his labour in freedom to the land, and he looks forward to the realisation of this dream. After all he asks for little—only the use of a patch of ground and a home worth calling his own. With these his independence is assured, without these life to him must remain what it is—a dull, dreary and hopeless thing. These idle acres are crying to the labourers to come and till them. They will surely not cry for ever in vain. Our explanatory literature is abroad in the land. It is being distributed from door to door and many "conversations" are taking place in the humble homes of Wiltshire, and in the near future we shall have with us a band of informed men and women who will themselves make our proposals plain to their neighbours. Meanwhile we proceed with confidence and hope in our rural campaign. Taxation of Land Values means idle acres for willing hands!

CRUSADERS WANTED.

A Petition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the following terms is now available for signatures by all who believe in the Taxation of Land Values and the untaxing of industry as a means of overthrowing the monopoly in land, widening the field for employment, raising wages, and providing the natural means to decent housing accommodation.

PETITION TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

The Petition of the undersigned adult residents of Wiltshire respectfully sheweth:—

(1) That the condition of those who labour upon the soil of Wiltshire stands in urgent need of improvement. The wage of the agricultural labourer is a miserable pittance. His home is often a hovel, and even such is hard to obtain. Nor has the labourer a chance to rise by obtaining land on reasonable terms. These conditions are the result of the land being monopolised and withheld from full use; the Landowners' Return of 1873 showed that 44 proprietors held 465,601 acres or over half the county.

(2) That in the towns of Wiltshire wages are low as the result of the people being driven from the villages to compete for work in such centres; the Census of 1901 showed that during the previous ten years 20,000 people had migrated from the rural districts of the county.

(3) That the rates as at present assessed bear heavily on tradespeople, on smallholders and market gardeners, and on all who put land to its best use, thus discouraging the use of land and encouraging its withdrawal from labour, thereby causing unemployment and low wages.

(4) That taxes on necessities such as tea and sugar, and rates levied on buildings, fall severely and unfairly upon all workers.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that you will be pleased to—

(1) Levy such a tax upon the value of all land whether in town or country as will compel its full use, so that a demand for labour may be created that will ensure a just wage to both town and rural workers;

(2) Apply the money raised by that tax to take the place of the tea and sugar duties which press so heavily on the poor, and to reduce the rates for education, poor relief, main roads, police and asylums, which as now assessed are a burden and penalty on industry.

Your Petitioners know that a tax on land values cannot be a tax on agriculture or any industry. Such a tax would fall upon what the Prime Minister has called "the communal value" of land, and we welcome his statement that "he regarded this question as of great importance both in its urban and in its rural aspects, although, in his opinion, the rural aspect was more urgent at the present time."

Furthermore your Petitioners pray that you may be pleased to come to Swindon to receive their Petition and reply to those who look to you to uphold the rights of the people against monopoly and privilege.

SPADE WORK IN WILTSHIRE.

During the month Mr. R. C. Orr and Miss Ponking have been doing successful spade work in Chippenham Division. On the 20th, Mr. R. C. Orr and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite spoke at Chippenham to an enthusiastic gathering.

The rating question intimately concerns Chippenham, the rates being 8s. in the £. The rating area is 300 acres, of which 150 acres escape as "agricultural" land. A select site of an acre recently sold for over £7,000. The following resolution was carried with two dissentients:—

This meeting fully sympathises with those industrial workers who are endeavouring to get a fair return for their labour and considers that steps should be taken to secure a higher wage for rural workers, and is of opinion that an effective means is to be found in the Taxation of Land Values, which by forcing land into use will create such a demand for labour as will enable the worker to obtain a just reward. Furthermore this meeting is of opinion that the proper method to improve rural housing conditions is to raise wages by freeing the land.

The ground has now been prepared in the Cricklade and Chippenham Divisions of Wiltshire for a project designed to enable the workers to bring home to the Government their views on the Land Question, and next month will be devoted to launching it.

REPORT BY MISS PONKING.

Miss D. T. Ponking, who is co-operating with Mr. R. L. Outhwaite and Mr. Robert C. Orr in the propaganda campaign being carried out by the United Committee in Wiltshire, sends us the following report of her activities during the six weeks, February 6th to March 16th, in the Chippenham Division:—

It is a little difficult to judge the amount of interest taken in our question. There is a general feeling of discontent at the low wages and high rents and rates in the villages, but this is the first the people have heard of the Taxation of Land Values as a remedy. Sometimes one comes across a man who seems to grasp the subject fairly well, and I think the leaflets are read generally with interest.

I have visited in the villages of Heddington, Calstone, and Blacklands near Calne; in Sherstone near Malmesbury, and in Derryhill and Pewsham near Chippenham.

In Heddington, Calstone, and Blacklands I have visited about 98 houses; in Sherstone 14 houses, and in Derryhill and Pewsham, where I am now at work, I have made up to the present about 17 visits.

The people visited are chiefly agricultural labourers, whose wages are about 12s. to 14s. per week and who pay rents varying up to 2s. 6d. per week, and small farmers. Many of the labourers rent allotments at 15s. per year per quarter of an acre. The usual complaint of the small farmers is that they have to pay rents of 50s. to 60s. per acre while land is let to the large farmers for 30s. and less.

On my first visit I bring usually leaflets Nos. 51 and 7: "A question for the Agricultural Labourer" and "Land Values Taxation: How it will help the Cottager and Smallholder," which I sometimes read and explain. On my second visit leaflets 64 and 50: "A.B.C. of Land Values Taxation," and "Why Work is scarce and How to Mend Matters," and afterwards "The Memorial," "A Message to the Rural Districts," "Rural Land Reform," and "What the Working People Want," according to the needs and intelligence of the people concerned.

Prior to the meeting in Calne I called on about 20 persons and left a copy of LAND VALUES or the pamphlet "Rural Land Reform." I made arrangements with the Women's Liberal Association by which their members distributed 500 copies each of leaflets 50 and 63: "Why Work is scarce, &c.," and "To all employed in the Building Trade." A good number of my villagers came to this meeting, in some cases walking two or three miles in order to be present. They have since asked me several times where the next meeting will be.

I also got persons whom I had visited to distribute notices of the meeting, and leaflets No. 7, "Land Values

Taxation, &c.," or No. 64, "A.B.C. of Land Values Taxation," in each of the following villages: Bremhill, Hilmarton, Derryhill, Cherhill, Compton Bassett, and Charlcote, in connection with the Calne meeting.

So far I have got four persons to subscribe to LAND VALUES, paying up their subscription for one year. If the paper were more suitable to the village people, simpler and containing news or a message dealing with their desire to obtain land on fair terms, good wages, and decent cottages, it would be easier to increase its circulation, and one could at the same time urge the people to read it with more confidence. But in its present form there is nothing in it which is really suitable for the country districts and for people who are only beginning to understand what the Taxation of Land Values means.

The housing conditions in Melksham are said to be very unsatisfactory. A number of men have come to work at the Rubber Works there during the last few years, and it is said two or three hundred cottages are badly needed. I frequently come across people living in the villages several miles away who have to walk or bicycle into Melksham to their work. In one case a man was living at Heddington and had to ride nearly six miles to his work. Last year he became ill, and since then he has been forced to take lodgings in the town during the week, in order to avoid the morning and evening journey. He has now been able to get a cottage at Seend, a village about two miles away from Melksham. His wages are about 18s. a week, the only cottages available in Melksham had rents of 6s. or 7s. a week, which he could not afford to pay.

Some 500 notices of meeting and leaflet No. 62 "How to raise Wages without Strikes," have been distributed by members of the Women's Liberal Association in connection with the meeting held in Chippenham on March 20th.

REPORT BY ROBERT C. ORR.

Mr. R. C. Orr writes of the month's work as follows:—

Continuing the rural campaign in the North-West Wilts Division, meetings were held at Colerne, Lacock, Calne, Conston, Christian Malford, Sutton and Chippenham.

At Lacock we had a very good meeting, the audience following the speeches right to the end, and not one of them leaving before ten o'clock, although we started at twenty minutes to eight. The questions were interesting, ranging round Form IV., Shifting the Tax, Valuation and Mining Royalties. Literature was distributed and six of the younger men gave us their names and addresses, promising to help us in our work by distributing literature or getting up meetings later.

At Calne we had a largely attended meeting in the town hall, over which Mr. J. H. Lee presided. Mr. Outhwaite's address was followed by a keenness and enthusiasm rarely found in rural districts, many among the audience having walked ten and twelve miles to attend the meeting. Their interest and intelligent grasp of the various aspects of the land question was largely due to the good work put in by Miss Ponking in calling upon the people in their homes, with our literature, and explaining to them the Taxation of Land Values, and how the reform would affect them as workers on the land.

The Christian Malford meeting was rather small, owing unfortunately to the very bad weather, but under the circumstances the attendance was very good. We had no questions, but Mr. Outhwaite got a very hearty invitation to return later to speak to an open-air meeting, which he has accepted.

The Chippenham meeting held in the Temperance Hall was not so largely attended as it should have been, but whatever it lacked in numbers was more than made up for by the interest and delight of the audience with Mr. Outhwaite's speech, in which he dealt very fully with the coal strike, labour unrest, housing and low wages. He used very effectively local illustrations of the burdens imposed by land monopoly with rates in Chippenham at 8s. in the £, and only half of the land within the burgh built upon, the other half rated as agricultural land.

Councillor A. J. Townsend, who presided, supported Mr. Outhwaite heartily, and gave some of his own experiences in trying to extend his business and make improvements. He had bought a small property a few years ago rated at £6 per annum. He had spent £260 on improvements, and when finished he was immediately rated at £28 per annum.

The village meetings were well attended, and although questions were not very numerous put to the speakers, the great majority were very anxious to get our literature, and in many cases we were asked for an extra supply so that they could be handed round to their friends and neighbours who were unable to be present.

The pamphlets which are most appreciated are "How to Reduce," "What the Working People Want," and "Rural Land Reform."

The Insurance Act meetings and canvassers have made our arrangements more difficult to carry out this month, but as they are almost finished we will soon get ahead more quickly and more satisfactorily with the work.

Two dinner-hour meetings have been arranged for at Melksham, where the housing question and rating is a burning issue. There is likely to be an election for the rural district council shortly, and an evening meeting will be fixed later.

The campaign so far has been a good piece of spade work. It has opened the eyes of many who have been entirely in the dark about Land Values Taxation. Men meet me in the street and say with sincerity and feeling how they are indebted to us for what we are doing. Some are enthusiastic, some are reading the leaflets and talking about them one to the other.

What has amazed me more particularly is the number of ordinary active politicians who thought that our proposals were for the bigger towns where the land is sold at half a million or more pounds an acre. I reply that our reform is for the rural districts as well, and ask them to read our literature and come to our meetings. Mr. Outhwaite is now a recognised authority in Wilts. Miss Ponking's house-to-house visitation with the leaflets is encouraging and helpful. I attach very much importance to her duties. She makes friends, and at first hand meets and answers all sorts of questions, which many shy ones will not ask at a meeting. We cannot have too much of such door-to-door mission work.

On the whole we have made a fairly good beginning. We have met with a friendliness and spirit of inquiry that makes the work interesting. This rural district has been neglected by land reformers. I daresay it does not stand alone in that respect; but it is something to know that our plan of reform can appeal to country people, and to find how willingly they listen and help in the crusade. A great number of new friends are eagerly looking forward to the open-air meetings when the good weather sets in.

THE LIBERTY SONG.

(To the tune of "Clementine.")

Friends of Freedom! Friends of Freedom!
Once again in battle stand!
See the sword of Justice pointing
To the Value of the Land!

Chorus:—

We demand it! We demand it!
'Tis our birthright fair and free,
We will shatter ev'ry fetter;
Give us Land and Liberty!

We have made the desert blossom
By the labour of our hand;
But the landlord reaps the harvest
In the Value of the Land.

Chorus:—We demand it! We demand it! etc.

They who toil not, but are idle
In their mansions old and grand,
Shall not live in ease for ever,
On the Value of the Land.

Chorus:—We demand it! We demand it! etc.

Through the ages, by our fathers
Were the fires of freedom fann'd.
They will light us while we struggle,
For the Value of the Land.

Chorus:—We demand it! We demand it! etc.

Friends of Freedom! Friends of Freedom!
Build no longer on the sand,
For the honour of your manhood,
Tax the Value of the Land.

Chorus:—We demand it! We demand it! etc.

—DOUGLAS P. BOATMAN.

NO ROOM TO LIVE.

Under the heading "No Room to Live," Mr. Charles Roden Buxton has a characteristic article on the Rural Housing Problem, in THE DAILY NEWS (March 14th, 1912). He informs his readers that "under the Small Holdings Act more new houses have been provided in three years than have been provided under the Housing Act in twenty-one years." "This proves," he contends, "that the housing question is largely dependent upon access to land." Wonderful new discovery! "The fundamental difficulty," however, he finds in the assumed fact that "cottage building does not pay." "I have already shown," he says in a most revealing passage, "that this is not universally true, even for local authorities, still less is it true for landlords or farmers, because the money they spend upon cottages brings its return indirectly, by keeping the labourer on the land, and enabling them (landlords and farmers) to pay lower wages than would otherwise be necessary." (Italics are ours.) In other words, the money spent upon cottages will enable farmers and landlords to get their work done at a lower cost in wages than would otherwise be necessary; and so the benefit of the expenditure would accrue to them, not to the labourers. Mr. Buxton continues:—"Still the fact remains that with the present rate of wages the labourers of southern and central England cannot as a rule pay a rent which will recoup a local authority or an independent builder for the capital outlay."

He goes on wisely and truly to say that:—"There is one ultimate remedy for this—an increase in wages." A pity that Mr. Buxton, here or elsewhere, does not tell us how such an increase can be secured, not only to agricultural but to all other workers—say, by making the use of land, for farming, small holdings or cottages, more available and at cheaper rates. He does not seem yet to have grasped the fact that, other things being equal, it is the rent or price of land which determines the wages of those who put it to use—low rent, high wages; high rent, low wages. However, he continues: "Pay a decent wage, and demand a decent rent—that should be our motto. And very soon there would be no housing problem left."

Brave words! though we do not know who the "our" refers to. Our motto is—secure the workers their full wage, and very soon there will be no poverty problem left. However, for some reason or other, Mr. Buxton seems to think that the payment of "a decent wage," to say nothing of "a full wage," is not to be hoped for yet awhile. Hence he contends that "we must seek for more immediate, though less logical, remedies." And so he urges a demand for a State Grant, to be administered by another new Board, a Housing Board. In other words, another sop to the landlords. For, as Mr. Buxton has himself shown in the self-same article, "the money spent upon cottages [whether State Money, Local Authorities' Money, or the Landlord's Money] brings its return indirectly, by keeping the labourer on the land, and enabling landlords or farmers to pay lower wages than would otherwise be necessary."

Mr. Buxton is evidently a young man in a hurry, who thinks that even though we cannot do the right thing, we ought to be doing something, even though the something only amounts to demanding alms and doles for the benefit of landlords, farmers, and other such deserving people. However, we quite agree with him that—"The improvement of rural housing cannot wait. The cost we pay in discomfort, debility, disease, death, and depopulation is incalculable. Nor is the question one that concerns particular districts and parishes only. It concerns the nation, and the nation must take it in hand." The nation will one of these days. It will, when it realises that the Housing Problem in both town and country is but a phase or symptom of the Poverty Problem, which is not to be

cured by alms and doles, but only by basing its system of land-tenure and of taxation upon the sound bed-rock of social justice.

HOUSING AND LOW WAGES.

The following letter appeared in the DAILY NEWS of 21st March:—

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Outhwaite's letter in the DAILY NEWS on Saturday, I should like to point out that uneconomic rents do not necessarily mean lower wages. In Ireland since the building of State-aided labourers' cottages in 1889 wages have risen 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. (so I was recently informed by an official of the Department). Moreover, if in England an agricultural labourer is housed in a cottage not owned by his farmer-employer, he will be less timid in demanding higher wages.

I may say I am as strongly in favour of a legal minimum wage as is Mr. Outhwaite, for at the recent annual meeting of the National Land and Home League I proposed a resolution in favour of a legal minimum wage, which was loyally and unanimously carried by Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists alike. But as a nation we cannot afford to let land become derelict or villages deserted until doctrinaires are able to bring to a practical issue the tenets of their dismal science; and of one thing I am quite certain: wages will never sink lower than the minimum in Dorset, Wilts, Norfolk, and Suffolk. If they did, we should be face to face with either a national bankruptcy or a revolution.

F. E. GREEN.

Newdigate, Surrey, March 18th.

REPLY BY R. L. OUTHWAITE.

To this Mr. Outhwaite sent the following reply, which appeared in the DAILY NEWS of 25th March:—

SIR,—I was surprised to read in Mr. F. E. Green's letter to you that I am "in favour of a legal minimum wage" for agricultural labourers. I have to differ from the "Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists alike" who "loyally and unanimously" supported the proposal at the annual meeting of the National Land and Home League. If an Act were carried to-morrow fixing the wage at a just rate, the immediate response of the monopolists would be to turn more land to grass and game preserves and further depopulate the countryside.

I am in favour of a minimum wage being established by such Land Value Taxation as would compel the full use of rural land and make land available to the labourer. The demand for labour would cause wages to rise; the labourer with land available for his own use would not consent to work for less than the return of his labour applied to the land he could obtain. That is the minimum wage I have in mind and the way to arrive at it. Mr. Green cannot wait till "doctrinaires are able to bring to a practical issue the tenets of their dismal science." This proposal may be "doctrinaire"; it is no doubt "dismal" to the "Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists" of the N.L. and H.L., but the method only lacks practicability because party politicians find it more convenient to unite in proffering useless laws and doles to the agricultural labourer than to overthrow the monopoly that has reduced him to serfdom.

As for the cottages at "uneconomic rents," seeing that no distinction can be made between individuals, I presume every agricultural labourer will have one, which means a minimum expenditure of £100,000,000. Then there are hundreds of thousands of other workers who cannot afford to pay an economic rent for a cottage, and who herd in tenements. These, too, must in equity have cottages at uneconomic rents. Why not at once say that every man getting less than 30s. a week shall have an "uneconomic" or free cottage? And why not bread and meat and clothing at uneconomic prices for the hungry and the ill-clad? And all this rather than tax land values, free cottages of taxation, and raise wages by forcing land into use. No wonder we have a Syndicalist movement based on scorn of "Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist alike."

R. L. OUTHWAITE.

March 21st.

A GOOD HOME AND A GOOD LIVING.

LETTERS ON WORK AND WAGES.

BY MOYA LLEWELYN DAVIES.

[Appearing also in "Political News" (the organ of the Home Counties Union of Women's Liberal Associations) for March.]

DEAR D.,

Thank you very much for your letter. I am glad to hear you like the country so much and find village life so interesting. At the same time, I am not surprised to hear that you often feel very sad and depressed, when you see how wretched is the condition of a large number of workers in the country. The people in the towns have a hard enough lot, goodness knows, but their fellow-workers in the country are almost worse off. Yes, 12s. or 14s. a week is a poor sort of a living, and how the poor fathers and mothers manage to pay their rent, and to buy food, clothing, boots and shoes, and firing, for themselves and their children is a mystery to me. The mothers especially!

What a hard lot is theirs, and how cheerful and splendid most of them are! I know them well. It is work, work, work from morning till night. When the children have been got to bed there is the husband's supper to be got; then the washing up; then that bundle of socks and stockings in the corner, all with holes in them! It is only when she gets to bed her toils cease; and the morning comes all too soon, when the hard, dull, round of work begins all over again.

And for the men too, whether in town or country, it is work, also, all day for them; and the end of their labours brings them no real rest, or comfort or satisfaction. If there was a nice comfortable home to return to, a bright fire, a good meal, and the faces of happy, healthy little children, if there was the good feeling that the day had brought its honourable toil, and its just reward, the hardships of work would soon be forgotten. But it is not so! And is it not the right of the working-men to get these things? Is not their labour worth to the country a wage that will give them at least the ordinary decencies and comforts of life? The working men, all the world over, impatient under a feeling of injustice, are asking for these things; whether they vote for Tariff Reform, or Protection, whether they vote for Liberalism, or for Socialism. They are groping about, looking for a remedy, and striving to find that decent life, to which they instinctively feel they have a right.

All workers, town workers and country workers, know well what they want. They want to be able to get a job, and to keep it. Isn't that it? The men in the country want a chance of a better career on the land, either working for themselves, or for others. The men in the towns, also, want steady employment and good wages, as mill workers, factory hands, navvies, dock-labourers, bricklayers, carpenters, at whatever work they may be suited to perform.

The working men, whether in town or country, want to be sure of work, and they want fair wages; whether working for themselves or for others, they want to be able to earn a decent living. They want what their work is worth; what they do not get at present, a fair return for their labour.

Then the working people want better houses. They want good cottages, good homes, where they will have some chance of living healthy and comfortable lives. And they want them at fair rents. In many cases, the housing conditions in both town and country are deplorable. Everyone admits it. As you know, housing schemes time after time have been talked about; some have been started, but they don't seem to help the people very much. The rents are not low enough, or the people's wages are not sufficient to allow them to pay the rents asked; I don't know which it is, probably both! When old houses become unfit to live in or are pulled down, they are not replaced, or if new ones are built they are too expensive, and the people are driven away to find shelter in equally wretched tenements, elsewhere, thus, it seems to me, making the demand for room in such tenements greater, sending up rents, and making overcrowding worse.

As far as I can see, it is the landlord who benefits, not the working man and his wife and family.

In the country, in many villages, you will agree, the bad insanitary houses,—without enough rooms, and the rooms there are too small,—are a disgrace. If there is any excuse at all for overcrowding in the towns, there is none in the country. All round is God's earth, and air, and sun, ready to supply room and health and happiness for all. Nevertheless, the people are crowded into wretched, insanitary cottages, and many, especially young men who want to marry, have to leave the villages altogether. Men, able and wishing to work, are driven with their families into the workhouse simply because no houses are to be had. Or else they drift to the towns, making the overcrowding there worse, adding to the numbers of unemployed, and making the struggle for life harder.

And then, besides the difficulty of getting work, and a house to live in, besides low wages and high rents, there are the rates and taxes, which press so hardly and unjustly on working people.

If a factory is enlarged, or new machinery put into a mill, if a farm building is put up, or improvements made, heavier rates are charged. What is the result? There is less work to be had of any kind, wages are lower, everything is scarcer and dearer.

And so when the working man goes home from the factory, which is taxed, from the shop which is taxed, from the land on which his improvements are taxed, he goes home also to a cottage which is taxed. The heavy rates at present on buildings result in his having a worse house than he would otherwise have, and he has to pay more for it. And when he sits down to his supper, his tea, his cocoa, and his sugar are taxed. They are dearer in consequence, and he has to do with less.

The present system is intolerable; something must be done, and done soon, whereby the working man can get a better chance to do the work for which he is most fitted, receiving the fair return for that work; whereby in the country he may get land for himself, or be enabled to work on the land on better terms.

Working people must have the opportunity of getting better houses to live in; and the present taxes on their work, their houses, and their food, must be taken off.

In my next letter I shall attempt to show how these things can be done. If the land were unlocked to the people, by means of a wholesale change of taxation, and the rates and taxes were taken off men's work, a tide of prosperity would be started which would flow from country to town, from town to city; from the agricultural labourer, the small holder, the farmer on the land, to the bricklayer, the carpenter, the bootmaker, the miner, the shopkeeper, the business man, gradually bringing to all workers what their labour is worth.

Your affectionate friend,

M.

TO THE WORKING PEOPLE.

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR BREAD AND MEAT TO BE TAXED.

GET THE TAXES ON YOUR TEA AND SUGAR TAKEN OFF.

GET THE RATES ON YOUR COTTAGES TAKEN OFF.

GET THE RATES ON YOUR FARM BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS TAKEN OFF.

TAX THE LANDOWNERS ON THE VALUE OF THEIR LAND.

Then you will have a better chance of getting a bit of land on fair terms and working it at a good profit.

Then there will be more jobs and higher wages.

Then there will be more cottages and lower rents.

Issued as a poster (size 20 in. by 15 in.) copies of which can be obtained from the offices of the United Committee.

HOW TO RAISE WAGES.

There is a means which will not only raise wages with absolute certainty, but which will also help every useful trade. There is a true, natural, and lasting way of raising wages. This is to give all workers—agricultural, building, mining, &c.—free access to land on fair terms. This can be accomplished by the Taxation of Land Values, that is, to make every owner of land pay rates and taxes on the full value of the bare land, whether it be well used, or only half used, or whether kept idle altogether, and at the same time abolishing present rates and taxes which are such a burden on industry and restrict production. If rates and taxes were raised on the basis of land value owners of idle land, whether land in the country suitable for the raising of crops, or land in the town suitable for building, would be compelled to look around for some means of meeting their liabilities and would be forced to throw the land open to industry. The present land famine and scarcity of work would be brought to an end, and all who wanted land could get it at its fair natural rent. Trade would bound forward, the demand for labour would increase, and wages rise. Employers could raise wages without loss to themselves if they got their land cheaper and were not taxed and rated as they are at present on the value of every improvement they make. The workers would be able to demand higher wages because the cut-throat competition that goes on to-day among themselves for employment would be eliminated.

If countrymen could get the land they so much need on fair terms we would then have three natural forces at work, each and all making surely for higher wages.

1. Wages would rise in rural districts because it would be easy to get land at fair rents, and therefore fewer men would be seeking to hire themselves out.

2. Wages would rise in the towns because fewer men would be driven from the country to cut down the wages of town workers.

3. Employers would have to seek more workers to supply the increased demand for produce, and this would further assist in raising wages.

LAND HUNGER: ITS EFFECTS AND ITS CAUSE.

COUNTRY LIFE (February 24th, 1912) tells us that:—

It often happens that we are surprised by the price that a countryman of the working class who has saved a little money is ready to pay for a patch of ground and a cottage that he can call his own. Often it is a price quite out of proportion to the value of the holding as estimated by what a larger landowner would regard as a fair return for his money. The explanation is that a possession of this kind holds out inducements to one of the working class which it does not offer to the man who regards it in the strictly financial light. But even a stronger motive, that urges him to the possession of a little holding of his own, is that he looks upon it as the visible and comforting refuge of his old age to which he may resort when past work.

That the possession of a patch of ground and a cottage, "to which he may resort when past work," "holds out inducements to one of the working class which it does not offer to the man who regards it in the strictly financial light," is undoubtedly true. But it is difficult to see who, save the seller, really benefits by a countryman of the working class having to pay for "this visible and comforting refuge" a "price quite out of proportion to the value." One of the many benefits to the countrymen of the working class of the Rating and Taxation of Land Values is that it would speedily make such "refuges" available to them, at a price or at a rent more in keeping with their real value—and that without the clumsy intervention of State Purchase.

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON ON PEASANT PROPRIETORSHIP.

According to THE GLASGOW HERALD (19th March, 1912), speaking on "A Plea for Peasant Proprietorship," on Tuesday, March 18th, before the Edinburgh University French Society, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who was introduced by the Chairman as "probably the most popular, and certainly most original, English man of letters," said:—

"When he talked about peasant proprietorship he was not talking about something new and ingenious, he was talking about a fact and an ideal. It was not easy to say what the essence of the ideal was. Man must have some place to stand on earth on his feet, and from that they said that as many people as possible should own the earth. Any society which provided the largest number of people on the land without tyranny was under a good Government. There were a good many ways by which that could be done. One method suggested by the Chairman was the abolition of entail and primogeniture. A peasant society existed in many parts of the world. England was not one of these parts. It was one of the plague spots.

"The proletarian system, where the overwhelming mass of the people were wage-earners depending upon capitalists, had failed, and had led to an impasse. That was proved by the coal strike. It was necessary that there should be some wage-earners, but it was not necessary or natural that the greater part of the poor or comparatively poor men should be in the position of wage-earners. Broadly speaking, capitalism had failed so disastrously that civilisation was threatened. State intervention was no remedy. The only cure was that as many people as possible should become capitalists. To transfer things to the State would make them a great deal worse than now. On the other hand, to leave things as they were was impossible. They should make as many people as possible capitalists—giving as many people as possible small pieces of land, and small co-operative shares in business—and then let them see whether they did not create a spirit of dignity and independence in society."

Has anyone ever read a more weird medley of keen observation and of childish, nonsensical illogical reasoning? "Man," which means we presume all men, "must have some place to stand on earth on his feet." A new and astonishing discovery! revealing keen powers of observation—or a love of platitudes. Therefore, we should have thought, good Government would secure to each of its citizens equal opportunities "to stand on earth on his feet," without tyranny, and without having to pledge his liberty or the fruits of his activities, on and from the earth, to any more-favoured fellow-citizen for permission to do so. But No, says Mr. Chesterton, "therefore as many people as possible should own the earth." Should own the earth! Why? we venture to ask. Is it really necessary that a man should own any portion of the earth before he can get the use of "some place to stand on earth on his feet?" And if to this end "as many people as possible are to own the earth," what is to become of the others, who also "must have some place to stand on earth on their feet?" Moreover, is the earth to be "owned" in blocks of exactly equal sizes and of equal values? or are some to be secured the ownership of larger and more valuable blocks than others? Surely, the whole history of the past, as well as of our own days, more especially, perhaps, the history of flourishing Land Companies, should have sufficed to teach even such a busy man as Mr. Chesterton that the main object of those so anxious to acquire the power "to own" land, is *not* to find a place to stand on earth on their own feet—but rather to prevent others from doing so save on their terms and conditions.

Such is the direct cause of slavery and of serfdom, as of the scarcely disguised slavery and serfdom of our own days. But Mr. Chesterton, in his wisdom or blindness, would still have us believe that for some reason or other, not only the exclusive possession, but the private ownership of land is a sort of necessity, the evil results of which he evidently thinks to minimise by enabling "as many people as possible to own the earth." In other words,

landlordism is a fraud and a failure, *therefore* let us create as many small landlords as possible. Strange reasoning. Any such step may bolster up landlordism, but cannot remove the social ills landlordism involves. To Mr. Chesterton's mind society's choice is limited to creating either a few privileged people or a lot of privileged people. That it could and should abolish privilege, and secure equal opportunities to all, favours to none, does not seem yet to have dawned on his mental horizon.

The rest of Mr. Chesterton's reasoning is on a level with the preceding. He tells us that "The proletarian system"—by which he means what others call the capitalistic system, based on and dependent on landlordism, upon "the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil," to use Karl Marx's words, "had failed and had led to an impasse. This was proved by the coal strike." We agree; though there were stronger and more convincing proofs of its failure, to those who had eyes to see them, before the coal strike, before even the Limehouse speech. But what is Mr. Chesterton's remedy? Just as he thinks to remove the evils of landlordism by creating a lot of small landlords, so he thinks to get over the impasse due to "Capitalism" by creating a lot of small capitalists. "Broadly speaking, capitalism had failed so disastrously that civilisation was threatened." And Mr. Chesterton's pill to cure, or avoid, the earthquake, is "to make as many people as possible capitalists." Once again we venture to suggest that though any such step might possibly bolster up "capitalism," or "the proletarian system," it cannot possibly remove or even lessen the social ills it involves.

"It was necessary," Mr. Chesterton tells us, "that there should be some wage-earners; but it was not necessary or natural that the greater part of the poor or comparatively poor men should be in the position of wage-earners." Does Mr. Chesterton mean that it is necessary that there should be some people earning their living by assisting in the production, exchange, and distribution of wealth, or in rendering services to those so engaged? If so, then we agree, not only that this is necessary and natural, but that the social conditions should be such that only those who share in the work should share in its fruits. Thus all would be found in the position of wage-earners, all would share according to services rendered, and the social problem would be solved. But, with all due deference to Mr. Chesterton, we cannot see how its solution is in any way made easier by taking some or many from the position of wage-earners, and making them rent receivers, or other tribute receivers. Someone must work to produce both rent and any other form of tribute; and if some, whether few or many, are to receive it without working for it, and in addition to their own individual earnings, then others must be forced to work without receiving the full fruits of their industry, their full wages, their full earnings. Just as we cannot all live by stealing, so we cannot all live on rent or any other form of tribute. Increasing the number of those who share in the fruits of social injustice, will not remove or lessen, though it may easily intensify, the evils injustice inevitably brings in its train.

It often appears to be Mr. Chesterton's business to juggle with words; and in this no one surpasses him. But he should occasionally look behind the words at the things or ideas for which they stand. He does this sometimes, and then he says or writes things worth saying and recording. We fear he did not do so at Edinburgh. If he had done so he would certainly have discovered that though peasant proprietorship is certainly a fact, it is not an ideal, and offers no solution of the social problem of to-day, no way out of the land question.

L. H. B.

CANADIAN FARMERS AND THEIR "FARMERS."—If the farmers in the West were allowed to use the vacant land that is being held out of use by speculators, there would be no person living more than ten miles from a railway, whereas some are now one hundred miles away. This dog-in-the-manger land policy is making the rich richer and the poor poorer.—GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE (Winnipeg), December 6th.

IMPORTANT SMALL HOLDINGS STATISTICS.

In the House of Commons on 1st March, Viscount Helmsley asked the President of the Board of Agriculture to give the total amount of land bought by county councils for purposes of the Small Holdings Acts, specifying the amount of land bought by each county and the number of small holders in each county settled on such land?

Mr. Runciman, in reply, stated that the following table supplies the information available up to the 31st December, 1911. He could not state separately the number of small holders on land acquired by purchase:

| County. | Area Purchased. | | Area Leased. | | Total Area. | | No. of Small Holders in Possession. | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| | A. | R. P. | A. | R. P. | A. | R. P. | | |
| ENGLAND. | | | | | | | | |
| Bedford .. | 1,632 | 1 20 | 1,232 | 3 27 | 2,865 | 1 7 | 297 | |
| Berks .. | 1,704 | 3 14 | 551 | 0 14 | 2,255 | 3 28 | 66 | |
| Buckingham .. | 727 | 1 31 | 2,387 | 0 23 | 3,114 | 2 14 | 128 | |
| Cambridge .. | 4,399 | 2 23 | 1,630 | 2 8 | 6,030 | 0 31 | 609 | |
| Isle of Ely .. | 2,498 | 3 26 | 535 | 3 9 | 3,025 | 2 35 | 553 | |
| Chester .. | 2,836 | 0 7 | 441 | 1 31 | 3,277 | 1 38 | 95 | |
| Cornwall .. | 2,631 | 0 22 | 175 | 2 24 | 2,806 | 3 6 | 106 | |
| Cumberland .. | 85 | 3 38 | 278 | 0 0 | 363 | 3 38 | 22 | |
| Derby .. | 601 | 3 0 | 0 | 1 15 | 602 | 0 15 | 9 | |
| Devon .. | 3,690 | 1 4 | 953 | 3 23 | 4,644 | 0 27 | 217 | |
| Dorset .. | 172 | 3 9 | 1,574 | 0 0 | 1,746 | 3 9 | 49 | |
| Durham .. | 134 | 3 30 | 1,323 | 2 20 | 1,458 | 2 10 | 60 | |
| Essex .. | 1,249 | 2 23 | 551 | 2 19 | 1,801 | 1 2 | 119 | |
| Gloucester .. | 1,681 | 0 38 | 524 | 1 13 | 2,205 | 2 11 | 177 | |
| Hants .. | 262 | 3 8 | 1,069 | 3 4 | 1,332 | 2 12 | 103 | |
| Isle of Wight .. | 506 | 0 2 | 360 | 1 32 | 866 | 1 34 | 53 | |
| Hereford .. | 1,236 | 3 29 | 316 | 3 1 | 1,553 | 2 30 | 75 | |
| Hertford .. | 857 | 3 28 | 1,237 | 2 28 | 2,095 | 2 16 | 117 | |
| Huntingdon .. | 3,006 | 3 2 | 264 | 3 32 | 3,271 | 2 34 | 303 | |
| Kent .. | 785 | 1 9 | 914 | 1 12 | 1,699 | 2 21 | 102 | |
| Lancaster .. | 89 | 3 6 | 363 | 2 8 | 453 | 1 14 | 59 | |
| Leicester .. | 2,205 | 1 19 | 287 | 3 30 | 2,493 | 1 9 | 80 | |
| Lincoln, Parts of | | | | | | | | |
| Holland .. | 1,976 | 1 11 | 1,376 | 0 32 | 3,352 | 2 3 | 139 | |
| Kesteven .. | 2,551 | 3 23 | 908 | 3 5 | 3,460 | 2 28 | 161 | |
| Lindsey .. | 1,997 | 3 5 | 518 | 2 12 | 2,516 | 1 17 | 127 | |
| London | | | | | | | | |
| Middlesex .. | 19 | 1 18 | 95 | 1 33 | 114 | 3 11 | 11 | |
| Monmouth .. | 2,587 | 3 21 | 442 | 2 16 | 3,030 | 1 37 | 58 | |
| Norfolk .. | 4,859 | 3 32 | 3,411 | 0 28 | 8,271 | 0 20 | 711 | |
| Northampton .. | 575 | 1 26 | 1,568 | 2 21 | 2,144 | 0 7 | 91 | |
| Soke of Peterboro' | 452 | 3 29 | 29 | 2 15 | 482 | 2 4 | 17 | |
| Northumberland .. | 2,282 | 0 0 | 911 | 0 0 | 3,193 | 0 0 | 61 | |
| Notts .. | 265 | 3 27 | 525 | 0 33 | 791 | 0 20 | 49 | |
| Oxford .. | 423 | 0 25 | 2,059 | 2 22 | 2,482 | 3 7 | 163 | |
| Rutland .. | — | — | 296 | 0 39 | 296 | 0 39 | 28 | |
| Salop .. | 1,094 | 1 34 | 528 | 2 9 | 1,623 | 0 3 | 76 | |
| Somerset .. | 4,088 | 1 4 | 1,762 | 1 17 | 5,850 | 2 21 | 348 | |
| Stafford .. | 1,169 | 2 0 | 739 | 1 0 | 1,908 | 3 0 | 48 | |
| Suffolk, East .. | 610 | 1 10 | 208 | 1 11 | 818 | 2 21 | 53 | |
| .. West .. | 1,223 | 3 28 | 334 | 2 26 | 1,558 | 2 14 | 175 | |
| Surrey .. | 941 | 1 3 | 84 | 1 31 | 1,025 | 2 34 | 55 | |
| Sussex, East .. | — | — | 300 | 3 22 | 300 | 3 22 | 22 | |
| .. West .. | — | — | 49 | 0 8 | 49 | 0 8 | 7 | |
| Warwick .. | 1,130 | 3 9 | 399 | 2 32 | 1,530 | 2 1 | 80 | |
| Westmorland .. | — | — | 79 | 3 9 | 79 | 3 9 | 8 | |
| Wiltshire .. | 1,218 | 0 10 | 1,706 | 0 18 | 2,924 | 0 28 | 151 | |
| Worcester .. | 921 | 3 30 | 1,042 | 1 13 | 1,964 | 1 3 | 365 | |
| York, East Riding .. | 1,152 | 3 12 | 1,146 | 1 38 | 2,299 | 1 10 | 84 | |
| .. North .. | 548 | 0 27 | 238 | 1 27 | 786 | 2 14 | 9 | |
| .. West .. | 2,660 | 3 6 | 452 | 1 31 | 3,113 | 0 37 | 36 | |
| Isles of Scilly .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | |
| Total .. | 67,741 | 3 18 | 38,191 | 3 1 | 105,933 | 2 19 | 6,532 | |
| WALES. | | | | | | | | |
| Anglesey .. | 365 | 0 31 | 285 | 2 35 | 650 | 3 26 | 17 | |
| Brecon .. | — | — | 220 | 3 0 | 220 | 3 0 | 12 | |
| Cardigan .. | 160 | 0 0 | 2,986 | 2 5 | 3,146 | 2 5 | 41 | |
| Carmarthen .. | — | — | 433 | 3 10 | 433 | 3 10 | 27 | |
| Carnarvon .. | 2,263 | 0 0 | 47 | 0 0 | 2,310 | 0 0 | 37 | |
| Denbigh .. | 1,756 | 2 0 | 1,208 | 1 0 | 2,964 | 3 0 | 70 | |
| Flint .. | 652 | 1 14 | 75 | 0 38 | 727 | 2 12 | 20 | |
| Glamorgan .. | 660 | 1 34 | 1,431 | 0 27 | 2,091 | 2 21 | 26 | |
| Merioneth .. | 1,331 | 3 27 | 359 | 1 28 | 1,691 | 1 15 | 19 | |
| Montgomery .. | 2,357 | 2 24 | 2 | 0 0 | 2,359 | 2 24 | 63 | |
| Pembroke .. | 1,537 | 3 17 | 59 | 3 9 | 1,597 | 2 26 | 46 | |
| Radnor .. | 44 | 0 9 | 330 | 0 0 | 374 | 0 9 | 19 | |
| Total .. | 11,128 | 3 36 | 7,439 | 2 32 | 18,568 | 2 28 | 397 | |
| Total— | England & Wales | 78,870 | 3 14 | 45,631 | 1 33 | 124,502 | 1 7 | 6,929* |

* In addition, 732 tenants of 39 Associations occupy land acquired by County Councils.

WHO IS HURT BY A TAX ON LAND VALUES.

BY F. A. W. LUCAS.

Not the working farmer. Not the man who works for his living. Only the person or company that keeps valuable land idle.

By taxing land values only and untaxing industry we shift the burden of taxation from the worker to the idler.

Why do we want to tax land values ?

Because land is provided by Nature for the whole people and not for a few.

Because land values are not created by any individual.

Because the value of land is made by the community and should belong to the community.

Because a tax on land values makes the owner of idle land use it or sell it to some one who wants to use it.

Because a tax on land values is a tax on idleness, while a tax on anything else is a tax on industry.

Because other taxes are unjust to the poor man.

The big landowners and the big mineowners who will be hit by this tax are very much concerned for the worker. They tell him this tax will mean the taking away of his little plot of land. They do not care for themselves, but their hearts bleed for the poor farmer and the poor shopkeeper. The poor farmer and the poor shopkeeper and every other worker have nothing to fear and everything to gain from taxing land values.

Everything a man eats or drinks, wears or works with, comes from the application of human labour directly or indirectly to the land. Without a tax on land values the private owner of land can keep it idle and limit the production of food and drink, clothing and tools. The miner who wants to mine, the farmer who wants to farm, cannot do so because some landowner says no. The amount of work available for miners and farmers is limited at the whim of private landowners. But not only the amount of work for these people alone. If miners are busy, engineers and blacksmiths are busy; if farmers are working, butchers and bakers, tanners and millers are required. You cannot have one section of the community busy without all other sections being busy too. We don't all want to be farmers or miners, but when those who do can easily get right on to farming or mining land, then we shall all feel the benefit.

A tax on land values opens up the land. As long as land is idle the owner gets nothing from it. If while he gets nothing from it he has to pay a tax on its value he will soon think it worth while to use his land or sell it to someone who wants to use it. In either case there is increased scope for employment. The more jobs there are, the more does the position of the workers improve.

Meanwhile, how does the small landowner—the man who is using his land—fare? In existing circumstances the more he works the more taxes he has to pay. If he is a farmer he has to pay Customs duties on the tea, sugar, cocoa, etc., he and his employees consume; he has to pay taxes through railway profits on everything he uses. The better his farmhouse and outbuildings the higher the taxes he has had to pay. By reducing these taxes and making good the revenue from a tax on the value of his land, the bare land value as distinguished from any value he as an individual has given to it and anything on it, we shall considerably reduce the amount of taxation payable by such farmer. So, too, with the shopkeeper, the clerk, the artisan.

On the other hand, big landowners and big mineowners, who do not contribute to railway profits and do not pay Customs duty in respect of idle agricultural or mining or town lands, will have to pay the tax on land values. That is why the big landowners like the present system of taxation, and that is why they are opposed to taxing land values. Use your vote and see your fellow workers and everyone you can influence use their votes for those who are pledged to tax land values without exemptions.

THE OLD, OLD CRY.

Speaking in support of the Housing of the Working Classes Bill, on Friday, March 15th, Mr. C. Bathurst (Wilts) said:—

As a Poor Law guardian in a country district for many years, he did not remember a single case in which a man having a large enough garden, and having the necessary knowledge to cultivate it, had either gone into the work-house, except in advanced age, or received outdoor relief. What they wanted was, not the *minimum* half acre of the Irish Labourers Act, but just enough land to offer an alternative occupation to the cottager and to help to meet the necessities of daily life without detracting from the value of the man's daily occupation. (Hear, hear.)

In other words, what "*they*" wanted was to give the agricultural labourers at the expense of the ratepayer or taxpayer the use of sufficient land to keep him off the rates, but not sufficient to make him independent—or "saucy," as it used to be called—or to detract from the value of his labour to those who want his labour for their own profit. Of course, with a cottage at, say, 1s. a week, and "just enough land to offer an alternative occupation to the cottager, and to help him to meet the necessities of daily life," the fortunate man would be able to work for his superiors at lower wages than without such advantages—and would very soon be made to do so. If he had the use of enough land to support himself and those dependent upon him, he would want more wages or even refuse to work for them at all—and then whence would the landlord get his rent?

WHAT CAN THE RICH MAN DO ?

In the case of the rich man to-day, who is honestly desirous of devoting his wealth to the improvement of the condition of Labour, what can he do?

Bestow his wealth on those who need it? He may help some who deserve it, but will not improve general conditions. And, against the good he may do, will be the danger of doing harm.

Build churches? Under the shadow of churches poverty festers and the vice that is born of it breeds.

Build schools and colleges? Save as it may lead men to see the iniquity of private property in land, increased education can effect nothing for mere labourers, for, as education is diffused, the wages of education sink.

Establish hospitals? Why, already it seems to labourers that there are too many seeking work, and to save and prolong life is to add to the pressure.

Build model tenements? Unless he cheapens house accommodation, he but drives further the class he would benefit; and as he cheapens house accommodation, he brings more to seek employment and cheapens wages.

Institute laboratories, scientific schools, workshops for physical experiments? He but stimulates invention and discovery, the very forces that, acting on a society based on private property in land, are crushing labour as between the upper and the nether millstone.

Promote emigration from places where wages are low to places where they are somewhat higher? If he does, even those whom he at first helps to emigrate will soon turn on him to demand that such emigration shall be stopped as reducing their wages.

Give away what land he may have, or refuse to take rent for it, or let it at lower rents than the market price? He will simply make new landowners or partial landowners; he may make some individuals richer, but he will do nothing to improve the general condition of labour.

Or, bethinking himself of those public-spirited citizens of classic times, who spent great sums in improving their

native cities, shall he try to beautify the city of his birth or adoption? Let him widen and straighten narrow and crooked streets; let him build parks and erect fountains; let him open tramways and bring in railroads, or in any way make beautiful and attractive his chosen city, and what will be the result? Must it not be that those who appropriate God's bounty will take his also? Will it not be that the value of land will go up, and that the net result of his benefactions will be an increase of rents and a bounty to landowners? Why, even the mere announcement that he is going to do such a thing will start speculation and send up the value of land by leaps and bounds.

What, then, can the rich man do to improve the condition of labour? He can do nothing at all, except to use his strength for the abolition of the great primary wrong that robs men of their birthright. The justice of God laughs at the attempts of men to substitute anything else for it.

To-day a wider, deeper, more beneficent revolution is brooding, not over one country, but over the world. God's truth impels it, and forces mightier than He has ever before given to men urge it on. It is no more in the power of vested wrongs to stay it than it is in man's power to stay the sun. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera, and in the ferment of to-day, to him who hath ears to hear, the doom of industrial slavery is sealed.

—THE CONDITION OF LABOUR, by Henry George.

KEEP IT BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

Keep it before the people—

That the earth was made for man!

That flowers were strewn,

And fruits were grown,

To bless and never to ban;

That sun and rain,

And corn and grain

Are yours and mine, my brother!

Free gifts from heaven,

And freely given,

To one as well as another!

Keep it before the people—

That man is the image of God!

His limbs and soul

Ye may not control

With shackle, or shame, or rod!

We may not be sold

For silver or gold;

Neither you nor I, my brother!

Freedom was given

By God from Heaven,

To one as well as another!

Keep it before the people—

That famine, and crime, and woe

Forever abide

Still side by side

With luxury's dazzling show.

That Lazarus crawls

From Devil's halls,

And starves at his gate, my brother!

Yet life was given

By God from Heaven,

To one as well as another!

Keep it before the people—

That the labourer claims his need:

The right of soil

And the right to toil,

From spur and bridle freed.

The right to bear

And the right to share

With you and me, my brother!

Whatever is given

By God from Heaven,

To one as well as another!

—J. H. DUGGANE.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISCUSSION.

**"LAND VALUES," AT THE SURVEYORS' INSTITUTION.
MR. EDWIN SAVILL'S FURTHER STATEMENT.**

The debate on the paper read by Mr. Edwin Savill, F.S.I., on the "Single Tax Movement" at the Surveyors' Institution on 5th February, from which we quoted extracts and commented upon in last month's issue, was continued on 11th March. According to the *ESTATES GAZETTE* of 16th March, Mr. Savill made the following statement:—

His object in writing the paper under discussion was to stir up the Surveyors' Institution. He had followed the whole question very closely indeed during the last three or four years. He had attended the debates in the House whenever he got the chance. When he could not attend the debates, he had read the official report. He had attended the meetings of the United Committee. The only object of that rating of site value was to bring in certain properties which he had heard members on both sides of the House—Conservatives as well as Liberals—say over and over again ought to be brought in. When anything was accepted by both parties he thought they would agree that it would not be long before it was brought about, and he thought all surveyors should be prepared for some change in our present rating system. Personally, he wanted no change, and if the Institution were strong and willing enough to stop or modify a change, he was with them entirely. He thought perhaps they might go with the stream and guide it, but he never thought for a moment, and he did not believe now, that they would have the energy and strength to stem it. It might be better, and he believed everybody would agree with him, that if there were going to be a change, and those properties to which he had referred were going to be brought in, that they should be assessed on their market value instead of upon their site value, because site value was a thing nobody understood; they had all been trying to understand it for over a year. He had used a great amount of energy, but had not arrived at it yet; nor had anybody else. Market value, or capital value, was a thing that they had all been brought up to calculate all their lives, and the difficulty in arriving at the fair market value was fairly easy compared with arriving at site value. His intention had not been to press any particular method of arriving at a fair system; all he wanted was that the Institution should put their whole energy either into stopping a change at all or, if there had to be a change, in guiding that change into the least harmful direction.

TOO GOOD TO KEEP.**"THE SINGLE TAX OUTRAGE."**

In the *LAND AGENTS' RECORD* of 24th February, appears the following letter under the title "The Single Tax Outrage":—

SIR,—Mr. Savill, in his paper at the Surveyors' Institution, described the schemes of the *Committee with a long name* for confiscating the entire value of the bare land in a beautiful spirit of toleration. His figures show that even the milder alternative, "for immediate consumption," would confiscate the average net annual value of agricultural land, including the buildings and improvements upon it.

I claim to have shown in the *NATIONAL REVIEW* for November, 1910, that local rates alone, without the food taxes included by Mr. Savill, exceed greatly the net annual value of agricultural land, apart from buildings and improvements.

As for the "whole hog" of the Single Tax confiscators, this need not trouble us at all, because the charging of all local rates and Imperial subventions in aid thereof would extinguish private ownership of land, for, of course, no one would own it if he had to pay annually more than its net annual value.

This is the avowed object of the land confiscators. They desire to nationalise or municipalise the land without paying a halfpenny for it. In other words, they ask the Government to steal it for the nation. Their moral status is no higher than that of a national union of burglars would be, and they should be met by denunciation, rather than by tolerant argument. Of course, the effect of their proposals should be demonstrated as clearly as it can be, and with such a demonstration a great union of owners and occupiers of land, including sites and ground-rents of buildings, should be formed, to arrange for public meet-

ings throughout the country, in order to show the people distinctly what it is that the *Committee for the Confiscation of Land Values* will do if they can.

Some ineffably silly scruples as to attacking the confiscation scheme because it is "political" were expressed at the meeting of the Surveyors' Institution. Is party spirit so strong among the members that they would hesitate to attack any criminal scheme whatever if it were advocated by a section of either party? These people are inciting the masses, through a sympathetic Government, to commit one of the greatest crimes ever committed by a majority against a minority of their fellow countrymen, and they deserve punishment as thoroughly as any men who set common criminals to work.

The classes connected with the land are in the habit of ignoring great dangers until these have become accomplished facts. At present the Committee of confiscators, with the help of Mr. Fels's wealth, are perverting the minds and consciences of ignorant masses of voters without check. Mr. Savill described how they are spending money lavishly and distributing their lying leaflets in shoals. If they are left long to pursue their iniquitous course without organised opposition, it may be too late to prevent their success, and politicians who are foolishly urging Mr. Lloyd George to deal with local taxation may find that when he has time to deal with it he will bring in a Bill to charge rates on capital site values which will be the beginning of the end of private ownership in land.

If all the associations connected with land would cooperate to form a National Land Defence Union, inviting banks, insurance associations, friendly societies, trustees, and all other investors in land to join it, not forgetting the hundreds of thousands of working men whose savings are invested in land through their provident societies, *we should have an army powerful and wealthy enough to wash naphtha soap out of the field*, or even to fight in defence of property in land if necessary.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM E. BEAR.

Hailsham, February 17th.

SIR JOHN BENN ON THE RATING OF LAND VALUES.

Sir John Benn, the leader of the Progressive Party on the London County Council, gave an address on "London Rates and Industries" at the annual meeting of the London Reform Union, held in the National Liberal Club on February 29th. Dealing with the question of the equalisation of London rates, Sir John, according to the *WESTMINSTER GAZETTE* of 1st March, said:—

Hitherto consideration had been limited to the effect of levying over the whole of London a flat rate of 7s. 6d. in the £ based on the rateable value. But, in the opinion of many of them, rateable value was not as fair a basis as site value—they held that a manufacturer ought not to be rated on every improvement he made in his premises, and on every piece of machinery he installed there; he ought not to be discouraged from making his factory as efficient as the latest inventions and most modern plant would permit.

This question was one of the most difficult economic problems they had to deal with, and the actual effect was hard to state in precise figures. But in connection with proposals which were recently before the L.C.C. for further equalisation of rates, some figures were prepared by Mr. E. J. Harper, the State statistical officer, to indicate the effect of relieving the present ratepayers from a burden of 4d. in the £ on the rateable value and substituting a charge of 10d. in the £ on the annual site values (roughly, equivalent to ½d. in the £ on the capital site values). Sir John Benn said he had taken out the figures relating to the fourteen highly-rated industrial boroughs, and he found that, according to the table, the rates now levied upon the occupiers would be reduced by £233,000, and that the site value rate, to be levied on owners in the same boroughs, would amount to £170,000. The result on the owners and occupiers taken together would be to reduce the charges of Local Government and Poor Law in these fourteen industrial boroughs by over £63,000.

This advance in London reform was not nearly so remote as it was a year or two ago. A stock argument against the taxation or rating of site values was that land could not be valued apart from buildings. Now, thanks to the Budget, the valuation was actually taking place, and there was a separate column for the ground landlord.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT.

THE PUBLIC MEETINGS CAMPAIGN.

A Report of the Campaign in Wiltshire will be found under "Rural News" on page 284.

THE SPECIAL LONDON CAMPAIGN.

In addition to those meetings announced in last month's issue, arranged by the United Committee and the English League in conjunction with the London Liberal Federation, for London, the following were held during March, making in all a total of 14 meetings:—

- Mar. 18th.—Stoke Newington (Library Hall, Church Street): Mr. Francis Neilson, M.P.
 .. 22nd.—West St. Pancras (Clarence Road Schools): Mr. James Dundas White, LL.D., M.P.
 .. 25th.—North Lambeth (Waterloo Road Schools): J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite.
 .. 27th.—Mile End (Burdett Road Schools): Mr. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite.
 .. 29th.—Peckham (Lower Park Road Schools): Mr. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite.
 .. 30th.—South Islington (Middleton Hall, Upper Street): Mr. J. C. Wedgwood and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite.

These meetings have been well attended and have been marked by great enthusiasm for the principles advocated. London Radicals are quick to realise the relationship between rural depopulation and the poverty problem of the industrial centres and to see in land value taxation the only means of redress. This taken with the pressing grievance and manifest injustice of the present rating system encourages the hope that London next March, when the L.C.C. elections take place, will decide to go forward with Glasgow against the evils of land monopoly.

LONDON MID-DAY MEETINGS.

Rain and the coal strike caused the postponement of several of the mid-day meetings arranged for the month. Mr. R. L. Outhwaite and Mr. Harry de Pass had fair audiences at the works of the Westinghouse Brake Co. and at the Potato Market at West Islington; an excellent gathering at McCorquodale's works, West St. Pancras, and an attendance of about 600 at the works of Waterlow and Co. in the Hoxton Division, followed next day by a meeting in the same division opposite the works of the Maypole Dairy Co. An encouraging feature of these meetings has been the eager demand for leaflets. Such work imposes a considerable strain on the speakers, but the meetings so far held show that during the summer very effective propaganda can be carried on in this way.

STAMFORD (LINGS).

Under the joint auspices of the Stamford Branch of the National League of Young Liberals and the United Committee, a largely attended meeting was held in the Corn Exchange, Stamford, on February 16th. Mr. Arthur Kitson presided, supported by many prominent local Liberal leaders, and Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, M.P., was the speaker of the evening.

Mr. Kitson, in the course of his opening address, referred to the life-work of Henry George, and in introducing Mr. Raffan, said that gentleman would explain the importance of the land question, and he thought it was most fitting that he should come there for that purpose, as he considered Stamford suffered as much as anywhere else from land monopoly.

Mr. Raffan, who had a good reception, showed how free land was the logical conclusion of Free Trade, and that Cobden's policy had only been half carried out. He traced the cause of unemployment, low wages and bad housing to land monopoly and emphasised the importance of land valuation in dealing with these problems inasmuch as land values taxation was the only remedy.

Mr. Raffan's eloquent address, to use the description of the speech by the STAMFORD AND RUTLAND GUARDIAN, was received with great enthusiasm, and a hearty vote of thanks to him and the Chairman was carried with applause.

The meeting was well reported in the GUARDIAN of 22nd February.

ALTRINCHAM.

A well-attended public meeting promoted by the Manchester Land Values League on behalf of the United Committee was held in the Literary Institute, Altrincham, on the 27th February. Mr. E. Meland was in the chair, Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., was the principal speaker, and on the platform were Dr. Percy McDougall, Mr. A. H. Weller (President and Secretary of the Manchester Land Values League), and many prominent local Liberals.

After a short opening speech by the Chairman, Mr. Wedgwood delivered a stirring address on the Taxation of Land Values. He showed in a clear and convincing manner how land monopoly was the cause of low wages and unemployment and consequently of the prevalent strife in the industrial world.

Mr. Wedgwood moved, Dr. McDougall seconded, and Mr. A. H. Weller supported a resolution supporting the recent Land and Taxation Reform Memorial to the Government, and urging the Government to hasten the completion of the valuation being carried out under the Finance Act. The resolution was carried unanimously, and it was agreed that copies should be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the member for the Division. Votes of thanks to Mr. Wedgwood and the Chairman, enthusiastically carried, brought the meeting to a close.

OLDHAM.

In the Co-operative Hall, King Street, Oldham, on March 1st, an excellently attended meeting was held under the auspices of the Manchester League and the United Committee. Mr. A. W. Barton, M.P. for the Division, presided, and an address was delivered on the Rating and Taxation of Land Values by Alderman P. W. Raffan, M.P. Alderman Greaves, Councillors Coates, E. Kempsey, J.P., Turner, Cheetham and Freeman, Dr. Percy McDougall and Mr. A. H. Weller of the Manchester League, were present among other prominent local Liberals.

Alderman Raffan, in a vivid manner, showed how the problems of the time—unemployment, low wages, and housing—were, at bottom, phases of the land question. He showed in some detail how the shutting out of the land from full and fair use affected the social evils of the day. The competition for jobs in the towns was caused by the fact that the country men were unable to get fair opportunities on the land. Land value was created by the community, and the community should enjoy the value it itself had created. Rates should be taken off improvements in the country, and off housing and machinery in the towns, and put upon land values.

Dr. McDougall moved and Mr. Weller seconded a resolution supporting the Land and Taxation Reform Memorial, and calling upon the Government to hasten the valuation of land under the 1909-10 Finance Act. The resolution was carried and it was decided that copies should be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MELTON MOWBRAY.

On Monday, March 4th, a meeting was held in the Corn Exchange, Melton Mowbray, under the auspices of the United Committee. Mr. W. E. Boyes presided, Mr. R. L. Outhwaite was the principal speaker, and others who spoke were Mr. W. Bowley and Mr. W. Leader.

The Chairman said that the land question was to-day the root of all their troubles such as big strikes and lock-outs. He dealt with the relation of mining royalties to the present crisis in the coal industry and said that the remedy was the Taxation of Land Values.

Mr. Outhwaite then delivered an address on "Land Monopoly and Labour Unrest." He said that he agreed with the Chairman that the land question was at the root of their present industrial troubles. He also dealt with the question of rural depopulation. The only way to remedy this evil was to obtain a rise of agricultural wages which could only be done by creating an increased demand for

labour, and the way to do this was by compelling the owners of the land either to use that land or let it go to somebody who would use it. If they could force into use the locked-up rural lands there would be such a scramble for workers to till the land that the wage of the agricultural labourer would rapidly advance. The Taxation of Land Values was the only way by which owners could be stimulated to bring their land into use.

MARKET HARBOROUGH.

Under the joint auspices of the United Committee and the local Liberal Association a well-attended meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms, Market Harborough, on March 5th. Mr. Arthur T. Cort presided, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., and R. L. Outhwaite.

Mr. Wedgwood, after paying a tribute to the work of Mr. J. W. Logan, the Member for the Harborough Division, said the only politics they could speak of at the present time was of labour unrest. It was a world movement. The most important feature of it was the birth of a new feeling in politics. For many years the Government of the country had been gradually going on along Socialistic lines. Throughout the individual had had to give place to the whole. Too much attention had been, however, given to giving the workers comfort, and not taking into account justice and freedom. The new movement was to alter this, and give the man first of all personal freedom and justice. As Liberals what they must put before the workers was to secure for them a full reward for their labours. Give them justice. They did not get the full reward now by reason of the vested interests and knowledge that existed. It was their business as Liberals to sweep these interests aside. Politics was one long struggle between privilege and the people. True Liberalism meant the destruction of the power of vested interest to rob the public. He then traced the effect of land monopoly on present-day social conditions, showing how restricted employment and low wages were the direct result of land-lordism and our systems of rating and taxation. He showed how the Taxation of Land Values would break down land monopoly, throw the land open to production, so increasing the demand for labour, and raising wages, quoting the example of how New Zealand and Australia had benefited by this reform. Mr. Outhwaite also delivered an eloquent speech. At the close many questions were asked the speakers by the audience and satisfactorily answered. A cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman and speakers brought the meeting to a close.

THE LORD ADVOCATE IN PORTSMOUTH.

An enthusiastic mass meeting was held under the auspices of the United Committee and the Portsmouth League of Young Liberals at the Town Hall on March 18th.

Mr. J. H. Martin, President of the League of Young Liberals, occupied the chair. He associated unemployment, poverty, and bad housing conditions with our present land system, and maintained that the uplifting of the masses could be accomplished only by freeing the land. The policy inaugurated by Mr. Lloyd George in his great Budget must be developed until some of the taxation and the whole of the rates were placed upon the huge land values which were entirely created by the effort, enterprise and presence of every productive worker in the community.

Mr. Ure, who delivered an address on "The Rating of Land Values," had a very hearty reception. He is a favourite with Portsmouth Liberals, while the Land Values men have the very highest appreciation of the great work he has been doing for the movement for several years. His address contained the same sober, cautious, clear, convincing arguments with which the men of the old guard are so familiar and yet the repetition of which ever brings fresh delight. He exposed in his own inimitable way the cunning, injustice, and stupidity of our present rating system, and then in a way that even the dullest could realise he showed the advantages of relieving buildings and machinery—the work of men's hands—from all burdens of rates and taxes. He was particularly severe on the advocates of land nationalisation, and warned them off our "pitch" as a menace to real land reform.

Referring to the coal strike, Mr. Ure said that if those reforms of which they had heard that night had been in force a generation or so ago we should never have seen this

upheaval. He could not but think that a fairer and juster system of distributing the burdens of taxing and rating on the shoulders of our people would have removed the seething mass of discontent and would have demonstrated to our working population that they had a real interest in the soil of their country. The telling points of his address were heartily applauded. In concluding he aroused the greatest enthusiasm by declaring he would never put on his coat until this great question of rating land values was settled.

Mr. Martin moved from the Chair the following resolution:—

This meeting, believing that bad housing and unemployment arise chiefly out of the existing systems of land tenure and taxation, urges the Government to develop the policy inaugurated in the Budget, by empowering local rating authorities to levy rates on the land value basis; and further pledges itself to resist any attempt to deal with the problem of local and Imperial taxation which ignores the rating of land values.

Mr. D. L. Lipson seconded, and said that the League of Young Liberals meant business on the rating of land values. It was the first plank on their programme. He called on the young men to join the League and help them to abolish poverty.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Sir Thomas Bramsdon proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Ure. He said if the Liberal party lost some supporters through carrying out an advanced policy, the party was well without their support.

Mr. W. H. T. Pain seconded the vote of thanks, and said the land question was at the root of our social ills and nothing permanent could be done to improve the condition of the workers until we got the Taxation and Rating of Land Values.

After replying to the vote of thanks and answering a few rather stupid questions about land nationalisation, Mr. Ure proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. The meeting responded with right good will, for it was no less proud of its chairman than he was of the meeting. Our movement will hear more of Mr. Martin.

The greatest credit is due to the League of Young Liberals for the manner in which with very scanty help under exceptional difficulties, they organised such a successful meeting.

The Secretary of the Portsmouth League of Young Liberals writes:—

As regards the speech itself, I will not presume to say anything, except that a Tory friend, whom I persuaded to attend, said to me afterwards, that he had never heard a clearer or more interesting exposition of any subject, and that he believed there was something in the rating

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of land values after all. I regard this as more satisfactory than any statement (and there were plenty) made by the Lord Advocate's admirers.

I must say that your local representatives gave us all possible help, in fact, they worked with a zeal worthy of the cause, and largely contributed to the success of the meeting. The leaders of our League, who are to a man ardent supporters of your movement and have placed the rating of land values in the very forefront of our programme, also gave unstinted help, not only in the actual arrangement of the meeting, but in making it known at our weekly meetings, and elsewhere, previously to the meeting.

PORTSMOUTH LEAGUE.

60, Upper Arundel Street, Portsmouth.

In connection with the Portsmouth League for the Taxation of Land Values a public meeting was held at the Co-operative Hall, Garnier Street, Fratton, on Wednesday evening, Mr. Stokes presiding. A paper on "The Industrial Unrest" was read by the Secretary, who at the close of his address answered many questions. A discussion followed, during which Mr. McGuigan declared that there was unrest in every class of workers, and working men were protesting against the great rich, idle, non-producing classes, who held practically all the wealth of the country. A vote of thanks was accorded the speaker.

WM. KING, Hon. Sec.

UNITED COMMITTEE LECTURERS.

Mr. Harry de Pass addressed two meetings under the auspices of the Eighty Club on March 13th and 25th at New Barnet and Hindhead (Surrey) on "Land and Labour Unrest." Writing of the Hindhead meeting a correspondent says that "great interest has been evoked in this district as a result of Mr. de Pass's address at the village debating society. There was a record attendance and the audience listened with the greatest attention while the speaker was expounding his views. After the address there was a very lively discussion and it was generally agreed that the meeting was the most interesting held this season."

On March 19th, Mr. A. W. Madsen, addressed a meeting, at Malden Crescent, of the North St. Pancras Women's Liberal Federation on "How to Reduce London's Rates."

MIDLAND LEAGUE.

20, Cannon Street, Birmingham.

The League has been carrying out an active campaign among the municipalities in the Midlands in connection with the Glasgow Town Council petition to Parliament for Land Value Rating Powers. About 40 Councils have been dealt with and much literature and information has been sent to the members of the various local bodies. Reports show that Councillors prefer to wait until the valuation is nearer completion before taking any definite step. At the time of writing we are waiting for the result from the Birmingham City Council, and are hoping that Councillor Duggan will provoke a good discussion. All the council members have been well circularised during the last few weeks and the Liberal and Labour members have either been seen or communicated with by letter. If Birmingham would only move all the other districts would follow. The delay with the valuation is the stumbling block.

The Selly Oak League of Young Liberals at their meeting on March 21st passed a resolution thanking Mr. Chapman Wright for his interesting and informing addresses at the Political Economy class, and especially for the very lucid way in which he has explained to them the principles of the Land Values policy.

CHAPMAN WRIGHT, Secretary.

MANCHESTER LAND VALUES LEAGUE.

1, Princess Street, Albert Square, Manchester.

In addition to those already announced in LAND VALUES, the following meetings were addressed during March:—Bredbury Liberal Association (Dr. P. McDougall), Bolton

Property Owners' Association (W. Noble), South Manchester Women's Liberal Association (Dr. P. McDougall), Russell Street Men's Own, Hulme (A. H. Weller).

The following meetings have been arranged up to the time of going to press:—

- April 15.—Ashton-under-Lyne Forum, Livsey's Restaurant: Dr. P. McDougall, 7.30.
 ,, 24.—S. Salford L.Y.L., Druid's Hall, Sackville Street: A. H. Weller, 8.
 ,, 4, 11, 18, 25.—Economic Class Meetings at League's office at 8.
 ,, 9, 23.—North Manchester Branch Meetings at Queen's Park Congregational Institute at 8.

We are doing all we can to interest Councillors in the Glasgow resolutions by distributing literature and in other ways. Up to the present, we have dealt with Manchester, Salford, Farnworth, Warrington, Radcliffe, Leigh, Bolton, Ashton-under-Lyne, Stockport, Oldham, Audenshaw, Hyde, Prestwich, Altrincham, Heaton Norris, Stretford and Sale.

NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENCE GROUP.

A Newspaper Correspondence Group has been formed, and will meet in the League's office every Thursday from 7 to 8 p.m. All friends willing to assist in this good work are invited to attend or to communicate with the Secretary.

Each member of the Group will undertake to watch one newspaper and will write a letter to the editor on any current topic or in reply to other correspondents whenever opportunity offers. When his letter appears he will at once inform the Secretary, who will communicate with other members of the Group with the object of getting other letters sent in support of the first writer.

If, after several attempts, a member fails to get a letter printed, he will transfer his attention to another paper. Such an exchange of duties between members might be made with advantage, even when members' letters are generally printed.

The meetings at the League's offices will be for the purpose of reporting progress and discussing future action. Those who cannot attend should send a verbal or written message to the Secretary if they have anything to report or any suggestions to make.

ARTHUR H. WELLER, Secretary.

NORTHERN LAND VALUES LEAGUE.

8, North Parade, Whitley Bay, R.S.O., Northumberland.

DINNER TO MR. WM. REID.

On January 24th a few friends gathered at the Liberal Club, Newcastle, to entertain Mr. William Reid prior to his departure for Leeds to which city the headquarters of the Northern League have been transferred. Mr. Richard Brown presided, and those present included Mr. James Veitch, Mr. C. E. Schroeder, Mr. James Corrie, Mr. Frank C. Thornborough, Mr. H. D. Glover, and Mr. H. V. Haslam. Unfortunately Mr. A. W. Duckers was unable to be present.

The Chairman stated that perhaps he, more than anyone else, was responsible for bringing Mr. Reid to Newcastle. When the work for the Single Tax movement in the two northernmost counties had become more than leisure time could bear he had asked the United Committee to send someone to Newcastle, and stipulated that whoever was sent should be a Scotsman. Their guest of that evening was that Scotsman, who had been with them far too brief a period before being translated to a sphere of greater activity. Mr. Reid had endeared himself to all lovers of the cause, and, he was glad to say, to many of its opponents.

Mr. James P. Wilkie proposed the toast of "Our Guest." He said that three common feelings animated all on that occasion: firstly, the expression of profound regret that Mr. Reid was leaving the district; secondly, the testimony of their appreciation of his high character and ability, and thirdly, their desire to wish him well in his new sphere of activity. During Mr. Reid's far too short sojourn in this district his life had been full of activity for the great cause. Mr. Reid was always ready and willing to give of his best, and in the course of a comparatively brief period he had won his way in to the affections of hosts of friends. His thorough grasp of public affairs, his wide knowledge,

sound philosophy and ready wit have all contributed to make him one of the most popular progressive expositors in the North. They would all miss his cheery but unmistakable Scotch face, and his cheery but still less mistakable Scotch tongue. They hoped that in the county of the broad acres Mr. Reid would have health and success, but wherever he was they hoped Mr. Reid would always have a warm place in his heart for his friends on Tyneside.

Mr. Reid replied, thanking those present for their good wishes.

Mr. H. V. Haslam—an opponent of the Taxation of Land Values—said he had found a good friend in Mr. Reid. Although they differed at present on the question of Land Values Taxation he hoped Mr. Reid would one day realise the errors of his ways and come over to his (the speaker's) camp.

Other members of the company joined in the chorus of praise and good wishes to Mr. Reid.

RICHARD BROWN, Hon. Secretary.

YORKSHIRE LEAGUE,

West Bar Chambers, 38, Boar Lane, Leeds.

Some very good work has been accomplished during the last month, and the resolutions passed by the Town Council of Glasgow have to a large extent made this possible. Copies of leaflets and pamphlets have been sent to members of urban, town and county councils as well as to members of boards of guardians. The principal rating bodies in Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham, Westmorland and Yorkshire have had this literature sent to them together with an offer of our President to discuss the matter with them.

All our leading men in the various districts have been very active.

Our President, Councillor C. H. Smithson, apart from much work in connection with the movement, has conducted a Political Economy Class at Keighley with especial good results. The class has turned up strong every night, showing the keenest interest and enthusiasm in the unfolding of the foundation principles upon which our movement rests. Mr. Smithson has been warmly congratulated by all concerned for his lucid examination. As an instance, a student at the close of the meeting on the 6th March said: "The lecture that night was one of the clearest statements," and all present were very complimentary after the lecturer had left for his train home.

Mr. R. W. Jenkins has been putting in the same kind of work at Rotherham to some purpose.

At the quarterly meeting of the Rotherham Commercials at the Crown Hotel, Rotherham, on 2nd March, Mr. Jenkins read an interesting and instructive paper on "National Economics" to a highly appreciative audience.

Mr. E. A. Lassen of Bradford, a comparatively new man in the movement, continues in an encouraging way the good work in his district.

Mr. John Archer as usual is working day and night at Huddersfield, and, along similar lines, Mr. Fred Dickinson and Mr. Harold Town are active at Keighley.

In many other smaller towns and villages the work of education is continually going on. At Penistone and Ossett we have able campaigners in Messrs. Clark, Fred Adams, John Marston, and the brothers Mitchell. They do keep the propaganda well to the front, and when there are no opportunities about they set to work and make a few, by provoking inquiry.

Mr. C. W. Sorensen of York appears sometimes to be outside our purview, but he strives incessantly to put our case before the people of that town and district. He has had an uphill task for a number of years, but at last his efforts are being recognised, and quite a number of new friends, strong in the faith, have arrived, while others are in the course of making.

Political Economy Classes have been held every week at Leeds, Huddersfield and Sheffield, conducted by Mr. Reid, who is making quite a name for himself as a student and able teacher of the "dismal" science. In Mr. Reid's hands it is anything but dismal. A pleasing feature of the class at Leeds is a lively correspondence this month in one of the evening papers conducted largely by young adherents of our cause who are getting to know from "Professor" Reid the economics of social problems, and the living,

moving philosophy that arises from a clear perception of fundamental principles.

The Secretary has addressed several meetings, including Manchester, Keighley and Sheffield.

During the past five weeks meetings have been held at Manchester (two meetings: F. Skirrow); Thurlstone (W. Reid); Pocklington (F. Skirrow); Keighley (two meetings: F. Skirrow); Windhill (E. A. Lassen and F. Skirrow); Penistone (W. Reid); Bradford (E. A. Lassen); Fartown (John Archer); Rotherham (F. Skirrow); Rochdale (John Archer); Leeds Debate (W. Reid); York Debate (W. Reid); Hull (J. C. Wedgwood, M.P. and P. W. Raffan, M.P.)

F. SKIRROW, Secretary.

CARLISLE.

On 8th, 9th and 11th March, Mr. Harry de Pass, of the United Committee, addressed meetings on the Taxation of Land Values, under the auspices of the Carlisle League of Young Liberals. On the 8th he addressed a large public meeting held in the Liberal Club, Lowther Street, on "Land Monopoly and Labour Unrest," at which Mr. Charles E. Crompton occupied the chair. He spoke to large meetings in the open air at the Cross in the Market Place on the 9th, and on the 11th at Longtown.

At each meeting Mr. de Pass had an excellent and appreciative audience and he took the full measure of his opportunities to put the case for Land Values Taxation as a remedy for and preventive of "industrial unrest." As evidence of the interest he aroused a large number of questions were put to him at the close of his speeches and he was able in each case to satisfy his questioners and make his arguments clear.

Mr. Crompton, who presided at the Liberal club meeting, has accomplished much good spade work for the cause in the district, and has been successful in raising considerable public interest and opinion in favour of our policy. Much of the success of these three meetings was due to his preliminary work and arrangements.

On March 19th, Mr. Crompton and Councillor A. Creighton addressed a large open-air meeting at St. Nicholas, on "Land Reform and the Rights of Labour." Great interest was displayed and a lively, but informing discussion took place at the close of the speeches. Other meetings on the land question will be held by the Young Liberals' League shortly.

Mr. R. L. Outhwaite will address a series of meetings this month on behalf of the United Committee.

AYLESBURY.

At a meeting of the Aylesbury Urban District Council on March 11th, Councillor Rupert East moved that part of the report of the Sewage Committee relating to the purchase of land for a new sewage disposal ground, be referred back, and that the Council instruct the Committee to offer the owners of the land a price based on the Government valuation under the Finance Act plus ten per cent. for compulsory purchase. The object of this, Mr. East said, was to find out if the owners were demanding more than a fair value. During the debate which followed it was stated that the price demanded was exorbitant. The Council unanimously agreed to Mr. East's motion, and the Clerk was instructed to communicate the Council's offer to the landowners.

THE LORD ADVOCATE AT EAST GRINSTEAD.

Speaking at Whitehall, East Grinstead, Surrey, on Friday, March the 1st, the Right Hon. Alexander Ure, K.C., M.P. (Lord Advocate for Scotland), dealing with the land question said, according to the SUSSEX AND SURREY COURIER of March 9th:—

He would ask permission to "soar to less ambitious heights" and speak on the question of land. (Applause.) He urged a system of rating and taxation in this country whereby the burden would be more equally divided. As an illustration of what he meant he instanced a man who had small business premises which were his own. Another man had a lot of valuable waste ground in the centre of an industrial neighbourhood. The first had to pay rates and the latter did not. If the authorities saw a man had a

piece of ground which he had not built on they would advise him to erect a grand and expensive house on it, and then they would make him pay heavy rates. If they did not start building they would pay no rates at all. The existing law as it stood tended to keep a man from making the best possible use of his land. (Hear, hear.) Could they not find a better system than that? Was it possible? Could they find a worse system? (Laughter.) He doubted it. To make land pay they had to build on it. Many business men had to keep up appearances and have expensive offices if they were to make progress. They were heavily rated into the bargain. If they had tried the best means of rating then they must admit that that system was a miserable failure. (Applause.) He would suggest that they approach the matter in an altogether different direction and try another principle. Let them ask what advantage a man's land derived from the community; what benefit does he get from the community? Why should land be different to any other commodity? Because it was different to any other commodity. Many people who possessed valuable land were content to let it remain to add still more to its value. They did not have to pay taxes for it in the meantime. They could afford to wait for prices which would come from nothing they had spent on the land. During that time the value of the land was growing and growing. He (the speaker) could pull down his house in Edinburgh and erect on it a hen coop and rate it at £5 a year. He would be taxed upon the value of that hen coop. That was a strange condition of things. (Hear, hear.) They could not rate the value of the land unless they knew the value of that land. (Hear, hear.) It was not so difficult as their opponents said, neither was it as easy as they themselves said. Work must be done; work was being done; and work would be done in the next two or three years which would lay the foundation of taxation which would distribute the taxes in proportion to what the owner has derived from the community all round.

BELFAST.

24, Willowbank Street, Antrim Road.

Our annual meeting took place on the 13th March, when it was decided amongst other things to approach the various libraries in the city with a view to getting LAND VALUES placed in the reading-room. The Secretary was also instructed to arrange to get LAND VALUES sent to the various working men's clubs and societies.

It was further decided to advertise the League and its literature in the ULSTER GUARDIAN, the weekly Liberal paper.

A. WILSON, Hon. Secretary.

SCOTTISH NOTES AND NEWS.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY CLASSES.

QUESTIONS IN THE PRIZE COMPETITION.

The prize competition class which meets every Friday evening has been exceptionally well attended and has brought together a band of very earnest students. Mr. M. Wilson Paul is delighted with the number of questions which are asked by the students. Besides the students who attend the class there are several reading classes in various places where young men are preparing to engage in the examination, in all there are 58 taking part in the contest.

The Secretary of the League has sent to each student a letter inviting participation in the examination and enclosing a set of questions which have to be answered and returned to the League offices by Saturday, 11th May. In addition to answering the questions each competitor has to write an essay on "The Taxation of Land Values in relation to Unemployment." Since the examiners are not to know the identity of the competitors, names must not be attached to the essays and replies, but written on a separate slip of paper and enclosed in the same wrapper.

The examiners are Mr. William Cassels and Mr. M. Wilson Paul, M.A. They recommend competitors to aim at brevity and accuracy. The following are the questions to be answered:—

- (1) Since many months' application of labour is necessary to the building of a "Lusitania," is it not correct to state that the workers engaged in the construction

are maintained and paid out of capital? Give reason for your answer.

- (2) The Law of Rent tends to equalise wages. Discuss.
- (3) "Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production, every stimulus applied to consumption, raises rent." (Thorold Rogers). Discuss fully.
- (4) The land of England has been made and re-made, therefore the present owners must not be dispossessed unless adequate compensation be paid. Discuss.
- (5) Discuss graduated Income Tax as a means of raising public revenue.
- (6) Single Taxers contend that a tax upon land values cannot be transferred by the landholder to the user of land. Is their position tenable? Give reasons.
- (7) The Single Tax is immoral in so far as it places all taxation upon, and aims at the extinction of, one particular form of property. Discuss this statement economically and morally.

NOTE.—The title of the essay is: "The Taxation of Land Values in relation to Unemployment." The examiners request that essayists be as concise as possible.

The coal strike is engaging the attention of everyone and at the close of the fourth week finds the industries of Scotland disorganised and almost paralysed. The irony of the situation is that none of the immediate parties in this futile struggle have turned their attention to the root cause of the whole trouble. Neither the miners' leaders nor the coal masters, nor for that matter the Government have for a moment glanced at the land monopolist who sits calmly waiting until the struggle terminates either by sheer exhaustion or by the still more futile method of a legislative minimum wage, to recommence drawing his royalties, wayleaves and dead rents.

In view of the strike the Organising Committee met and arranged for a series of open-air meetings in the mining districts and meetings were held at Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cambuslang, Blantyre, Baillieston, Uddingston, Bellshill, Rutherglen, Kirkintilloch and other districts. The meetings were well attended, and in several places the attendance was over 1,000. The speakers were Messrs. Adam Muir, Robert Muir, McLaren, Henry, Macdonald, Little, J. Cameron, Bell, and Fairley.

The campaign among the United Irish League Branches is going on and meetings have been addressed by Messrs. Adam Muir, Macdonald, M. Wilson Paul, and Graham Cassels.

The strike has been the cause of a lively newspaper correspondence and some striking examples of what land monopolists exact as royalties. Here is one which appeared in the GLASGOW HERALD over the signature of "John Hogg":—

Wemyss Coal Trust and Coal Companies (Limited).—
"The trust was formed in 1897 with a capital of £500,000, equally divided into Ordinary and 5½ per cent. Preference shares. The Ordinary shareholders have got 165 per cent. in dividends from 1898 to 1907, while the Preference shareholders have got 70 per cent.

| | |
|--|----------|
| 11 years' Ordinary dividend | £390,000 |
| 14 years' Preference dividend at 5 per cent. | 175,000 |
| Reserve fund (1908) | 3,924 |
| Carried forward | 655 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| 14 years' royalties (£43,260 per annum) | £569,579 |
| | 605,640 |

£1,175,219

This statement shows that in 14 years the landowner has taken £36,061 more than the capitalist. Even the Socialist must admit that the capitalist supplies his capital.

Is there any justification however for the huge returns which accrue to the landowner, who grants but his bare permission.

The special correspondent of the GLASGOW HERALD, who made a tour of some of the towns and villages of Lanarkshire, says:—

"In discussing the situation with the more intelligent men in the ranks of the strikers one cannot help noticing the vigour with which they condemn the principle of paying high mining royalties to landowners. They recognise that the coal master must have a reasonable profit in working the mines, but they strongly advocate something being done to reduce the burden imposed on the industry by the payment of royalties."

When will these intelligent miners tackle the work of teaching their leaders the importance of the Taxation of Land Values as a means of raising wages?

ROUKEN GLEN AND LAND VALUES.

The GLASGOW HERALD of 15th March gives two announcements which are in direct relationship, and to which it seems worth while to call attention. The HERALD gives a general indication of the purposes of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill introduced by Mr. Dundas White, and intended (1) to expedite the land valuation of Scotland now in process and to put in proper form and render it as quickly as possible available for the purposes of local rating; and (2) to make such valuation the basis of price to be paid for land for public purposes. In another column the HERALD reports that the Glasgow Corporation have bought 73½ acres of ground from Sir John Stirling Maxwell situated close to Rouken Glen at £160 per acre, equal to a total sum of £11,760. The "annual value" of this ground for purposes of present rating is not likely to exceed £2 10s. per acre, equal at 25 years' purchase to a total sum of £4,575. Under the new conditions contemplated by Dr. Dundas White's Bill we should have either a decidedly higher valuation for purposes of rating or a decidedly lower price for the purpose of purchase. The probability is that we should have both things. We should rate on a higher value than £4,575, and we should purchase if the necessity arose, at a lower price than £11,760.

We have here the latest reminder that the estimates of land values based on present figures of "annual value" are totally misleading, and fail to bring out that much higher value which often emerges—in the case of suburban land unfailingly emerges and usually in much greater degree than we find in the present illustration—when purchase is proposed.

MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE RATING OF LAND VALUES.

GLASGOW TOWN COUNCIL.

TERMS OF THE PETITION TO PARLIAMENT.

According to the MUNICIPAL JOURNAL of 9th March, the following are the terms of the Glasgow petition to the Government in favour of the Taxation of Land Values for local purposes:—

That your petitioners are the Statutory Assessing Authority for municipal purposes in the City and Royal Burgh of Glasgow.

That your petitioners have since 1896 consistently approved of the principle of the Taxation of Land Values for local purposes, and supported the Bills for attaining this object as regards England which were read a second time in your Honourable House in the Sessions of 1904 and 1905.

That your Honourable House in the Sessions of 1905 and 1906 read a second time Bills for the Taxation of Land Values for local purposes in Scotland, and on April 24th, 1906, remitted the Bill of that Session to a Select Committee, which, after hearing evidence, made the following recommendations, viz.:—

(1) That the Bill referred to the Committee be not further proceeded with; and

(2) That a measure be introduced making provision for a valuation being made of land in the burghs and counties of Scotland apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, and that no assessment be determined upon until the amount of that valuation is known and considered.

That under the Finance (1909–1910) Act 1910, provision has now been made for a valuation of all land in the United Kingdom, and for the imposition inter alia of an Imperial tax called "Increment value duty" in respect of any enhanced value of such land, as provided for in the said Act.

That your petitioners have had submitted to them information showing that a valuation of land apart from buildings has been adopted on the Continent, in the Colonies, and in other countries, and that taxation has been imposed thereon for local purposes.

That on January 25th, 1912, your petitioners passed the following resolution, viz.:—

"That, having regard to the facts (1) that the principle of the Taxation of Land Values has been consistently supported by the corporation with the view of securing to the city and the ratepayers the benefits of such taxation, and (2) that the Government are at present collecting, or are in contemplation of collecting, information and all relative data as to the true valuation of all lands situated in urban and suburban districts throughout the country for the purpose of such taxation, the corporation, following out their recognised policy in regard to this matter, resolve to petition Parliament to the effect that powers be granted to all local rating authorities throughout the country—county, urban, and town councils—to impose and levy on the new valuation a tax on the value of land for local purposes, distinct and separate from the increment duty to be imposed and levied under the provisions of the Finance (1909–1910) Act 1910."

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that there may be introduced into your Honourable House by the Government, and passed into law, a Bill empowering local rating authorities to impose and levy a tax for local purposes on the valuation of land in the United Kingdom as ascertained under the Finance (1909–1910) Act 1910, and with such clauses and provisions therein inserted as to your Honourable House may seem meet.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE GLASGOW PETITION TO PARLIAMENT.

As far as we have been able to ascertain thus early, some 25 local rating authorities have decided to support the Glasgow Town Council in petitioning Parliament for powers to rate land values, while others still have the matter under discussion, and the matter has still to come up on many local rating bodies.

The following is a list of authorities who have decided to support Glasgow Town Council in petitioning Parliament for powers to rate land values:—

North Bierley Guardians, Arbroath Parish Council, Edinburgh Parish Council, Bothwell Parish Council, Glasgow Parish Council, Ramsbottom District Council, Halifax Town Council, Hastings Guardians, Cannock (Staffs) Guardians, Cannock District Council, Wolverhampton Town Council, Oldham Guardians, Oldham Town Council, East Ham Town Council, Yeovil Town Council, Bristol Guardians, Hinckley Urban District Council, Rhondda Urban District Council, Rotherham Borough Council, Gillingham Town Council, Redruth District Council, Gt. Harwood Urban District Council, Bermondsey Board of Guardians, Huddersfield County Borough Council, and Tottenham Urban District Council.

Below we give reports from the Halifax Town Council, and the Staffordshire County Council.

HALIFAX TOWN COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the Town Council held on 6th March, Councillor C. H. Smithson moved that the Council again affirm its approval of the principle of rating land values, and in conjunction with Glasgow and other local authorities, decide to petition Parliament to grant powers to all local rating authorities to adopt the principle of rating land values for local purposes. He contended that all land should be assessed for local rates according to the advantage it obtained by the expenditure of public money and by the presence of the community. The principle of the present system of rating was that all land used was rated, and the more and the better it was used the more it was rated; the less it was used the less it was rated. If an owner refused to let his land be used, he paid no contribution

to the local authority for the benefits that property received from the rates. That was an anomaly which members of all parties were prepared to remedy. Taxation of Land Values would bring in extra revenue which could be used to strike a generally lower rate or to establish a differential rate between the value of land and the value of buildings.

Proceeding, Mr. Smithson said the effect of this reform would be that much more land would be taken up by builders. It would also materially assist in schemes of town planning, because owners would be much more willing to co-operate with the public authority in dealing with undeveloped land. An alternative was the application of the recommendation made by a Parliamentary Committee in 1906, after taking evidence from all over the country as to the effect of the rating of land values. This was that a new basis of assessment of property should be established for local purposes, which should exclude from assessment any value which could be directly traced to what the individual had done to improve his property, and the whole rate should be levied upon land value alone. That proposition he strongly supported, because he believed it would lead to a much more equitable distribution of the burden of rates between the property owners of the town. Wherever the principle had been applied it had met with the greatest success. He hoped Halifax would be one of the first authorities to adopt these powers and thereby get a lead over other authorities that would make it difficult for them to be overtaken. In conclusion, he suggested that the Council should have a special evening to discuss this question in detail.

Alderman Smith seconded the motion, but said that the time would come when the question of local rating would be settled by a municipal income tax. Alderman Thompson supported, as also did Councillor Taylor, who said: "I rise to support the Resolution because it is one of those resolutions which you cannot rise to oppose. He had never heard of a land tax that was worth half the time that was spent in the agitation for it. It was nothing more or less than a 'red-herring,' but he supported it as a 'red-herring'—a 'red-herring.'"

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

At a fully attended meeting of the Staffs County Council, the Clerk submitted the Glasgow Town Council's Resolution. It was moved and seconded that the Resolution be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration and report.

Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., moved that the resolution be not submitted to the Finance Committee but be decided by the Council at that meeting. Proceeding, he said that his object in submitting his resolution as a subject of great importance to be discussed by the Council as a whole, was in order that the Finance Committee might have some indication as to the reasons which instigated the Glasgow City Council to pass those resolutions and send them round. The Glasgow Corporation had consistently, as they said, supported the rating of land values, but he did not think that the question had been before that Council before. The Government, it would be observed, were not being asked to compel local authorities to do anything; they were merely being asked to give local authorities the power to rate land values as well as to rate the combined hereditaments of land and buildings together. This question of allowing local authorities to rate land values came before the Royal Commission, appointed by a Conservative Government, in 1898, and which reported in 1901. That Commission submitted several reports, but the most important was one signed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir James Balfour (now Lord Blair Balfour), Sir George Murray, head of the Treasury, and Sir Edward Hamilton, also a great Treasury official. In their report they made this recommendation, which he would take the liberty of reading to the Council. They said:

Unless the owners of ground values are to be relieved at the expense of the taxpayers, a course which probably none would advocate, it seems most necessary to accompany the increase of subventions—(that means, explained Mr. Wedgwood, subventions from the Imperial Exchequer and Consolidated Fund)—by the imposition of a site-value rate.

The position taken up by them was that any relief given to the ratepayer, would relieve local landlords of the hereditary burden, as Lord Goschen called it, of being liable for the maintenance of the poor and the upkeep of education.

Since the Royal Commission report of 1901, several other committees had sat, notably the Select Committee on the Scottish Land Values Taxation Bill. They reported in 1907, and it was on their report that the Glasgow resolution had been based. They reported that there should be a change in the basis on which rates were levied, and that, in their opinion—and they took evidence, very extensive evidence, from surveyors and local authorities—it ought to be possible to levy rates in such a manner as not to penalise buildings and improvements. In a word, the object of the change in the basis of rating was that the rates should be levied upon the capital selling value of the land instead of upon the combined value of the hereditament—land and buildings together. Industrious people were penalised by the present system; they were made to pay more because they improved their property, whereas the man who starved his property and did not employ capital or labour upon it escaped. The new valuation called for contributions from all people, according to the use that might be made of their land instead of upon the use they actually made of it.

Mr. G. E. Brown supported Mr. Wedgwood's proposition, and said that Lord Hatherton, speaking at a meeting of the Cannock Board of Guardians, said this, whatever it was, was a tax on land. He (the speaker) said it was not a tax on land. It was a tax on land values. If they could get the agriculturists to realise the difference between a tax on land and a tax on land values he did not think there would be a single farmer who would not be with them. The agriculturist was rated on the full rent value of his land—"No! no!". Well, less 50 per cent. (Laughter.) However, the 50 per cent. granted some years had been overtaken by the extra taxation already put on. Where it had not been increased and where tenants had gone into new farms the rents had risen to exactly the amount of the 50 per cent. allowance. ("No! no!") He could name a member of the Council who had told him that when a tenancy changed between his father and himself that was what happened. He thought agriculturists did not realise that while they were paying on land that, say, cost £40 per acre at the rate of 30s. per acre, there were hundreds of cases of land around their towns worth from £500 to £3,000,000 an acre which was not paying a single farthing to the rates and taxes. If land values were taxed it would bring down the price of land to a proper level so that it would allow people to use it, and use it in the very best way.

Mr. Heaton said he hoped the Council, by a unanimous vote, would reject the amendment of the hon. member (Mr. Wedgwood). The subject of land values was perfectly understood, and very much so by the hon. member himself, but it was a highly controversial subject. The hon. member appeared before them that day as the friend of the over-burdened ratepayer. Well, they were all over-burdened ratepayers, but he would venture to say that the hon. member stood there in another capacity, and that was as Chairman of the Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. Probably many members of that Council received by post that morning, as he did, a copy of the journal entitled LAND VALUES, of which Mr. Wedgwood was so distinguished an ornament. He took it that, underlying all this, Mr. Wedgwood was trying to steal an advantage by getting the support of the Council to a motion of this kind.

After a lively discussion an amendment proposing that a special meeting of the Council be called to consider the matter was defeated by 40 votes to 29, and the motion referring the matter to the Finance Committee was adopted.

INVERNESS TOWN COUNCIL AND THE LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

A UNANIMOUS VOTE.

At a meeting of the Inverness Town Council on March 4th, Councillor George Young, the Hon. Secretary of the Highland Land Values League, moved the following resolution:—

That it be remitted to the Law Committee to consider as to the advisability of petitioning in favour of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill 1911, presented by Dr. Dundas White, and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 13th December, 1911.

The Provost took exception to the motion on the ground that it was political.

Councillor Young, in his speech, said that this was not a political question. It was a rating question. Having explained the objects of the Bill, he said he could not see any political bias there. A motion, practically the same as that which now stood in his name, was carried by an overwhelming majority in the Glasgow Corporation, and the Board of Guardians of Bristol, by a big majority, supported the principle he now advocated. They all knew that the rates in Inverness, as well as those throughout the country, were rising year by year, and they as a Council ought to look ahead and see if they could do anything to assist the overburdened ratepayer. He was not standing there as a party politician, but as one interested in the advancement of the ratepayers.

Councillor Donald Murray seconded, remarking that he could not see the political element in the question, notwithstanding what the Provost had said. It was purely a matter for the expression of an opinion—an opinion which ought to be expressed by every intelligent body, pro and con.

The motion was unanimously agreed to.

The conversion of the majority of the Town Council to the Taxation of Land Values was not unexpected, says the HIGHLAND TIMES of 7th March, in an admirable leading article on the question. Most of the councillors, it continues, have come to recognise that the days of moving that communications bearing on this important question be allowed to lie on the table, or under it, have passed for ever, and that it must now be considered seriously in the interests of their constituents. The Provost's qualms about the subject being a political one may not be taken seriously, for he is far too shrewd an individual not to realise that it is no more a political question than it is a religious one.

Great credit for the progress of the Land Values Movement in the Highlands is due to the capable and hardworking Secretary of the Highland League and his co-workers, who by pen and voice never fail to take every opportunity of furthering the cause.

COUNCILLOR WM. D. HAMILTON'S VAN CAMPAIGN.

In our February issue we referred to Mr. Hamilton's magnificent motor van specially built to his order at a cost by him of over £700 for service in the land values movement. This new and up-to-date machine comes as a striking example of individual effort and unfaltering belief in the gospel it is designed to serve. There has been nothing like it since Tom L. Johnson first amazed the democracy of Ohio with his famous tent campaign. Tom L. provided his own hall which he erected and removed at his own convenience. Mr. Hamilton now comes with his motor van to the free and open halls provided by Nature and policed by the local governing body. We predict for him a measure of success which will justify the venture and compensate our "crusader" for his faith in the people, when approached with our ideas, clear and away from party politics. There is to be no partisanship in this crusade, Liberals, Labour men and Tories, as such, are warned off the pitch. Mr. Hamilton's intention is to get at the people and explain to them that their salvation lies with themselves and not with "the never-ending audacity of their elected persons." Words with him are not meant to conceal thought, but to explain it and to some purpose. It is an inspiring mission and we cordially wish it all the success it can and ought to command. In all this noble self-sacrificing endeavour Mr. Hamilton has the loyal and enthusiastic support of his wife. The idea of the van may not be due entirely to Mrs. Hamilton's well-known devotion to the cause, but it has had from its inception her warmest approval.

Relating his experiences, in a letter on 5th March, Mr. Hamilton writes:—

This is the first day with the caravan. After a run round Ardrossan with my wife and daughter, we hove to in Princes Street, dropped anchor between the Eglinton Hotel and the Bank, hauled down the diagrams and maps and inaugurated our campaign with less ceremony than it takes some folks to take their tea. Although the hour was unusual—about 5 o'clock—we soon had 400 or 500 men around, and for over an hour addressed the most interested and wondering group of mortals perhaps that I ever confronted. A Tory pressman honoured me

with his presence for about 20 minutes on the outskirts of the crowd and thereafter stole sickly away. A strong party Liberal at one point said "Liar!" but I roped that fellow in as a sympathiser before I finished. Speaking of the present crisis, I placated all parties and institutions so far as they failed to see and urge that under a just social condition the minimum wage might easily be equal to 25s. per day. I showed this with the aid of my wages diagram.

I did not forget to explain the burdens which the Government had placed upon me in the execution of this work, such as licence, registration, motor and petrol taxes, &c., Altogether, although no Bishop or big man was there to bless the opening ceremony its success was in every way encouraging, and the spirits of all the just men that ever lived were approvingly with us.

In a later letter (March 16th) he says:—

Since writing you last I have had four other splendid meetings: at Saltecoats in the Public Square; at Stevenston on the shore; at Stevenston again on the following day in the Public Square; and at Largs. I arrived at the Public Square in Saltecoats shortly after 3.30 p.m. and immediately drew down the diagrams and chart. A considerable crowd gathered round and began to survey the figures and lines. Regretfully they informed me that I had come at a bad time. It was Saturday, and they were all practically on the move towards the weekly football match, and suggested that I could have a great audience if I cared to commence when the match was over. I had a splendid meeting, nevertheless, of three or four hundred interested hearers. All the surrounding windows of houses were used after the manner of opera boxes, with windows up and chairs drawn to the front. At the finish I had two invitations from members of the audience, one to go to Stevenston, and the other to go to Largs. To Stevenston (as the day was fine on Sunday) I went. Sunday I am convinced is the best possible day for our work if it is handled in proper missionary spirit. On arrival at the shore at Stevenston a gentleman and some ladies came round and curiously scrutinised what seemed to them, on such a quiet sacred day, a strange phenomenon. I recognised in the man an old schoolfellow. "What is this?" he said. I pointed to the maps and the armour plate on the front of the radiator on which was painted in large letters "The Land for the People." "Oh, yes," he replied, colouring cholericly, "I remember you now discussing this subject with me one day in the train. Well, I am against you and will go for you and denounce you." "Right you are," I replied, "you're the very man I've been looking for. There is the platform, take it and use it if you have a better message than I have to the people, and I will deal with your remarks when you have finished." "Oh, no," he said, "you speak first." "All right," I rejoined, "anything to meet you." "Ah," he concluded, "I really must get home with my friends to tea." And like the would-be pilgrim in Bunyan's immortal allegory he turned homewards and I saw him no more.

At all the meetings I have dealt with the present crisis and explained it in the light of our philosophy and truth. Stevenston is largely a mining town and in it and Saltecoats there are a good many Socialists and Labour men, and while as I told you in my last letter I make an open show of all parties that have led us into such trouble, so far I have had no one to challenge me, with the exception of the gentleman just referred to, and one, a sort of Scotch-Yankee type, who questioned some figures, which I got from Edward McHugh, with regard to miners' wages in Pennsylvania. This man told me I did not know what I was talking about. The crowd looked fiercely at him. I told him that I was very anxious to obtain funds to carry on this work, and, although not a betting man, I would bet the van that the figures could be substantiated. He, too, walked immediately away talking to himself.

One feature of the meetings impresses me especially. That is the keen interest taken in the subject by women, old and young, many of whom even with children in their arms will stand for over an hour listening, and so far as I can judge, approvingly.

Although I have only been out five times, the experience has been so remarkable and so encouraging that it has already provided sufficient matter to fill a book.

In his latest letter dated March 24th, Wm. D. Hamilton writes:—

James Busby (Secretary of the Scottish League) came down here yesterday to represent the League at the

unveiling of a Memorial Celtic Cross to the old sturdy Highland land reformer John Murdoch, who as you know lived in Ardrossan. We went up in the caravan along with Mrs. Hamilton to the cemetery. We hauled up at the gate and found some local and Highland personal friends of Mr. Murdoch, some of whom, by the way, seemed to think that the Crofters Act and the Small Landholders Bill had solved the land question. I unfurled the deer forest map, the diagram and all the others so that those present might be suitably edified for the occasion.

One of the friends was equipped with splendid photographic tackle for taking a plate of the Memorial and function, but he forgot to take the caravan! We all said a few words, but Busby will be able to give you a good idea of the ceremony generally when you come up north. Thereafter he accompanied us to West Kilbride for a meeting. On arrival we found the village preparing to go out solid to a football match, but we managed to get 20 or 30 to listen to us, and for about three-quarters of an hour we delivered our message. This was the poorest meeting we have had yet, and some of our interested audience apologised and promised us a larger meeting if we would only wait till about 7 p.m.

We decided however, to clear away to another meeting at Salcoats, after doing justice to a substantial lunch in the van at West Kilbride. We started our meeting at 6 p.m. after getting rid of one or two drunks who troubled us much at the outset. The meeting grew till it assumed very large proportions. I cannot possibly say how many, but they stood in a densely packed mass round the van and repeatedly urged me to give them more. I spoke for two hours and twenty minutes, encountering—and I think I can safely say demolishing—the criticism of all parties and sects which seemed to be represented there. Our old friend the man who wants to know "who he is to vote for" was present, and to the immense satisfaction of the meeting I dealt with his difficulties.

This has been the best meeting so far, but in going home I failed to clear by half an inch the iron gates at "Ailsa House," and so toppled over the gate pillars and about 15 feet of the adjacent railing and coping. It looks a sorry wreck. By not much short of a miracle the van, beyond a slight abrasion, is intact, and if weather permits I hope to be out speaking at Dalry to-morrow evening. On Friday night I had a very fine meeting at Kilwinning for the first time there. People assured me that I would have a much better one next time. In all I have held eight meetings since the 5th March as described.

WHAT THE ENGLISH LEAGUE IS DOING.

In addition to the lectures already announced in this column, Mr. Verinder has addressed a Ward Meeting of the West Southwark Liberal and Radical Association (the first of a series of five such meetings in this constituency), and a drawing-room meeting at Oxted. Mr. Graham Pease has lectured at West St. Pancras on "The Lesson of the Coal Strike." Councillor Dobson, J.P., has addressed the Adult School and the Brotherhood at Union Church, the P.S.A. Meeting at Earlsmead, Tottenham, and a meeting at Beeston, and has also dealt with the Land Question in a number of Branch meetings of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, besides getting a Resolution through the Tottenham U.D.C. in support of the Glasgow movement for the Local Taxation of Land Values. Mr. Geo. Linskill, always active at Grimsby, has lectured before the Social Union, and the South-West Ward Liberal Association. The former lecture (March 9th) was reported in the GRIMSBY DAILY NEWS. Mr. Linskill is keeping up a persistent agitation, by letters to the local Press and by distribution of leaflets, in support of the municipal campaign. Councillor McCulloch lectured at Stonebridge, N.W., on March 10th.

The public meeting at Greenwich, organised by the League with the active assistance of the Greenwich Liberal Association, was a great success. Mr. Oscar F. Dowson, M.A. (a member of the League's Executive and prospective Candidate for the Borough) took the chair. The General Secretary of the League addressed the meeting and moved: "That in the opinion of this meeting, the present method of raising local revenues ought to be changed, inasmuch as it unduly favours some ratepayers and unduly penalises

others, obstructs industry, causes unemployment, and prevents the healthy growth of our cities, towns and villages; and this meeting further declares that local authorities should be given the power of raising local revenue in such a way that the existing obstacles to the employment of labour and capital are removed, and rates imposed instead on the value of the privilege enjoyed by those who benefit from the performance of public services, namely, upon land values." This was seconded and carried with five dissentients. Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., President of the League, then delivered an address on "The Lords and the Land," dealing with the history of the English Land Question. The Secretary of the Greenwich Liberal Association writes that "the meeting is the best we have held in that Ward, for a long time past; the S.E. Ward is looked upon as a Tory stronghold."

The officers of the League, with the willing help of members of the Executive, have taken charge of the sale of literature at the series of meetings now being held in London in conjunction with the United Committee and the London Liberal Federation. The results have, so far, been very satisfactory.

The Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, L.C.C., a Vice-President of the League and one of its founders in 1883, has put the following Resolution on the agenda paper of the London County Council: "That having regard to the fact that the Government are at present collecting, or are in contemplation of collecting, information and all relative data as to the true valuation of all lands situated in urban and suburban districts throughout the country for the purpose of the Taxation of Land Values, the Council resolves to petition Parliament to the effect that powers be granted to all local rating authorities throughout the country—county, urban, and town councils—to impose and levy on the new valuation a tax on the value of land for local purposes, distinct and separate from the increment duty to be imposed and levied under the provisions of the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910."

Mr. John Osborn, P.L.G., writes: "Whilst I have not spoken during the last few weeks expressly on the Land Question, I addressed a very well attended meeting of the Men's Brotherhood at the Wesleyan Church at Strood, near Rochester, on Sunday, March 10th, on the work of the Poor Law, and prefaced my remarks by a few very strong points to the effect that a Poor Law was only rendered needful in this land at all by reason of the workers being deprived of their natural birthrights in the land values of this country. I dwelt on this quite sufficiently to drive the point well home, and the meeting took it at once: so much so, that I have arranged to go there again and lecture entirely on the Land Question at as early a date as can be arranged for in their next quarter's programme."

The April quarterly meeting of the League will be held on Wednesday, April 24th, in the Essex (Large) Hall, Essex Street, Strand (nearly opposite the Law Courts). Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., President, will take the chair at 8 p.m., and Mr. J. W. Graham Pease will open a discussion on "Land Value Taxation *versus* Land Purchase." Members are requested to make this meeting known, and to bring as many friends as possible.

APRIL LECTURES.

- Mon. 1.—West Southwark Liberal and Radical Association (Ward Meeting): Fredk. Verinder, "Taxation of Land Values."
- Wed. 3.—West Southwark, Ward Meeting: Fredk. Verinder.
- Th. 11.—British Socialist Party, Coffee Room, Temperance Hotel, Grays (opposite Station): Fredk. Verinder, "The Housing Problem."
- Fri. 12.—West Southwark, Ward Meeting: Fredk. Verinder.
- Mon. 15.—Executive Meeting. 8 p.m.
- Tu. 16.—West Southwark, Ward Meeting: Fredk. Verinder.
- Th. 18.—Hornsey Liberal and Radical Association, 66, Durham Road, East Finchley: Fredk. Verinder, "The Housing Problem." 8 p.m.
- Fri. 19.—Willesden, L.Y.L., The Croft, High Street, Harlesden: Fredk. Verinder. 8.30.
- Wed. 24.—Central Council. 7.30 p.m.
- " —Public Discussion at Essex Hall (see above).
- Th. 25.—Buckhurst Hill L.Y.L., Westbury Hall: Fredk. Verinder, "Taxation of Land Values." 8 p.m.

LAND VALUES PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL REPORT,

FROM NOVEMBER 1ST, 1910, TO JANUARY 31ST, 1911.

The audited accounts of the above Department will be found at foot. The following books and pamphlets have been printed or purchased during the past fifteen months:—

- 2,000 "My Neighbour's Land Mark" (First Edition).
- 5,000 "Moses: The Hebrew Law-giver."
- 5,000 "Thy Kingdom Come."
- 5,000 "The Labour Question."
- 20,000 "Free Trade and Land Values" (Verinder).

In addition to the above, the United Committee have supplied:—

- 50,000 "The Story of My Dictatorship" (First Edition).
- 5,000 "Form IV.: and What Next?"
- 5,000 "Rural Land Question."
- 5,000 "Land Reform."
- 5,000 "A.B.C. of the Land Question."
- 5,000 "Land Valuation Guide."

In consequence of the poor health of Mr. L. H. Berens, who has administered the affairs of this Department since its inception in October, 1906, the assets of this Department and the printing and financial arrangements for future publications will be taken over by the United Committee; the business of distribution, &c., will remain in the capable hands of Mr. William Mann, of the English League, at 376-77, Strand, London, W.C., where all orders should be sent.

LEWIS H. BERENS,
Administrator.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS.
November 1st, 1910, to January 31st, 1912.

| RECEIPTS. | | PAYMENTS. | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | £ s. d. | | £ s. d. |
| Nov. 1910, Cash in hand .. | 44 17 11 | Printing books and pamphlets .. | 149 7 10 |
| Literature sales .. | 124 16 9 | Advertising .. | 7 0 0 |
| | | Sundries and postage .. | 11 6 0 |
| | | Cash in hand .. | 2 0 10 |
| | <u>£169 14 8</u> | | <u>£169 14 8</u> |

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.
January 31st, 1912.

| LIABILITIES. | | ASSETS. | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | £ s. d. | | £ s. d. |
| Sundry creditors .. | 20 19 3 | Stock of Books and Pamphlets .. | 157 9 6 |
| Balance of Assets over Liabilities .. | 178 11 1 | Sundry Debtors .. | 40 0 0 |
| | | Cash in hand .. | 2 0 10 |
| | <u>£199 10 4</u> | | <u>£199 10 4</u> |

We have audited the above account and compared it with the books and vouchers of the Fund and find same to be correct.
(Signed) **BUTTON, STEVES & WITTY,**
Incorporated Accountants.

February 23rd, 1912

BOOK REVIEWS.

TOM L. JOHNSON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

"MY STORY."*

"It is in the nature of truth never to fail." These simple words, with which Tom L. Johnson concludes his story, supplies the keynote of his public career, of his brave, manly, and instructive fight against all the forces established privilege could command. It was his firm, unswerving belief in their truth that enabled him to remain gay and cheerful in the midst of defeat, to inspire others with his own undaunted spirit, and to rally his forces confidently to confront difficulties and opposition which might well have appalled a lesser man. He knew he was fighting from no selfish motives and for no selfish cause, but for right and justice and truth; and he never faltered in his optimistic belief that, whatever the temporary set-backs, ultimately truth and justice must and would prevail; that, to use his own inspiring words, "Agitation for the right, once set in motion, cannot be stopped. Truth can never lose its power. It presses forward, gaining victories, suffering defeats, but losing nothing of momentum, augmenting its strength though

seeming to expend it." For himself, as for so many others inspired by the same social philosophy, it sufficed to have had an opportunity of being a soldier on behalf of truth, and in carrying out to the best of his abilities the work he found to do. And Tom L. Johnson was a soldier of no ordinary metal, a man of no ordinary powers, of no ordinary abilities. Hence, it was soon his proud privilege to find himself the natural leader in the struggle in the special district where his lot was cast.

Like so many thousands of others, Tom L. Johnson owed his intellectual quickening, or rather his moral and spiritual quickening, to the works of Henry George. When he first became acquainted with these teachings, through the instrumentality of "a prosaic railway train conductor," he was simply a specially capable and specially successful business man, engaged in "big-business" in which he was absolutely absorbed, indifferent to politics, and without even the suspicion that there was a social question awaiting solution. Acquaintance with the teachings of Henry George, however, speedily changed all this, brought into play intellectual and spiritual forces hitherto unsuspected, and transformed him into one of the most prominent, most resourceful, most courageous and indomitable leaders in the cause of practical democracy, in the broadest sense of this term, America has ever yet produced. Once understood and accepted, he never swerved from his conviction of their truth, and of their universal applicability. In one of his last speeches, given on his return from England, in the closing days of his well-spent life, referring to the fight in Great Britain, he once more reiterated his political beliefs in the following telling words:—

"Everywhere, all over the world, our cause is moving, so that those of us who twenty-five years ago thought it far off, have now the good fortune of seeing the realisation of our dreams. Privilege has been caught, exposed; and there is but one way of putting it down, and that is by the doctrine of Henry George. Abolish privilege! Give the people who make the wealth of the world an opportunity to enjoy it."

My STORY, however, is rather a frank revelation of his thoughts, a story of his fight against established privilege in his own city, rather than of his own life. Nor is this surprising. For its avowed purpose is to show "how privilege fights in the city, the State and the nation," so as to bring home to others not only its injurious effects, its demoralising influence, its nefarious, unscrupulous actions, but also how it can be exposed, fought and conquered. And yet, as its able editor, Miss Elizabeth Hauser—without whose willing co-operation Tom L. Johnson tells us the book would never have been written at all—so well says—"There is humour and sweetness and poise and power to be found in My STORY, but it is the story of a man who never knew what a momentous figure he was. Not the least of his greatness is his unconsciousness of it."

"The greatest thing our Cleveland movement did," its hero modestly says, "was to make men." One man makes many. And "Our Tom" was a man, a staunch democratic man to the very bottom of his soul; a man well fitted to make men of others, as well as to be their natural leader to worthy deeds. Nay, more than this; even his simple, characteristically modest account of his own life and doings is calculated to make men, better men, of those who study it, to uplift them to a higher realisation of their highest and most sacred duties as men and as citizens of a free, self-governing community. Not only Municipal reformers, Single Taxers and political students generally, but boys and young men specially will welcome My STORY. For the hearts of the young are generously open to the inspiring lessons to be drawn from a brave, unselfish life, ungrudgingly spent in the promotion of humanity's highest aims. Hence it is that those who would help their children to become citizens worthy of a free community, who would fit them to play a brave, manly part on behalf of liberty and justice in the great struggle to-day inevitable in every progressive country in the world, could not do better than place in their hands this record of the career of the man who willingly stepped down from the foremost ranks of privilege to cheer, inspire and lead those fighting on behalf of justice, of true democracy—Tom L. Johnson of Cleveland.

L. H. B.

* My STORY: By Tom L. Johnson, Edited by Elizabeth J. Hanser. B. W. Huebsch, New York, \$2.00 net.

"THE VILLAGE LABOURER (1760—1832)."

"I have attempted to show that the pauperism and the degradation of the English labourer were the result of a series of Acts of Parliament and acts of government, which were designed or adopted with the express purpose of compelling the labourer to work at the lowest rate of wages possible, and which succeeded at last in effecting that purpose."—THOROLD ROGERS, SIX CENTURIES OF WORK AND WAGES.

This book almost seems as if specially written to confirm the truth of the above contention of Thorold Rogers, at all events as far as the momentous years from 1760 to 1832 are concerned. It pictures the life of the rural workers during this period, revealing the causes which made it what it was, and them which they were; and describes the treatment meted out to them by a Government in which they had no share. Its authors are to be gratefully congratulated in a really good piece of solid work, timely and necessary to be done, and containing many reflections timely and necessary to be voiced. And yet to Englishmen necessarily a depressing book. For it will force upon them the conviction that in very many respects it would have been far better to have been born a West African native, dependent upon the sense of justice and of fellow-feeling of a despotic chief, than an English agricultural labourer at any time from 1650 to 1830, dependent upon the sense of justice and fellow-feeling of a politically and socially all-powerful landed aristocracy. These may seem bitter or even irrational words, but the contents of this book abundantly demonstrate them to be true.

The special legislative acts adopted to consummate "the pauperism and the degradation of the English labourer" during the period treated of in this book, were those known as Enclosure Acts. Hence, we find the motives, procedure, methods, character, objects and effects of these Acts admirably illustrated and described, more especially their effects upon rural life and upon the condition and character of the rural population.

The position of the English peasantry prior to these Acts may not have been exactly an enviable one; but the great majority of the rural population still retained certain rights to the use of the land and to avail themselves in many ways of the bounties of Nature, and this alone engendered feelings of independence, self-respect and self-reliance worthy of "the commoners of England." Their position after the passing of these Acts almost beggars description; rents had leapt up, the wages of the workers had gone down; agriculture had been revolutionised, and so had the condition of the agriculturalists; "the anchorage of the poor was gone." As our authors well picture it—the labourer's "auxiliary resources had been taken from him; enclosure had robbed him of the strip he had tilled, of the cow that he kept on the village pasture, of the fuel he had picked up in the woods, and of the turf he tore from the commons," and his money wages were less than they had been whilst he had enjoyed these advantages. Rate aid had to be accorded him to enable him to keep body and soul together—and "poaching, smuggling and ultimately thieving were called in to rehabilitate the labourer's economic position. The history of the agricultural labourer in this generation is written in the code of the Game Laws, the growing brutality of the criminal law, and the pre-occupation of the rich with the efficacy of punishment."

Bourke compared the landed aristocracy of his time to "the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate their benefits from generation." The purpose of this book is "to examine the social history of this country in the days when the great oaks were in the fulness of their vigour and strength, and to see what happened to some of the classes that found shelter in their shade." And as its authors well say in conclusion, "That class has left bright and ample records of its own life in literature, in art, in political traditions, in the display of great orations and debates, in memories of brilliant conversation and sparkling wit; it has left dim and meagre records of the disinherited peasants that are the shadow of its wealth; of the exiled labourers that are the shadow of its pleasures; of the villages sinking in poverty and crime and shame that are the shadow of its power and its pride." L. H. B.

* THE VILLAGE LABOURER, 1760—1832: A STUDY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND BEFORE THE REFORM BILL. By J. L. and Barbara Hammond. Publishers: Longmans, Green & Co., London.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN.

UNITED STATES.

JOSEPH FELS.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fels expect to leave the other side not later than 10th April. Mr. Fels' latest communication shows that he has been in Washington, D.C., putting the case for our proposals before a large builder there whose family are interested in the Single Tax movement. As we have indicated in recent issues he has done a great amount of campaigning on this trip and his voluminous correspondence shows that he is maintaining his record of a fourteen-hour day service in the movement.

Under the *agis* of the Fels Fund Commission presided over by Daniel Kiefer, the Single Tax movement in the United States has got a move on it which has commenced to disturb the peace of mind of the orthodox politicians of the United States and their camp followers. Tom L. Johnson's brilliant campaign in Cleveland counts for much. It brought a great amount of fighting force into the movement and inspired men everywhere in the cause of social justice. The Fels Fund Commission has taken hold of the situation in masterly fashion. Meetings are held and literature is being distributed with a consistency that bodes no good for the adjustments of American politics.

Mr. Fels, these past four months, has placed himself unreservedly at the service of the movement in the United States and Canada, and our friends in both these spheres of influence are enthusiastic over his successful speaking trip. Much new ground has been opened up, and every day able workers with sound views are coming into the movement, stimulating it and expanding it in every direction.

A CHARACTERISTIC LETTER.

The following letter dated March 9th, appearing in a Philadelphia newspaper, tells its own story:—

Dear Madam,—Enclosed find cheque for \$250 to be used in giving relief to the child victims, of the existing system from Lawrence, Mass.

In sending this I wish it distinctly understood that it is not a philanthropic gift to the sufferers. It is a part payment of a debt due these children from all who are upholding existing social wrong. Since I am not one of these, this cheque must be considered a gift to those whose dishonoured obligation it is, to a slight degree, liquidating.

Strict justice requires that if we cannot at once abolish legalised wrong then when immediate relief is needed for victims of legalised robbery, the upholders of the iniquity should be made to pay the bill. But unfortunately that is not possible. There is no way by which we can compel donations from upholders of landlordism, of private appropriation of public earnings, of tariff robbery, of private control of public highways, and of other privileges. We are helpless to enforce payment, even from the American Woollen Company, although it can be proven that this corporation has robbed these poor children by embezzling a fund entrusted to it for their benefit by the American people.

The people have levied a burdensome tariff tax on themselves and turned the proceeds over in trust to the American Woollen Company to be used in paying high wages to employees. The people were induced to do this by the representations of the American Woollen Company and similar concerns, that this trust would be faithfully carried out. But the corporation has used the money instead for excessive dividends. Similar acts of legal embezzlement are being committed by other protected employers.

Upholders of robbery make the false claim that there is no way by which the worker may be assured just treatment. They claim to know no cure for poverty and offer this voluntary ignorance as an excuse for continuing it. The excuse is not valid. Thirty-two years ago Henry George showed in PROGRESS AND POVERTY how poverty can be abolished. His arguments have never been disproved in spite of numberless attempts to do so.

The amount of the enclosed cheque I have charged in my ledger against the American Woollen Company and other supporters of legalised robbery. I advance it in part payment of a debt they owe, without consulting them

because their child creditors are in distress through their reluctance to settle. I doubt whether they will recognise the obligation, in spite of its manifest justice, since it is not legally enforceable. Consequently if it must be considered a charitable gift let it be fully understood that the real recipients of this charity are not poor children from Lawrence, but the stockholders of the American Woollen Company and other upholders of existing wrongs. I am, dear Madam, Faithfully,

JOSEPH FELS.

THE SEATTLE ELECTION.

The Single Tax amendment to the City Charter secured 12,000 votes out of 40,000 polled. The election took place on 5th March. A great campaign of education was carried on for a year or more and the Single Taxers, while losing the vote, are confident of the future. The City now knows something of the Single Tax policy, and 12,000 prepared to vote for it is something to be going on with. Referring to the subject *THE PUBLIC*, of March 15th, says:—

With the election of one of their own group for Mayor of Seattle and the polling of over 12,000 votes for the incorporation of their most ultra preliminary demands into the City Charter, the Single Taxers of Seattle have nothing to mourn over. On the mayoralty their candidate was opposed by the candidate of disreputable interests that make money out of vice, supported naturally enough by reputable interests that make money out of the economic conditions upon which money-making vice flourishes; and, although by a narrow margin, their candidate won. On the Single Tax amendment, they drew the full fire of the enemy. Every daily newspaper but one was against them, every disreputable business interest was against them, every investor in vacant lots angling for a prize at the expense of the common interest was against them, and education on the subject had not gone far enough to enable the average citizen of unselfish instincts to understand. Under these circumstances a vote of 12,000 for the Single Tax in 40,000 cast on the question, is a guarantee for the early future. Those were intelligent votes. The voters who cast them knew what they wanted and why. And now, with the arguments of the opposition laid bare in the cleanest cut and most vigorous contest over the Single Tax ever had anywhere, Single Tax progress in Seattle is hardly more than a matter of keeping at it. With the excitement of the campaign over, and a people aroused to the thinking point, those hostile arguments that served so well in the heat of the fight will look naked and forlorn in the calmness of the coming months. That an election should be carried frankly and brazenly in the interest of obstruction to improvement, in the interest of squatters on vacant lots, in the interest of a little group of rich monopolists of the most desirable locations in Seattle, and as frankly and brazenly against the interests of improvers and workers, is in itself the best kind of indication that the result was abnormal. But a chestnut burr was put under the saddle of the land capitalists by the Single Taxers of Seattle last week that will soon unhorse them.

AUSTRALIA.

THE LABOUR POLICY.

"THE LAND TAX HAS COME TO STAY."

According to a *TIMES* correspondent writing from Sydney, under date January 16th, published in the issue of 28th February, after a week's deliberation at Hobart, the Federal Labour Conference has directed that the Land Tax plank of the fighting platform shall stand.

The *TIMES* correspondent continues:—

The Land Tax has come to stay. Broadly speaking, it has left values very much as they were. Because of this some of the more eager spirits of the Conference were anxious to make the higher rate effective over a larger proportion of the value, but the Parliamentarians, who constituted more than a third of the delegates, thought that enough had been done for the present, although, significantly enough, their influence was only sufficient to defeat the proposal for heavier incidence by one vote. . . . So long as they (the large landowners) evince a willingness to co-operate in the policy of settlement they

have little to fear from the moderates of the Labour Party, but if, on the other hand, they choose to adopt a do-nothing attitude they will strengthen the hands of the extremists who are itching to give another turn to the screw.

SPAIN.

The March number of *EL IMPUESTO UNICO* makes a special feature of Mr. Alex. Mackendrick's "True Idea of Liberalism," translated by Mr. Amaya Rubio in a serious and lucid style worthy of the original. Other translated items are Henry George's "Introduction to the Study of Political Economy"; Mr. Fels' letter to Charitable Societies; and best of all (in the large type it merits), "Croasdale's definition," which every reader should wear in his heart.

Owing to indisposition of the accomplished editor—of which and of his improvement one learns by private correspondence—there is not so much of the striking news of the movement in Spanish speaking countries as usual. But there are two of the severely restrained and curt demonstrations to be expected in the Spanish movement: "Four Axioms of Free Trade" and "Some Maxims relating to Political Economy," good sound Georgian stuff, with no windy "Economics" to it! A good bit in large type: "Almost all taxes have been invented more for some private advantage than to procure higher Treasury receipts." And yet Spain has a good protective tariff pretty well at every street corner, and a tax-free proprietary!

Dr. Vitale, of Montevideo, deals drastically with the medical apologists for landlordism and poverty who ascribe consumption to a calf's lack of discretion in choosing parents: the modern Azazel of a sinful camp. His paper is very valuable, particularly the figures from industrial areas in Japan, such as Osaka, where children do not get cow's milk, meat is rarely eaten, and the native cattle are immune to tuberculosis; but the human scourge is as bad as in similar areas in Europe. That Free Trade points the way is shown by the consumptive death-rate of 1904 per 100,000: Moscow 387, Paris 383, luxurious Vienna 314, Madrid 256, Milan 254, Berlin 257.5, and London 166. To this may be compared 71 for New Zealand, where less attention is paid to the very rare infection from cattle than to the blight of Land Monopoly, which slays millions and shatters twenty times as many, while our doctors are worse than silent.

M. J. S.

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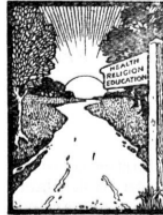
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LAND VALUES

SUPPLEMENT.

Extracts from Debates in the House of Commons on Local Rating, and on Sir Griffith-Boscawen's Housing of the Working Classes Bill.

APRIL, 1912.

DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON LOCAL RATING AND LAND VALUES.

MR. WEDGWOOD'S RESOLUTION.

Wednesday, 6th March, 1912.

Mr. Wedgwood : I beg to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present method of raising local revenues ought to be changed, inasmuch as it unduly favours some ratepayers and unduly penalises others, obstructs industry, causes unemployment, and prevents the healthy growth of our cities, towns, and villages; and this House further declares that local authorities should be given the power of raising local revenue in such a way that the existing obstacles to the employment of labour and capital are removed, and rates imposed instead on the value of the privilege enjoyed by those who benefit from the performance of public services, namely, upon land values."

In moving this Resolution I am bringing forward one of the points emphasised in the Memorial sent by 177 Liberal and Labour Members to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year. There were two main points in that Memorial, one was to obtain relief for the local ratepayers in the bearing of these burdens, which are really national in character, by a uniform tax upon land values. That I do not wish to touch to-night, although it has an intimate connection with the Resolution on the Paper, and the Resolution on the Paper would not be complete without some such general reference to land value for the relief of local rates. The Resolution gives to all local authorities the power, if they choose to exercise it, of levying rates upon land values instead of upon land and buildings together, instead of upon the annual value of the combined hereditaments. This question of giving additional powers to local authorities to levy rates upon land values is of exceptional importance at the present time, because the Town Council of Glasgow have recently passed a resolution upon this subject, and have circulated that resolution to all the local authorities in the country, including boards of guardians, with over 10,000 population, with the result that resolutions have been passed by local authorities here, there, and everywhere, and the resolutions have been forwarded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and local Members of Parliament. The question, therefore, is very much alive at the present time in the local Press, and it is all-important that this House, too, should discuss the question with a view to seeing that the change is both just and in the interests of the public.

The Resolution draws attention, in the first place, to the inequity of the present incidence of the rates, and you cannot have the inequity of the present system more perfectly exemplified than by the case of the different parts of London at the present time. In the year 1910 the poor rate in Poplar amounted to no less than 3s. 5d. in the £, while the poor rate in the parish of St. James', Westminster, amounted to a penny in the £, as against this 3s. 5d., and in the City of London to decimal '41 of a penny in the £. There you have an extraordinary difference in the incidence of the present rates, the poorest districts having a heavy levy to pay, and the rich districts the

smallest rate to pay. The fact is that these heavy rates borne by the poorer districts are becoming an overwhelming burden upon those districts. The people working in the city work in places where the rates are low and land values high, and they go back to sleep in these districts where the land values are low and the rates extortionately high. One of our chief objects is to readjust that, to equalise rates upon the only fair system by calling upon those to contribute who enjoy land value made by the people's work. Then as to the inequity as between persons, we have another striking example from London. No. 7, Aldersgate, in the City, a site of 10,000 square feet, is rated at £2,677 a year, whereas the next shop, No. 4 and 5, a site of 12,700 square feet, is rated at nil, because there are no buildings upon it, yet the land value of both these sites, whether built on or not, is maintained and created by the expenditure of public money in the shape of rates and by the work of the community. We maintain that is inequitable as between both those owners, and that both those owners should contribute to the rates according to the benefits they receive themselves, according to the land value which the rates and public created for them.

Therefore, the proposal we put before the House is that there should be a change in the standard whereby rates are levied, and in making this proposal we are merely following out the Report of the Select Committee on the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, which reported in 1907, and which sat under the chairmanship of the present Lord Advocate. Upon that Committee there sat, not only the hon. Member for Holborn (Mr. Remnant), whom I see opposite, and who, I believe, is going to oppose this Resolution, but also the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. Rollox Division (Mr. McKinnon Wood), who is now in the Cabinet, and several other distinguished men, such as the present Lord Dewar. The Committee reported exactly upon the lines that we are proposing this Resolution to-night. They desired to set up a new standard of rating, and I will read the exact words from the Report of the Committee:—

The setting up a standard of rating whereby the ratepayer's contribution to the rates is determined by the value of the land which he occupies apart from buildings or improvements upon it, the object being to ensure the ratepayer's contribution, not by the value of the improvements on the land to any extent, but solely by the yearly value of the land itself.

And they went on to say that they were going—

to select a standard of rating which will not have an effect of placing the burden upon industry. Hence the proposal to exclude from the standard the value of buildings, erections of all kinds, and fixed machinery. To include these in the rating tends to discourage industry and enterprise: to exclude them has the opposite effect.

And they gave as a justification for the adoption of the new standard of rating the fact:—

that land owes the creation and maintenance of its value to the presence, enterprise, and expenditure of the surrounding community.

So that they laid down quite wisely, not only the expedient results which were bound to follow from the taxing of land value, but also the justification in that it was recovering for the public that value that public created. One other quotation from the Report:—

If the value of bare land, apart from improvements, be chosen as the measure by which to fix contributions to local expenditure, the ratepayer will be merely restoring to the exchequer of the local authority part of that which he has derived from it.

There you have in the clearest language the considered Report of the Select Committee representing both sides of the House, and presided over by a distinguished lawyer. I do not think that any words of mine can possibly improve or make clearer the objects they have in view or the justification of the Report they make. What I want to do is to get the House to endorse the Report of that Committee, and thereby urge upon the Government the adoption at the earliest possible moment of legislation which will have the effect of translating this Resolution into law, giving local authorities the power they do not possess to rate land values, and to exempt from rating all buildings and improvements upon the land. An Amendment is to be moved to this Resolution by the hon. Member for Holborn (Mr. Remnant), who has strongly opposed the Taxation of Land Values, both in season and out of season, just as I have supported it. The hon. Member for Holborn opposed this system of rating of land values during the Conservative Administration of 1900 just as he does now, but it is noticeable that under the Conservative Administration of 1900-6 he had behind him by no means the unanimous support of the Conservative party of that day. A Bill was introduced Session after Session and was carried in that Conservative House by increasing majorities as years went on. I think no less than thirty-five Members of the Conservative party voted in favour of the rating of land values, and it was ably supported in the House and outside by the hon. Member for West Toxteth and the hon. Member for the Everton Division of Liverpool, by the late Sir G. Bartly and Sir Albert Rollit.

I do not think the Conservative party are solid in their opposition to the rating of land values, or to giving local authorities the option of rating land values. Ever since the Budget of 1909-10 we have had statements from responsible members of the Conservative party supporting the rating of land values as opposed to the Taxation of Land Values. I hope we shall have to-night from some Conservative Member representing the Liverpool district some support for the principle which the Members representing Liverpool supported in the old days, and which circumstances still demand they should support with even greater emphasis than they did ten years ago. If the conditions of housing were bad ten years ago they are worse now, and if the conditions of Liverpool was unknown then to the general public it is better known now. The only way to improve housing satisfactorily is to take the taxes off houses, and make the building of houses as free as possible. I wish to emphasise this appeal to Conservatives by putting to them the statement, first of all, of the right hon. Gentleman the late leader of the Tory party; and, secondly, a statement made by the Noble Lord the Member for Hitchin (Lord Robert Cecil). The senior Member for the City of London (Mr. Balfour) speaking on 17th November, 1909, at Manchester, after the Budget had been introduced, said:—

Taxation of Land Values for rating purposes is legitimate if it can be shown that the land or the values which you desire to rate are values which are not paying their fair share of the local rates. . . . The Taxation of Land Values is really no interference with security—it only means that that which does gain by the rates should contribute to the rates.

At the present time we have before us a proposition to spend £875,000 of the ratepayers' money upon making the great new avenue to the west of London by the extension of Cromwell Road. It is true that the Government and the

Road Board Fund is finding £875,000, and the ratepayers are also called upon to pay another £875,000. As every business man knows perfectly well, after declaring that such a road will be made, and that the Government is prepared to find money for the creation of it, the immediate result is to increase the value of land not only along the line of route, but also over the vast district tapped by the new road at its extremity. This is an obvious case where the expenditure of ratepayers' money will increase the value of land, and surely, if ever there was a case for the rating of land values this is one. The Noble Lord the Member for Hitchin is known as an economist, and this is what he says:—

You have already the principle that land contributes to the local rates, and the question is whether the rates should be levied upon the improved value or upon the site value. This is a fair subject for discussion, and I do not think anyone would suggest that the alteration from improved value to site value is Socialism, or any extravagant or novel proposition.

I cannot, of course, claim the Noble Lord as a supporter of mine, but I can claim him as a fair supporter of a system which involves change. And as justifying that change, both these points are made clearly in the Report of the Select Committee presided over by the Lord Advocate which I have read to the House. There are other Amendments down in the names of Members of the Conservative party voicing the usual Conservative way of shelving the issue by pleading urgency. Hon. Members opposite know there is no arguable case against this change in the basis of rating, but they argue very speciously that the valuation under the Budget of 1909-10 is not complete and cannot be complete until 1915, and, therefore, they say something should be done immediately to relieve the immediate difficulty, knowing full well that anything which is done will prejudice the case and make it more difficult to bring about this change in the basis of rating satisfactory when the valuation is completed. The only answer of hon. Members on this side of the House is that the valuation must be hastened and must not be allowed to go on until 1915. The valuation is going on at the present time, perhaps at a slightly accelerated pace, but no hope has been held out, and under the existing system I do not think any hope can be held out to us that there will be any great anticipation of the date which has been mentioned, namely, March, 1915.

The real point which I and the 170 hon. Members who signed that Memorial wish to urge upon the Government is that this valuation should be simplified, and thereby the date when it should be completed would be anticipated. We do not want the buildings, machinery, and factories valued, but we want to get the full site value, and if we only ask for the full site value, and if the valuers only seek to obtain that, we shall get it in six months instead of four years. You want to simplify the system of valuation, and if the Government are seriously going to support us in this question, the only satisfactory answer they can give to the ratepayers and hon. Gentlemen opposite is to show that they are going to hasten this valuation. We had a promise from the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year extracted by the hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Pretyman) that there would be some sort of inquiry into the existing system of land valuation and land taxation to see if the present system could not be simplified. The present system can be simplified by leaving out all questions as to improvements. The question of taxation can be simplified enormously if we drop these irritating and unsatisfactory taxes like the Increment Duty, the Reversion Duty, and the Undeveloped Land Duty, and go for one straight tax on land values. You are merely making difficulties and making hard cases by persisting in these extremely unsatisfactory half-way houses towards taxation. What we want, what the people in the Land Union want, and what all property owners want is a perfectly simple and straightforward tax, and for that we only want a simple and straightforward valuation. I want to remind the Government that any remission of rates whereby the money is found out of the Consolidated Fund, or out of the pockets of the general taxpayer, is really a present to the landlord at the present time. It is merely an extension of the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896. It is a reduction in rates coupled with the increased taxation

of the whole community, and it is going to be of no assistance to the community in the long run. I will quote, in support of my statement, the view of Professor Marshall, after all the leading economist at the present time in the country, if not in the world. He says in his evidence before the Royal Commission, reported in 1901:—

Any remission of rates on agricultural land would be a present of public property to the owners, a small part being caught by the farmers on the way.

That is the view of our leading economist, and it was the view also of every Liberal statesman in 1896, when this Agricultural Rating Act was before the country. I think it is necessary to remind the Government of it at this day, when all these different suggestions of assisting the ratepayer are being made. There is only one honest way of assisting the ratepayer, and that is by raising the money to provide the relief by a uniform tax on land values. I hope the Government will give the Resolution their support. I believe from the point of view of the Liberal party it is essential they should take up sound Liberalism such as this: the relief of industry from taxation and the breaking down of monopolies. Along these two lines Liberalism will prosper in the country, and so will the country prosper under such Liberalism.

Sir W. Byles: I have risen to second the Motion ably moved by my hon. Friend and redoubtable advocate of the cause that he has been pleading. The subject is one not only worthy of discussion in this House, but one which calls for a speedy remedy. There is a pressing need for a speedy remedy. In the borough of Salford, which I have the honour to represent, we have a population of 235,000 or so, mostly poor people, and our rates are 8s. 10d. in the £. There are many grosser cases than that. Our poor rate alone is 1s. 10d., although we are singularly fortunate, because, besides the benefit of old age pensions which we enjoy, we have the advantage of a very rich charity, Booth's Charity, which brings in £18,000 a year, and which is distributed to the poor of Salford. The land from which that income is derived was left by a Mr. Humphrey Booth two or three centuries ago.

Mr. Booth: There are two of them.

Sir W. Byles: The land then brought in £19 a year. Now our income is £18,000 a year. Notwithstanding this large charity and old age pensions our poor rate is 1s. 10d. in the £. This weighs very heavily on our poor people. Manchester, of which we are practically a part, has in one area demolished a lot of cottage slum property and has built large warehouses, which of course have a much higher rateable value. The effect of that has been to pull down the poor rate in that area 1s. in the £. It is at any rate 1s. in the £ less than we have to pay in Salford, but the poor who were housed in that area of Manchester have come to live in Salford. Therefore, we have not only a much lower rateable value, but we have many more poor to keep. The poor rate is only one of several national services which have been imposed by Parliament upon local authorities. The incidence of these charges, many of them new or increased charges, falls very unequally on different rating areas. The Royal Commission in 1901 distinguishes between national and local services, and quotes the poor rate, the education rate, and the maintenance of main roads as services which are national. The cost is thoroughly unequal owing to the fact that the rateable value of these different areas varies so much. This affects poor boroughs much more than rich boroughs. I may mention as one example the difference between Manchester and Salford. The rateable value per head of population in Manchester is 6.48 per cent., and in Salford it is only 4.26 per cent. The duties we have to discharge are practically the same in proportion to the population, but the effect upon the rates is very unequal as against Salford. One might take another illustration, referring this time to education and not to the Poor Law. In Bournemouth the education rate is only 9½d., whereas in Salford it is 1s. 7½d. This difference is due to the greater rateable value per head of population. There are far fewer children in richer towns like Bournemouth to educate than in poor towns like Salford. Therefore, we have greater obligations imposed upon us with a much lower rateable value, and the Exchequer Grants-in-Aid which we are supposed to receive should be in the inverse ratio to that which they are at present. They

should be less to the rich and more to the poor district. The power to rate land values is most important. New sources of revenue are necessary. Very large sums are taken away every year from our borough: wealth which is created by local industries is taken away by persons who contribute nothing whatever to its creation. Tens and hundreds and thousands of pounds are taken away from the borough of Salford every year by large landowners, by noble lords and great ecclesiastics; it is wealth which has been created by the citizens of Salford, and it is taken away by those who contribute nothing towards the great municipal developments which are enriching them. This is a monstrous and gross injustice which Parliament ought to set to remedy. I do not want to speak ill of the landlords. I have no doubt, if I were fortunate enough to be a landlord, I should act in the same way as they do, but it does always seem to me that the system is wrong, and the rent receiver and the rent payer should in justice change places. We have to live on the land, and the man who takes a piece away and encloses it should pay for the privilege. But it is much less than that we are asking for to-day. At any rate, we are only asking for a contribution. I hope we shall go on. If you tax houses you make them dearer; if you tax land you make it cheaper. The one leads to scarcity; the other to plenty. In proportion as you put it on to the land and take it off the houses the result is more houses and more land. You get both an increase of houses and of land—I mean, of course, available land. I could give illustrations from New Zealand and New South Wales, where the thing has actually been put into operation, and where the official authorities are able to report upon it as a complete success. In conclusion, let me say that the nation is at this moment, and I am sure we are painfully aware of it, confronted by very grave perils arising from the discontent of its working population. May I tell the House the most solemn political conviction that I have arrived at at the end of a long life? It is that private property in land is the root of all these troubles. As long as the land is maintained by our laws, tied up by the lawyers' parchments, defended by our soldiers and sailors, it will ensure the serfdom or semi-serfdom of our population. If the land on which we live and on which we must live and must work—it is as necessary to us as the air we breathe—belonged to us instead of to a handful of us, each man would get the just reward of his skill and labour. There would be no need for Insurance Acts or Old Age Pension Acts, there would be freedom and plenty for all. Some day the nation will, in the favourite phrase of Mr. Henry George—[Hon. Members: "Hear, hear"]—I am glad to hear my hero's name cheered from the other side—see the cat, and then it will enter into its rightful heritage.

Mr. Remnant: I beg to move as an Amendment to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to insert instead thereof the words:—

This House, while recognising the claim of ratepayers to substantial relief, is of opinion that such relief should be sought in the provision of new sources of local revenue, in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, and not in increased taxation of that form of property which already bears an excessive share of both Imperial and local burdens.

All who have listened to the hon. Gentlemen who Moved and Seconded this Motion must agree that they have put their case in more moderate language than the advocates of the Single Tax and the Total Taxation of land are accustomed to do. I do not propose to go too much into detail in reference to this important matter, because it would take too long, but if I may refer to one or two points mentioned by the two hon. Gentlemen, it would be to dispute what they have said rather than to enter into serious argument against it. The Mover of the Motion referred to the Select Committee on the Taxation of Land Values for Scotland, of which I was a member. I was one of four representing our side of the House, as against more than twice that number of hon. Gentlemen from the other side, nearly all of whom were members of what is now the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, which is the only Committee in existence which seems to carry out the principles laid down by the late Mr. Henry George. The report to which the hon. Gentleman referred was the report of the majority. I do not admit that I agreed

with that report. If we had been allowed to introduce our report, the hon. Gentleman would have seen, what he can see now, what we thought upon the subject we were appointed to discuss. Coming to my Amendment I cannot help remarking that although one profoundly disagrees with the conclusions and arguments of the Mover, we cannot but admire the consistency with which the hon. Member always comes back to any attack on the rating system of this country. The hon. Gentleman will surely agree that this is a singularly inappropriate time to bring forward such a Motion. He knows perfectly well a Departmental Committee was appointed in April last year, and is still sitting, to deal with this matter. The terms of reference to that Committee were:—

To inquire into the changes which have taken place in the relations between Local and Imperial taxation since the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in 1901, to examine the several proposals made in the Report of the Royal Commission, and to make recommendations on the subject to His Majesty's Government with a view to the introduction of legislation at an early date.

We may disagree, as a good many of us do, with the composition of that Committee, but that is no reason why we should ignore its existence. This is not the first attempt of the hon. Gentleman to prejudge that matter. As recently as the Debate on the Address, my right hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Hayes Fisher) moved an Amendment, to which the hon. Member tried to add a further Amendment, urging the Government to hasten the valuation of these site values. Surely the hon. Gentleman does not forget what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in reference to his procedure on that occasion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—

My hon. Friend will not expect me to express any opinion on the latter part of his Amendment as to the question of local taxation. I am anxious not to express any definite opinion until the Committee reports. It would not be fair because that would be expressing an opinion on the whole case before we have got the report of the Committee that has been appointed expressly to advise the Government on that particular subject.

I do not say the hon. Gentleman did it intentionally, but surely he is now asking the House to take a course which has been condemned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer so recently as last month as being a course which was not fair under existing circumstances.

Mr. Leif Jones : The hon. Member is moving an Amendment which commits the House in the same way.

Mr. Remnant : And if I could have done so I would have moved an absolute negative to the Motion. But we have this matter to deal with to-night, and it is an inappropriate time to do it. I agree with the hon. Member in desiring that some revision should take place of our present rating system, but upon entirely different grounds. The outstanding injustice is to-day that an unduly large share of our local, as well as Imperial, taxation is levied in respect of land and houses. The Royal Commissioners on Local Taxation, in their Report presented in 1901, pointed out that, while personal property subject to Imperial taxation is about three times as great as real property so taxable, yet non-rateable property contributes to local objects, if elementary education is excluded, only a little over 6 per cent. of the whole expenditure, and nearly 83 per cent. falls upon the rates. The Report goes on to say that in order to relieve this inequality the Commissioners propose that there should be an increased payment for Death Duties on personalty for local purposes, that the transfer of trading licences and of establishment licences shall be made complete, and that power shall be given to increase their amount while the assignment to local purposes of a fixed portion of the Income Tax is said to be deserving of consideration. That was the Majority Report. If we go a little further we shall see that the Minority Report on ground values proposes on owners site value rate only as a make-weight to accompany "increased provision made by the State in aid of services locally administered," and it goes on to justify such a rate on the ground that it would be "counter-balanced by the relief proposed to be granted in the shape of increased subventions." I think I may fairly claim that both the

Minority and the Majority Reports of the Commissioners in 1901 support the principle embodied in my Amendment. It seems to me that the theory on which the hon. Member proposes to reconstruct our rating system would by no means justify his own conclusions. The theory is itself unsound, and it has been abandoned by modern economists of repute. The theory of taxation now recognised as correct is not taxation according to benefits received but according to ability to pay. The fundamental principle of our taxation, if I may borrow the definition of a well-known economist, Professor Smart, would be that the present system is an equal sacrifice of payment by every citizen for general services rendered to him. The hon. Gentleman and his Friends propose, instead of taxing people in proportion to their means, to tax some and to exempt others, for the simple reason that their money happens to be invested in different ways. The hon. Member who moved the Resolution said that all property owners want a straightforward tax. I agree. Those whom I know want a straightforward, fair, equitable and logical tax, and they do not see why one form of property should be practically free while another, which has always been considered commercially interchangeable with another form of property, should have most of the burden thrown on it. The owners of capital invested in land, according to some hon. Gentlemen opposite, however poor they may be, are practically to pay everything, while the owners of capital invested in other ways, however rich they may be, are practically to pay nothing. It would take a great deal to persuade the community that that is anything but a scandalous scheme.

May I give an instance of a man who, out of his savings, leaves to his three daughters, £1,000 each. To the first he leaves a house of the estimated value of £1,000, half of which is supposed to represent the site value. To the second he leaves £1,000 in Consols, and to the third £1,000 in foreign bonds. On what principle of right or justice can it be urged that practically half the value of what he gives to one daughter is to be confiscated, while the others are practically exempt. The two daughters who escape taxation enjoy a privilege which is enjoyed by every millionaire who happens not to have invested his money in land, but in other forms of property. A defence of such an injustice would hardly be made outside Colney Hatch. The levying of rates according to benefits received would, if logically applied, instead of being illogically applied, as the hon. Gentleman proposes, produce results which he and his Friends would not desire. May I take the Education Rate, which is levied for the purpose of providing schools for the working classes. On this benefits theory the working class ought to find the whole of the cost. [An Hon. Member: "They do."] That is the first time I knew it.

Mr. Wedgwood : They pay it in rent at present.

Mr. Remnant : If you take the Poor Rate, the same would happen there, and none of the owners of property would be in the employment of the so-called privilege. The adoption of this principle might indeed lead to one result which I should approve, and that is that we should get an end to the demand for the rating of vacant land. After all, rates are spent in satisfying the needs of the inhabitants of houses, and in so far as land is vacant there is scarcely any need for rates. Building land has no population requiring lighting or repairs of streets, the provision of a police force, and the support of the poor. The hon. Member's principle, if correct, and if fairly applied, would tend to exempt a class whom he and his friends were most anxious should not escape taxation. No doubt the hon. Member will say that vacant land owes what capital value it has to the existence of the neighbouring population. [An Hon. Member: "And the expenditure of rates."] Yes, Sir, and exactly the same thing may be said of any form of property. There is no form of property, existing or imaginary, which does not owe its value to the public. Without the public there could be no demand. I hope the House will reject the Motion on three grounds. In the first place, it is contrary to the Royal Commission Report of 1901; secondly, this is an inappropriate time to bring forward the Motion, while a Committee appointed to deal with the subject is actually sitting; and thirdly, the Motion is based, as I believe, upon a theory which is economically unsound and ethically unfair.

Sir Alfred Cripps : I rise to second the Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend. If we were discussing rates as apart from taxation, we should have a very complicated question before us. But when we come to the views put forward by the Seconder of the Motion, dealing with matters of taxation and singling out what he calls the restoration of public property due to the public, then we are dealing with an entirely different matter—a matter so different that if I were answering the Seconder only I should say, "You are simply bringing forward a method of confiscation, pure and simple, and not dealing with the principle of rates and taxation at all." I say so because exactly the same argument which he applies to land might be applied to a vast number of other sources of wealth in this country, with the result that you would seek to begin confiscation where you thought it was most popular, and you would have to carry on the process against others if you are to be in any sense logical at all.

When we were considering this matter on the Royal Commission, I do not go too far in saying that I believe we were all agreed, if we could do so, that a heavier and not a lighter burden ought to be put on business or professional men under those conditions. But how can the hon. Member say that this would be done when, under the terms of this Resolution logically carried out, the existing burden on the occupier of these premises or chambers would be taken away, and they would not pay a penny of burden as regards the rates of the locality in future, though they might benefit to an extraordinary extent? They might be people who used the roads with motor cars, and possibly rich people, people who got an enormous advantage out of the town population as doctors or professional men; but I cannot conceive *prima facie* any scheme more directly opposed to the true principle of spreading local taxation so that those who receive the benefit should share the burden than by seeking to put all these rates on one class of property only, namely, site values. When I come by and by to say what I have got to say on the constructive side, I want the House to remember a distinction which, in my view, must be borne in mind between taxation and rates. Taxation ought to be imposed in proportion to ability to bear. Rates ought to be imposed in proportion to benefit received. But where I join issue is that it is absurd to say that the only person who receives a benefit is the landowner or the owner of the site value. The hon. Member who moved this Resolution entirely gave the go-by to what is the principle, and, I think, the right principle, of rating at the present time—that is, you rate the occupier on the ground that it is the occupier who receives the benefit. And if we think what the benefit is which is received in Salford or any of these other large towns, it is directly received by the occupier. I would not for a moment say that the owner of the land or the site value should not contribute his share. But what I want to impress on the House is that, accepting the general principle of rates in proportion to benefit, you cannot escape the conclusion that the occupiers who live in one of these town districts are the people who immediately receive the direct benefit, and therefore so far from it benefiting them, in my view, if you are to put rates on a proper basis, you would increase the burden and not relieve the burden altogether.

Mr. Wedgwood : Do not they pass it on when they pay rent to the landlord?

Sir A. Cripps : I give this answer. It is the answer which Lord Goschen gave. When you are considering who pays the rate, it is utterly impossible to lay down the proposition that it is paid either by the occupier or the owner. All we can deal with is the person upon whom the law puts the immediate obligation. You may have a great demand for houses in a particular locality, but because of the bond between the owner and the occupier the owner can probably put the burden on to the occupier. Now take the other case, where there are a great many houses and a small demand. I think it perfectly clear that in the bargain between the owner and the occupier the owner cannot transfer the burden to the tenant. There is another point to which I wish to call the hon. Member's attention. In taking site values alone he is diminishing enormously the assessable site value of each district. At the present time site values bear their proportionate share. As every-

one who is cognisant with rating knows, and the Attorney-General will know, under our present system you rate the site value as well as the building. You rate the whole property. The result is that both interests must bear their burden. It may be well said, but you are to put a special burden on the owner of the site value. That, of course, is the argument that was used. I do not take that argument except to the extent which I am going to explain in one moment. But it must not be forgotten that if you tax the site values only the assessable value of a number of our most important boroughs would be enormously diminished, and in many of our country districts it would disappear altogether. In fact, that did happen in the old days in the case of a district in the county I belong to where the burden of the rates exceeded the whole site value, with the result that the whole parish became a waste. That is what happened before the reform of the Poor Law in 1832 and 1833.

I will give an illustration. The rentals were about 10s. an acre. I take the case of a farm I know of 120 acres let for £60 a year. The farm buildings alone cost £4,000, and if you were to add to that the value of bringing the land out of prairie into cultivable condition, there would be another £1,000. There was £5,000 spent, and the total income derived was £60 a year, out of which there were various outlays. What is the site value in cases of that kind, if you were imposing rates in a district where you have conditions of that kind or were going to impose them, and what is going to happen when you have rated all your site values up to the hilt and find you have not got enough? You have got to face that, and the notion of having either a single rate or a single tax, as soon as you come to close quarters, is manifestly and evidently unjust in the sense that it lets off persons who ought to contribute. I think that is quite as unfair as putting on an undue burden on a special form of property, which in this country is very largely owned by poor people, because my experience is, as regards the investments of poor people, that there is nothing more popular than small plots or pieces of local property, as the case may be, and you will find that the result would be to put an enormous burden on some of the poorest owners of property who exist in this country at the present moment. That is not right. I think that every man ought to contribute in proportion to his means, but you do not bring about that result by isolating your charges to landowners. You bring about exactly the opposite result. You bring about the grossest inequality, both as regards rating and taxation, that you can possibly imagine. Everyone who has studied the question as between rating and taxation will agree with what has been said by one hon. Member opposite, that there is a large number of charges at the present moment placed on the rates which ought to be borne by the National Exchequer. We shall never get the proper reform of our rating law until that distinction is logically and scientifically followed.

Supposing the proper charges were made on the National Exchequer, you would immediately get an enormous relief as regards the ratepayers of this country—a relief to which they are immediately and properly entitled. If, instead of a wild-goose chase, as I call it, after land values or site values, hon. Members opposite joined with us in enforcing upon the Government the immediate necessity of carrying out the reform indicated in the Report of the Royal Commission as to local taxation, then you would put the burdens on the right shoulders and give the relief to the ratepayers to which they are entitled at the present moment. There is only one way of dealing with this question: if it is true that land values are specially advantaged by particular local expenditure, then let them pay in proportion to the benefit they receive. I do not dispute that proposition for one moment, and I never have disputed it. But outside and beyond that, do not specialise rates, but make them as equally as you can in proportion to the benefits received, and, when you come to charges of a national character place them on the National Exchequer, which, after all, is intended to obtain revenue raised in proportion to the ability to bear the charges made.

Mr. R. Lambert : The reason why I am anxious to support this Motion is because vacant land will not escape taxation under this scheme. If I may be allowed to refer to what is happening in my own constituency, I think perhaps

the House will see that there is a good deal of room for reform in this direction. I represent the constituency of which the principal town is Swindon. That town, as everybody knows, is the seat of the works of the Great Western Railway Company, who employ about 10,000 or 12,000 men. It has been the custom of the company in years past to allow their employees what are called "requisition cards." That is to say, the workmen who live at a distance of some eight or nine miles from Swindon can get tickets enabling them to go to and from their work at a very cheap rate. Recently it has dawned upon the railway company that they are very large ratepayers in Swindon, and with a view of preventing empty houses in Swindon, and I suppose with a view to lightening the burden of the rates upon themselves, they have decided in future not to allow requisition cards to be issued to their workmen. That is a very great hardship to the men, because it prevents them from living with their families outside the town where they can live more cheaply and obtain small holdings of land. I wish to be perfectly just to the company, for it is quite true that they have not taken away the privilege from those who already possess it. I understand that those who already have the privilege are to be allowed to retain it, but outside that limitation no more requisition cards are to be issued in the future. Supposing we had a system under which site values were taxed instead of houses, the result would be that there would be no temptation at all to the company to refuse these requisition cards. It would not make any difference to the company whether the houses were occupied or not. It would not make any difference to them whether the land was built on or not. All would pay an equal amount on site values according to the value of the land. When we know the way in which, in some of our towns, the rates at present inflict injury upon commerce and trade by the taxation of machinery, and putting a heavy rate upon industry, I think we ought to consider whether the taxation of site values would not be a fairer and a juster way. It was said just now that we ought to tax according to means. I agree with that partly, but I think you want to add something to it. You want to say you must tax not only according to means but according to opportunities. I think when you find people getting a monopoly, as they do get it in a piece of land which cannot be taken away, that you are entitled to say they ought to pay their full share towards the rates for the privilege which they obtain from the community. All wealth is derived from land, labour, and capital. Capital is nothing more or less than stored up labour working on the land, and if you have no land you cannot have labour to work upon it. The one essential for the production of wealth is land. Land is the foundation of everything, and therefore when people obtain privileges which leave them monopoly rights over the land, in common fairness we are entitled to go and ask them to pay more than those who are deprived of that privilege.

Mr. Percy Harris : The hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution spoke as if the only question before the House was whether the present basis of assessment should be changed from the present rateable value to that of site value. That, of course, is a perfectly arguable question, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that the hon. Member and his friends are not seeking such a reform of local taxation as the municipalities have asked for and the Royal Commission has approved. They are seeking the more or less complete confiscation of land values. The contention of the municipalities has been twofold—first, that the ratepayers are unduly burdened in respect of services which are of national rather than of local importance, and that owners ought to make a direct contribution towards local expenditure. The first of those contentions was unanimously approved of by the Royal Commission. The other contention, though not approved by the majority of the Commission, undoubtedly was recommended by an important minority, of which the chairman of the Commission was a member. All who are interested in local government hoped that the way was paved for reform, but the hon. Member and his friends have taken in hand a very different policy. They are agitating, and it is idle to ignore it, for the confiscation of land values. Their object is clearly stated in a leaflet published by the English League for the Taxation of Land Values in these words :—

Since land values are the outcome of the presence and energy of the community, by taking them we shall be securing for public use what is essentially a public fund.

That is an absolutely different policy from the proposals put forward by the municipalities or those approved of by the Royal Commission. As I understand, the ultimate object of the hon. Member and his Friends is to put all rates and taxes upon land values. The immediate proposal, as the hon. Member said, is to be found in the Memorial which was presented to the Prime Minister by a considerable number of Members of this House. That proposal was first to place all rates upon land values; and, secondly, to levy upon land values a Budget Tax for two purposes—first to provide a Government Grant for such matters as Education, Poor Law relief, and the like, and to provide a fund equal to that now provided by food taxes, which it is proposed to abolish. I believe the Lord Advocate goes even further, and proposes to abolish all Customs Duties. There occurs to one the happy thought that that might relieve the Government of one Irish difficulty, because if it is right that all Customs Duties should be abolished then there is no need to discuss who shall control them in Ireland.

It must be perfectly clear that that is not a proposal for taxation in the ordinary sense of the word, but that it is a proposal, as the hon. Member no doubt would put it, for the absorption by the State of what is considered a public fund. How is that justified? I find that the leading proposition by which it is justified by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values is that the land comes from the hands of the Creator. I do not know whether the hon. Member ever bought a piece of land, as it is against his principle. I bought a piece of land lately, but in extenuation of my crime I may say it was only a little one. But I did not receive it from the hands of the Creator. I received it from the hands of a man who obtained many sovereigns for it.

I hope the cause of the reform of local taxation is not going to be prejudiced by this wild and predatory scheme. There is urgent need for reform, and to simplify the present system of taxation, and to put it on a sound and permanent basis. The broad lines, I do not say the exact lines, on which reform must proceed are to be found, I believe, in the Report of the Royal Commission. They are not to be found in the recommendations of the hon. Member who moved this Resolution. The Royal Commission held that services which were locally administered, but national and onerous in character, ought to be assisted out of national funds. The reason they gave was that Imperial taxation presses upon all classes of property and persons less than by any contribution from, and works more evenly than by, local taxation. The Royal Commission indicated the national services which ought to be assisted out of Imperial funds, but the hon. Member and his friends reject the findings of the Commission and propose to put on one class of property—namely, land—the whole burden of national services locally administered. That is surely to ignore altogether ability to pay. As regards local services, the Report of the Royal Commission shows that funds for purely local services have to be levied upon property which is localised and rateable. Opinions differ as to whether the basis of assessment should be the present rateable value, or whether site value should be partially or entirely substituted for it. The minority of the Royal Commission were of opinion that site value might be introduced, not for all rates as the hon. Member proposes, but only for a special rate of a limited character.

I object to the hon. Member's proposals because they are contrary to the interests of owners and occupiers alike. It is not fair to place upon property which is localised and rateable not only large burdens of local expenditure, but large burdens of national expenditure. It is not in accord with any fair principle of local taxation. The question whether site value should be introduced as a basis of local taxation is a perfectly arguable one. I may not agree with it myself, but it is an arguable question, and one upon which no doubt the Government will be advised by the Committee of experts now sitting. Provided no interference with existing contracts takes place, I see no objection in principle; but if that valuation is introduced, and if a direct levy is made upon owners, it is absolutely necessary to introduce some such safeguards

as have been recommended by the minority of the Royal Commission. Otherwise you will get a system of local taxation which will be grossly unfair, and lead to monstrous extravagance. For these reasons I hope the Resolution will not be carried, and I cannot help thinking that it would be better that this House should not pass any Resolution on this subject until the Committee of experts have reported.

Mr. Albert Smith : In my career as a member of a local governing authority I have often been struck as to how it was that this system of rating under which we have been living for years and years has been allowed to continue. I just wish to draw the attention of the House to a very humble authority, because its history is not long, and this borough, which is in my constituency (Clitheroe) shows my case perhaps better from my point of argument than any other town. I know there are in great cities abnormal instances of land values. These are greater, perhaps, than the ordinary working man or working woman can understand, but they can understand, and do understand, their local conditions, especially when their rates are getting pretty high.

In 1850, in the borough to which I refer, the gross rental received from the whole of it was about £14,000. Just over £7,000 came from agricultural land and farm buildings. In December, 1911, the gross rental from that township was £206,800. Out of that area 604 acres only are built upon, leaving 2,791 acres unbuild upon. The approximate gross rental of that 604 acres was about £200,000, and the 2,791 acres unbuild upon accounted for the £7,000 remaining. I think that that gives a considerable illustration of what that 600 odd acres is worth, compared with what we may practically call agricultural land. The whole income for the government of the town, practically speaking, is borne by those people who either own factories, business premises, or live in humble houses. The main factors of the contribution of this £200,000 are those who have shops, houses, banks, offices, &c. Those over a £10 rateable value contribute £93,266; houses of £8 and under rateable value contribute £33,204; weaving shops contribute £41,107, this bringing the total up to £167,570, out of the £200,000 from the whole area. I am not mentioning this town because I think there is something exceedingly abnormal about all this. I believe there are other towns in this country which can equally show my case as well as this town. But I am sure that hon. Members will agree at any rate that those 604 acres must be worth tremendously more per acre than the 2,791 which is being used for agricultural purposes.

In arguing this point I do not for a moment advocate any process of rating that will hinder at all the progress of agriculture. I do not think that the system of rating suggested by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme will in effect do any harm to the farmer or his fellows; rather the reverse. Out of all the money I have mentioned the town does not receive one penny from the ground landlords by way of relief to the burdens of nearly £59,000 which the occupiers have to find in rates. I believe honestly that this system of rating is neither just nor defensible. It is a system which the working classes particularly and occupiers generally are finding to be unbearable. We are seeking some system of rating whereby these community created values will pay their share towards the local governing services. In the borough to which I have referred there are approximately 8,000 houses. The average ground rent for these houses is 30s. Thirty houses, I suppose, will be built on an acre of land—perhaps more. This means that in ground rent £45 per acre is being paid for the ground landlord. At twenty-three years' purchase that is over £1,000. Employers of labour and their men put into their industry a great deal of work to attain these financial results.

This value is one which has been created by the industries of the people and the community, and it is that value that we think ought to pay its share to relieve the local services of the borough, of the urban authority. That land, as agricultural land, would not fetch any more than, say, £1 to £3 per acre in rent. The difference is very remarkable. It is inconceivable that some system has not been devised whereby it can contribute its fair share. The hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke on the other side referred to the difficulty of the situation. I am aware certainly

that there will be difficulties to surmount in the readjustment of these rates. These difficulties of readjustment are not to be compared with the difficulty of these poorer people in the towns in meeting their rates. The worst of it is the more the property is improved the more you have to pay in rent, and the more you pay in rent the more you have to pay in rates. Whether it be by means of a dwelling-house, a shop, a factory, or by any other business premises, the occupier has got to be penalised for the improvement he puts in, and at the same time the whole value underneath his building is to be swept away by another man who escapes rate free.

It is very hard on people who are day after day, week after week, and year after year saving what money they can to buy their own homes. There are a large number of people in this borough who have bought their houses outright, and who are paying ground rents for these houses; they have to pay from the centre of the front street to the centre of the back street; they have to pay to keep in order flags, channels, sewers, both in front street and the back street. When the street is made to the satisfaction of the borough surveyor to the local authority he may report it is fit to be taken over as a public street, and then to pay 7d. in the £ for the upkeep of the public streets for ever and ever. Surely the man who is drawing the ground rent for the ground upon which these houses are built and through which those streets run ought to pay his quota towards the burden of taxation. As soon as ever that street is paved and made good you will see another builder marking out another plot of ground for another street in the same way. All that tends to increase the value of the land every time. If ground rents were subjected to the same basis of rating as houses they would yield in this borough a 1s. 3d. rate, which would be a very great consideration indeed to the local authority where rates are getting up to 7s. or 8s. in the £.

There is something else of importance in regard to houses and land which applies not only to this local authority but to others as well. Houses are being put up just in sufficient quantities to demand sale, and the occupying tenant who has got the house into comfortable living order will some day suddenly find the landlord suggesting that he had better buy the house because someone else is inquiring after it, and the result is that the builder gets a good price or houses have to be taken at heavy rents. If the tenants cannot see their way to buy, their rents are increased, as we have had several examples recently. The great harm in that is this that once the rent is increased it is increased practically for all time, whether the house is worth the rent or not. I cannot help but think if there was a system of rating land values of this kind it would give the people in the community a really fair chance of buying a house or of renting a decent habitable house. It would open up, especially in rapidly extending boroughs, work, and it would provide labour, and you would hear very little about outdoor workers being unemployed, because it would encourage people to extend their factories and workshops. In the long run, although they may have to pay a proportion of the rent received from the land in rates, there would be more land let out, and the owner would be a financial gainer rather than a loser. It is quite feasible that, by adopting some plan of that sort, you would draw agricultural rent for the same land. Those of us who have had experience of corporations know how these values go up. Only recently, in the very same borough I have mentioned, the corporation wanted to buy for street-widening purposes a certain strip of land, and it is within the memory of living burgesses there that that land was sold for a few shillings. The corporation had to pay £27 per yard for it for making that land more convenient for the public, and after that they were asked to pay again for it. Besides this, there is all the expenses of the fire brigade, town hall, lighting, educational services, main roads, and policing, and if they are not fortunate enough to be a county borough they have to meet the county charges as well. Whatever else may happen I feel sure that the poor ratepayers of the borough, the people who are creating continually this wealth, have certainly a good claim to it. This is a feasible system of rating, and if it is adopted will not only lead to the extension of employment, but tend to relieve the burdens on industry and also the burdens of those who have to work very hard day after day for a living.

The Attorney-General (Sir Rufus Isaacs): The hon. Member (Mr. Wedgwood) bases the whole of his proposition upon the principle that you must charge those who benefit by the public service, and that you must not adopt the principle which was advocated by others, to charge according to the ability of the person to pay. That, again, strikes very vitally at a root principle in economics. This question has formed the subject of many inquiries and of the Report of a Royal Commission in 1901, but since that time much has happened. A complaint was made by the hon. Member (Mr. Albert Smith) who made a most useful contribution to the Debate, that we have been waiting eleven years since that Report and nothing has been done. That is perfectly true, but there has been a variety of causes for it. It amounts to this, that in 1912, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer discovered in 1911, having travelled very far, as we have, in that period along the path of social reform, we have realised that in almost every step that you take in social reform you impose necessarily a further burden upon the ratepayers of the locality. It has been stated rightly that the burdens have become almost intolerable, and that something must be done to relieve them. I think I am speaking for the whole House when I say we are all agreed that some change must be made, that we must pass from the old system which has done duty so long, and that we must have some new system, and probably, I should imagine—of course I do not profess to speak for anyone who may have to decide this hereafter—a combination of systems will have to be brought into play in order that we may have a full new system to take the place of the old system. A Committee has been and is still sitting inquiring into the subject. It is a Committee of experts, appointed for the express purpose of giving the House and the country the benefit of its assistance in arriving at a conclusion as to the new system, or combination of systems, which you are to substitute for the old system at present in existence. That Committee had to be nominated for the reason that since 1901 so much had been done that before you could legislate on such a vast subject as this you must have some further assistance and some further information in order that we may have a scheme founded on greater expert knowledge. Evidence has been called, both of well-known experts on the subject-matter of the Motion before the House and equally of those who take the opposite view, and who put forward their particular version of taxation and rating. I would ask my hon. Friends, how is it possible under these circumstances for the Government, which has nominated this Committee, to accept the proposition put forward by my hon. Friend, however much they may agree with him in principle? How can it accept this Motion, which declares not only in favour of the principle, but of a system of getting money for your local revenue by rates upon the land value, and putting that forward as a system to be adopted? If the Government were to accept that it would be really pronouncing its view and giving its judgment before it could have the report of the experts.

The view we are forced to take as a Government in this connection is that it is impossible for us to support the Motion brought forward by my hon. Friend. I think I am right in saying that valuation is proceeding, though slowly. With the view of hastening it, my hon. Friend would desire to substitute some simpler and different system of valuation. That hardly enters into the system we are at present discussing, but I agree that it is desirable that there should be a hastening of the valuation in so far as you possibly can, provided, of course, that you have a proper valuation.

I am in a position to tell the House now that the valuation is being accelerated and will be more accelerated. March, 1915, was put forward, I think, as the earliest date on which the valuation will be completed. I am now in a position to tell the House, from the information of those who can best know, that we fully expect the valuation to be completed before that date, and at the rate at which we are progressing now it may be considerably before that date. [Hon. Members: "When?"] That is asking a little more than I can possibly tell. So far one-fifth of the task has been completed. The first part of the valuation is far the most difficult and takes the longest time. We have had the forms, and all the information from the forms

has been tabulated and is available for the valuers and will enable them to work very much faster. Further, every day the valuers acquire more knowledge and are in a better position to determine as a result of their experience what is market value without making so many inquiries as when they first started. I hope that my hon. Friend will feel that he has got some information with regard to valuation which will satisfy him, though I quite agree that it does not give him anything like the full extent of his demand. I doubt very much whether there is anything further that I can say to the House on behalf of the Government, because I do feel, however one might be tempted to take part in the discussion and put forward views in answer to some of the arguments from both sides of the House, that there is always this difficulty confronting us, that this question is now being inquired into by this Committee. We do feel that as a Government we have no right to declare any opinion, and we have no right to take any view in this House when we have appointed that Committee, and are awaiting its Report. I cannot help thinking that the result of this Debate has shown how necessary it was to have a Committee of that kind and how impossible it is to come to any conclusion without going into a vast body of evidence, and without making full inquiry and bringing expert minds to bear upon the subject. For these reasons, I am afraid, on behalf of the Government, I am unable to support the Motion proposed by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Pretyman: I cannot help thinking the Government must recognise that the legislation of 1909-10 was the very kind of legislation which the Attorney-General has just told us ought not to be undertaken until the Report of this Committee has been received. What is the legislation of which this valuation forms part except legislation in anticipation of any expert opinion upon the whole question? What would be the use of this costly valuation if the Committee issues a Report in which they do not advocate this particular form of taxation as suitable for the purpose. It does not seem to me at all improbable, from the way in which this legislation is being carried out, that that will be their Report. I do not know whether we are entitled at this time even to go so far as to assume that this valuation would be for that further purpose. With regard to the acceleration of the valuation, I think the Attorney-General has left out of account one or two facts. It is assumed very often by the valuers, and by the Government that they have to value according to what the value is to-day, but the valuers are not set to value the property according to what it is worth to-day, but according to what it was worth on 30th April, 1909, and that, of course, increases the difficulty of making a fair valuation as at that date. Further than that, as the methods of valuation proceed they are being constantly subjected to investigation by referees and by Courts of Law, and so far as these cases have been heard, they have almost invariably resulted in a change of the proposed valuations now being adopted. I assert that the valuations or the methods of valuation must be subject to very considerable change, and the Attorney-General must recognise that one-fifth of the valuations which are stated to be completed are all subject to alteration as these cases come before the Courts of Law and are decided, and it is a very sanguine statement to make on the part of the Government that any of the valuations may be regarded as really settled.

Mr. Booth rose.

Mr. Wedgwood rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Mr. Booth: The hon. Member who has addressed the House does not seem to have remembered that the question of site values or land values also includes the question of mining royalties.

Mr. Wedgwood rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld assent and declined then to put that Question.

Mr. Booth: I am quite sure that if the hon. Member, who put his case with great moderation, had only seen the application of this to land value—

And it being Eleven of the clock, and objection being taken to further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL.

Friday, 15th March.

Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen : I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill, of which I have the honour to move the Second Reading, deals with a matter of the very greatest importance to the people of this country. There can be really no social reform which does not begin with the home life. If you look at the houses and the surroundings in which so many of our people are forced to dwell, it will explain a great deal of the ill-health, the misery, the poverty, the labour unrest and other troubles of the present day. Sir William Lever has calculated that there are 200,000 deaths every year through one cause only—overcrowding.

Take, for example, London. The London County Council are going to clear a big area, called the Tabard Street area, in South London. When I say going to clear, I mean that at the present moment they are just awaiting the formal sanction of the Local Government Board. The area is fifteen acres. The death-rate is 36 per 1,000. There is a tremendous death-rate from phthisis and other tubercular diseases. There are back-to-back houses and narrow courts, sometimes approached by little alleys not more than 3 ft. across, and there is a condition of affairs which is a disgrace to civilisation and ought to be blotted out. Take Liverpool. A great deal of splendid work has been done in clearing away slum quarters in Liverpool, thanks largely to the efforts of my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkdale (Mr. Kyffin-Taylor), who is unfortunately not able to be present owing to ill-health, and who, as chairman of the Liverpool Housing Committee, has done magnificent work in clearing away slums. Let me take another case, a remarkable one. The worst housing conditions exist at the present time probably in South Wales. I was reading the other day an article in the DAILY NEWS, which has had a Commissioner investigating the housing conditions in South Wales. He says:—

The real problem in Glamorgan is not that of the minimum wage, but that of the housing conditions of the miners.

and he proceeds to give certain death-rates to show the condition of affairs in South Wales. Take the garden city of Letchworth. They have a death-rate there of only 4·8 per 1,000 and an infantile death-rate of 54·05. In Poplar which is perhaps not the healthiest part of London it is only 15·6 and the infantile death-rate is 118, while in Pen-y-darren, a mining town on the mountain side in South Wales there is a general death-rate of 19·7, or four more than Poplar, and an infantile mortality of 193.

I have got here one or two extracts showing the conditions of housing in South Wales. Take Dowlais: I quote the following from a local account:—

In 1910, a house-to-house visitation of the district of Dowlais showed that the number of houses with two rooms only was fifty-eight, and figures have been supplied by the medical officer of health showing that in such hovels the modern sanitary system is unknown. There women and children are huddled together in defiance of every moral and physical law. In the house with three small rooms downstairs and three attics, there lived no fewer than eighteen persons—the occupier, two lodgers, a husband and wife, and three children; another husband and wife, and mother; and a third husband and wife, and five children, and so forth.

Then the account goes on to mention:—

At Tondy, near Maesteg, the home of the famous Vernon Hartshorn, the conditions are as bad as, if not worse, than even those in the Merthyr district. Two-roomed houses abound, and they are overcrowded to an almost incredible degree. About 15 per cent. of the houses rented in Tondy were such that if a man and woman and one child were put in each room to live and sleep, there would be five unhappy persons without any shelter at all.

From the urban point of view the sooner we find some means of getting rid of these appalling conditions of housing, the better it will be for the moral and physical health of the people. I pass to the rural problem, which is the most baffling one. It amounts to this, that there is a positive dearth of housing accommodation in many of our

villages, and nobody will build. They will not build because it does not pay. The landowners cannot build without loss, and you cannot expect them to build at a heavy loss. If you are going to compel a man to make a loss on his own estate, how are you going to do it? Take the local authorities: they have the power to build and acquire land without any difficulty by compulsory purchase. But if they build there is a huge loss, and that loss falls upon the rates. The condition of affairs in the country districts has been made distinctly worse in the last few years by the Housing and Town Planning Act. I am not going to blame the Housing and Town Planning Act generally, but I say, in one respect, it has made the condition of affairs worse, as everybody knows. There are increased powers to close insanitary houses. What happens? The Act is put in force; insanitary houses are closed, no new houses are built, the people are turned out into the streets, and there is no shelter in which they can live. It may interest the President of the Local Government Board to know that altogether, under the Housing and Town Planning Act, only 116 cottages have been built by local authorities, and in the last three years 1,344 houses have been closed. I will give to the House one or two examples. Take, for instance, the Hungerford rural district, in Berkshire. There some houses were closed. What happened. This is the report from the NEWBURY WEEKLY NEWS:—

A cottage was considered unfit for habitation, and the sanitary inspector served notice on the owner to put it in repair. The landlord was only receiving a nominal rent, and sooner than go to the expense of doing the place up he closed it, with the result that the man and his wife and four children had to leave. Another cottage could not be found for them, and for the past three or four weeks they have been living in a sheep-house. This, in turn, has been declared unfit for habitation, and the man and his wife look like being homeless this Christmas. So, in trying to remedy an evil, a greater one has been caused. The only way of solving the difficulty seems to be for the various local authorities to make provision under the Housing of the Working Classes Act. This was urged upon the Hungerford District Council by their sanitary inspector, but they would not entertain the proposal for a moment, presumably on the grounds of economy.

There you have the whole difficulty. You close insanitary houses, and you cannot afford to build new houses. The result is that these poor people are turned out and they have nowhere else to go. Let me give the House another example in Bedfordshire, at a place called Eaton Bray. I quote from THE LUTON REPORTER of 26th August last:—

The whole Council was appointed as a committee to carry the Housing and Town Planning Act into effect. Captain Gilliat stated that if they carried it out the rates, which were 6s. in the pound, would go up to 12s. in the pound. The surveyor—

This is not a landowner—

was of opinion that it certainly would be a serious matter to carry out the Act in some of the villages in the Council's area. It would ruin everyone.

I will give another example, at Heathusett, in Norfolk, I take it from THE EASTERN DAILY PRESS. This particular place wished to go in for a building scheme. They had an inquiry held by the Local Government Board, as they were going to borrow £1,500. At the inquiry evidence was produced to show that there was overcrowding, and that there was nowhere for young married couples to live. It was shown that the operation of the right hon. Gentleman's Act, by closing insanitary dwellings, had made matters worse. The evidence of the inspector was:

If we build, we build at a loss, unless we let for £9 a year; but the people here cannot possibly pay more than £7 a year.

What is the cause of the difficulty? It has been caused by the requirements of the Local Government Board and the by-laws which added so largely to the cost. I will sum up the whole matter from the rural point of view by quoting an extract from a letter written by a clergyman to the Local Government Board on 3rd August last year.

I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman remembers this letter, or whether any attention was paid to it. The letter is from the Rev. C. A. Wills, formerly curate at Pelton, near Chester-le-Street, in the county of Durham. He says:—

There are certain houses in Pelton which are an absolute disgrace to the nation, and consequently the infant mortality has been appalling, and no doubt is still. These houses, Sir, are not fit for a prize-dog. I got so sick, sometimes, of burying infants—indeed, very often batches of twos and threes at a time—from these awful hovels that I could stand it no longer, and I had to leave the place. What good is there in preaching the gospel—and we clergy are paid for doing so—whilst this holocaust is going on from day to day.

From the days of Lord Shaftesbury, who forced the Liberal Government at that time, and in days when there was objection to any kind of interference to pass the Housing Act, down to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, there have been housing reformers in office and in this House, and Housing Acts have been passed. I will quote the right hon. Gentleman a sentence, not drawn from anybody on this side of the House, but from his colleague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the Housing Act. In dealing with the excessive sickness clause of the National Insurance Act, whereby he proposed a certain remedy—in my belief, an absolutely inefficient remedy—for this evil, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, speaking of the Housing Acts:—

Most of them are mummies. They are not exercised, there is no life in them, they are pure dust, and they only have one form and feature of life. There is none of the spirit and the soul in any of these powers."

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the London County Council is clearing this terrible area called the Tabard Street area. Let me give the history of that up to the present time. We came forward with a thoroughly comprehensive scheme, and we carried it through the Council on 8th November, 1910. The next step was a Local Government Board inquiry. We had to wait until the middle of April, 1911, before the Local Government Board could spare us an inspector to carry out the inquiry. The inquiry lasted three days. Then we waited until the middle of August before we got any answer from the Local Government Board as to the result of that inquiry. When we got the answer it was to this effect: That they found our case proved; that the place ought to be cleared; but they suggested certain minor alterations in the scheme, chiefly concerned with the rehousing, which is the second stage, as the clearance necessarily comes first. We could not deal with it at once, as they delayed their answer until the London County Council was on summer holidays. The Local Government Board delayed their answer until the middle of August, when the Council was not sitting. No sooner did the Council meet in November than we replied to the Local Government Board, and we accepted every single one of their suggestions. That was the first week in November. From that day to this we have never got their formal sanction. People come to me, and they say, "Why are you not getting on with the Tabard Street scheme, and why do you let it go festering on?" My answer is that until the Local Government Board approve of the plan we cannot, and we have not got their formal sanction. There is a case of a willing authority, anxious to do their duty, anxious to spend a very large sum.

The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Burns): I understand it was sanctioned on the 12th of this month.

Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen: In any case it is four months since we accepted every one of the suggestions made by the Local Government Board. The right hon. Gentleman brought in the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, one article of which was to make housing operations easier, cheaper, and quicker than they had been before. The result of this Act has been, so far as this particular scheme goes, to delay it, and nothing else. We go further than merely substituting a defaulters' clause for the present mandamus provision to set up a new Housing Department subject to the Local Government Board; a Housing Commission of experts in housing, one of them to be a man who is an expert in questions of urban housing, another to be an expert in rural housing, and a third to be a medical officer of health. Clause 1 sets up the Housing Com-

missioners, and in Clause 2 we give them very special powers. We say that where the local medical officer of health has failed to represent an area as insanitary—such failures do occur sometimes, although I agree that, as a rule, there is no finer body of men than the local medical officers of health—the Housing Commissioners may do his duty for him. We also give them a power, which I am sure will be welcomed by the right hon. Gentleman, for the more effective carrying out of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. We say that they shall have the right to take action under that Act in cases where it is impossible to get action taken either by the local council or by four resident householders. I will quote another of the right hon. Gentleman's colleagues. The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Masterman), who was, I believe, one of the authors of the Town Planning Act, said that there was the utmost difficulty in getting public-spirited ratepayers to take the initiative to bear the obloquy, and to be responsible for the expense of a Local Government Board inquiry. We propose that in future the Housing Commissioners shall be able to do it, and in that way there will be an opportunity of carrying out the Housing and Town Planning Act more effectively.

We propose boldly State aid for housing, to spread the burden over the broader shoulders of the taxpayers. That is absolutely necessary and important, because in no other way can you get this housing work carried out. There is abundant reason for this. As things stand now, if the whole burden is placed on the local ratepayers, poor districts have to bear the entire expense, while the richer districts get off scot-free. Let us see what we are spending money on for national purposes now. In connection with the Road Board we are spending £1,000,000 a year on straightening roads. I do not doubt that that is a very important and very useful matter. But is it not far more important to provide proper housing for the working classes? Would it not be much better to spend the money, instead of on straightening roads, in giving decent accommodation to working people? The Insurance Act of last year provides for the expenditure of £1,000,000 a year on sanatoria. What is the object of sanatoria? To cure tubercular diseases. Is it not far more important to stamp out the breeding places of these diseases? If you spend £1,000,000 a year in getting rid of slums you would do far more good than by merely trying to cure the disease after it has been contracted. I can give examples to show that the slums are the real breeding places of these diseases. A few years ago the London County Council cleared a big area, known as the Boundary Street area, in Bethnal Green. The average death-rate from tubercular diseases at that time in the whole of London was 2·69, but in the Boundary Street area it was 8·5, or nearly four times as great. Take another case—Grotto Place, an area we hope to clear when we get the sanction of the Local Government Board. The average death-rate from phthisis in London is 1·44; in Grotto Place it is 6·10, or nearly five times as great. It would be far more useful to spend money in stamping out the breeding places of these diseases than to come in at a later stage and try to cure the victims. Therefore we propose State aid both for clearances and for house building in the country. We can see no other way of meeting the difficulty.

I want to see the work speeded up, and I say that in such cases where expensive schemes are undertaken there should be power to give a certain amount of State aid towards the cost. That applies also to the building of cottages in rural districts. Where there is a house hunger and it is quite impossible to build cottages except at a rent which the people cannot pay, unless you are to incur a big loss, you can meet the difficulty only by State aid. We have an example in the Labourers (Ireland) Act. There you have a process of cheap State loans and Government Grants, and what has been the result? Up to 31st May, 1911, 34,370 cottages have been built, and power and money were taken last year to build 6,000 more. The result is, as the Chief Secretary has told us a great improvement in the condition of the Irish people. They are paying now for decent cottages smaller rents than they used to pay for wretched mud hovels a few years ago. The system works out in this way: the ratepayers contribute 6-33rds of the cost, the State 11-33rds, and the tenant 16-33rds.

I know that it will be said that State aid towards housing and building, whether in Ireland or in England, is simply

subsidising rents out of public money. But that is done now out of the rates to a large extent—and must be. All we propose is to come to the assistance of the ratepayers and “speed up” the process by devoting a little public money to help the ratepayer to provide these houses where they are urgently needed. I know people say that a better plan would be a general rise in wages. [Hon. Members: “Hear, hear.”] I agree. That would be the best solution. But are we going to wait until that takes place, and allow the people to live in these insanitary houses? I say that something must be done at once. Practically nothing is being done now, and that is our reason for bringing in a Bill of this sort at the present time. A Compensation Clause, Housing Commissioners, and State Aid, are the three principal points of this Bill.

We are trying in various ways to cheapen, assist, and smooth the operations of the present Act. Let me give examples. We are trying to make the slum clearance schemes under Part I. cheaper and easier by Clauses 9 and 7. By Clause 9 we endeavour to arrange that evidence shall be received as to overcrowding which will prevent the slum owner getting more than he ought in the case of a clearance scheme. That was always intended under the Act of 1890. It has not worked well in practice. We propose in Clause 7 to cheapen the process of slum-clearing by enacting that where there are opportunities for cheap travel rehousing may take place to a considerable extent, not on the site, but in the suburbs. It will be much better for the people socially, and at the same time relieve us of the fearful cost of attempting the relieving of the working classes in central parts where land is very expensive. To enact Part II.—that is of the principal Act—which deals with the demolition and the closing of insanitary houses, we propose by Clause 8 greatly to facilitate that process. I am told that Clause 8 is likely to meet with strong opposition from the other side of the House because it provides, in the case of the demolition of insanitary houses, that there may be, under certain conditions, compensation given to the owner. People have said that is a clause for giving more money to the slum owner. This particular clause is in the Liverpool Act of 1864, and has proved most beneficial. Experts of the London County Council assure me that it would be of great assistance in London. What does it provide? At present, when you deal with a slum area you can only proceed as a rule under Clause 1—a wholesale and expensive process. In some cases—small areas—you can only proceed under Part II., and here you are frequently blocked by the fact that if you pull a man's house down you leave him control of the site, and there is nothing to prevent him building again, and so spoiling the effectiveness of your efforts. All we here propose is that if a man is willing to enter into a contract never to build again on the site without the consent of the local authority he may be given compensation.

Mr. Charles Bathurst: I desire to second the Motion for the Second Reading of this Bill from the rural standpoint. One difficulty in rural districts to-day is that the closing order may be made under pressure by rural district councils, followed logically by a demolition order, and nothing whatever be done to provide the houses necessary to replace those that have been removed. The result is that the housing conditions in many villages are considerably worse than they were prior to the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Act.

The second reason is that factories are being set up to a greater extent outside the crowded urban areas than formerly, largely owing to the supposed improved sanitation and healthy conditions in the country districts, and largely owing to the serious burden of the rates in many of our overcrowded urban areas. Just take the last case, the case of a factory put up without any warning in a purely rural district. What happens? There is no obligation thrown upon those who put it up to provide the necessary accommodation for the working classes whom they employ. The result is that overcrowding at once takes place. The agricultural labourers, who can only afford to pay low rents, are driven out of the best of the cottages in favour of those who can pay higher rents, or they adopt that pernicious system of taking in lodgers, thereby seriously aggravating the social evils which previously existed. Lately the Local Government Board has issued a White Paper, to one part of which my hon. Friend has referred. That Paper shows that, excluding the Chester-le-Street improvement for fifty cottages, for which a loan of £11,960 was granted,

since the passing of the Act only eight rural district councils have borrowed money for building and reconstruction purposes under Part III. of the principal Act.

We spend out of the public funds enormous sums to-day, not merely upon our Poor Law, but upon infirmaries, hospitals, and on lunatic asylums, which are very largely filled as the result of the overcrowding that goes on in workmen's cottages, and we are faced at present with a large and increasing expenditure upon the medical treatment of our school children. I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that no more alarming document has ever been put forward by any public Department than the last report of the Medical Inspection of School Children by Sir George Newman, the medical officer of the Board of Education. This House, and the country generally, have taken too little interest in that report. They have considered too little the causes which underlie the lamentable condition of the majority of our school children—even in our country districts. May I just shortly refer to this Report. We find that no less than 10 per cent. of the children in our elementary schools are suffering from defective vision; 6 to 8 per cent. are suffering from nose and throat defects, which are largely traceable to lack of ventilation and proper sanitation; and 40 per cent. are suffering from extensive and injurious diseases of the teeth; from 30 to 40 per cent., and sometimes more, suffer from unclean heads and bodies, a condition largely due to the dirtiness and unwholesome conditions of their surroundings, and 1 per cent. from tuberculosis in a readily recognisable form. If 1 per cent. is suffering from the disease in that form we may assume that at least five times that number are suffering from it in a form not yet come thus to be recognised. In addition to that we learn that a very considerable percentage are suffering from malnutrition and anæmia, not necessarily due to insufficient food but to impaired or very low vitality. A very large proportion—I will not say the majority—of the cases of tuberculosis in this country are not due, as some scientific men seem to think, to the existence of the germs of this disease in large quantities in milk or other sources of infection, but are due to the predisposition and therefore susceptibility to disease resulting from impaired or low vitality of those who suffer from it. The medical officer of the Board of Education winds up his report with these words:—

It is to the gradual improvement of the home that local education authorities should primarily look for relief for the special difficulties which confront them through the malnutrition of the child.

The Local Government Board have also lately published their medical officer's Report, and I think it is somewhat significant of the housing machinery of the Department that, whereas there are 480 pages in that Report, seventy-two of which consist of the actual text of the Report and the remainder of various appendices, only one page is devoted to the housing work of the Department. What does that page tell us? It says that in the course of the next few years the house-to-house inspection necessarily preliminary to the effective administration of the Act will be carried out. It draws attention to the fact that in the year 1910 Regulations were issued by the Board pointing out the importance of the appointment by local authorities of district inspectors in order to obtain a complete survey of the houses within their own district. We are not going to see that survey completed, even on the showing of the right hon. Gentleman or his chief medical adviser, for the next few years. Why cannot it be speeded up? Why cannot we have a complete report as to the housing conditions of every sanitary area in the country? How are the local authorities to do the work expected of them?

During the course of the Insurance Bill through this House stress was laid by the Government on the amount of rheumatism which was supposed to detract from the value of the agricultural labourer's life, and it was assumed that the rheumatism was mainly traceable to the man having to work in all weathers in the field. I venture to suggest to this House that the rheumatism, with its subsequent ills, existed very largely owing to the damp condition of the cottages in which these labourers live. I think a very small proportion of the rheumatism from which the agricultural labourer suffers is contracted through active work in the field. Curiously enough, under the existing conditions, the Housing Acts are the least desirable

channel through which houses can be built in country districts. As Alderman Thompson has pointed out—and I would take this opportunity of commending the excellent work he has done in pointing out the conditions of housing in rural districts—really the most effective way of obtaining an amelioration of those conditions is to proceed through the Small Holdings Allotment Act, 1908, under which cottages can be provided under much more simple machinery as an annexe to allotment.

May I ask the House whether they really consider, as has been frequently stated in the past, that the agricultural labourer, under existing conditions, can properly be called the backbone of the nation? When you find—I am sorry to say that even in my own constituency I know cases such as I am about to describe—when you find houses where windows will not open; where there are no means of alternative ventilation, even through a flue; where the walls, even in comparatively dry weather are exceedingly damp; where the doors, through lack of repair, offer no protection against the east wind; where you find, owing to defective guttering or unrepaired roofs, a perpetual damp in the ceiling, and where finally you find a whole family, and possibly a lodger, including the adult members of the family, sleeping together in one room in a condition of promiscuous indecency, how can you reasonably say that where such conditions exist you are providing a valuable asset to build up the manhood of a nation, or that you are justifying the enormous expenditure which is going on to-day to remove the many defects that are traceable to these conditions. We boast in this country of our civilisation, but I venture to say that we ought to hesitate to make any such boast until we cease to rest content with mere palliatives and cures, and get down to the bedrock cause of the bulk of the nation's ills, and do all in our power to remedy them.

Mr. Wedgwood: I beg to move, as an Amendment, to leave out the word "now," and, at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months."

The arguments which are behind this Bill were the arguments used by the early Fabians about thirty years ago at the street corners. The recommendations of this Bill are the same crude, ill-thought out, economically unsound recommendations that were made in those days. Socialism has cast them off, and they have been taken up by the Tory party and reproduced in this Bill. Let me go a little into details. The Bill opens with a section appointing the usual new department. More jobs, political jobs, of course, more fat salaries for the cadet members of the landed families. The Bill says that a new department is to be set up in the Local Government Board—in the Local Government Board, although the Local Government Board cannot manage the business that it has at present.

This new department is to be composed at the top of three Housing Commissioners. Of course, there is the inevitable provision that a duly qualified medical practitioner is to be one of the commissioners. It seems to be inevitable that if you are introducing a Bill into this House you must accompany it by a duly qualified medical practitioner. Besides that, we have the usual two sociological experts. These three people are to be appointed at a sufficient salary, and to be called commissioners. I think the hon. Members might have avoided the word "commissioners," seeing how much commissioners have been thrown in our teeth during the last few years. It is a fresh move on the part of the Conservative party to introduce more commissioners into the Government of this country. Let me suggest to them that it is not sufficient to appoint three commissioners only. As soon as they are appointed they will require gingering in due course by the appointment of six additional commissioners, as in the case of the Small Holdings Commissioners. This will be an expandable body; you are not limiting the jobs to three, nor do you limit it to the three people in this Bill. A new department means a whole new series from top to bottom of principal clerks, senior clerks, junior clerks, and all the rest of it. All these jobs will be created by a party which has been suggesting that we were corrupt politically, because we were creating so many jobs, yet the best they can do is to offer us a Bill like this, making more jobs. These new commissioners are apparently to go round on a sort of fishing inquiry to see to what extent there is likely to arise in the district of any local authority any need for improvement schemes. They will not have to go far.

We come on to Clause 2, which gives beautifully the whole interference with the local authority that is to be put into the hands of the new autocracy. The Housing Commissioners may at any time make representations to the local authority. You observe it is not the Local Government Board, but it is the autocratic Housing Commissioners themselves, without any Order from the Board or anybody to exercise a check upon them. I hope the hon. Members have consulted the county councils upon this question. If the local authority does not do what it is told, action may be taken upon the report of the Housing Commissioner, and the action that is to be taken is that the work is to be carried out by the Local Government Board, of course over the head of the local authority, and instead of issuing a mandamus—a far more difficult form even than the mandamus to put into force—the Local Government Board are to levy local rates through their own officials in the locality against the will of the local authority. Of all the wild schemes of bringing pressure to bear on a local authority this must be the wildest. Is the hon. Member aware that at present the Local Government Board and the Board of Education have satisfactory means, if they like to use them, of bringing pressure to bear on local authorities by withholding Grants? Here you are proposing that you should not only levy a rate, but actually make the rate, and say what is to be assessed upon. All I can say is, let them try and see what the local authorities will say. If all that machinery for making your housing Acts work has failed, is it not about time that we dropped this series of Housing Acts—1890, 1892, 1893, 1899, 1903, 1906, and 1909? How many more do you want before you will be convinced that it is impossible in this way to get decent housing for the people of the country? Then we pass on from that particular dodge to deal with overcrowding to the next dodge.

In Clause 5, you are increasing the power of the local authorities to buy and to job. It seems to me it is inevitable whenever the Tory party take up this question of the land that they should deal with it from the point of view of seeing how it is possible to secure the maximum of compensation for the owner, the maximum amount of interference with everybody, and the minimum result to the community as a whole. We have a scheme under Clause 8 later on for compensating these owners of property. I think it was the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) who said, after he had gone over to the other side on Home Rule in the 'nineties, that a man who owned bad houses should be treated like a man who owned bad meat, and should have his property destroyed for him, and here you are proposing for the first time not to carry out the demolition orders which you are allowed at present to carry out by law, but to pay compensation to the owners of the houses you are proposing to destroy, if they promise not to put up new houses on the site of the land. You can at present destroy the property when it is in an insanitary, rotten condition without having to pay them for it.

Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen: So you could if this clause passed. It only says if you like to give them compensation on the condition that they will not build again you can do so. It does not take away from any power which exists at present at all.

Mr. Wedgwood: I beg the hon. and gallant Gentleman's pardon, it does. It enables them to get higher compensation. You say the local authority has the option of paying, therefore the property is of more value than it otherwise would be, and the owner will not let it be pulled down because he will now have by Act of Parliament an opportunity of getting compensation which he had not before. I come to Clause 6. For the purpose of carrying out any particular improvement the local authority may relax any by-laws. I am thankful that there is at least one clause in the Bill of which I can heartily approve. There is one good thing in the Bill in respect that you are proposing to pass a clause which will enable local authorities, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to smash up previous Acts. You are enabling the Government to untie the knots which you yourself have tied in previous Acts. I am not at all certain that if that one clause had been brought in by itself it would not have passed through the House with acclamation, because it would undo many of the rotten Acts which were passed in bygone days. Clause 7 is one which I cannot commend. I would like to ask the hon. Gentleman (Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen) who, I presume,

drafted the Bill, to say who are the people described as the working class who are to have cheap travel provided for them to enable them to live at some distance from their place of employment? I wish to know who the working classes in this country are. I hope we are not putting people into their different castes and providing legislation for them. Why do you not make the working classes wear a distinctive uniform, so that you can pick them out at once? It is always legislation made by the good, kind people on the top for the working classes, as if the working classes could not be trusted to legislate for themselves.

Clause 9 is really most interesting. The whole difficulty in the way of housing of the working classes under the Acts passed between 1890 and 1909 has been the difficulty of dealing with the compensation question, and each Act that has dealt with it has done so in a different way and by different machinery to see what compensation should be paid to the owners of rotten property. If you trace out the schemes by which compensation is to be awarded, they all with one accord come back to the Lands Clauses Act of 1845. If there is one principle rooted in the Conservative party it is that there must be no scheme that gets away from that Act, and consequently we see different schemes introduced so that compensation shall be paid, though not on so excessive a scale as in the case of railway companies. Clause 9 of this Bill is another modifying link in the chain to give the victim a chance of breathing a little more freely, if he cannot get away. The difficulty of hon. Members opposite in devising schemes whereby plunder can be got out of the people is that a general valuation of all land and property in the whole country is being made, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to invent reasons why a special class should be treated as a special case which ought to have special legislation accorded to them.

You would have thought that, in introducing a new Housing Bill and fixing what compensation is to be paid to the landlords, some regard, possibly a passing notice, would be had to this general valuation, and that the arbitrator would at least be asked to look at it, if not to take it as a basis. They have taken the old scheme of basing compensation on rental. In the old Acts passed on the question of the housing of the working classes, it struck the promoters that it was rather unfair to give additional compensation where people were huddled together, ten families in a house, or where the landlords got additional rents owing to the immoral character of the inhabitants, and they decided not to take the full rental as the basis, but only the rental that would have been got if the property had been used in an ordinary and decent manner. Hon. Members who introduce this Bill have inserted Clause 9. It throws the onus of proof on the owners, and so far that is a slight improvement on the existing state of affairs. But why not take the valuation and have done with it? Why have this special class of arbitrators? I think a new vested interest is going to be set up under this Bill—a class of arbitrators for the valuation of land. You have at present one system of arbitration of lands taken by railway companies, another system in the case of the compulsory appropriation of land by the State, a third system for the work in connection with small holdings, and now you have a fourth system in this Bill. I suppose it is within the wit of man to invent a few more systems of arbitration to decide what compensation is to be given to landlords. I tell you there is one straightforward way and that is to go to the new Doomsday Book and get it out of that.

I come now to the real kernel of this Bill—Clauses 11 and 12. These are the clauses under which the money is to be found. It is to be found by the ordinary taxpayer, and where is it to go? Part of it into the pockets of the Housing Commissioners and their Department, and the rest of it is to go as a subsidy for the building of cottages in the country and letting these cottages at charity rents. You are going to provide half of the cost of building the cottages. What will be the result of providing the local authorities with the half of the cost? The result will be that local builders will be unable to compete with the local authorities.

The local authorities building houses at half-price would prevent anyone else from building them, and this would destroy private enterprise altogether. You will have the parish council employing the parish architect and the parish clerk of works, and building their own cottages and

letting them at charity rents, all out of the money of the taxpayer. Hon. Members opposite are anxious to perpetuate the system of allowing labourers to live in cottages at 1s. a week. The Secorder of this measure pointed out, quite rightly, that it was an iniquitous system, yet here in this Bill you are proposing to perpetuate that state of affairs.

Mr. W. Thorne : Hear, hear.

Mr. Wedgwood : The hon. Member for South-West Ham thinks that cottages let at charity rents are good for the working classes. Let me tell him that this system of charity rents is one safe way of driving down wages in this country.

It not only affects the people who live in these cottages, but it affects the whole of labour, whether living in these cottages or not. If you provide these people with the opportunities of getting houses so cheaply as that they will be able to undercut the wages of other people and drive down wages, so that it would not only ruin the particular people in those houses, but the whole of labour. Surely hon. Members opposite, if they do not know anything about political economy, have heard something of the economic history of the country, and they know of the system under which wages were assisted out of the Poor Law. The old Poor Law was repealed as long ago as 1835, and the main ground of the appeal was because of the iniquitous system which was introduced by good and well-meaning people, like themselves. They found that wages were no longer adequate to support the agricultural labourer; they found that the price of food was rising and that the agricultural labourer was starving; and the parsons and magistrates devised the system which allowed the wages of the agricultural labourer to vary with the number of his family and the price offered, and they were thereby enabled to pay wages out of rates. Here you are proposing, seventy or eighty years later, to do exactly the same thing, to assist wages out of the rates and taxes; and the result can only be ruin to the working classes.

This measure shows up Tory finance and economics in its very best method. Section 15 has nothing whatever to do with the rest of the Bill, but deals with an Act of Parliament passed in 1899—the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act.

This preposterous Act, that was never acted upon, only allowed the local authority to advance up to four-fifths of the value of the ownership. That is more than an ordinary bank or private person would advance, but still it is not so bad as it might be. Hon. Members opposite now propose that 90 per cent. should be lent. The original Act only allowed a man to be assisted to purchase his own house; hon. Members opposite now propose to extend it to a shop as well. I do not know what the definition of a shop is. It is not given, but I presume it covers a certain number of trades. I ask hon. Members on what ground do they justify the financing of some trades and not of other trades.

On page 8 of the Bill an even more beautiful example of Tory finance is given. The original Bill says that the man who borrowed the money had to repay the interest and capital within thirty years. In the amended Bill it merely says instead that the annual or half-yearly payment shall not exceed by more than 20 per cent. the net rental value of the house for the period in respect of which such payment is made. What does it mean? If the net rental value is low, the actual repayment, the actual 20 per cent. must be less than the interest on the capital sum advanced, it is inevitable that the man, so far as paying off his debt to the State, would either run into bankruptcy or insist on having the loan written off in the long run, and written off without being repaid to the State at all.

Just think of a financier coming forward and proposing to do away with the only check upon exaggerated and extraordinary loans, by putting into the Bill such a provision as that which it contains. Under Sub-section (c) of Clause. The rate of interest is determined at 3 per cent., which the borrower has got to pay. The Government rate of interest to the local authority is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and the local authority would lose half per cent. This is called business—Tory democracy and Tariff Reform finance. That is not the worst of it. This is only to lend money, so far as local authorities have power to lend money, to people who want to own the houses they live in. But the promoters of the Bill have made a new change which was even more interesting from the

point of view of sound finance. Under the sub-section I think you will find that the local authority has power to accept the transfer of other people's mortgages and letting those people have the money at charity rates of interest. What a system of jobbery that would lead to! A man who has borrowed at 4½ per cent. from a building society would have a chance to get his mortgages at 3 per cent., and he would ask the local authority to let him have the money on his mortgage, and he would pay off the building society.

I should like to hand this Bill down as a type of the sloppy Fabian legislation of the mid-Victorian era. There my interest in it ceases. My opposition to it is not an opposition to fallacious popularity-hunting detail. It seems to me that there is something fundamentally wrong with the Bill. It appears to be a Bill for satisfying the consciences of the intellectual and refined classes rather than for satisfying the just claims of the workers. Have we not had enough of the kind attentions of the rich intellectuals to the placing and ordering of the lives of the lower orders? Would it not be as well now to cease our well-meant efforts to stable and groom them properly and give them a little justice instead? Let them get their higher wages, and they will look after their own homes without your interference.

This Bill, even this type of Bill, is out of date. Will nothing but an operation for cataract enable you to see the world as it is now? They are not asking you for the comforts of the kept serf; they mean to get the where-withal to be comfortable in their own way. Very kindly and sympathetic speeches have been made by the Mover and Seconder—such speeches as have been almost of common form at meetings of the Christian Social Union or at the annual gathering of the League of Poor Brave Things at any time during the last six years. They bubble over with sympathy and sentiment, and the cry is to have "something done"; and when it comes from priests and mission workers one accepts it at its full face value. After all, devoted priests and mission workers, ministers and district visitors, do go in and out of the fetid dens that we call houses; they do speak kindly to the child whose head is full of vermin; they do try to cheer the bullied drudge that is called a wife; they do know the smell of the place where the worker may enjoy his out-of-work leisure. They are so near to the horrors that any scheme, any plan, may be begged for.

If you really are bent on legislating to get better houses there is only one sound way of doing it. The question is how much you want it, because the way involves a sacrifice, not a sacrifice out of working men's pockets, but a sacrifice of a few upper-class privileges. If you really want to see cheap and good houses to the extent of making such a sacrifice, you must do as you did in 1846. When you wanted cheap and good bread, you took off the Bread Tax. Will you now take off the House Tax? At present, when the rates amount to 10s. in the £ that equals a 50 per cent. tax on every new house. Take off that tax, remove the rate from the house, and then see whether you do not get cheap and good houses. Go further, and do not only take off the rate from the house, but put a stop to the privilege which people at present enjoy of keeping back land which is wanted for building. Stop that privilege by putting a substantial tax and a substantial rate upon the value which they ask for their land, and which they keep back until the building trade is willing to buy. In that way you would break down the land monopoly, you would let houses be built freely, and you would encourage building throughout the length and breadth of the country, instead of spasmodically here and there dealing with a particular slum area. The Mover of this Bill said, and said rightly, that when a slum was cleared and decent buildings put up the death-rate went down, and the infantile death rate particularly, and that the criminal records changed for the better. Yes, but does he not know that when you clear a slum area the people are merely driven into other districts where there are worse slums, so that we do not do away with overcrowding. The whole problem can only be tackled when you allow free expansion of enterprise. We want to put a stop to those bad laws of the past which strangled building, and are strangling building enterprise to-day, and which were made by landlords for the benefit of landlords.

Mr. Dundas White: I beg to second the Amendment. There are many on this side who believe that the problem can be solved in a business way and on a perfectly sound economic basis if we get rid of the evils which at present prevent what I may call its natural solution. In the first place, whenever you want to build houses, whether in the country or the town, you come up against the difficulty of getting land at a fair price to build them upon. Some time ago I went rather fully into this question and gave a good many instances in which I compared the rating value with the price which was asked when the land was wanted for various public purposes. There was one case in Northumberland in which some agricultural land was wanted for a school. That land was being rated at an annual value of 27s., and the price when it was taken for a school was, I believe, £700. I could give even more striking instances than that, but that is the first difficulty, the difficulty of getting the land. So much has to be paid for the land that when the house is built it is impossible for people to afford the price. We want to get land at something like a fair price. There are many of us who believe that the best way to do that is to adopt as the standard of rating the market value of the land, and to rate the land according to its market value, whether it is used or not. If that were done there would soon be a great deal more land available for building houses as well as for other purposes, and with the increase in the available supply the rents and the price would come down to a natural level, and would give, so to speak, the foundation for building houses. Again, as soon as a house is built, you are faced with the rating difficulty. Up goes the rent, because the house is taken into account in the rating. We want good and healthy houses for our poorer classes, who suffer so much through the want of them; but the better you build the higher the rate, and the more your efforts are penalised. Surely the fundamental thing is to remove both those difficulties, to unrate the house, and cause the rate to be placed on the market value of the land, whether it is used or not.

We talk of congested areas. The theory is that a congested area is an area where there is much people and little land. The fact is that a congested area is an area where there are few people and much land, but the people cannot get at it. We want to enable them to get at it, and we say that the root of the housing problem lies in enabling the land to be obtained at a fair price, and to have free trade in building. Of all the trades we have the building trade is probably the most languishing, because the houses are penalised by a load of taxation in a way in which nothing else is. There is no trade in which the load of taxation is so heavy. We would appeal to hon. Gentlemen on the other side as well as to hon. Gentlemen on this side to give whatever aid they can to remove those taxes on the buildings, which is one of the most active causes of overcrowding. Of course the wages difficulty arises. It may be said that the difficulty is low wages. One way to make low wages go further is to facilitate building in the way I have suggested. The other way is, and they can both be done at the same time, to increase the opportunities for labour. The rating problem, like the housing problem, has its root in the land problem. The same conditions that check our housing also check the development of our factories and workshops and various industries. You find the same fundamental difficulty of getting the land, and there again, when you build, the more wholesome and more healthy your factory, the higher the assessment and the heavier the rate, and British industries are penalised. As Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann said in one of his last speeches, the present system of rating operates as a hostile tariff on our industries. That is a tariff which we would seek to remove as soon as we possibly can.

The same thing applies to agriculture. The hon. Member opposite (Mr. C. Bathurst), who speaks with great knowledge of agriculture, knows as other Members know, that this is the case. Suppose a man reclaims a bit of moorland and develops a farm. As soon as he puts up farm buildings or makes various other improvements, they come within the scope of the rate-collector's ambit, and he is rated on them. British agriculture has never yet had a fair chance. I believe that in this country, if those who work the soil could get access to it on fair terms, and a free course could be given to agricultural as well as to industrial improve-

ments and to the building of houses, British agriculture would develop in a way it has never yet done. Proposals of this character have already received recognition from hon. Members on the other side. For instance, I may quote the Noble Lord the Member for Hitchin (Lord R. Cecil) who, in opposing the Land Clauses of the Finance Act, said:—

I quite agree that a large number of hon. Gentlemen of Conservative opinion have pledged themselves to the Taxation of Land Values, but what for? As a substitute for our existing system of rating, which is a perfectly easy and rational proposition.

That is the easy and rational proposition which is made from these benches to-day. That is the true line of solution. I do not say it will do everything; many other things are necessary; but we go on the simple principle of first things first. This Bill would tend rather in the opposite direction. Take, for instance, the Grant of £500,000 annually towards the better housing of the people. How much of that is to go in the purchase of land at its present high price? The way to bring rents and prices down to what they should be is to increase the available supply. You will do that only by saying that the people who hold the land without using it shall be rated on its market value nevertheless. But if you say to those who are now holding up the land, "We will exploit the taxpayer in order to get you the price that you ask," the result will be that, while you may secure that particular piece of land, you will strengthen the hands of those who are holding back land all over the country, and ultimately, instead of helping, you will hinder the getting of land on fair terms. From all these points of view it seems to me that this measure is most undesirable. It does not help forward the solution; it postpones it. It turns men's minds from what the real solution is, and I believe that in practical working it would make that real solution more difficult of realisation than before. I have pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Mr. Sutton : I would like to give a few instances of how the housing question affects the great city (Manchester) with which I am connected. Within half a mile radius we have practically 1,996 houses, with 9,264 persons living in them. It was ascertained by the local authority some little time ago that 1,619 houses are occupied by one family, 377 by one family and a lodger, 128 by one family and lodgers, 167 by two families, seven by five families, and four by six families, so you see the houses there are very much overcrowded. The death-rate in that district amounts to nearly 30 per 1,000. The houses contain four, five, and, in some cases, six rooms. Some of them are what are termed "farmed" houses. A person takes three or four of the larger houses and lets them to a number of families. He is the tenant of the house, and he makes a certain amount of money out of the families. The district is overcrowded, and there are many living in these houses who ought not to live in them. Altogether, on one acre of land in this district there are 137 persons. I believe the House will agree that that is altogether too many. The quality of the people is such that 575 of them are in receipt of 20s. per week, and the local authority, in attempting to pull down what is practically slum property, are in a very difficult position indeed. They must either build tenements on the same land, and it will be seen the area is already overcrowded, and we believe that tenements are not liked by the tenants, or they must go outside the city and build cottages there. There is a difficulty in going a distance away from the area where the people at present live. Some hundreds of them work within a half-mile of this slum area, and they are unable to pay tram fares to go outside the city. Moreover, if they go outside the city it means the raising of rents on account of having to build property outside.

The municipality is in a very difficult position indeed; in fact, the small housing schemes which they have put into operation already cost nearly £16,000 per annum, and that has to come out of the rates. It has already cost them £53 per person and £193 per house for the demolition of slum property alone. Therefore, as they have a loss equal to nine-tenths of a penny on the rates, the municipality is very reluctant to continue this housing scheme, and the only thing in my mind is to do as you have done in Ireland and make a Grant of money to help people to live in decent houses. That can only be done

by a National Grant, and I do not believe half-a-million is going to do very much. It is only an infinitesimal amount to be distributed among the different industrial and urban areas. I believe if a housing scheme is going to benefit the working classes of this country at all, something far more than half-a-million of money will have to be granted from the Treasury.

Mr. Booth : My own opinion is very clear. It is that this measure will not contribute one iota to the solution of the problem that hon. Members have been seeking. It is the old idea of a dole. Directly you get a social problem that taxes the brain, industry, energy, and loyalty too much, one immediately looks to the State for advice and to the State for money.

What is the foundation principle of this measure? Lack of confidence in the public authorities of the country. Big and little alike, county and parish, they are all to be swept away. Their powers are to be taken away at the bidding of three Commissioners. I am not at all sure that these three men could cover the ground in their lifetime. Apparently the Bill contemplates that they shall act together. One is to be a doctor, one an urban expert, and the other a rural expert. Surely the idea of having three distinct characters as Commissioners means that we are to have the combined wisdom of these three. They are to look after 2,000 medical officers of health. I say that if we undermine the immense and right powers of medical officers of the country, we shall be making a retrograde step. That is one of my principal objections to this measure. The only hope we have is that the independent medical men in the various districts are strong-minded enough and loyal enough to the ideals of their profession that they will state what is required. But if we remove the responsibility from them and put it on to three State officials who come from Downing Street or Whitehall, I think we shall be taking a step backward. What was the whole contention of the Seconder of the Second Reading? He summed it up in one phrase, which was a delightful phrase. He said that what he wanted was pressure from outside. That is to me the most melancholy and pessimistic utterance I have heard since I have been a Member of this House. When we lose faith in the manhood of this country and the ability and determination of the men in their own localities to grapple with the evil, and when we come to rely on State intervention and State prodding, then is our doom as a nation sealed. The way to deal with the problem is not by a bastard Socialistic measure such as this. There are two courses open. One is the drastic reform of the position of land-owning and of rating and taxation. No one can quite conceive what would be the effect upon the congested districts of this country if property were freed from intolerable burdens, and if the increment due to the action of the community was restored to the community.

I represent a borough (Pontefract) which sadly needs better houses, and I looked to this measure with a great deal of eagerness, and with a desire to see in it some message of hope for my constituents, but I have found none. I do not consider that this would lead to the erection of one single house in the whole borough of Pontefract. What does it amount to? It is a dole, I estimate, of about twopenny a head to our constituents. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bonar Law) has told us that the working man does not want charity but work. I am not quite so sure that I understand what is the meaning of that occult aphorism, but at the same time I would very much prefer open assistance from the State, repeated and regular, that a man can rely on, to the spasmodic intervention of a three-penny-bit once a year, such as this Bill provides.

I cannot understand how the members of the Labour Party, with their huge programme, and with the heavy task they have undertaken, can admit principles like these to be incorporated in the legislation of the country. They hope to do a great deal in the way of social reform by some of the measures they propose, and while they have more faith than I have in some of their schemes, I must say they have no more sincere admirer than myself of their motives. If they wish to tackle the question of monopolies, how can they do it by rearing up obstacles in the way of providing compensation to vested interests. I do not wish to treat large interests badly, but we are devoting this money to compensate people for having property

so bad that it has to be condemned. I say we are introducing here a principle which I for my part cannot possibly support. I do urge in the interest of the working classes that hon. Members should think twice before they give their sanction to such an atrocious principle.

Mr. Lansbury : The reason I support the Second Reading of this Bill is that it contains, in my judgment, two good principles. One is that we are to have set up here in the centre an authority to see that things are done in regard to housing, and the other is that we are to have national money to help do them. A good deal of objection is taken to the proposal to buy out the owner of slum property. I should have thought everyone acquainted with housing schemes and questions affecting housing was quite aware that up to the present we have had to do that. No one has yet proposed that we should take away from the slum owner his property without compensating him for it. I will vote for a Bill to that effect if the hon. Member for Pontefract will bring one in, but I doubt very much whether the President of the Local Government Board would support such a measure. I am perfectly willing to support a Bill with that object, or I will support an Amendment to this Bill to the same effect. Speaking for a district which badly needs housing, I wish Parliament would carry out the proposition of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Wedgwood) to raise the money and then re-house the people under decent conditions. Get the money in the manner he suggests, and let it be spent, not by private people, but by the municipalities. It is of the greatest importance to see that children, women and men are living in decent homes first of all. I believe that that is the most important thing in life, and it is because I believe that, not because I agree with all the details of this Bill, that quite cheerfully I shall go into the Lobby in support of the Second Reading.

Mr. Burns : I ask the House on this matter to be very careful about following the advice of gentlemen who have hearts of gold and heads of quicksilver, because it is so generous to be philanthropic with other people's money, and it is so easy to ask for a dole of half-a-million to-day, to be followed by a million next year, and a million and a half the year following. But this Bill has not been advanced on its merits so much as it has been advanced as a medium of making what I think was a totally unjustifiable attack on the Housing Department of the Local Government Board. I have a right to speak and to say that you have no right with the Housing Act of only two years ago, before its roots have been in the ground long, to pull up those roots to see how far and how fast it has grown. That suggestion was made by the hon. Member who moved this Bill, and who made an attack which was as ungenerous as it was unjustified, and poor compensation to myself, who for the Tottenham, Rotherhithe, Tabard Street, and Grotto Place schemes have done everything within my power, and, as well, to accelerate the speed of housing reform in London, and have lost no opportunity of helping the hon. Member and the committee over which he presides.

When the hon. Member says that nothing has been done for rural housing, I can only say that, apart from repair work under Part III., and in the matter of new houses within the last three years there have been 13,000 representations made to rural district councils. Of that number 9,000 were in the last year. For closing, demolition, and repairs, over 20,000 separate actions have been taken in the rural areas under this Act in the last eighteen months or two years. So much for the suggestion that nothing has been done. The next point made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dudley and supported by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wilton, was to the effect that it was perfectly true that some new houses, comparatively insignificant in number, have been built in the rural areas. "But what," they say, "is the good of them when you have closed 1,344 houses?" That is not the fact. The real fact is that 1,344 closing orders were issued. Of these, instead of the property being demolished, as was suggested, with the exception of 126 the rest have been put into a condition of habitable repair. The 126 have been demolished.

I warn the House of Commons that, so far as I am concerned, the day the commissioners come into my Department, that day I walk out, and I will tell the House why. The only way Parliament can act is through the local authorities. We have got 25,000 local authorities, large and small, in England and Wales. Increasingly the local authorities are suspicious of commissioners, and we find the more you supervise them the more they mistrust you, the more they suspect you, and the more they are jealous of you; and the result is that the extent to which they are over-inspected by independent housing commissioners is the measure in which they neglect their duties which they would do cheerfully and efficiently without the interference of those commissioners.

Let us assume that I have a purse like Fortunatus, and I could give half-a-million, what would be the good of it to deal with this problem? There are no less than 1,250,000 men in the United Kingdom engaged in the building trade, and over £100,000,000 in wages or profits are taken by masters and men. What is the good of half-a-million, which is less than half of 1 per cent., on an industry that employs so many men and so much capital?

Mr. W. Thorne : Give us a bit more.

Mr. Burns : The hon. Member for South-West Ham said give us a bit more. Where is it to come from? From dear sugar? [An Hon. Member: "No, from the Income Tax."] This has to be given at once, and it will have to come from the heavier taxation upon the charwoman and the poor workers in South-West Ham on purpose to give subsidies to those working on high wages in the tinplate industry or to engineers or colliers getting from 5s. to 10s. per day. It is a monstrous proposition, and unjust to the very poor. Besides that it is bad finance, just as ethically it is unjust to those who have to find the money.

When the Progressive party, from 1889 up to 1906, proposed that public money without any subsidy from the State, without a charge on either rates or taxes, should be used to build houses to cover the cost of erection, maintenance and repair, the rents to cover all outgoings, hon. Members of his party said, "Oh, this is competition with private enterprise and it will prevent houses from being built." There are about 50,000 tenants now actually in. All this has been done through the rents of the tenants themselves. I am glad to say that for the eighteen years I was chairman of the Labour party on the London County Council we all of us took the line that charity rents through rates or taxes were nothing less than a bonus to employers in aid of low wages, and would be used and exploited by unscrupulous employers of labour to that particular end. A Grant will not touch in a practical form either rural or urban housing; it will do more harm than good; it will be an assistance to landlords and a bonus in favour of low wages, and it is not necessary in towns and cities and rural districts where they are building on economic lines.

Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put accordingly, and agreed to.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House."— [Mr. Booth.]

The House divided: Ayes, 129; Noes, 158.

The Liberal and Labour Members who voted with the majority included Sir J. H. Bethell, W. Brace, S. O. Buckmaster, S. Collins, F. Goldstone, R. V. Harcourt, J. Keir Hardie, A. Henderson, J. Hodge, W. S. Glyn-Jones, F. W. Jowett, G. Lansbury, Rt. Hon. T. Lough, J. R. Macdonald, J. Martin, P. Morrell, T. Richardson, G. H. Roberts, A. J. Sherwell, Albert Smith, H. B. Lees Smith, P. Snowden, J. E. Sutton, W. Thorne, H. A. Watt, A. F. Whyte, T. Wiles, Sir J. H. Yoxall.