

# Land Values

JOURNAL OF THE MOVEMENT FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

### Parliamentary Debates.

We publish with this issue a Supplement reporting discussions in the House of Commons on the Small Holdings Act, Rural Housing, Cottage Homes and Municipal Land Purchase. These reports contain much valuable information to students of the land question, and show that economic and social problems have not been altogether set aside by the political issues that are claiming first attention in Parliament to-day.

On the third reading of the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, Mr. Bathurst pointed to the anomalous position in which County Councils found themselves owing to the different attitudes of the various Government Departments in respect of loans made to local authorities for the purpose of providing land for small holdings. Mr. Runciman admitted the difficulty in bringing the various Departments into line, at the same time giving it as his opinion that the Sinking Fund charge, so far as it is due to land, should not be borne by the small holder, and only such charge on the buildings and other things should be borne by him as is equal to the amount exhausted during his tenure. The debate provided Conservatives with an opportunity to urge their case for peasant proprietary. Their solution was to charge the small holder with the interest on Sinking Fund and enable him to become owner in course of time—that is, to pay in instalments for the freehold of land which has already been purchased at monopoly prices by County Councils. This disastrous policy would only be a degree more unjust to the land user than the policy the Government have themselves adopted in "acquiring" land for the small holder. This debate was upon a matter of administrative detail, but it has only helped to reveal the futility of any attempt to settle the land question which leaves land monopoly free to put every obstacle in the way.

### Rural Housing and Cottage Homes.

The Debates on the 3rd and 12th April were fruitful in admissions from both sides of the House of the deplorable condition of housing among the poor. The homeless labourer, like the unemployed man, is to-day on the doorstep of the politician. Even the Conservatives recognise his existence, and are using him to try to foist on the country their policy of municipal charity and State grants, which is found embodied in their Cottage Homes Bill and in their recently introduced Housing Bill.

The undisguised plan to build and supply cottages at less than cost was too much even for the President of the Local Government Board. His suggestion to the House was that they should join in criticising in the proper quarter the low standard of wages paid to agricultural labourers of 13s. to 16s. per week instead of coming to Parliament for a bonus to landlords who did not always do their duty, and to farmers who did not always pay economic wages on which the labourers could sustain themselves. They could do more for rural housing in the next twelve months if they got the wages raised only 1s. a week than they will do by supporting a cadging organisation on the part of either farmers or landlords." And yet in the same speech Mr. Burns said, "I need not tell the House that from 1906 to 1910, on much smaller schemes and more on rural housing than previously, £448,000 in loans had been sanctioned by my department, but better still in 1911, and in the three months of 1912, £245,000 had been sanctioned in that fifteen months." It is a strange boast to make in view of his earlier statement, for have not these loans the very same effect as a grant from Parliament? Money raised in this way filters just as surely into the pockets of landowners as a State grant does. Its use for the purpose of buying land raises the level of rent on all sides, strengthens the power of the landed

interests, and renders agricultural labourers and others more and more dependent on the goodwill and charity of the local authority and the State.

#### Municipal Land Purchase.

On the 19th April, the second reading of the Land Acquisition Bill was taken and the debate was talked out without a division in a listless House. The Bill is designed to enable public authorities to purchase land at a price based on the new Finance Act valuation, and not merely for specific and immediate, but for general and future purposes. The objections to the measure were ably stated by Mr. Wedgwood; they will be found in the report of his speech in our Supplement. As he said, it is not the land speculator but land speculation itself that must be condemned, and whether the process of ripening is carried out by the local authority or by a private landlord, it is equally bad in either case.

The experience of such cities as London, Glasgow and Aberdeen have demonstrated that municipal land holding is only a delusion and a snare. Mr. George Barnes, who supported the Bill, quoted Glasgow's success in acquiring land out of the Common Good fund; but if he had been acquainted with the evidence given before the Select Committee on the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill, 1906, on this typically unfortunate experience in municipal land speculation he would have hesitated before using it as an example to be followed by other towns. Most of the land bought for "development" purposes has remained vacant for many years, the Corporation finding it impossible to feu or sell it. In London, Mr. Tasker stated at the London County Council meeting on the 5th March, £210,000 a year was being paid in the shape of interest with regard to land from which they got an income of £154,000 a year. To-day they had land valued at £3,100,000 producing nothing, and they were losing £93,000 in interest on money borrowed for the purchase of land.

There is no purpose in municipal land purchase for future requirements unless the land is parted with again at a higher figure. Speculation intervenes induced by a gamble with public money. So far as the individual citizen is concerned the land might as well have remained in the hands of private owners. For vacant land, whoever owns it, has its counterpart in high rents and rates, overcrowding, restricted opportunities for employment, and low wages.

#### Government Approval.

The most noteworthy feature of the debate was the declaration by Sir Rufus Isaacs that the Government accepted the principle that local authorities should have the right to buy land in anticipation of their requirements. As Mr. Wedgwood pointed out, this attitude helps to explain the passage in Mr. Lloyd George's speech on the 2nd April, that the valuation would be available for the readjustment of local taxation and "for equally important public purposes of another character." Do these other "public purposes" include powers to public authorities to buy off landowners and to embark on extensive development schemes? We honestly hope not. They can never come before the country and pretend, after all their statements to the contrary, that this is what was meant by land reform. Local authorities have other means of overcoming the power of those privileges which strangle their growth and development, and they only ask they may have the right to apply such means. The Government will try in vain to shunt public opinion in another direction, for the public is too well informed to allow the valuation to be used for any other purpose than as a new standard for rating and taxation. It is a weapon which can and will be used with effect to put an end to land with-holding and compel landowners everywhere, on pain of paying sweetly for the privilege, to allow development of every kind, whether municipal or industrial to proceed.

#### Slums—A Bold and Wise Proposal.

Mr. R. L. Outhwaite's admirable article on Glasgow Slums, which appeared in the DAILY NEWS of the 9th April and which we reproduce in another column, is a heart-moving picture of the ravages of land monopoly in Scotland's commercial and business centre. In Glasgow, perhaps, the slum evil is seen at its worst, not excepting the East End of London; but on the other hand, Glasgow is the city that has done most and is doing most to call attention to the root cause of poverty and bad housing and to demand measures for relief. For a generation past Glasgow has led the municipal fight for the rating of land values as the only real solution to the slum problem, and once again is making a strenuous call for support in demanding powers from Parliament to tackle the question on these lines.

Mr. Outhwaite's article is opportune and will do much to focus attention on the action taken by the Glasgow Corporation. We appeal to our friends and supporters throughout the land to follow his fine example. Although we cannot all get special articles into the newspapers, we can write "letters to the Editor," we can talk to and interest our friends, we can tackle town and county councillors, we can raise the question at public meetings, we can distribute literature, we can get subscribers for LAND VALUES, and in a hundred and one ways we can give a helping hand in the campaign that the Corporation of Glasgow has inaugurated.

Referring in an editorial to Mr. Outhwaite's article, the LONDON STAR, on April 9th, said:—

The cause of better housing for dwellers in great cities is likely to receive a considerable impetus through the campaign initiated by the Glasgow Corporation in favour of rating urban land. While London, the metropolis of the United Kingdom, lies supine in the hands of the ground landlords' organisation, Glasgow, the second city, has moved forward with this bold stroke against the monopoly which is throttling the growth of healthy town life. . . . The 1909 Budget only touched future increment, but it showed the way, and our practical Scottish friends are applying the principle to present rating. The Corporation have found how the exorbitant demands of ground landlords, based on a value which is created absolutely by the community, has hindered street widening, workmen's dwellings, and other necessary public improvements. . . . Exactly the same evils exist in London, and for the same reason. The Glasgow Corporation are inviting other rating authorities throughout the country to petition Parliament in favour of the Corporation's Bill legalising the levy of a rate for local purposes on the valuation of land. We shall watch with interest the action which the L.C.C. Moderates will take when this bold and wise proposal reaches them.

#### A Lesson for Town Planners.

In the GLASGOW HERALD of 18th April appears a report of the second inquiry by the Local Government Board into the town planning of Rosyth, held at Inverkeithing. Mr. Wm. Paterson, engineer, convener of the Town Council's Town Planning Committee, said that since it became certain that the docks at Rosyth were to be proceeded with it had become apparent that there would be required a large increase of accommodation for the various classes of working people coming into the locality. There was a demand for building sites and no lack of speculators, and had ground been obtainable on moderate terms a large strip of land would in all probability have been covered with houses. There appeared, however, to be a tendency on the part of some proprietors to hold back land until prices were higher. Other landowners were willing to dispose of their ground, but they could not do so because they could not open up street accesses without negotiating with a number of other proprietors who were content to block the way and were unwilling to contribute the necessary expenditure. The result of the difficulty of obtaining sites was

### The "Rich Man using little Land."

It may be a fallacy that "all incomes are *invested* in land," but it is a truth that all wealth is *produced* from land. In putting forward the case of the man who "might be a millionaire and yet not own an acre of land," or who "further might not occupy more than an acre," and therefore "escape local rating altogether," the MUNICIPAL JOURNAL betrays a very narrow view of land occupancy. The wider view of the case is that all industrial and commercial undertakings and all business are worked on and through land. Manufacturers, financiers, bankers, brokers and business and commercial magnates of all kinds may directly occupy but a small piece of land—a small office in a large building perhaps—but these people who *seem* to be producing wealth in a small space have interests in all kinds of concerns: in docks, coal companies, mines, factories, building estates, &c. Or they may be holders of mortgages, or interested in land development schemes.

In considering whether the taxation of land values would reach these rich men, we must consider, not the restricted area in which they personally operate, but the whole country. If *all* land were rated and taxed according to its market value, every acre of land would be affected, whether it were used or held idle for speculative purposes, or by caprice. In this way the taxation of land values will reach out to all men, rich or poor; as they are interested in land personally, or as a shareholder in a land company so will they contribute to the public revenues. Under the Taxation of Land Values none will escape. Those who enjoy much land value will pay more than those who enjoy less, and those who do not enjoy any land value will not be asked to make a contribution. When the Taxation of Land Values is in operation "Dick Turpin's" occupation will be gone. The ratepayers will be in possession of their own and there will be nothing left for our old friend D.T.

### A Hostile Tariff.

The following statement was copied, on April 16th, from a notice in a shop window at 272, Pentonville Road, King's Cross—one of London's busiest spots:—

#### THE BURDEN OF RATES IN ISLINGTON.

We beg to notify the public of our intention to vacate this Window (a plan of which is given below) in consequence of the iniquitous increase in Rates.

The assessment of this small window, which includes basement only, in 1910 was £138 per annum and has now been increased to £209, making Rates payable £83 12s.

The enormous rating of properties in Islington has caused the downfall of more than one prosperous thoroughfare and is already taking effect at King's Cross.

Various appeals have been made to the Rating Committee but lightly dismissed and a courteous hearing refused.

We have acquired four very large floors at less than half the rent of this window.

The plan referred to indicates a floor space 21 feet deep by 11 feet wide at the front, narrowing down to 5 feet at the back.

It would be difficult to find a more direct and eloquent explanation of the "hard times" of which almost every business man complains. The handicap thus placed on industry is the necessary accompaniment to the advantage given to monopoly by our rating system. A just and business-like system of rating would treat all land occupiers alike—would levy upon them rates in proportion to the benefits derived from public service. Land value is just the price of a monopoly privilege, and if rates were levied on this basis owners of idle land would be brought into the net, relieving the industrious and enterprising business

men of a considerable portion of the almost intolerable rating burden. In a well-ordered community an improvement of business premises would not mean a fine in the shape of increased rates.

### The Criticism of the Expert.

The LAND AGENTS' RECORD of March 23rd contains the report of a paper on the Rating of Site Values which was read by Mr. W. P. Ryan, F.S.I. (Past President R.S.A.), before a recent general meeting of the Rating Surveyors' Association. We are indebted to Mr. Ryan for joining his colleagues in giving publicity to the propaganda of the United Committee, and we welcome his voice in the chorus of men who are bent upon holding up the activity of our terrible Committee as a warning to the landed interests. For the rest, Mr. Ryan discusses the proposals of the Land Values Group as placed before the Departmental Committee on Local and Imperial Taxation. We learn for the first time that the Group "do not propose that local rates are to be at once levied on the land value, but suggest that an interval of ten years should be allowed before it becomes compulsory." Also that the Group "estimate that a levy of 3d. in the £ on the capital value of land, after the existing rates on lands and buildings are 'lifted,' will realise a sum sufficient to cover the total of the grants-in-aid, which are now paid to local authorities, for what are called national services. These grants amount to £20,029,941 in England and Wales alone, so that it may be assumed that the assessable capital value of land in England and Wales is assumed to be £1,602,395,280, which at 4 per cent. would give an annual value of £64,095,811." On this amusing fabric of guesswork and assumption, Mr. Ryan works out many elaborate calculations all going to show how iniquitous and impracticable the proposals of the Land Values Group are. We are familiar with question-begging calculations of this nature and simply pass them by as contributing nothing whatever to the discussion. At the same time, notwithstanding his subtleties, we congratulate Mr. Ryan on his perseverance. He has at least opened the way to a more intimate consideration of the subject at a future meeting of the Rating Surveyors' Association.

### Wanted, Additional Subscribers.

We appeal to our friends to do all they can to help us in securing additional subscribers to LAND VALUES. In the past two or three years our circulation has increased by 50 per cent., but this increase is infinitesimal, we feel convinced, with what can be done if every active reader will help. To assist those who are willing to canvass their friends, we are issuing coupon receipt books which any one can conveniently carry about with him, and use whenever an opportunity presents itself. The books can be had either with 7 receipts (for 1s. 6d. each), value 10s. 6d., or with 14 receipts, value £1 1s. Application should be made to the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W., or to any of the associated Leagues.

This should be an inviting field for all our speakers, and we specially seek their aid in adding to our subscribers list. Those who address meetings, and they are an ever-growing body, have, we are often advised, made a good and lasting impression at some meeting; but our speaker passes away to make room for others on other questions, and this appears to be the end of his mission. We have not gained any new permanent connection in the district. This should not be, and it need not be any longer. Let the speakers of the movement provide themselves with a 10s. 6d. or 21s. book of coupons, and ask the audience addressed, or any interested, to give their names, along with 1s. 6d. for LAND VALUES by post for one year. This will keep them in touch with the movement, add to its strength, and encourage those at headquarters who are responsible for the output of the monthly Messenger of the Movement.

### "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.

### LABOUR UNREST.

The Coal Strike, the latest phase of labour unrest, has been patched up for the time being. The Coal Mines Minimum Wage Act, 1912, is now in force, and the Wage Boards it provides for are at work endeavouring to cope with the troubles that precipitated the quarrel. This strike, like the Railway and Transport Workers' Strike last year, has many lessons to teach, but one lesson stands out in bold relief: the change that has come over the face of British politics. Economic and industrial questions, as such, have now taken the place of political questions, as such. The unemployed man, the badly paid worker, the millions condemned to live in unspeakable housing conditions in both town and country feel deeply the wrongs they endure. In a dumb way the working people have borne patiently their burden, hoping against hope that some day redress would come. The reformers of past generations kept the fires burning and fought with giants for political emancipation and for wider educational facilities. They believed firmly in more democracy, and accepted the wider extension of the franchise as the means to their goal of universal peace, and health and progress. But the schoolmaster, inside the schools and without, has been abroad, and the seething mass of discontent among the labouring people to-day is provoked and controlled by a new and altogether different philosophy.

It is now clearly seen that mere political enfranchisement, good enough as far as it goes, is no remedy for labour troubles. To give a man a vote and force him to tramp in search of a living, to cede the right of citizenship and compel the citizen to endure hopeless unrequited toil, side by side with the most glaring examples of prosperity and refinement, is what more than anything else in a progressive community awakens forces of discontent. The labour unrest now abroad in the land is no mere ephemeral disturbance; it is there to stay and to become deeper and wider till the cure for it is discovered and applied.

Industrial questions, the question of work and wages, the questions of unemployment and of housing, are now uncomfortably in occupation in the front seats of public opinion, and they are going to remain there till public opinion gets ripe for a settlement of their case. These great strikes mean only one thing. The worker has roused himself, he wants his wages advanced, he demands a fairer share of the wealth which he labours so incessantly to

produce. He knows there is enough and to spare, for he sees and hears of the overflowing abundance which he has learned by bitter experience is not for him, but is earmarked for others, many of whom are less entitled to it than he is. In all his suffering he has been more than patient, and now he is indicating in plain terms that he is out for a change. If the politicians whom he has voted into place and power time and again cannot or will not bring him the justice and fair play he demands, he is prepared to speak and act for himself; and this is what he must do or sink even lower in the social scale.

The worker is right, and he has a measure of popular support behind him that even the dull-minded politicians do not seek to ignore or belittle. This struggle of the miners was the usual fight between "capital and labour" with the real enemy, the mine owner, the land monopoliser, behind the scenes. The Government with its Minimum Wage Act, a species of the half-baked Socialism it provides in the name of Liberalism, has brought to itself and the country a breathing space for the time being. The miners are back at work, and in their off time engaged in a sordid struggle for a minimum legal share of what is left after the man in the background has made his deductions in the form of royalties, wayleaves, dead-rents, surface-rents, and all the rest.

But this measure does not mean that the unrest of labour is settled, even for a time. The cause of poverty is still actively at work, and if the Government are not prepared to take the "deeper cut" then the Minimum Wage for coal miners has but set the pace for similar legislation all round. If the Government will not fulfil the hopes they held out of going to the root of the poverty problem they are going to have an uneasy time. If they will not go forward with the liberating policy set forth in the Taxation of Land Values they are going to be driven along the lines of restriction and that way lies the end of all things, at least for Liberalism.

The chief cause of all labour troubles is landlordism; the rent of land keeps pace with all attempts of labour to escape. Education, invention, improvement of any kind, anything that would lighten the day's toil, is arrested and stifled by this constantly acting force. The advance of rent is an enduring obstacle to higher wages. In the words of Henry George: "It is a fresh and continuous robbery that goes on every day and every hour. It is not from the produce of the past that rent is drawn; it is from the produce of the present. It is a toll levied upon labour constantly and continuously." This power to appropriate the rent of land induces land monopoly, the standing barrier to the solution of the poverty problem. It checks production at its source and in itself constitutes a permanent lock-out of labour and capital.

Three years ago this seemed to be recognised by Liberal leaders, and on a thousand platforms, landlordism in all its nakedness was ruthlessly exposed. There was no talk then of a beggarly "ninepence for fourpence," and as for a Minimum Wage Act for miners out on strike for a living wage, why such a thing was incredible. Verily it is altered days since we were looking for the thaw that was to come in the spring, when the frozen feudal sources of monopoly were to vanish before the rising sun, and the children of the people enter into their inheritance from on high. To-day this looks like a dream. Monopoly is still as strongly entrenched and Land Values Taxation has given place to legislation arising out of the reactionary backwash of the Poor Law Commission inquiry.

Six years ago the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith, then Chancellor of the Exchequer,) asked the municipalities for time to find out how best to tax land values. "We are all agreed," he said to a Municipal deputation on the 26th February, 1906, "that as a preliminary step there should be a separate assessment of land values," and that this would secure "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." This was six years ago, and all we have got is what Mr. Asquith said we did not want—the "piecemeal instalment;" and as for what we were all "agreed upon having," the separate valuation, well, that is due in 1915, and when it comes it will be just six years out of date and therefore useless for purposes of local rating.

Meanwhile, the Land Values Group in the House of Commons continue to bring forward their Bills and their Resolutions on Land Values, Housing, and Labour Unrest, but there is never one sympathetic word of encouragement or support from the Liberal leaders. When the Taxation of Land Values is debated in the House of Commons to-day the Government is dumb; it has sent the question to a Treasury Committee of experts and has no opinion of its own on the subject. What does it all mean? And what are the Members of Parliament fully pledged to the Taxation of Land Values going to say to their constituents when they return to the hustings with their cargo of Dead Sea fruit? Scores and hundreds of them have advocated the Taxation of Land Values as the cure for unemployment, bad housing, and as a method of land reform which the Government were pledged to carry.

Ten years ago the Liberal Party emerged out of much obscurity with the Taxation of Land Values as one of the foremost of the tasks they would set their minds to and overcome. It was one of their chief planks at the 1906 election, and three months later the Second Reading of a Bill on the subject was carried in the House of Commons by a vote of 319 to 61. It was the Land Clauses of the "People's Budget" that saved the party from defeat at the polls in the 1910 election, and incidentally paralysed

the House of Lords. The Taxation of Land Values has served the Liberal Party better than the party has served it. The driving power in the country for this reform has stood the test, and the treatment it has received at the hands of those who have exploited it for meaner ends can be regarded as one of the despairing chapters of modern Liberalism. For such a betrayal a day of reckoning must come sooner or later, and the sooner the better. In the words of Mr. Lloyd George himself:—

"A rational land system lies at the very root of national well-being. Liberalism will commit one of the most fatal blunders of its career if it allows this question to rest until it is settled. The real meaning of the enthusiasm aroused by the Budget is that the country has risen in revolt against the land monopoly. It has impoverished our rural districts, it has driven old industries away from our villages, and has prevented the establishment of new ones. It has cramped the natural, healthy growth of our towns. Streets which might have been filled with real homes, affording ample breathing space to restore the energies of our labouring population, in all ranks of life, have been crushed into airless blocks of unsightly buildings which are the eye-sore of our great cities and a danger to civilisation. Traders, manufacturers, professional men, business men, builders and workmen in town and country, have long been smouldering with disaffection against this oppression of landlordism, and with the Budget their discontent has burst into flame. **IF LIBERALISM LEAVES THE MATTER THERE AND DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE SOME MORE RATIONAL SYSTEM, IT MUST INEVITABLY SUFFER FOR ITS LACK OF COURAGE AND FORESIGHT.**"

#### THE LOSS OF THE "TITANIC."

The terrible disaster to the "Titanic" on Sunday, 14th April, which has caused such a shock over the whole world, has quite overshadowed every other event of public importance during the month. It has been the greatest calamity that has ever taken place at sea, and we wish to join in the universal feeling of deep sympathy with the bereaved, as well as in paying tribute to the heroism with which crew and passengers alike went down to that awful and sudden death. Man has not yet conquered Nature. He builds ships which he boasts are "unsinkable," and in one short hour all the fruits of his genius are utterly destroyed. Nature demands obedience, and the elaborate precautions which Governments and Shipping Companies are now making against a similar loss of life are an expression of man's observance of the Law. This disaster suggests many thoughts, but these have already found full expression in the country and in the daily and weekly press of the country and throughout the world.

## LAND VALUES RATING BILL.

INTRODUCED INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY  
MR. FRANCIS NEILSON, M.P., ON THE 24th APRIL, 1912.

### MEMORANDUM.

The object of this Bill is to enable Rating Authorities to adopt Site Value as defined by the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910, as the standard of rating, and thus to relieve ratepayers from paying rates in respect of buildings, fixed plant, and improvements.

For this purpose the valuation directed by the Budget should be made up to date and periodically revised so as to provide a record of the land value of each hereditament for the time being and of the persons interested therein and of the proportions in which they are so interested.

In adopting Land Value as the standard of rating the Bill follows the recommendation of the Select Committee on the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill, 1906.

### A BILL

TO ENABLE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO RELIEVE  
RATEPAYERS FROM PAYING RATES IN  
RESPECT OF BUILDINGS AND FIXED  
PLANT AND IMPROVEMENTS, AND TO  
ADOPT LAND VALUE AS THE STANDARD  
OF RATING.

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows:—

LOCAL AUTHORITY MAY LEVY RATES ON NEW RATEABLE VALUE.

1. A Local Authority may by resolution determine that the whole or any part of the existing or future rates which are or may be levied by such Local Authority shall be levied and charged in respect of the New Rateable Value as hereinafter defined in lieu of any other rateable value.

BY WHOM AND IN WHAT PROPORTION THE RATE TO BE PAID.

2. The rate or rates levied in respect of any hereditaments under the provisions of this Act shall be payable by each person interested in the New Rateable Value of such hereditaments in proportion to the amount of his interest therein.

VALUATIONS TO BE SUPPLIED TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

3. The Board of Inland Revenue shall supply free of charge to every Local Authority full copies of all valuations made under the provisions of the Finance (1909-10) Act 1910 and any Amending Act or Acts relating to land or premises within the area of such Local Authority.

DEFINITIONS.

4. For the purposes of this Act:—

“New Rateable Value” means the Full Site Value as defined in Section 25 of the Finance (1909-10) Act 1910 and any Amending Acts;

“Local Authority” means County Council, Borough Council, Town Council, and every other Local Authority which has or may hereinafter have the power to levy a rate.

SHORT TITLE.

5. This Act may be cited as the Local Authorities (Rating) Act 1911.

## DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE BILL.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH.

Mr. Neilson: I beg to move, “That leave be given to introduce a Bill to enable local authorities to relieve ratepayers from paying rates in respect of buildings and fixed plants and improvements, and to adopt land value as the standard of rating.”

This is a very short Bill. In the first Clause it asks that local authorities may by resolution determine that the whole or part of existing or future rates may be levied and charged in respect of a rateable value as hereinafter defined in lieu of any other rateable value. The rates to be levied in respect of any hereditaments under the provisions of this Bill shall be payable by each person interested in the new rateable value of such hereditaments in proportion to the amount of his interest therein, and the Board of Inland Revenue shall supply free of charge to every local authority full copies of all valuations made under the provisions of the Finance (1909-10) Act and any Amending Act or Acts relating to land or premises within the area of such local authority. The basis of the rate shall be the full site value as defined in the Finance Act of 1909-10. This is the sixth time a Bill has been introduced into this House asking that power should be given to local authorities to raise rates upon land values. During the Conservative Administration, 1900-5, five Bills were introduced and debated. One Bill during that Administration was carried on Second Reading. In 1906 the Government was itself urged by a petition signed by nearly 600 rating authorities to give power to rate upon land values. The Budget of 1909-10 seemed to whet the appetite of local authorities on this question, and the agitation which has been going on since 1909 has increased in its vigour until to-day one can hardly open the Notice Paper without seeing from some part of Great Britain petitions asking the Government to give powers to local authorities to rate upon land values. I might remind the House that the Glasgow Corporation is now again instituting an agitation in this country that was once very successful in bringing to the notice of the Government the wish of the local authorities to rate upon land values. This little Bill is one that has been discussed very freely in connection with the Glasgow petition in councils up and down the country. It is the wish of those who support it that the Government should get on with the valuation as speedily as possible, and that they should keep in view the necessity in future of bringing the valuation up to date, so that when the local authorities have power to rate upon land values they will always have the value a year before the rate is imposed.

Sir George Younger: I rise to object to this Bill. The hon. Member opposite appears to think he can base a system of rating on the present system of valuation carried out under the Budget. If he will look at the Scottish Land Values Bill, he will see the definition of land values in that Bill is totally different from that being carried out under the proposals of the 1909-10 Budget. It includes in its definition a great deal which is not land value at all, and therefore it does not represent the basis which I think the hon. Gentleman's predecessors in this movement sought to obtain. The definition of land values in the Scottish Land Values Bill was agreed upon in this House after a long Debate, in which the then Lord Advocate (Mr. Shaw) and the present Lord Advocate (Mr. Ure), gentlemen who thoroughly understand the question and who were almost the apostles of the movement, took part. When I say this Bill proceeds upon a basis of land values which really does not exist and which is purely imaginary, I certainly think it ought not to be passed into law.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Neilson, Sir Henry Dalziel, Sir Alfred Mond, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Charles Price, Mr. Raffan, Mr. James Parker, Mr. Stephen Walsh, Mr. Wedgwood, and Mr. George Barnes. Presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next (1st May), and to be printed. [Bill 173.]

“The first and paramount consideration in taxation should be equality of burden; and only by taking the rental value of land in taxes can such equality be secured.”—  
TOM L. JOHNSON.

### HENRY GEORGE'S UNANSWERABLE LETTER ON PROTECTION.

In his autobiography, *MY STORY*, Tom L. Johnson tells us that while the Wilson Tariff Bill was under consideration he received a letter from some Cleveland cloak manufacturers requesting him to vote for a specific duty in addition to an *ad valorem* duty on ladies' cloaks. He then goes on:—

I explained the matter to Henry George and he framed a letter in reply. That letter was one of the finest pieces of writing Mr. George ever did. It was as follows:—

Cleveland, Ohio.

December 29th, 1893.

To Joseph Lachneet, Emil Weisels, Joseph Frankel and others, tailors and tailoresses in the employ of Messrs. Landesman, Hirscheimer and Co., cloak manufacturers of Cleveland.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

I have received your communication and that from Messrs. Landesman, Hirscheimer and Co. to which you refer, asking me to vote against the Wilson Tariff Bill, unless it is amended by adding to the duty of 45 per cent. *ad valorem*, which it proposes, an additional duty of 49½ cents per pound.

I shall do nothing of the kind. My objection to the Wilson Bill is not that its duties are too low, but that they are too high. I will do all I can to cut its duties down, but I will strenuously oppose putting them up. You ask me to vote to make cloaks artificially dear. How can I do that without making it harder for those who need cloaks to get cloaks? Even if this would benefit you, would it not injure others? There are many cloak-makers in Cleveland, it is true, but they are few as compared with the cloak users. Would you consider me an honest representative if I would thus consent to injure the many for the benefit of the few, even though the few in this case were yourselves?

And you ask me to demand, in addition to a monstrous *ad valorem* duty of 45 per cent., a still more monstrous weight duty of 49½ cents a pound—a weight duty that will make the poorest sewing-girl pay as much tax on her cheap shoddy cloak as Mrs. Astor or Mrs. Vanderbilt would be called upon to pay on a cloak of the finest velvet and embroideries! Do you really want me to vote to thus put the burden of taxation on the poor while letting the rich escape? Whether you want me to or not, I will not do it.

That, as your employers say, a serviceable cloak can be bought in Berlin at \$1.20 affords no reason in my mind for keeping up the tariff. On the contrary, it is the strongest reason for abolishing it altogether. There are lots of women in this country who would rejoice to get cloaks so cheaply; lots of women who must now pinch and strain to get a cloak; lots of women who cannot now afford to buy cloaks, and must wear old or cast-off garments or shiver with cold. Is it not common justice that we should abolish every tax that makes it harder for them to clothe themselves?

No; I will do nothing to keep up duties. I do not believe in taxing one citizen for the purpose of enriching another citizen. You elected me on my declaration that I was opposed to protection, believing it but a scheme for enabling the few to rob the many, and that I was opposed even to a tariff for revenue, believing that the only just way of raising revenues is by the Single Tax upon Land Values. So long as I continue to represent you in Congress I shall act on the principle of equal rights to all and special privileges to none, and whenever I can abolish any of the taxes that are now levied on labour or the products of labour I will do it, and where I cannot abolish I will do my best to reduce. When you get tired of that you can elect someone in my place who suits you better. If you want duties kept up, you may get an honest protectionist who will serve you; you cannot get an honest free trader.

But I believe that you have only to think of the matter to see that in adhering to principle I will be acting for the best interests of all working men and women, yourselves among the number. This demand for protective duties or the benefit of the American working man is the veriest sham. You cannot protect labour by putting import

duties on goods. Protection makes it harder for the masses of our people to live. It may increase the profits of favoured capitalists; it may build up trusts and create great fortunes, but it cannot raise wages. You know for yourselves that what your employers pay you in wages does not depend upon what any tariff may enable them to make, but on what they can get others to take your places for. You have to stand the competition of the labour market. Why, then, should you try to shut yourselves out from the advantages that the competition of the goods market should give you? It is not protection that makes wages higher here than in Germany. They were higher here before we had any protection, and in the saturnalia of protection that has reigned here for some years past you have seen wages go down, until the country is now crowded with tramps and hundreds of thousands of men are now supported by charity. What made wages higher than in Germany is the freer access to land, the natural means of all production, and as that is closed up and monopoly sets in wages must decline. What labour needs is not protection, but justice; not legalised restrictions which permit one set of men to tax their fellows, but the free opportunity for all for the exertion of their own powers. The real struggle for the rights of labour and for those fair wages that consist in the full earnings of labour is the struggle for freedom and against monopolies and restrictions; and in the effort to cut down protection it is timely beginning. I shall support the Wilson Bill with all my ability and all my strength.

Yours very respectfully,

TOM L. JOHNSON.

One of the principal movers in the matter, an experienced newspaper man, told me some time afterwards that he had wasted reams of paper and burned much midnight oil in a fruitless attempt to answer. "But," said he, "I'm just as much a protectionist as ever, only it won't work on ladies' cloaks."

### CHIPS FROM A SWISS WORKSHOP.

#### ON THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIALISM.\*

BY GUSTAV BUSCHER.

Whatever may be held concerning its merits or demerits; whether we regard it as the only path to social salvation, or as a misleading will-o'-the-wisp, holding out alluring promises it cannot possibly fulfil; its fundamental theories and teachings as true or as false, as bracing or as enervating, as uplifting or as demoralising and degrading—the causes of the evolution of Socialism are comparatively easy to find.

The great political teachers, the apostles of Liberty and Justice, of the Eighteenth Century arose at a time when Despotism and Privilege ruled supreme and unchecked, when Might was tacitly assumed to confer Right, and when Government, under the influence of the Mercantile Theory, which regarded gold and silver as the only real wealth of the nation, were interfering with every branch of trade and industry, with the view of keeping in each country as much of these metals as possible. As against these tendencies they taught that the recognition of the equal rights of all—equal rights to life, to liberty and to the pursuit of happiness, as the American Constitution expresses it—was the only rational basis of peaceful and harmonious social life, the foundation-stone, key-stone and corner-stone of rational Constitutional Government. They held that the State was made for Man, not Man for the State. The primary function of the State, they contended, was *not* to grant monopolies, nor to maintain, extend and protect privileges, but to secure Justice, to maintain and enforce the equal rights of all its citizens. If it would only do this, it need do little or nothing more. For under such conditions the production of wealth, as well as its equitable distribution amongst those co-operating in the necessary work, would satisfactorily take care of itself. State interference and State regulation, they argued, was far more like to do harm than to do good, and,

\* A somewhat free translation from Mr. Gustav Büscher's pamphlet, "A Word to Socialists." To be had in German. Price 6d., post free, from LAND VALUES Pub. Dept., 376-77, Strand, London, W.C.

so long as the State carried out its primary function, was entirely unnecessary. For the natural harmony of the rightful interests of mankind would soon put everything on the right track. These doctrines were briefly summarised in the somewhat vague and misleading phrase—" *Laisser faire, laisser aller.*"

After the downfall of unchecked Despotism and the gradual adoption and extension of Constitutional Government, the great Liberal Parties, both on the Continent and Great Britain, avowedly accepted this doctrine of equal rights. As a matter of fact, however, for the most part they only demanded and secured for the people such rights as cost the still all powerful privileged classes little or nothing. True that a few bold and far-seeing thinkers had openly proclaimed that the realisation of the equal rights doctrine was not secured by the extension of the franchise, or even equal voting power, and other such political formalities; but that it involved and demanded the recognition of the equal rights of all to the use of the earth. But any such idea was too new, too bold and too big, to be accepted by the mob of lesser men of which these parties were composed. Still less did it suit the powerful interests who had supported Liberalism mainly because, in its blindness and innovating zeal, it had helped to clear away any remains of the old established rights of the people to the use of the land, and had thus torn down every hindrance that stood in the way of their own ever-increasing greed and covetousness. Thus the best and most potent part of the great and immutable truth, upon the assumed adoption of which Liberalism had established itself and acquired political power, was hidden from the people.

More than this, when, despite this pretended granting of equal rights, the needs of the people became more and more pressing, Liberal theorists confronted them with haughty superiority, heartless indifference, and impudent denials. "We have given all of you equal rights, what more do you want, what more can you ask for?" they insolently demanded. As a matter of fact, of course, they had done no such thing. They had willingly given the people equal rights in immaterial, intangible, and invisible things; but that the equal rights doctrine involved equal rights to the use of the earth and to share in the bounties of Nature, they had never allowed themselves to entertain for a moment, or even allowed others to avow unhindered. Small wonder that such a distorted, perverted Liberalism soon lost its hold on the people, gained only the favour of the rich whom, in truth, it had served too well.

This gave Socialism its opportunity; this accounts for its establishment and phenomenal development and progress, more especially, perhaps, in countries, such as Prussia and Russia, where the masses of the people have only recently been emancipated from serfdom and been granted some modicum of political power. The needs of the people were too great to be overlooked; Socialism espoused their cause and claimed to voice their aspirations. Socialistic theorists meditated on their needs and continuously invented and proposed fresh means to help them. Realising that such equal rights as had been secured were utterly useless to the poor, utterly inadequate to solve the social problem that confronted them, with swift logic they rejected the fundamental idea of equal rights as offering any guide to the social salvation of the industrial masses of the people. They seem to have been too immersed in their own theories to realise, or too near-sighted to suspect, that the conception of the equal rights of all had a far deeper meaning, of more far-reaching import, than that attributed to it by the orthodox apostles of Liberalism. Hence, instead of accepting and extending this basic conception, the truth of which it seems to many worse than folly even to suspect; instead of boldly avowing that it must involve and carry with it equal rights to the tangible things of this world, in so far, of course, as they have not been called into existence by unequal human toil: they proceeded to invent and proclaim a whole host of less clear and understandable, and certainly more questionable, disputable and confusing theories, from which they then proceeded to deduce such actions and proposals as they deemed called for by the temporary pressing necessities of the day. Once having quitted the straight path of clear conceptions and indisputable eternal verities, their path has grown ever more confused and confusing. Hence we have the paradox that while Socialism continues to make

constant appeals to right feeling, to accepted ideas of right and wrong, while Socialist poets have burst out into eloquent songs glorifying Freedom, Justice and Right, Socialist theorists, on the other hand, have come more and more to combat the inspiring idea and ideal of the inalienable rights of man as an absurd, ridiculous, obsolete fancy, quite unfit to serve as any safe guide to human conduct, individual or collective.

To-day in many countries Socialism still holds the field as apparently offering the only solution of the social problem. The greater the number of its supporters, of those willing to vote for its candidates, the more numerous become those who have implicit faith in it, who build upon it all their hopes of social salvation, even though they may have no real insight into or understanding of the basic principles upon which its teachings and doctrines are based. The progress of Socialism has startled the most apathetic. The progress of Liberalism has been checked; the forces of reaction have been strengthened. To-day the learning which serves the rich and powerful has turned a complete somersault. Whilst formerly it had perforce to avow and proclaim that, in the abstract at least, the doctrine of the equal rights of all was the one rational and natural foundation of constitutional law and order, to-day, encouraged by the example of the Socialist Theorists, this doctrine is attacked by all sorts of specious reasoning. In place of this clear, understandable, straightforward and logical conception, the publicists of to-day are busy substituting a confused and confusing mixture of all sorts of disconnected theories. Amongst well-placed but narrow-minded and half-educated men it is becoming increasingly fashionable to scoff at the idea of the inalienable rights of man, or of natural rights, as a sort of nursery-tale fit only to amuse such superior, clever and cultured folk as themselves.

The end, however, is not yet. If modern Socialism is not to pass away as so many other similar movements have done: if it is permanently to influence the future destinies of mankind, it will have to free itself from the fanciful imaginations and inventions of its early youth, and to seek the foundations of its ideal Social State of the future on the eternal and immutable verity of the inalienable equal rights of all, and boldly advocate all that this inspiring, up-lifting conception involves. In the process of its evolution it will have to come to discard the false and cling to what is true, to recognise, with the great apostles of Liberty and Justice of the early Eighteenth Century, that the State is made for Man, not Man for the State.

"Privilege is the advantage conferred on one by law of denying the competition of others."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

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## LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

### MEMORANDUM.

The object of this Bill is to prepare the way for the unrating of houses and other improvements, so as to give free scope to building, agriculture, and all industrial enterprise, and for the adoption as the standard of rating of the market value of the land alone, so as to bring unused land into the market, and, by thus increasing the available supply of land, to reduce rents to their natural level.

This change is well adapted to Scotland, where the system of rating is of such a character that the required valuations can readily be engrafted on it. Some progress has already been made in Scotland as regards the exemption of improvements from rating. Under the combined provisions of section 6 of the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act, 1854, and section 6 (2) of the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886, the improvements of the Scottish Crofters have been treated for more than thirty years as exempt from rating. The Lands Valuation (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1895, in bringing within the scope of rating certain "erections or structural improvements," not hitherto included, exempted, among others, those which were "for agricultural purposes," and this has now been applied to "landholders" under the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act, 1911, by section 31 (6) of that measure. Under the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1902, certain classes of machinery are rate-free.

The new valuations here provided for are designed to facilitate the unrating of improvements made by the landlord as well as those made by the tenant, the unrating of improvements on large holdings as well as on small ones, the unrating of fixed as well as other machinery, the unrating of buildings and improvements generally, and the adoption as the standard for rating of the market value of the land alone, on the principle that those who hold the natural resources of the country should contribute to the needs of the community in proportion to the value of the natural resources which they hold.

The Bill is based, subject to some variations in detail, on the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced by the Government in 1907 and 1908, and which passed all its stages in the House of Commons in each of these years. Clause 3 is added to co-ordinate the proposed valuations with the valuations under Part I. of the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910, and clause 4 is inserted partly to prevent excessive prices being charged for land required for public purposes and partly to provide an automatic check on under-valuation. The Bill deals with valuations, leaving all questions as to rating on these valuations to be provided for later on.

### A BILL

TO

Provide for the ascertainment of Land Values in Scotland, and for other purposes connected therewith.

**B**E it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

#### NEW ENTRY IN VALUATION ROLL.

1.—(1) In respect of the year commencing *Whitsunday nineteen hundred and thirteen* and of each subsequent year there shall be inserted in the valuation roll of each county and burgh in Scotland, after the column under the heading "Yearly Rent or Value," an additional column under the heading "Capital Land Value."

(2) Subject as hereinafter provided, there shall be entered under the last-mentioned heading the capital land value of the several lands and heritages required by the Valuation Acts to be entered in the valuation roll, not

being lands and heritages falling to be valued by the assessor of railways and canals.

(3) Except so far as they may be inapplicable, and subject as hereinafter provided, the provisions of the Valuation Acts shall apply for the purpose of the entry of capital land value prescribed by this Act with as full force and effect as for the purpose of the entry of the yearly rent or value of lands and heritages prescribed by those Acts; and without prejudice to such general application all rights, powers, and duties conferred or imposed on, and all penalties exigible from, any person for the last-mentioned purpose shall be conferred or imposed on and be exigible from the same respective persons for the purpose of the entry prescribed by this Act.

(4) Until Parliament otherwise determines, no person shall be liable to be taxed or rated in respect of the entry prescribed by this Act.

(5) From and after the *first day of January nineteen hundred and thirteen*, section eight of the Valuation of Lands (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1867, and section seven of the Valuation of Lands (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1879, shall be read and construed as if such sections respectively provided for the nomination of three instead of two judges in the Court of Session.

#### MODIFICATION OF VALUATION ACTS.

2. The Valuation Acts, as applying for the purposes of this Act, shall be modified as follows (that is to say):—

(1) Section seven of the principal Act shall not authorise an assessor to call upon a tenant or occupier for a written statement of capital land value, or to call upon a proprietor during the first year of the operation of this Act to furnish such written statement within a shorter period than six calendar months, but shall otherwise apply, and the particulars which may be called for as prescribed therein shall include all such particulars as may be necessary to enable the assessor to carry out the purposes of this Act; provided that the word "proprietor" occurring in the said section shall for the purposes of this Act extend to and include the actual proprietor within the meaning of section six of the principal Act, and such actual proprietor shall have the same right of appeal as if his name were entered in the valuation roll; and provided further that the Secretary for Scotland may from time to time by order under his hand and seal (which shall be laid before Parliament) alter for the purposes of this Act either generally or for any county or burgh any dates or periods prescribed for the performance of any duties or otherwise under the Valuation Acts, and in such case the Valuation Acts shall apply for the purposes of this Act in respect of any year subject to alterations so ordered, notwithstanding that such duties are performed or other proceedings taken before the commencement of such year:

(2) Where the same lands and heritages are, under the Valuation Acts, entered in the valuation roll in respect of more than one occupancy, the entry prescribed by this Act may, unless a separate capital land value can be ascertained in respect of each occupancy, be made opposite such one of the occupancies as the assessor considers most appropriate, provided a reference thereto is entered opposite the other occupancy or occupancies:

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act no separate entry shall be made of the capital land value of a dwelling-house the annual value of which is entered in the valuation roll solely in respect of the provisions of section twenty-nine of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889:

(4) Until Parliament otherwise determines, section thirteen of the principal Act shall not apply.

## ACCESS TO FINANCE ACT VALUATIONS.

3. For the better ascertainment of the capital land values of any lands under the provisions of this Act, the assessor shall be entitled to access to any information supplied or valuations made in respect of such lands under the provisions of Part I. of the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910.

## VALUATIONS IN CASE OF COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND.

4. In the event of the compulsory acquisition under statutory powers of any land of which the capital value has been ascertained under this Act (such ascertainment not being under appeal), either the person acquiring such land or the person from whom it is being acquired may require that—

- (a) In the event of compulsory purchase the price of such land, in so far as it represents capital land value, shall be the capital land value thereof as ascertained under this Act, with the addition of *ten per cent.* thereon as compensation for compulsory acquisition; and
- (b) In the event of compulsory feuing or compulsory leasing the annual feu-duty or annual rent of such land, in so far as it represents capital land value, shall be one-twentieth of the capital land value thereof as ascertained under this Act and of *ten per cent.* thereon as compensation for compulsory acquisition:

Provided that nothing in this section shall affect or diminish any right to compensation in respect of any subjects not included in the capital land value.

## DEFINITIONS.

5. In this Act the following terms shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them (that is to say):—

“Capital land value” in reference to any lands and heritages includes the value of any common interest in land, and means the sum which such lands and heritages or common interest might be expected to realise if sold by a willing seller in the open market at the time of the valuation if divested of improvements and sold free from all burdens, public and private, except building restrictions and servitudes:

Provided that where the assessor considers that any restriction or servitude created after the *passing of this Act* has been created in order to defeat this Act it shall be lawful for him (without prejudice to the appeal to which any person aggrieved is entitled) to disregard such restriction or servitude:

Provided also that where any building restriction or servitude is taken into account to diminish the valuation of the servient tenement or tenements, it shall also be taken into account to increase the valuation of the dominant tenement or tenements:

“Improvements” means—

(a) Buildings, erections, and structural improvements, of whatever nature, on, in, or under the soil, woods, and fixed or attached machinery; and

(b) Works of drainage and of reclamation, making up, levelling, and the like, where such work has been executed not more than twenty years preceding, and in so far as the benefit thereof is not exhausted at the time of the valuation:

“Valuation Acts” means the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act, 1854 (in this Act referred to as the principal Act), and any Act (other than this Act) amending the same.

6. This Act may be cited as the Land Values (Scotland) Act, 1912.

## NOTES ON THE LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL, 1912.

BY JAMES DUNDAS WHITE, LL.D., M.P.

The Land Values (Scotland) Bill, which I have re-introduced, is designed to add to the existing columns in our Scottish Valuation Rolls a new column setting out the land value of each property. This is the first step towards the adoption of a rating system which will help industry instead of hindering it. The proposed valuations would prepare the way for:—

- (1) Rating on the market value of the land alone, so as to bring unused land into the market, and, by thus increasing the available amount of land, to reduce rents to their natural level; and
- (2) Unrating houses and other improvements, so as to give free course to building, agriculture, and all industrial enterprise.

## FINANCE ACT VALUATIONS.

The land valuations under the great Finance Act are proving of great service in many ways, but they are designed to provide a basis for the increment value and undeveloped land duties rather than to constitute a new standard for rating. They will not be completed till at least the year 1914, when some of them will be three, four, and five years old. And it is evident that even after they are completed, several more years will be required to revise them, to bring them down to date, and to develop them into valuations for rating. While the grass grows the steed may starve!

## WHY SHOULD SCOTLAND WAIT?

Why should Scotland wait all this time, and risk the changes and chances of politics? Our machinery for rating is well-nigh perfect, and we could easily add to the existing columns in our valuation rolls another column setting forth the land value of each property. The practicability of such a plan was recognised by the present Government, when in 1907, and again in 1908, they passed through all its stages in the House of Commons their Land Values (Scotland) Bill, designed for this very purpose. The valuations which it proposed would have been completed long before this if it had passed; but in both years it met its end in the House of Lords. The time has come to press on with this interrupted work, for which the Finance Act and the Parliament Act have cleared the way.

## THE NEW BILL.

The new Bill is founded on that earlier measure, brought down to date by two additional clauses. The first of these provides that the assessor shall have access to the information as to land value obtained under the Finance Act, which would do much to facilitate his work. The second provides that the land-value valuations as acquiesced in by the owner for rating purposes should, subject to certain qualifications, be taken as the basis of the price, so far as the land value is concerned, in the event of compulsory purchase under statutory powers. This would be doubly useful, because on the one hand it would prevent exorbitant prices being asked when land is required for public purposes, and on the other it would act as an automatic check on under-valuation. These new valuations would run concurrently with those under the Finance Act: each would help the other, and both would be completed about the same time. If the Bill were to pass this year we should have land-value valuations for rating completed throughout Scotland before the close of 1914.

## THE PROBLEM IN ENGLAND.

The problem is more difficult in England, because she has no modern measure as comprehensive as our Valuation Act of 1854, and requires new machinery for valuation as

well as a new standard of rating. With these complications, and with her more extensive area, she stands to gain by the pioneer work being done elsewhere. The fact of the new standard being accomplished in Scotland would strengthen the case for a similar reform in England, while the practical experience gained in setting up the system here would facilitate the work there.

#### THE CASE FOR SCOTLAND.

The case for Scotland rests on the needs of Scotland herself. The sweeping depopulation of her country districts, the unequalled overcrowding of her towns, the scandalous state of housing in both, the over-pressure in the labour market, and the conditions which darken the lives and prospects not only of the men and women, but also of the children in our midst, show the urgency of dealing with the most fundamental of economic questions; the question of enabling the people to make the best use of the natural resources of their country. The "Pentland" Act—as the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act of last year may well be called—has indeed been an important step; but the best way to bring unused land into the market and to reduce rents to their natural level is to rate those who hold it according to its market value whether they use it or not, and the best way to encourage building and improving is to make all houses and other improvements rate-free.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

In Scotland we have already done something towards the unrating of improvements. Under the combined provisions of Section 6 of the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act, 1854, and Section 6 (2) of the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886, the improvements of the Scottish crofters have been treated for a quarter of a century as exempt from rating. The Lands Valuation (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1895, in bringing within the scope of rating certain "erections or structural improvements" not hitherto included, exempted, among others, those which were "for agricultural purposes," and this has now been applied to "landholders" under the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act, 1911, by Section 31 (6) of that measure. Under the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1902, certain classes of machinery are rate-free. But these go only a very little way, and indeed it is not possible to go much further on the present basis of rating, because the mere exemption of some improvements from rating increases the burden on the others, and does not enable us to rate land according to its market value.

#### THE NEW STANDARD.

Hence the need of the new standard which this Bill seeks to set up. The adoption of a land-value standard is as necessary for the unrating of improvements as it is for the opening up of the land. The scheme rests on the twin principles that those who hold the natural resources of the country should contribute to the needs of the community in proportion to the value of the natural resources which they hold, whether they use them or not, and that free course should be given to building, agriculture and all industrial enterprise. This would open up the land and promote its development as nothing else would do. It is the key to the solution of the housing problem, the labour problem, and many of the other problems which confront us. We must go to the root of the evil by opening up the natural opportunities for both labour and capital in Scotland.

WHAT HENRY GEORGE ASKS OF US.—I ask no one who may read my books to accept my views. I ask him to think for himself.—SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

"With the object of the fight well defined, the line of action faithfully adhered to, and plenty of patience, there is no reason to despair."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY CLASSES.



NORMAN McLENNAN.

### REPORT OF ONE OF THE LECTURES DELIVERED BY MR. NORMAN McLENNAN AT HIS DUMFRIES POLITICAL ECONOMY CLASS.

[From the "Dumfries Courier and Herald."]

#### "INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THE RATE OF EXCHANGE."

International trade Mr. McLennan defined as trade between peoples who had different currencies. He quoted the present rates of exchange between this and several foreign countries, as given in that day's GLASGOW HERALD, and proceeded to explain the reason of their fluctuations with the aid of diagrams on the blackboard. They had already seen how large a proportion even of our "home" trade was carried on by bankers' entries, and without the passing of money. It was just like the tally sticks of the barbarian barterers, only it was the bankers who cut the notches in the sticks and kept the tally right. Into international trade, money, for all practical purposes, did not enter at all, for the money of one country did not run freely in another country. It was entirely carried on by means of bankers' entries, the vouchers of which were cheques, bills of exchange, bank drafts, letters of credit, and other banking documents. Specimens of several of these banking documents were handed round the class.

#### COMMERCIAL "PAPER."

Among our foreign merchants all of those documents were technically known as "paper." When British merchants bought goods or services, say from France, they paid their accounts in British "paper"—which, from all parts of France, generally, soon found its way to the clearing house at Paris. And when French merchants bought goods or services from Great Britain, they paid their accounts in French "paper," which, generally, soon found its way to the clearing house at London. Then the Paris and London bankers "swapped" their "paper," just as the Dumfries bankers "swapped" their local cheques. This was done by firms of merchants called "bill-brokers," who made a business of buying and selling foreign paper, making a small percentage on the transaction. Thus a Paris bill-broking firm would buy a quantity of the British "paper," which had come to Paris. This they would send to a bill-broking firm, their agents, in London, who would sell it to the

London bankers in exchange for a quantity of the French paper which had come to London. This French "paper" they would then transmit to their Paris firm, who would, in turn, sell it to the French bankers in exchange for a quantity of British "paper" lying in Paris, which they would again transmit to London, and so on.

#### BUT SUPPOSE AN UNEQUAL TRADE.

But, suppose that British merchants had been buying more from France than French merchants had been buying from Britain. There would then soon be more British "paper" in Paris than there was French "paper" in London. While the bill-brokers would then find it easy to buy British "paper" in Paris, they would find it difficult to buy with it an equal quantity of French "paper" in London. The price of British "paper" would, therefore, fall as compared with that of French "paper"—all in accordance with their old friends, supply and demand. The par, gold for gold, rate of exchange between this country and France was said by our bankers to be 25·22. That was to say that there was as much gold in a British sovereign as in 25·22 French francs. But in the supposed circumstances, the price of British "paper" might fall, say, to 25·15. Upon this the French bankers would at once tell their customers—"With this glut of British 'paper' in our hands we cannot go on crediting you with 25·22 francs for every £1 of British 'paper,' we can only credit you with 25·15 francs, that is all the brokers will give us for it."

This position had been brought about by the fact that British merchants had been buying more from France than French merchants had been buying from Britain. It would now have two effects—(1) It would tend to discourage British merchants buying in France, as they could now only get 25·15 francs' worth for £1; (2) it would tend to encourage French merchants to buy in Britain, as they could now get £1 worth for 25·15 francs, instead of paying 25·22. This was the reason why such a rate was said to be "against Great Britain," and "in favour of France." Both of these effects would have the tendency to draw the trade of the countries back towards a balance, and the further the rate varied the stronger this tendency would be.

#### GOLD BULLION.

Of course, gold in bullion might be sent from this country to clear off our temporary balance with France. But this might not seriously alter the position. For it was an expensive matter to ship gold from one country to another. If the French bankers had to pay the freight and insurance, they naturally could not afford to credit 25·22 francs per £1 of British "paper," and then pay for having that "paper" redeemed. On the other hand, if the British bankers had to pay the freight and insurance, they would be glad to credit £1 for every 25·15 francs of French "paper" they received from their customers, for the more French "paper" they received the less gold they would require to ship. Besides, the French bankers might not want gold. For although it was necessary and desirable to have a certain amount of bullion in reserve, it was bad banking business to lock up a lot of capital in gold lying idle in the vaults. As a matter of fact, people always blamed bankers for keeping too small a reserve of gold—never for keeping too large a reserve. In actual business gold bullion rarely passed from a country that had enough; but almost always from a country that had it to spare to a country that happened to want it. Thus the South African bankers, placed in a rich gold-producing country, would only accept gold in payment of a balance as a last resource, for it was South Africa's business to export gold, not to import it. Besides, even if a country piled up a lot of bullion, the only practical use to which she could put it was to export it in payment of some goods or services received from abroad. Thus, while gold bullion certainly played to some extent the part of an international money, economists were rather inclined to regard it as an ordinary commodity to be bought and sold like other commodities.

#### TRADE BETWEEN MANY COUNTRIES.

Hitherto they had thought only of two countries. But, in the world, there were far more than two countries having different currencies. Thus, while British merchants were buying more from France than French merchants were buying from Britain, Belgian merchants might be buying

more from Britain than British merchants were buying from Belgium. In that case there would be more Belgian "paper" in London than there was British "paper" in Brussels, and the rate of exchange between these two countries would be "against" Belgium and "in favour of" Great Britain. The bankers at Brussels would then be glad to get British "paper" to help them to clear off their indebtedness to Great Britain without having to ship gold. And the Paris bankers might then get rid of a lot of their surplus British "paper" by sending it to Brussels, where the bill-brokers would find a readier sale for it than in London. This was a state of things which continually occurred in actual business. If they studied the *GLASGOW HERALD* they would find that the rate quoted for a British pound in Belgian money was invariably higher than that quoted in French money. Thus, in that day's *HERALD*, while the rate of exchange with Paris was quoted at 25·27, the rate of exchange with Brussels was quoted at 25·38. Thus the balance of trade might be maintained between the three countries without affecting the proportion which each did with the other, and without seriously affecting the rates of exchange between them. Indeed all countries played their own parts in maintaining the general balance of the world's trade.

The fluctuation of these rates of exchange was one of the finest examples of the working of the law of supply and demand, and showed beautifully how our commerce of the present day, in all its infinite intricacy, was essentially similar to that we carried on by rude barter when we were still in the savage state.

Of course, all "paper" passing between countries tended to affect the rate of exchange whether it was in payment of goods or not. Thus the prize of £10,000 which Messrs. Harmsworth gave some time ago to a French aviator, and which was taken by him to Paris in the form of a cheque, affected the rate between France and Great Britain just exactly in the same way as if it had been paid to a French merchant for a consignment of £10,000 worth of silks or wines.

#### PRESENTATION TO MR. McLENNAN.

Mr. McLennan's class came to a close on 22nd March, and the members who have attended it presented him with a handsome roll-top desk, as a token of regard and appreciation of his services as lecturer. The function took place at the end of the lecture in the Ewart Public Library Hall, and there was an attendance of about fifty ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Jas. Hyslop, solicitor, Dumfries, who presided, said they arrived at the close of their class with a mixture of pleasure and regret—pleasure in looking back at the times they had spent so wisely as they hoped and so agreeably and profitably in making excursions together into fresh fields and pastures new, under the guidance of one who was so well equipped to point out subjects of interest and raise suggestions of various kinds in their minds regarding objects they would otherwise have passed by without seeing their great interest. He thought they could not allow the class to come to a close without expressing their thanks to Mr. McLennan, who had been their guide, philosopher and friend in these interesting studies.

Mr. John Hendrie, schoolmaster, who made the presentation, referred to the lecture they had had that night, which he regarded as one of the most interesting of the lot. They were all of one opinion that they had had a very pleasant time since these lessons commenced. For that good time they were entirely indebted to Mr. McLennan, and it would be altogether unbecoming to part with him without giving him some tangible token of their gratitude. They must all have been deeply impressed with the thorough grasp and knowledge Mr. McLennan had of his subject. His lucid and simple expositions had, he was sure, been much appreciated by them all, and they could not do better than present this gift to Mr. McLennan with their warmest acknowledgments of his labours.

The desk bore a neat plate with the following inscription artistically engraved: "Dumfries Political Economy Class, 1911-12. Presented to Mr. Norman McLennan as a mark of esteem."

In returning thanks, Mr. McLennan remarked that he certainly had not lacked the toiler's pay. When he took up the class he felt sure that he knew his subject. But after going over it with them during the course of the session

he felt that he now knew it much better than he did then, and in other ways the class had been to him an exceeding great reward. He had enjoyed it and profited by it fully as much as any of them. He wished to thank them sincerely not only for this token of their regard, but also for the kind way in which they had met him from week to week, to deal with what was generally regarded as a dull and abstract subject.

## HERE AND THERE.

In an article on "The Prospects of the Government," in the March *FORNIGHTLY*, Mr. A. G. Gardiner, editor of the *DAILY NEWS*, says:—

Up to the beginning of 1909 the Government waged a steadily losing fight. . . . Little had been done to inaugurate the promised schemes of social reform. The steady opposition of the House of Lords was breaking down the *morale* of the party. In the country the tide was turning, and speculation was rife as to the date of the next election, and the dimensions of the probable defeat. This was the situation at the opening of 1909. Then came a dramatic change in the fortune of the Government. The influence of Mr. Lloyd George became the dominant factor in the Government's policy and strategy; and it is not too much to say that the history of the next three years is the history of the most brilliant cavalry leader in the annals of British politics. In the face of much internal opposition he produced the Budget of 1909, with its historic land clauses, and by that sudden raid into the enemy's country he turned the whole tide of battle, precipitated a conflict with the Lords on the issue least favourable to them—the land—and so compassed their overthrow.

Replying to Mr. J. Dundas White, M.P., in the House of Commons on 2nd April, the President of the Board of Trade issued a statement showing for each of the years 1901 to 1911 the passenger movement between Scottish ports and places outside Europe, and the number of passengers of Scottish nationality that left and arrived at ports in England, Wales, and Ireland. In 1911 the excess from Scottish ports of outward over inward passengers of Scottish nationality was 46,076. From English, Welsh, and Irish ports the excess was 15,252. In 1901 the figures were 7,475 and 1,495 respectively.

Here is a little story that illustrates the late Citizen Tom Johnson's quick wit. When he was running for Congress the first time he met a Clevelander in front of the Society for Savings and hinted in his smiling way that he hoped to get his vote. The citizen demurred.

"I like you, Mr. Johnson," he said, "but I was born a Republican. My father was a Republican and my grandfather helped form the party." Johnson laughed.

"You remind me of the story of the Kentucky mountaineer," he said. "A belated stranger seeking shelter at night entered a mountaineer's cabin and found an old man toasting his bare feet by the open fire. 'I reckon I'm goin' to hev chilblains,' the aged one explained after he had said howdy to the wayfarer. 'I ain't got 'em yet, but Pap Tolliver had 'em, an' Granpap Tolliver had 'em, an' o' course I got to hev 'em.' The stranger looked doubtful. 'Mebbe ef you was careful,' he said, 'you wouldn't git 'em.' The old man straightened up. 'I tell ye I got to hev 'em,' he cried. 'Chilblains goes with Tollivers.'"

Citizen Tom laughed. "Some people seem to think that traditions are more valuable than principles," he said, as he turned away.—CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER.

A correspondent, a veteran fighter in our movement, writes us:—"I have just finished reading *MY STORY*, which a friend sent me from America. It interested me very, very much. I only wish I had more of Tom L. Johnson's breezy optimism. That our philosophy will win eventually, I have no doubt whatever, as the whole history of our civilisation seems to me nothing but a record of the struggles of mankind toward Democracy. On the road from Despotism to Democracy, from Privilege to Justice, one means of impoverishment and enslavement of the

masses after another has had to be abolished, each succeeding one weaker than its predecessor, until we are in sight of the dawn of Social Justice and Economic Liberty—the goal of all our efforts."

MR. PUNCH: "What are you going to do about this Labour unrest?"

JOHN BULL: "Labour unrest? I thought it was all over. I've got plenty of coal."

MR. PUNCH: "Yes, but what about the future?"

JOHN BULL: "Oh, the Government will inquire into all that. That's what they're for."—PUNCH, 17th April.

At a meeting of the Paisley Town Council held 9th April, Councillor Ashe opposed an extension of the municipal buildings on the ground that "it meant further taxation," and further declared that "the town was so heavily taxed already that no new public works would settle in it." Keep your eye on Paisley; the rating of land values will remove its wretched slums and invite unrated industries within its gates.

The *TIMES* of 6th, 9th, and 10th April contains three special articles on the Housing Problem in London. They review the legislation that has been introduced affecting housing and the solutions attempted by the London County Council and other authorities in the direction of clearance schemes, rehousing and municipal land purchase. The articles show the inadequacy of past measures and lead to a plea for the Unionist Housing Bill, the main features of which are more administration and a State Grant of £500,000 per annum.

Commenting on the fact that the Keighley Town Council agreed by 11 votes to 9 to support Glasgow Town Council in petitioning Parliament for powers to rate land values, the *KEIGHLEY NEWS* of 6th April says:—

Surely, if slowly, the movement for the Taxation of Land Values is making headway. Time was when Keighley would have none of it, and the Town Council scouted it as a fantastical agitation kept up by a crowd of scatter-brained revolutionaries intent on undermining the foundations of society and waging a campaign of confiscation. But that time has gone by, and let us hope there will never be a return to these musty old-fashioned notions of what Land Value Taxation really means. Even the more conservative and laggard members of the Council nowadays exhibit but little open hostility towards the principle that values created by the community should be taxed for the community's benefit. Some of them still vote against any proposal for getting the principle practically applied, but precious few of them are bold enough to raise their voices against so equitable and reasonable a principle as is involved in the rating and taxing of values due to communal effort and public improvements.

A Glasgow correspondent writes:—

"We have had five Political Economy Classes in or near Glasgow with about 150 students. Mr. Wilson Paul is conducting a sixth class in Bo'ness with about 15 students. I am glad to see from *LAND VALUES* that Harry de Paas is going to try and form a class in London. I do not see why London should not have five or six such classes going next winter."

At a meeting of the Keighley Political Economy Class, held April 23rd, Councillor Chas. H. Smithson, teacher of the class, was presented with a Memorial Edition of the works of Henry George, a copy of *MY STORY*, by Tom L. Johnson, and a pipe. We shall notice the proceedings at greater length next month.

A Portsmouth correspondent, referring to the political economy class conducted by Mr. J. H. McGuigan, writes that there have been 21 meetings in connection with this class, and there is no doubt about the result. One never knows just how much good comes from a meeting, but when one sees a new light in men's minds and receives expressions of thanks from men who are truly grateful for knowledge obtained, there is some satisfaction in the work.

E. Jackson of Sheffield writes asking for a sample set of leaflets, and adds:—"In Sheffield we have just brought to a close eight lectures very ably given by a gentleman from Leeds (Wm. Reid), on behalf of the Yorkshire Land Values League, which I had the pleasure of attending."

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At the presentation to Mr. Norman McLennan at the conclusion of the political economy classes in Dumfries, a student suggested that a capital way of putting to advantage the excellent grounding they had received by Mr. McLennan's lectures would be the formation of a literary or debating class.

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The President of the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association, in his address at their Annual Conference held at Cardiff, 11th April, declared that scavengers received higher pay than qualified sorting clerks and telegraphists for season duties. Why scavenger? We sincerely wish every sorting clerk and telegraphist to have as wages all that they earn and the scavenger as well.

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A proposed Town Planning Scheme for Dunfermline is now being inquired into by the Local Government Board. The area affected comprises 5206 acres with 14 landowners. The Commissioner, at a meeting held on 10th April, said he had a letter from Lord Elgin to the effect that while he sympathised with the scheme he reserved his rights of objection to the details of it. Commence any scheme for social betterment and you are sure to waken up a landlord or 14 of them, as the case may be. [See p. 306.]

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Commenting on the scheme for the fusion of the two wings of the Conservative Party, the DAILY HERALD, the new Labour paper, remarks:—

"Better still would it be if the majority of the 'Liberal' Members of Parliament would take advantage of it to step over to the more open reactionaries and leave the few sincere Radicals to join hands with Labour. This, doubtless, is what will ultimately happen, and it is for that reason, among many others, that we wish the Labour Party to maintain a stiff-necked attitude in the near future. Upon that will depend whether they join the advanced Radicals or the advanced Radicals join them."

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Under the headlines, "Disgrace to Leeds: Scandal of neglect of Land Values Question," the following interesting letter appeared in the YORKSHIRE EVENING NEWS of 13th March:—

SIR,—Surely there cannot be two opinions in the minds of our city councillors as to the advisability of rating land values.

As a business community we have always been plundered and had our progress hampered by the present system, and largely because of it our rates now stand at something approaching 10s. in the pound, for whenever land has been required for public purposes, we have had to pay through the nose.

Moorland for waterworks, agricultural land for sewage works, slum property for street improvements—all rated at next to nothing—rise to exorbitant prices when required by the city.

Not only is it the cause of high rates, but the burden is unequally distributed; it presses heavily upon users of land and lightly upon non-users. Manufacturers, engineers and shopkeepers pay upon every stick and stone of their premises, while the owner of land, waiting for his price and leaving the workers to make such price possible, pays little or nothing.

The man who puts land to its fullest use is the most heavily penalised, and the man who does nothing escapes scot free.

The rating of land values would remedy this, and the results would be great—better and cheaper housing, better home markets, better employment and better wages (both actual and relative).

If our Council do nothing to assist the Glasgow Corporation with this great reform it will be a disgrace to our city, and explanations will certainly be required next November.—HAMPERED TRADER.

A Blue Book (Cd. 6130) has been issued giving a return, up to 31st March, 1911, by Counties and Provinces, the Area, the Poor Law Valuation, and Purchase-money of (A) land sold, and (B) lands in respect of which proceedings for sale have been instituted and are pending under the Irish Land Purchase Acts; also the estimated Area, Poor Law Valuation, and Purchase-money of lands in respect of which proceedings for sale have not been instituted under the said Acts.

The accounts relating to Irish Land Purchase are made up by the National Debt Commissioners at the close of each financial year. At 31st March, 1911, the advances under the various Land Purchase Acts were £70,219,975, and the repayments £6,012,725. Since 31st March, 1911, the advances under the Land Purchase Acts, 1903 and 1909, have been increased by £7,670,914, and the repayments, so far as advised, by £266,856.

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The following terse statement of policy appears in the first number of the WOLVERHAMPTON LIBERAL MONTHLY (April):—

We recognise that the great strength of privilege lies in the monopoly of the land, with its grip upon the industry, the homes and the lives of the people. A country can only be strong when its inhabitants are happy, contented and prosperous. Land monopoly prevents this desired state coming into existence. We would, therefore, break down this stronghold of privilege by a policy of Taxation of Land Values. By this method only can the land be forced into use and better use; by this policy only can an end effectively be put to slumdom and its attendant evils; by this policy only can the worker be secured the products (or its equivalents) of his labour. . . . It is, we believe, the policy approved of by the electors of Wolverhampton South. Had Sir Henry Norman in his last contest there more strongly advocated this policy, Wolverhampton South would probably still have had a Liberal as its parliamentary representative.

\* \* \*

In the course of a searching article on the coal strike, the EXPRESS and STAR (Wolverhampton, April 10th), says:—

Betterment of the worker's conditions will only be secured by abolishing land monopoly, and that is to be attained by taxing unimproved land values. The landlord is behind the miner's grievance, directly through the royalty and wayleave system, and indirectly by narrowing the field of industry. By withholding agricultural and mineral bearing land from use the landlord places artificial limits on the resources of the country; labour is forced into a congested market; the excess of supply over demand lowers wages; and any temporary advantage that may be won by a combination of the workers goes by one channel or another into the pockets of the overlord. Land monopoly enters into every one of the items that go to make up the cost of the production of a ton of coal. The heavy railway rates are largely due to the monopoly value the companies had to pay for land on which to lay down their lines.

"Nothing is so deadly as inertia. The greatest obstacle to overcome in any fight in which fundamental moral issues are involved is not opposition, but indifference."—TOM L. JOHNSON.

Entails are founded upon the most absurd of all propositions, the supposition that every successive generation of men have not an equal right to the earth and to all that it possesses.—ADAM SMITH.

THE LESSON OF THE COAL STRIKE.—To adjust our institutions to growing needs and changing conditions is the task which devolves upon us. Prudence, patriotism, human sympathy and religious sentiment, alike call upon us to undertake it. There is danger in reckless change; but greater danger in blind conservatism. The problems beginning to confront us are grave—so grave that there is fear that they may not be solved in time to prevent great catastrophes. But their gravity comes from indisposition to recognise frankly and to grapple boldly with them.—SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

## BATTLE WITH THE SLUM.

WHY GLASGOW WANTS TO RATE LAND VALUES.

OVERCROWDING.

104,000 PERSONS LIVE IN ONE-ROOMED HOUSES.

CITY'S HANDS TIED BY LAND MONOPOLY.

By R. L. OUTHWAITE

(In the "Daily News" of 9th April.)

On February 1st last, by 40 votes to 17, the following resolution was carried by the Corporation of the City of Glasgow:—

That, the Corporation having approved of the resolution contained in the Parliamentary Bills Committee's minute, of date 25th January, 1912, relative to the levying of a tax for local purposes on the valuation of land under the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910, the Town Clerk be instructed to communicate the said resolution to all rating authorities in Great Britain, requesting them to petition the Government in favour of the same at the earliest possible date.

At the outset of an inquiry for THE DAILY NEWS into the motives underlying this action, I waited upon the Lord Provost, Mr. D. M. Stevenson, at the Municipal Buildings in Glasgow. What principle, I asked him, had the Corporation in view in seeking to establish a new basis for assessment?

"The argument is well known by now," he replied. "The difference between the value of the site on which this building (the City Chambers) stands and that of meadow land is due to the community. So it is held that land value provides the just basis of assessment. Under the present system the rates are apportioned according to the use to which land is put. A site worth £100 per annum may be let for £10; there may be a coal or wood yard on it. It would be rated on the actual rental—£10. It is held that the owner should pay on the true value, irrespective of the use to which he puts his land, and if he chooses to hold it up for an expected rise, he should meanwhile pay rates on the real value from time to time."

How it would act.

"Do you anticipate this would lead to the better use of land?"

The Lord Provost looked out of the window and indicated an out-of-date structure occupying one of the most valuable sites in the city.

"If the owner of that property opposite were rated on its site value it would induce him to put it to a better use."

"And has the Corporation been hampered by the present system in its endeavours to improve the city?"

The Lord Provost pointed out that the answer to that question was to be found in the history of the endeavours made by the Corporation to get powers to rate land values, and continued: "The 1909 Budget only touched future increment, with the exception of the undeveloped land tax. We want power to rate land values apart from Imperial taxation. We desire to use the new valuation for our purpose; it is in sight now, and the time has come to set our house in order, and so the Corporation has taken this step."

Following advice which the Lord Provost had given me when I first called upon him, I sought the views of Bailie Alston, on whose initiative the Glasgow Corporation is renewing its demand for powers to rate land values.

"I had long believed in the justice of this principle," said Bailie Alston, "but it was only when I became a member of a public body that I realised how urgent was the need for its application to remedy the evil of land monopoly. My first experience was as member of the Cathcart School Board, which had to build a new school every two years owing to a rapidly increasing population. We were forced to build a school at Mount Florida. It was then an agricultural district, the land being rented at £2 10s. an acre. But at this period the Glasgow Corpora-

tion was laying down water and gas mains, providing drainage, and a tram system. So when we approached the proprietor for one acre one pole, he demanded, and we had to pay, a perpetual feu duty of £100 per annum. He ceases to contribute anything to the local burdens. Later, within half a mile from this spot, the Board purchased another site, and the procedure was repeated.

£8,000 for a 30-Yard Strip.

"Take another case. During the past twelve months the City Council desired to effect an important improvement at the corner of Argyle Street and Union Street. The proprietor on the north side of Argyle Street proposed to erect new buildings, and the Council thought to take this opportunity to acquire a strip of frontage forty yards in length, 4 ft. 6 in. wide at one end, tapering to nine inches at the other. He demanded £19,000, or £130 per square yard. The Corporation refused to pay, and the improvement has not been carried out. Round the corner, in Buchanan Street, for a strip thirty-yards by 4 ft. 6 in. the city paid £8,000. The moral is that where values exist, created by the community, the community should have power to draw from that source all revenue required for municipal government."

"There is another more important aspect of the question. From my experience as councillor and magistrate I am convinced that land monopoly is the source of all other monopolies and their attendant evils. I recognise that when you relieve houses from taxation and force land into use, a better and cheaper class of house will take the place of the slums. I don't so much object to what the landlord takes, as what he prevents being done."

"I signed to-day fifty ejection orders. The poor people will go to crowd with others, and if they go to "ticketed" houses the occupiers may be fined for overcrowding. It is a horrible business. A magistrate recently sent 78 men to gaol in one batch for sleeping in a brickfield. Contrast this with the wealth of a city where the owner of land worth £130 per square yard pays nothing. In the slums the people pay twice as much for a given area of floor space as is paid by tenants in the fashionable suburb of Pollokshields."

From official sources one learns that in its endeavour to improve the housing of the poor and the amenities of the city the Improvement Department incurred under special Acts an expenditure of £2,439,725 15s. 1d., giving a net cost after realisation of certain properties of £1,586,786 5s. 10d., and showing a probable deficiency on realisation at a present valuation of £322,584 0s. 4d. For these transactions there was borrowed £1,215,558 17s. 4d. and raised by special assessments £597,003 0s. 11d. The cost of new tenements, model tenements, family house, and labourers' dwellings totalled £347,652 8s. 7d. On seven lodging-houses, with sites, there was spent a further £109,342 19s. 5d. These latter sheltered during 1911 nightly lodgers to the number of 693,328, including 89,105 females, the payment per night ranging from 3d. to 6d. As against the sum of £597,003 0s. 11d. raised by special assessment, the ratepayers have free assets valued at £32,753 17s. 9d., and Alexandra Park, costing £40,000; the balance has gone in the main to the formation of streets and to confer a special benefit on adjacent land-owners.

In view of such tremendous expenditures to remedy conditions due to land monopoly, the main result of which has been to put millions of increased land values into the

pockets of ground landlords and leave the evil unremedied, it is not surprising that the ratepayers of Glasgow should continue to make an insistent demand for power to levy upon the communal land value fund. All the more reasonable seems the demand in view of the extent to which land benefited by municipal expenditure escapes from contribution.

From the Assessor's office I gleaned the following significant facts. The area of the city is 12,975 acres, from which was collected for 1910-11 the sum of £1,044,600. Of this area 1,360 acres appears in the valuation roll as unoccupied land, and contributes £275. There is a further unoccupied area of 1,320, but as it is attached to other subjects, such as farms, it is rated through them, and the amount it contributes cannot be estimated. The Corporation owns 320 acres of unoccupied land which is not included in the above. Consequently 2,680 acres, over one-fifth of the area of the city, is unoccupied in the hands of private individuals, and contributes a few hundred pounds to a total contribution of over a million. When to this area is added that which, whilst being technically occupied, escapes through the structures on it not being in conformity with the value of the site the need for a land value basis of assessment is obvious.

#### The Death Roll.

I waited upon Dr. Chalmers, the Medical Officer of Health for the City, and told him the object of my mission. He said: "I have no politics, but you may say the need for reform is as great as ever, there has been no improvement as regards the evils due to overcrowding." I went to view a typical corner under the guidance of an official of the department. A few minutes' walk from the municipal buildings brought us to a place of Doom, where huge tenements towered aloft around a narrow courtyard. We entered one through the low archway and began to climb the stone stairs. It was midday outside, it was night within. The stairs were greasy with damp, the stench was as if we were ascending an inverted sewer, nauseating, utterly horrible. On one landing a few feet square, lit by a glint of light from a window over against which stood the wall of another tenement, there were huddled eight little children—this was their playground. We knocked at a door, and, getting no answer, opened and entered. It was a dark, musty smelling den. In the middle of a room was a cradle with a baby in it, two little children were sitting on the floor by it, and a child of about five was in bed and in charge of the family. There was an unguarded fire in the room. Opening from this room there was another small crib. We closed the door and left the children to their fate, and ascended to the fifth and topmost storey, looking in on the way at similar homes. This tenement was one of two-roomed houses; in homes of such dimensions live 348,731 people, 47 per cent. of the population of Glasgow. In these the death-rate is 21.3 per thousand comparable with a rate of 11.2 per thousand for houses of four apartments and up.

#### Where Children Perish.

Then we visited another tenement comprised of residences of one apartment. The homes we entered at each flight were about ten feet square. In one we found a little pale-faced boy and two women who were trying to sew in the dim light, one of whom said she came from Inverness. I asked her if she preferred Glasgow. "If you ask me, there is no place in the world worse than Glasgow," she replied sadly.

The one-room house is let for 2s. 9d. a week, sometimes by the night for 1s., with a blanket branded with the word "Stolen," to prevent theft, and a stick or two of furniture. In such houses in Glasgow there dwell 104,128 people, 14 per cent. of the population. In these the death-rate is 32.7 per thousand, comparable with 11.2 per thousand in homes of four apartments and up. In such homes of one and two compartments still dwell, after all Glasgow's noble endeavours, 61 out of every 100 of her population. The density of population in Glasgow is at the rate of 60 to the acre, in the area I visited it is 567, in the particular locality described it is 973. And over one-fifth of the area of the city is unoccupied land! It is for power to bring the people out of the black holes of Glasgow, to save the children who are perishing in battalions that the Corporation is appealing to Parliament.

#### The "Ticketed" Houses.

In such localities as these are the "ticketed" houses, of which there are 20,344 in the city. They are subject to visitation by a sanitary inspector at any hour of the night or early morning in defiance of the "sanctity of the home." In 1909 such inspections resulted in the detection of 3,846 cases of overcrowding, and the infliction of fines in 472 cases. Here is an illuminating Press report of such a prosecution:—

Among the overcrowding cases dealt with at the Eastern Police Court yesterday, that of Hugh Logue, a labourer, aged 22, was one of an extraordinary nature. Logue pleaded guilty of overcrowding the single apartment he rented at Marlborough Street to the extent of three persons more than were allowed by Statute. Two inspectors stated that on June 10th, while in search of overcrowded apartments, they heard suspicious sounds proceeding from Logue's house, and on looking in through a chink in the shutter, one of the officers caught glimpses of the members of the family scurrying about apparently in a state of excitement. Having demanded admission, they found Logue's wife, the father and mother of the accused with two children in bed. Suspecting there were other members of the family in the house, a search was made, in the course of which the bed was closely examined, and the missing members, accused, and his two sisters, aged 20 and 16 respectively, were found secreted between the bedboards and the mattress. The three were somewhat exhausted when relieved from their uncomfortable place of refuge. A fine of 7s. 6d. was imposed.

I called upon Mr. Fyfe, Chief Sanitary Inspector of the city, and he put the problem of the overcrowded tenement in the true perspective. Speaking of the prosecutions, he remarked: "It is only stirring the pot; the poor creatures just shift from place to place. There are plenty of better houses standing empty, but they cannot afford to rent them."

It is thus no question of securing closing orders; as a matter of fact, many of the ticketed tenements are those in best structural condition. Then Mr. Fyfe gave instructions, and sent me into another room to see ocular demonstrations of this point—and here in passing let me bear testimony to the great courtesy shown by the officers of the Corporation to me when introduced by Bailie Alston. We went into a room on the walls of which were hung great canvas sheets covered with figures prepared by Mr. Fyfe. They were the results of his investigations as to the wage status of the occupants of one, two, three, and four room houses in selected areas. At a glance one saw that the tenement problem is a wage problem, a poverty problem. In a street, the tenements of which I have described, live fifty labourers, four artisans, one professional man, and eleven men of various occupations. Their average weekly wage is 14s. 6d. In one street the weekly wage is 10s., in another 13s. The one-room houses are almost entirely occupied by people getting less than £1 a week, and each rise in the wage status goes with occupancy of a better dwelling.

The citizens of Glasgow know that they have created a vast fund that now goes into the pockets of those who render no service in return, and that any endeavour on past and discredited lines would only swell that fund and leave present evils untouched. They hold that the rating of land values will make this fund available for social benefit, and also make available to private enterprise the land withheld from use. By taking this socially created fund to remove the taxation that now falls on buildings, and land being forced by the process into beneficial use, they anticipate that the slums and tenements would disappear, and that in their place more desirable accommodation would be provided for those whose need is greatest.

All too inadequately have the reasons been indicated which have led Glasgow to make once again this appeal, but they should suffice to ensure the support of a democratic Parliament. A Free Trade Government may be expected to listen to an appeal from the business men of the Clyde, the Clyde that last year turned out a greater tonnage of shipping than all the German Empire. Moreover, the example of Glasgow should inspire such endeavour as will assure that London, after the County Council elections next March, will take her rightful place in the life and death struggle to free civic life from the incubus of land monopoly.



# RURAL NEWS

Come forth from the valley, come forth from the hill,  
 Come forth from the workshop, the mine, and the mill,  
 From pleasure or slumber, from study or play,  
 Come forth in your myriads to aid us to-day ;  
 There's a word to be spoken, a deed to be done,  
 A truth to be uttered, a cause to be won.  
 Come forth in your myriads ! come forth every one !

Come, youths in your vigour ; come, men in your prime ;  
 Come, age with experience fresh gathered from time ;  
 Come, workers ! you're welcome ; come, thinkers, you  
 must,

Come thick as the clouds in the midsummer dust,  
 Or the waves of the sea gleaming bright in the sun !  
 There's a truth to be told, and a cause to be won—  
 Come forth in your myriads, come forth every one !

—*Charles Mackay.*

The news of our rural campaign is encouraging. Our intention is to reach out with our message and our literature to every centre, to every village, to every home in every village, and we mean to continue until the Taxation of Land Values and the untaxing of cottages and all improvements made by labour and capital is understood. This is uphill work, we know, but it is the only way.

We have been told time and again in the Senate and in the market place by the Free Trader and by the Tariff Reformer, by the official Liberal, by the Housing reformer in various land reform camps (so called), that our policy cannot be applied to rural land, and that he who advocates it will be met with an unconquerable opposition. Farmers and labourers, to say nothing of the good landowners, ready to assist whenever a reasonable scheme is produced, will understand the proposed Tax on Land Values to be a tax on land, or in other words a tax on the raw material of their industry.

There may be some truth in this latter contention, and there is ; but it only goes to show the urgency and the need there is for our enlightening mission. We are not aiming at a tax on land, and we mean to make this clear and plain to the rural workers of the country. We are out for a just system of land tenure, and for a system of local rating which will encourage and not discourage the producer and the improver. We think we can make our case good, and already we have the assurance of hundreds of converts in Wiltshire that our explanations and our practical proposals are acceptable. We have the active and willing co-operation of these new friends, and when they see and agree we are convinced

that there are others likewise ready to receive the good news.

We propose to relieve houses and buildings and all industry from the existing burden of rates and taxes and to take as our standard for rating and taxing the value of land, which as all authority declares exists independent of individual effort and is due entirely to the presence and industry of the community as a whole.

The Prime Minister agrees with this view of the case, and he has said that the rural aspect of the question is more urgent at the present time. It is more urgent now and at any time ; it always was the more urgent phase of the land question. As Henry George well said :—" It is not the growth of the city that develops the country, but the development of the country that makes the city grow."

Men cannot make a countryside, but out of the labour and strivings of the people, out of their needs and by their genius a town can arise even on the bleakest looking landscape. The well-being of the town rests on the well-being of the country, and hence the rural question is the more urgent.

The Taxation of Land Values will tap a source of revenue for public needs which exists by virtue of public life and public effort and public expenditure ; but it will do more, it will set the land free from the grip of monopoly. It will do this by forcing the landowners to pay rates and taxes on the communal market value of their land whether it is used, put to inferior use, or held idle. Such a policy is the reverse of the existing system which taxes industry and allows monopoly to escape. The existing system is the direct cause of low wages and bad housing conditions. Where wages are high, men can and do command comparatively good houses, and wages are highest where land is easily obtained.

The labourers and the farmers have everything to gain by the Taxation of Land Values. They are the active partners in the agricultural industry, and as such have a united interest in its advancement. This in brief is our story for the rural workers. Their labour contributes much to the higher land values of the centres of industry. They have a just claim to share in this communal value wherever it appears, and when this is given them the burdens they now bear will be removed, and not till then.

We cordially congratulate our emissaries and all their public spirited helpers in the formidable looking job they have undertaken. Their well sustained campaign is bearing good fruit, and the enthusiasm they have already evoked for their cause more than justifies this invasion into an hitherto neglected territory.

### WILTSHIRE CAMPAIGN.

Active work has been resumed in connection with the Wiltshire campaign now that the men have got their gardens and allotments for the most part into order. The petition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer is under way, and a series of explanatory meetings are being held in the Cricklade Division by Mr. R. L. Outhwaite and Mr. R. C. Orr. The stories told by labourers after the meetings at the gates of the Great Western Railway Company show that a land values tax that would force the soil of Wiltshire into use would empty the works of thousands of men who have come from the villages, or else wages would have to be greatly increased to retain them.

Writing on April 24th, Mr. Outhwaite says: "At the two work-gates meetings, held yesterday and to-day, there was a great rush for literature. I distributed myself 1,000 "Why Engineers" after yesterday's meeting, being literally mobbed by the men. I explained the petition idea at these meetings, and it seemed to be greatly approved. To-day a man came up to me and said, 'I hope this will be done. I'd like to get out of there and have a bit of land, for I can plough and milk. But the men are kept right under and some will be afraid to put pen to paper.' Another with him said: 'Yes, and I would like to get out too.' They had both come in from Wiltshire villages, and there are no doubt thousands like them among the 15,000 employed. I enjoy speaking to these men, and if one only reaches 1,000 a week it must tell, especially as so many ask for literature to distribute in the works. It is proposed to hold a series of open-air meetings at night round the town next week in addition to the dinner-hour ones, for the purpose of getting the petition understood in Swindon. The nine meetings of this week should touch 2,000 men."

### MR. R. C. ORR'S REPORT.

Judging from the meetings and from some canvassing I have done with literature, this is the first time land values have ever been heard of in these parts, although the Housing and Rating Questions are both up in acute forms at present. The people have been so fooled in the past that they have lost all hope of betterment.

We had a very good meeting on 27th March, the literature going well—"How to Reduce," "Rural Land Reform," "What the Working People Want." About three hundred were present all the time. About a hundred and fifty turned out yesterday at the Ironworks, where the demand for the literature was again strong, the meeting arranged for the evening had to be put off, as a travelling show had monopolised the Market Square for their performance.

Arrangements have been completed for the first series of meetings to be held in the Cricklade Division to get the Petition, published in last month's RURAL NEWS, well under way in Swindon before proceeding to the other Divisions of the county. Seven meetings, from April 23rd to April 26th, have already been held.

In Chippenham, Trowbridge, Melksham and Devizes the leading progressive men and women are anxious to have the copies of the Petition at the earliest possible date for signature, and judging from the attacks made on Mr. Outhwaite by the Tory members at Chippenham and the Tory candidate at Swindon, we are certain to have a splendid series of educational meetings and discussions throughout the whole county and in the Press.

Four mid-day meetings at the Great Western Railway Works, and three evening meetings in the outskirts of Swindon, are contemplated, to be followed by the village meetings as soon as the garden work is finished, which will be in about ten days.

Five hundred copies of RURAL NEWS have been distributed, also two hundred copies of Mr. Outhwaite's new pamphlet, "Land Values in Hastings, Harrogate and Glasgow."

### MISS PONKING'S REPORT.

On March 21st, at the request of the Women's Co-operative Guild, I attended their monthly meeting at Chippenham, and I read there Mrs. Davies' pamphlet, "What the Working People Want," which they seemed to grasp very well, and I afterwards put some arguments on the Taxation of Land Values before them, which they listened to with a good deal of interest, interrupting occasionally to ask questions or corroborate what I said.

I have found three persons who said, "Oh! you are coming to talk about Henry George"—a Malmesbury tailor, who has taken LAND VALUES for six months and is going to see if he can get it put up in the Y.M.C.A. room; a clerk in a bacon factory in Calne; and a Nonconformist minister at Chippenham.

I came across one man at a village (Beanaere) near Melksham, who works at the foundry there, who himself suggested a Petition and volunteered to get signatures.

I have been canvassing and distributing literature in the villages of Highworth and Purton, where meetings have been held, preparing the way for the Petition.

### POSTERS FOR THE VILLAGES.

The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values have issued the following striking posters for use in the rural districts.

No. 1.

#### 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 Farm Buildings and Improve-  
ments 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.**

No. 2.

#### MESSAGE TO THE VILLAGES.

**If Food is Taxed it Costs More.  
Every Cup of Tea, every ounce of Sugar, costs more,  
because it is Taxed.  
A Tax on the Value of Land will make those who  
have Land use it, and will make Land easier to get.**

**Do you want more Small Holdings?  
Do you want steadier work and higher wages?  
Do you want better Cottages?  
If you do,  
Then Tax Land Values.**

No. 3.

#### TO THE WORKING PEOPLE.

**Do not let your Bread be Taxed.  
Get the Taxes on Tea and Sugar taken off  
Then Living will be Cheaper.**

**Tax Land Owners on the Value of their Land.  
Then those who own Land will have to use it.  
Then you will have more chance of getting a bit of  
Land.  
Then there will be more jobs and higher wages.  
TAX LAND VALUES.**

These posters are printed in red on white and in black on yellow, and in three sizes, viz. :—

Size A. 20 in. by 8½ in., suitable for gate posts.

Size B. 20 in. by 15 in., suitable for hoardings.

Size C. 30 in. by 20 in., ditto.

and can be obtained from The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W., in either style of printing at the following prices, carriage or postage paid :—

Size A. per 1000, £1 5s.; per 100, 3s.; per 25, 1s.

Size B. " £1 15s.; per 100, 4s.; per 25, 1s. 3d.

Size C. " £2 15s.; per 100, 6s.; per 25, 2s.

The intention of the Committee is to have these posters placarded broadcast in the rural districts, and we hope they will have the co-operation of our friends in this admirable means of conveying our messages to the villages.

## A GOOD HOME AND A GOOD LIVING.

### LETTERS ON WORK AND WAGES.

#### II. Freeing the Land.

By MOYA LLEWELYN DAVIES.

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

DEAR D.,

It is plain from your letter that you agree with me that what the working people want is more and steadier employment with better wages, better houses at lower rents, and relief from the present heavy rates and taxes.

Does not everyone, or nearly everyone, agree that the working people ought to have these things? Look at Tariff Reform, offered to the people as a cure for unemployment and low wages! Look at the Housing Acts, Small Holdings Acts, Minimum Wage Act, all passed in recent years, which are attempts to help the people to get better homes and a better living! But has it ever occurred to you, that instead of trying to help the people it might be better to let the people help themselves? They are only too anxious to work and produce the things they want, and are perfectly well able to do so, if only they were allowed the opportunity. What prevents them from doing so? Why is it that there is not enough work for all, and that people should be suffering in this way through no fault of their own?

No one can work without land, and the things the land yields. Land there is in plenty—land suitable for producing food of all kinds, and for timber, stone, clay, metals, and all the raw material from which alone useful things can be made, and the making of which gives employment to men; land suitable as sites for houses, and for wharves and warehouses, factories and shops, where raw materials could be worked, and goods distributed. Is it not plain that there would be plenty of work for all, if that which is necessary for all work, and of which there is plenty—I mean the land—were set free for the use of all, on fair terms? All the work that has ever employed men, and given them the means to live, requires the use of land. There has never been a trade nor an industry which has not owed its existence to work which was first of all done by men upon the land.

But though there is plenty of land, land which could be turned to good account, the people who want to use it, can't get it. It is a case of "water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink!" Many people who own valuable land, won't use it themselves, and won't allow others to use it. For such land in many places a price of £100 or even £1,000 an acre has been refused. Such land is kept back as a speculation, till the need for it becomes greater still and a still higher price can be asked. And all the time this land escapes paying taxes altogether, or pays on a very low value, far below its real value.

Then again much land which could supply people's wants is kept by the owners for sport, or for pleasure, or merely from selfish pride of ownership. Everyone who owns such land, and refuses to turn it to account himself or let others do so, is causing the unemployment, low wages, and poverty which are oppressing the people.

He refuses to allow it to grow corn for instance, he is therefore preventing farm-labourers, harvesters, binders from getting work; the miller and his men might be milling it but they do not get the opportunity; the railway does not carry the flour to the market, there is less work for railwaymen, clerks, engine drivers, porters, shunters. Less work for the railways means less work for the iron-workers, coal miners, engineers, and numberless other workmen. And all these thousands of men who might have got employment if that land had been put to use, they themselves would have been buying goods, and giving employment; renting houses and helping the building trade; buying food, clothes, furniture, and so helping countless numbers employed in producing these things.

If more land were put to use, not only would there be more work, but wages would rise. Men at present idle, would find work, the number of men looking for jobs would be less, it would be more difficult for masters to get men, and they would have to pay higher wages.

With a bit of land, a man in the country, for instance, could find plenty to do, work of a healthy, happy kind which would bring him in enough for comfort. But things must not be as they are now! He must not be squeezed and crippled by too high a rent for his bit of land; and as soon as he begins to use the land and make it produce, or build a cottage on it, he must not be made to pay rates on his improvements. He must not be punished because he works hard and produces food and other things, thus helping himself and others, and making things more abundant and cheaper for everybody. No! having paid a fair rent for his bit of land that must be the end of paying for him. He must be allowed to go ahead and get the best out of his land, and improve his position as much as ever he can, and no rate or tax must be put on him for doing so.

And if he were thus prosperous—working his own land at a profit, or working for someone else at good wages—he would have no great difficulty in renting a cottage if there were any to be had, or even in building one for himself, as the Scotch crofters have done, who have security of tenure and fair rents, with no fear of their rents being raised, or having to pay rates on their buildings and improvements.

When I hear of Acts for the Housing of the Working Classes, I sometimes wonder who it is who is going to provide houses for the working classes except the working classes themselves. And I ask myself what is now preventing the working classes from providing themselves with the houses they want. And the more I think about it the clearer it seems to me that all they want is the use of a piece of land as a site for house and garden, paying only what that site is worth, and then being secure there with no fear of being turned out at a landlord's whim, or of being called upon to pay anything more in rates or taxes because they have built and made improvements.

The people who want houses are there, everywhere, waiting for them; builders are there ready to build; it is the land that it is so difficult to get. The land is there too; land there is in plenty for cottages and gardens, but it can't be had, or can't be had at a fair price, not at ten times, nor twenty times, nor a hundred times the price that an owner puts on it when he has to pay rates and taxes on it. Do you know for instance what happened in Richmond in Surrey? The Town Council of Richmond wanted to build some workmen's houses, and they cast their eyes on a piece of land which was lying idle right at the far end of the town. It was not very easy to get at, and they thought to themselves it couldn't have much value, and they'd get it rather cheap. But did they? The land appeared in the Rate-books as of the value of £4 an acre, and as it was called "agricultural" land the owner only paid rates on £2 an acre. Well! he asked the Town Council £2,000 an acre for that land, and he got it! And the result was the Town Council had to squeeze forty houses on to two acres! And who was it who suffered? The ratepayers who had to find the money; the working men who had to live in the houses without proper air-space and garden; and still more, the men who couldn't get cottages at all in consequence of the high prices demanded for land.

What on earth is the good of trying to build houses for the working people as long as at the same time we encourage, as we do by the present system, landowners to withhold their land or sell it only at such monstrous prices?

Land there is in plenty also, suitable for cultivation, but again it can't be had, or can't be had at fair prices. At a meeting of the Surrey County Council (held on the 9th May, 1911) it was reported that the Earl of Dysart asked £200 an acre for Small Holdings, land for which he was paying rates on a yearly value of £1 an acre. How can Small Holdings Acts and Housing Acts help the people as long as prices like these are asked for land, and other land is held back altogether because the prices asked no one could possibly pay and at the same time make a living out of the land.

Why can't the people get land at fair prices? Because at present land which is not used is let off almost altogether from taxation. Every encouragement is given to a landowner, or land speculator, to hold back his land, to refuse to allow it to be used, and every difficulty is put in the way of those who want to use the land, make it productive, and get all they can out of it. At present a landowner has two values for his land, one value, a low one, when he is asked

to pay rates and taxes, and another value, a very high one, when he wants to let or sell it. A small piece of land, for instance, that I bought recently in Sussex, was paying rates on a yearly value of £2 before I bought it, but the owner asked and got from me £650, or 325 years' purchase!

How are these bad things to be put right? Steps must be taken which will make it worth the landlords' while to let their land be used. The present state of things, which rewards those who keep land out of use, and punishes those who put it to use, must be reversed. How can this be done? By putting a tax on the value of all land, apart from the improvements made in or upon the land; on all land, according to its true value whether it is used or not. This would be a relief to the man who is making good use of his land, because he would have no rates to pay on his buildings and improvements. On the other hand it would very soon induce landlords who were holding back their land either to use the land themselves (thus giving employment, and increasing production), or to let others use it. If a landlord had to pay on the land he kept idle, as he did on the land which he allowed to be cultivated, and which was bringing him in something, he would soon be anxious to cultivate his idle land, or to get rent for it by letting it, to help to pay the tax upon it.

The land which would thus be brought into use would be more than sufficient to provide small holdings for those who wanted them, and for cottages and gardens. By a natural process, men would be put on to the land, and the "Housing Question" would solve itself.

In my next letter I shall show how these changes can be brought about.—Your affectionate friend,

M.

### THE MARTIAN.

BY DR. GEORGE W. CAREY.

During the course of his journey on the Earth, the inhabitant of the planet Mars reached a large and marvellous country. Majestic rivers watered it, and its soil, which stretched out of sight, was of a remarkable fertility. The Martian surveyed the country with pleasure, when he saw coming towards him an Earth citizen, looking rather melancholy.

"Good morning," said the Martian.  
 "Good morning."  
 "Well, what's the matter with you?"  
 "I'm hungry."  
 "Why don't you eat, then?"  
 "I've got no money."  
 "Work and earn some money."  
 "I can't find any work."  
 "Work on that piece of land. Start growing some wheat, some potatoes; it doesn't matter what."  
 "The owner doesn't wish to employ me."  
 "The *What*?"  
 "The owner."  
 "What do you mean by an 'owner'?"  
 "Forsooth! It is he who owns the land."  
 "Owns the land?"  
 "But . . . naturally . . ."  
 "What the dickens! . . . Say, but is it not Nature that created this Earth?"  
 "So it is said."  
 "And was it not made for everybody, to the end that they might live on it?"  
 "So I am told. . . . I don't know. . . ."  
 "Then, how is it that a man comes to be owner of the land?"  
 "The law gave it to him."  
 "Who made the law?"  
 "But . . . it was us."  
 "Who's us?"  
 "Us, the electors. I and all the others."  
 "What! You the supreme people, you make laws which give fields like that to a man—to a man who has the right to refuse you work when you are begging, and when you are dying of hunger?"  
 "Alas! . . . Yes."  
 "Will you be so good as to remove your hat and allow me to look at the shape of your head?"  
 And the Martian raised the anchor of his airship and cried, as he rose up in the air:  
 "What madmen are the inhabitants of the Earth."

## THE COAL STRIKE.

### A SERMON: AND AN OPEN LETTER.

At the Coatdyke (Lanarkshire) Parish Church Men's Own Meeting on Sunday, March 10th, the Rev. J. Cromarty Smith gave an address on the Coal Strike, a report of which appeared in the local paper, the COATBRIDGE (LANARKSHIRE) EXPRESS, Mr. John Cameron of the Scottish League took advantage of the opportunity to send to the Editor a reply in the form of an Open Letter, which duly appeared in the COATBRIDGE EXPRESS and which we reprint in full as a very excellent exposition of our case.

#### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REV. J. CROMARTY SMITH.

Reverend Sir,—I beg to thank you for your address on the present labour unrest. It is much that a minister of the Gospel should on the Lord's Day, consider it his duty to discuss those momentous labour and social questions which affect the very lives of the people. The masses are steadily drifting away from the Church. Earnest social reformers have long looked upon it as the willing hand-aid of tyranny and privilege; as an institution which stands paralysed and inert in presence of the most glaring injustice. While, therefore, grateful to you for trying to teach the Church its duty, I venture, on behalf of the movement with which I am connected, to criticise some of your remarks and point out several inconsistencies. Of your own sincerity we have no doubt whatever. A part of the truth you undoubtedly see, but your failure to grasp the entire truth has led you into pitfalls; has made your deductions valueless and your proposals incongruous and impracticable, being, as they are, subversive of the rights of true property. My object is not so much to dissect your utterances as to advance a principle which I believe to be the only thing which will save society from the many dangers which now threaten it.

In discussing the coal strike, such subjects as the rights of property and the rights of labour are brought into sharp prominence, and before we can think or act correctly the first question we must answer is—To whom do the coal-fields of Britain rightfully belong? A mere layman might be excused if he looked upon present possession as being sufficient title to exclusive ownership, but a minister of Christ and a scholar like yourself cannot be excused for blindly accepting such claims without questioning. Into this subject of a just and moral basis for property you did not enter in your speech, but your remarks regarding the State taking over the mines, where you say that "no one-to-day advocated confiscation," and that "the present owners would be paid out at a reasonable and well-considered figure," show that you favour the coal-owners' right to mineral land in preference to the people's claim. Now, we disciples of Henry George, and who, on account of the form which our political proposals has taken, have come to be called Single Taxmen, hold views diametrically opposed to those suggested by your remarks. We hold that this earth, with all its natural forces and elements—air and water, the light and the heat of the sun, the land (including, of course, mineral land)—were provided free by the Father of all and given to His children that they might use them for their subsistence while sojourners upon earth. We insist that no man-made law can set aside this decree of Providence. This doctrine of equal rights to the use of the earth is graven upon the face of Nature, and the moral sense that is within every man responds to the truth of it. Not only have our beliefs the Divine sanction, but they have also the highest legal support, for no less an authority than Chief Justice Coleridge has declared that the land of a country belongs to the people whenever they choose to resume possession of it.

And it must be so. The land is our storehouse; the reservoir from which everything must come, and without access to which nothing can be produced. Everything that man eats, drinks, wears, or uses in any form comes from the land. From it our very bodies are made, and to it they shall return; we are as truly children of the soil as is the blade of grass or the flower of the field. You will see, therefore, what a tremendous, an unjust power we have placed in the hands of those to whom we have given exclusive ownership of the earth. The land-owner exerts a more baneful influence than any autocratic

monarch, in that he holds absolute dominion over life and death. In handing over to one man that element upon which, and from which, other men must live we make him their "master" in the fullest sense of the term. (I get the word "master" from your own speech, in which you have used it several times; surely an unfortunate designation to be used by one who is supposed to acknowledge but one Master.)

In admitting the righteousness of private property in land, we make attacks on the rights of that which is really genuine private property, viz., those things which are produced from the land, by labour and capital. Thus capital is cheated of its just reward, and at the will of an obstinate landowner is compelled to lie idly by, rusting and decaying, and labour is fleeced of its just earnings and condemned to poverty and rags, followed by utter destitution in times of enforced unemployment, caused by the withholding of land from use. It is private property in land which is the root cause of the acute distress which prevails among the working classes of every country to-day; it is this that causes the intense struggle for a bare living, forcing men to trample upon others lest they be themselves trampled upon; that cruelly condemns them to bitter want and involuntary idleness, and goads them on to despair, and drunkenness, and crime, and is fast destroying their faith in the Church and the existence of a living God. The Creator has provided plenty for all, but we have allowed His good gifts to be monopolised by a few, while we turn and rend each other.

What is the matter with labour all over the world to-day is that labour is robbed, and any remedy which stops short of abolishing that robbery is futile. No half measures will suffice; equal rights to the earth must be restored. But how? Nothing is easier. All that requires to be done is what we propose: to abolish as fast as may be the many burdensome and iniquitous taxes which we at present levy on incomes, on trade, on houses, and other forms of wealth which are legitimate property and resort for revenue to ground rent or land values. Thus, without any talk of confiscation or compensation, the State would become the universal landlord without calling herself so. Ground rent being taken and used for the public good, the land would be truly the joint stock property of the people. To see fully how beautifully this beneficent reform would harmonise with the Divine will and satisfy every Christian aspiration, I would refer you, Sir, to the writings of our revered teacher, Henry George; yet nevertheless one aspect of the question in its bearings on the present coal crisis may be considered.

There are three parties concerned in the mining industry as we see it carried on to-day, viz., the owner of mineral land, the coal lessee, and the miner. The coal lessee invests and risks his capital in boring for coal and finding it. He puts down plant and machinery to raise the coal to the surface; railways and roads are laid to get the product away. The capitalist is thus a necessary and useful member of society, and has a perfect right to share in the produce. The miner supplies the active labour required, and is therefore also entitled to a share. But the landowner supplies nothing, risks nothing, does nothing towards production. His immense income, arising from dead-rents, way-leaves, railway rents, ground rents for miners' houses, and a royalty from every ton of coal produced, accrues to him though graciously giving us his permission (which he can withhold if he likes) to tread and use what is sometimes sardonically referred to as "our native land." Whatever preposterous claims may be set up regarding ownership of the surface of the earth (and, of course, we repudiate all such claims), law and reason alike declare that the minerals in the bowels of the earth are, and always have been, the property of the nation. Therefore we may at once justly appropriate by taxation all mining royalties for the state without hampering production in any way, but, on the contrary, by so doing we will give a great impetus to industry by relieving it of this dead weight. Coal lessees will be in a better position to offer better wages, and we shall also be enabled to better compete in the coal markets of the world with countries that at present have the advantage of saner laws regarding mining royalties.

But, great as would be the relief given to industry and trade by the taxation of land values and mineral royalties (for all other rates and taxes could be gradually dispensed with), enormous as would be the public revenues derived therefrom, these things pale into insignificance when com-

pared with the effects that the tax would have when applied to the value of unoccupied land which for any reason is being "held up" or kept out of use. We must make it unprofitable, and therefore impossible, for the landowner to keep the field from the tillers, and this we can do by taxing him on the true annual value of the field, whether it is tilled or kept lying vacant. Under present conditions a strike or lock-out in the mining trade can only end disastrously for the men; the conditions are all against them. When work ceases the landowner is only slightly embarrassed; his royalties certainly are suspended temporarily, but his fixed or dead-rent goes on. The coal lessees recoup themselves for any temporary loss by disposing of binged-up coal at fancy prices, and by keeping up prices when work is resumed. But the miner starves. With a substantial tax imposed on the annual value of the coal-fields, whether there was any output or not, "the boot would be on the other foot." With such a heavy tax to meet, coal owners could not possibly afford to keep the pits producing nothing, but must make terms with the men at once. A strike like the present one could not possibly continue for any length of time; indeed, under the new conditions, lock-outs or strikes could hardly occur at all. With all kinds of land thus everywhere forced into use labour would be in demand, and its reward would be, not only a "minimum wage," but the full earnings of labour.

Into details as to how the tax would be apportioned between coal lessee and landowner I cannot now enter, but in the first place it would be made payable by the lessee who would have power and authority to deduct a proportion "pro rata" from the royalties and ground rents paid to the "superior." For it must be remembered that the superior is not only the receiver of land values. When he lets a tract of mineral land to a company on a long lease, he retains only a part of the land values in the shape of fixed rents and royalties, and the company from that moment participates in future increase of land values and in any higher profits that may be got for the coal produced. The lessees thus become to that extent landowners and receivers of land values. As such, our reform would touch them, but as capitalists, employers of labour, and captains of industry we would remove every tax and burden which now fetters them. Let them count the loss and count the gain.

Our position, Sir, is the only logical one you can take. If the coal-fields are the just property of the present holders (and you admit this when you affirm that before the State can resume possession of mineral lands the present holders must be fully compensated) then the whole agitation to compel the owners to grant a minimum wage is wrong. If a man has the same moral right to own coal in the bosom of the earth as he has to own a horse, a watch, or a house, then any Parliamentary filibustering to compel him to employ certain men to dig the coal and pay them certain wages is to be condemned, being an unjust and unwarrantable attack on property. If, on the other hand, as we declare, there is a common right to the land (a right which does not attach to things of human production) then the only way out of the difficulty is to restore that common right by some such method as we advocate, viz., the taxation of land values.

Thinking men are beginning to see that radical treatment of the land question is necessary, and our ideas are spreading apace. To quote our gifted leader in his passionate appeal to the Church:—"And the cause for which we stand has now made such progress in the minds of men all the world over that it can never again be subdued, but must go on conquering and to conquer. God's truth impels it, and 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 social ferment of to-day, to him who hath eyes to see, the doom of industrial slavery is sealed! Where shall the dignitaries of the Church stand in the struggle that is impending; nay, that has already begun? With the delivered when the timbrels shall sound again, or with the chariots and horse-men who shall again be engulfed in the waves?"

I write this to you, Sir, in the hope that I may be the humble means of causing you to search for the truth and be freed by the truth and use your influence and abilities to spread the truth, and I should be glad to think that others who may read this letter may be helped thereby to see the light.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

JOHN CAMERON.

## A BLOW TO SMALL OWNERSHIP AND LAND PURCHASE.

### SMALL PROPRIETORS CANNOT MAKE ENDS MEET AND BY REQUEST ARE TAKEN OVER AS TENANTS UNDER THE CROFTERS ACT.

THE OBAN TIMES (the leading agricultural journal in Scotland advocating Tariff Reform), April 20th, tells in a leading article of the complete breakdown of a small ownership and land purchase scheme instituted in the Scottish Highlands to provide land for "landless raiders." We quote this informing article in full, both as a warning and a guide to all who are on the lookout for small holdings, and who have to listen to the fairy stories of the two sets of land reformers who advocate both small ownership, and tenancy under the Government, by land purchase:—

#### "BARRA LAND PURCHASE.

##### SCHEME ENDED IN FAILURE.

The first seizure of land in the island of Barra took place in 1901, when a number of landless cottars raided the extensive farm of Eoligaray. Readers will no doubt remember the history of that raid; and it is not our purpose to refer to it here. The upshot of the land seizure was that the Congested Districts Board opened negotiations with the agents of the proprietrix, Lady Gordon Cathcart, with the view of acquiring land for the landless raiders. The result of the negotiations was that the Board paid £5,500 for a portion of Eoligaray farm, which they sold to 58 small landholders under the land purchase scheme. Twenty of these holdings were valued at £5 each, five at £4 10s., and thirty-three at £2 10s., giving a total rent of a little over £200. The annual price payable for these holdings was about £204, representing the purchase price of £5,500. It was said at the time that the Board had bought these lands at 27 years' purchase, but statements in Parliament by the Member for Inverness-shire represented the price paid to be at least 38 years' purchase on the gross rental. This statement, which appeared to have been at the time rather wide of the mark, may prove at the end to be fairly accurate. The smallholders at entry were totally ignorant of the value of land, being mostly cottars and squatters, and in their extremity to obtain a croft were eager to agree to any terms. The Board thus proceeded with the settlements and sold the holdings to the tenants at the rents stated. After a few years' hard struggle, however, the settlers found it impossible to meet the instalments of purchase price due by them. Year by year they sank deeper and deeper into arrears, and finding their position gradually becoming an impossible one, they again and again petitioned the Congested Districts Board to relieve them of the purchase system and accept them as tenants under the Crofters Act, but without avail. At the General Election of 1910 both political candidates—Sir John Dewar, M.P., and Sir Reginald Macleod—were approached by the settlers who explained their hopeless position. Both candidates promised to endeavour to extricate them out of the difficulty. In September last Lord Pentland, accompanied by Sir Robert Wright (now the Chairman of the Scottish Board of Agriculture) visited Barra, when the settlers waited upon his lordship and stated that they were ruined, and would of necessity have to abandon their holdings unless effect were given to their petition. Lord Pentland then promised to give favourable consideration to their request. The settlers all along had insisted that the purchase price was exorbitant, and that the individual holdings in each township, valued at a stereotyped figure, were in very few instances of the same value. The settlers' interview with Lord Pentland, as stated, resulted in a revaluation of the holdings as craved, and in their being put under the Crofters Act tenure. A few weeks ago Mr. Thomas Wilson, the Congested Districts Board factor, visited Barra, when an agreement was signed by all the settlers abandoning the holdings as owners under the purchase system, and taking them over as tenants under the Crofters Act. By mutual agreement, Mr. Neil MacLean, farmer, Nunton, Benbecula, was appointed arbiter to fix fair rents for the holdings in question, and during the last fortnight he has inspected the lands. The rents fixed by him are not yet announced

by the Board of Agriculture, but from the fact that the settlers have been placed under the crofting tenure it may be inferred that their grievances were well founded. The new valuation will be awaited with much interest generally, and with eagerness by those poor settlers to whom it means so much.

From the beginning of this ill-fortuned experiment, it is clear that the basis of purchase was at fault, and but for Lord Pentland's action in rescuing the settlers from their unenviable position, they would have had to carry on the struggle for another forty years. It is gratifying to know that the agreement made with the settlers provides for the fair rents now being treated as if they had been fixed in 1901, the date of entry, thus giving credit to the settlers for any sums overpaid by them should the valuation turn out to be under the combined annual instalments of £204 hitherto paid by them."

## LAND MONOPOLY IN WILTS.

### PETITION TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

#### TAX LAND VALUES.

[From the DAILY CHRONICLE (Western edition), April 27th.]

A comprehensive land campaign is in progress in Wiltshire, under the conduct of Mr. R. L. Outhwaite and Mr. R. C. Orr (on behalf of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values). Explanatory literature is abroad in the land, and is being distributed from door to door. Meanwhile there is a concentration upon Swindon, with a view of obtaining signatures to a petition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer from those 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 of employment, raising wages, and providing the national means to decent housing accommodation.

The petition makes the following submissions:—

(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 cottage often a damp and dismal abode, 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 22,000 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; and

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

#### TO ABOLISH TEA TAX.

The petition asks that such tax shall be levied upon the value of all land, whether in town or country, as will compel its full use, and that the money raised by the tax shall take the place of the tea and sugar duties which press so heavily upon the poor, and shall reduce the rates for education, poor relief, main roads, police and asylums, which as now assessed are a burden and penalty on industry.

One of the prime objects of the petition is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shall come to Swindon to receive the document and reply to those who look to him to uphold the rights of the people against monopoly and privilege. If memory serves, Mr. Lloyd George has never addressed a Swindon audience, and signatures will no doubt be procured in their thousands when it is fully

realised that the petition not only prays for the Taxation of Land Values, but also for a visit from the most loved and most hated statesman of the day.

#### OPENING THE CAMPAIGN.

A preliminary meeting of the campaign will probably be held during the next few weeks in one of the large halls of the towns, at which it is hoped that either Mr. Frank Neilson, M.P., or Mr. Wedgwood, M.P., will speak. Both these gentlemen are popular in the railway town for their masterly treatment of the land question.

Having adequately covered Swindon, it is proposed to go into the other Wiltshire towns. Already good work has been done in the rural districts. The ground has been prepared in the Cricklade and Chippenham Parliamentary divisions for a project designed to enable the workers to bring home to the Government their views on the land question, and the month that is about to dawn will be devoted to launching it.

There is plenty of scope for such a campaign in Wiltshire. At Chippenham, for instance, the rates are 8s. in the £, and of the 300 acres which comprise the rating area 150 acres escape as "agricultural" land, and a select site of an acre recently sold for £7,000! This is the sort of data upon which the campaigners are working. The housing conditions at Melksham are notoriously unsatisfactory. During the last few years a number of men have been brought from far away to the rubber works established in the town, and several hundred cottages are badly needed. Workers are forced into the villages because their earnings will not allow them to pay 6s. or 7s. a week. They are not blessed with a minimum wage, but this land campaign may lead to their having the power to demand proper and reasonable housing accommodation close to their work.

Another phase of the question is supplied by a prominent town councillor at Chippenham, who a few years ago bought a property which was then rated at £6 per annum. He spent £260 on improvements, and was penalised for such enterprise by an immediate rise in the rateable value of the premises to £28 per annum.

#### IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, AND IN ENGLAND.

By W. LEWIS WADE.

Those students of social reform who recognise in the Bible a guide to their thoughts and actions cannot fail to be interested in the fact that the old Hebrew Patriarchs recognised that the land was sacred to the community, and that its unrestricted use was essential to the general welfare.

In the first paragraph in the Book of Genesis it says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And further on in the same chapter it tells how God gave man dominion over the earth, and all that it contains. Thus we have the first principle that man has, by the right of divine gift, the privilege of using the land, and to enjoy the results of that use. The fact that land does not rightfully belong to the individuals is indicated in Lev. xxv. 23: "The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me." It was against the Hebrew law for a man to sell his land "for ever"; his was only a life interest, and he had no absolute right to dispose of it. Soon after the settlement of the Israelites in the Promised Land, Joshua sent out surveyors to measure and report on the different parts of the country, a valuation was made, taking into account the varying fertility of the soil, and the land was duly apportioned to the whole race, tribe by tribe, family by family. Boundary marks were set up, clearly defining the limits of each plot of ground, and these visible signs of the equal right of all to the use of land were protected both by public opinion, and by the imposition of a solemn curse upon anyone who removed them. This curse still continues to be uttered annually in all English Churches, but it is to be feared it is little heeded.

To-day, the law has ceased to recognise these ordinances, and protects those whose interests are devoted to private property in land. Of course the equal division of the land among a primitive nation like the ancient Hebrews, whose only industries were agriculture and cattle rearing, was

a comparatively simple matter; but with our intricate system of the division of labour, and our highly complicated commercial organisation, it is hardly possible to divide the land equitably among the huge and ever-increasing population of our country, neither would its results be likely to be beneficial; but if we can secure to every individual an equal opportunity to labour in any capacity, and to enjoy the fruits thereof, the same result will accrue. A man who has unrestricted access to the land can always earn his own living, and support his wife and children in comfort. But under existing conditions, with our institution of private property in land, it is difficult to obtain the ground for this purpose without the tiller being obliged to pay so high a rent as to deprive him of the greater part of what he produces, and only leave him a bare starvation wage. The result is that men are forced to leave the soil and to flock into the towns, there to compete with the manufacturing classes for wages and for house room. This is how wages are reduced and rents raised.

The housing problem, of which so much is now talked, and the necessity for feeding children at school are the direct outcome of low wages and high rents. Numerous charities are set on foot, with earnest desire to mitigate this state of affairs, the donors being in blissful ignorance of the fact that the ultimate destination of their good intentions is the pockets of the landowners. Indiscriminate charity is useless—and even dangerous—as an attempt to solve social problems.

Instead of this wasted effort, let us advocate a stiff tax on the value of all land, whether it is well used or badly used. This policy will restore to the community its own, and leave to the individual his own. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land now idle will be forced into use, for the so-called owners will then be obliged to open it up to labour in order to pay the tax. The result will be that opportunities for productive labour will vastly increase, thousands will go back to the land, where they will earn a comfortable living for themselves and relieve the workers in the towns from crushing competition. This will reverse the existing conditions, and town workers will be in a position to obtain the higher wages they demand and turn their backs upon those employers who only offer a low wage. Under such a system a general stimulus would be given to trade by the national prosperity which would appear, and the ancient phrase "the labourer is worthy of his hire," would be a reality and not a mere formula.

Tax Land Values and remove all the present unjust rates and taxes, which hinder industry and penalise thrift, while they leave the idle free to live in luxury, and there will be no fear of foreign competition, strikes or revolutions, those great social upheavals which to-day cast a shadow over the minds of all thoughtful people.

#### WHAT THE WORKING PEOPLE WANT.\*

This brochure, by Mrs. Moya Llewellyn Davies, which is issued by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values of Great Britain, contains in some of its pages much true wisdom that one does not find in the heavy volumes of the founders of the Socialistic schools.

Mrs. Davies, after having given us a true picture of the sad plight that is the lot of the present day worker, shows that the wealth producers cannot put much faith in any of the reforms that are generally put before them. They can only find relief in a just system of taxation—taxes on the value of the land.

As a result of this taxation, the land, which to-day is securely locked up by the individual landowner, will be freed, *i.e.*, be thrown open to labour. Producers will have free access to land, and unemployment and poverty disappear concurrently.

We strongly recommend this interesting little pamphlet to those of our supporters who can read English.—*From the April issue of L'IMPOT UNIQUE, the organ of the French Single Tax League.*

\* What the Working People Want. By Moya Llewellyn Davies. Price One Penny. Published by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W.

### THE LORD, THE CHILD, AND THE ANGEL.

A FABLE.

These things were spoken to me by the Spirit of the Mountain.

There was once a city built under the shadow of the mountains; and dark trees, entwined with horrible growths, rose round about it and blotted out the light of the sun. There was no sound in the city of darkness save the groaning of the people; by day there was sighing, and by night, silence. Moreover, the air was still and the water stagnant.

And behold, there went forth men from the city; they went forth from the city into the fields beyond. For the sun shone over the fields, the streams trickled and the flowers gave up their perfumes to the breeze. But the men spake only in whispers; they whispered and they worked. They ploughed the fields in the season; they scattered the grain in the season; and in the season they cut down the yellow corn which nodded and danced under the sky.

Now, not far from the city, in the fat lands of the valley, there dwelt a lord. Among the lilies, and hyacinths, and pleasant, cooling waters he dwelt. And the birds made sweet music in that place, so that the air was filled with the trilling of the birds and the rustling of the leaves. There were fair lawns, also, and terraces which stretched down to the winding river. And the lord was clothed in fine raiment.

But when the time of harvest was come, and the sheaves were stacked in the fields, the servants of the lord went up from the river to demand a part. And lo, they took of the corn ninety-and-nine portions; and they departed thence and returned to the valley. And the men, murmuring, took the corn that was left, and, murmuring, went back to the City of Darkness.

These things were spoken to me by the Spirit of the Mountain.

And, behold, hard by the city there tumbled from the mountains a rushing torrent, the noise whereof was like the beating of drums and the clashing of cymbals. At the foot of the mountains, moreover, there stood a mill, the wheel whereof was turned by the falling of the waters. And he who owned the mill brought forth the corn and ground the grain between the upper and nether stones. And the grain he made into flour, and the flour to bread.

But when the bread had been baked in the oven, and the loaves had been ranged on the shelves, the servants of the lord drew nigh and demanded a part. Then took they ninety-and-nine portions of the bread and returned to the valley. And he who owned the mill took the remaining loaves and returned to the City of Darkness.

These things were spoken to me by the Spirit of the Mountain.

Now, in the gloom of the city, where lurk the sombre shadows, there dwelt a woman; a woman whose husband laboured at the potter's lathe. And lo, a child suckled at the breast of this woman; and the child was pale, with wistful eyes. But the mother worked with the needle; from the grey dawn to the sad twilight she worked with the needle. And the child was pale, with wistful eyes. And the garments which the woman made were garments of linen.

But when there were many garments, the servants of the lord approached the city and demanded a part. Ninety-and-nine portions took they, and with these they returned to the valley. Then took the woman the remaining garments; and she wept bitterly. For the child was pale with wistful eyes. And the child died.

These things were spoken to me by the Spirit of the Mountain.

Now, not long after, there came to the city an angel. His form was comely and his smile was full of sympathy. In his hand was a torch; and he called the torch REASON. And before the light of the torch the shadows of the city fled away. By his side, also, a sword was slung; and on the sword was inscribed in letters of gold, JUSTICE.

And there arose a great muttering and shouting within the city. Yea, the sound of the shouting swelled from the city and fell upon the ears of the lord in the valley. And he, wondering, left the lilies and the hyacinths and came towards the City of Darkness. And, lo, the angel went forth to meet him. But the lord turned aside, and said, "Who then art thou?" Then answered the angel, "I am he whom men call LIBERTY." And the lord covered his face and shuddered and fled away. He fled away to the rippling waters and to the sunny glades. But the angel turned and re-entered the City of Darkness.

And there was great unrest in the city. For the sound of muttering grew in volume; and mingled with it was the sound of singing. And these sounds swelled forth and reached the ears of the lord, in the valley, like the distant rumble of the approaching storm.

These things were spoken to me by the Spirit of the Mountain.

DOUGLAS P. BOATMAN.

### JONES' BOY ASKS SOME QUESTIONS.

A TALE WITH A MORAL.

- Q. What place is this?  
 A. This, my child, is a brickyard.  
 Q. Whose brickyard is it?  
 A. Oh, it belongs to me.  
 Q. Do these big piles of bricks belong to you, pa?  
 A. Yes.  
 Q. Do those dirty men belong to you too, pa?  
 A. No, there is no slavery in this country; those are free men.  
 Q. What makes them work so hard?  
 A. They are working for a living.  
 Q. Why do they work for a living?  
 A. Because they are poor, and are obliged to work.  
 Q. How is it they are so poor when they work so hard?  
 A. I don't know.  
 Q. Don't somebody steal from them what they earn?  
 A. No, my child. What makes you ask such ridiculous questions?  
 Q. I thought that some of that dirty clay got on their eyes and blinded them. But, pa, don't the bricks belong to them after they have made them?  
 A. No, they belong to me.  
 Q. What are the bricks made of?  
 A. Clay.  
 Q. What! That dirt I see down there?  
 A. Yes, nothing else.  
 Q. To whom does the dirt belong?  
 A. It belongs to me.  
 Q. Did you make the dirt, pa?  
 A. No, my child, God made it.  
 Q. Did He make it for you specially?  
 A. No, I bought it.  
 Q. Bought it of God?  
 A. I bought it like I buy anything else.  
 Q. Did the man you bought it of buy it of God?  
 A. I don't know; ask something easy.  
 Q. Anyway, it's a good thing you've got the land, isn't it, pa?  
 A. Why, my son?  
 Q. Because you'd have to make bricks for a living like those horrid men. Shall I have to work for a living when I'm a man?  
 A. No, my boy; I'll leave the land when I die.  
 Q. Don't people turn into clay when they're dead?  
 A. What remains of them is clay.  
 Q. When are you going to die, pa?  
 A. I don't know; why do you ask?  
 Q. Nothing; only I was thinking what a hard old brick your clay would make.

## "THE RATING OF LAND VALUES."

The Case for Hastings, Harrogate and Glasgow.

By R. L. OUTHWAITE.

ONE PENNY.

To be had from The United Committee for Taxation of Land Values, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W.



**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS.**

**THE 1912-13 BUDGET.**

NO TAXES ADDED OR REMITTED.

SIX AND A HALF MILLION SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD.

Mr. Lloyd George issued his fourth Budget in the House of Commons on 2nd April. The actual receipts and expenditure for the year just ended and the estimated receipts and expenditure for the current year are:—

	1911-12.	Estimated, 1912-13.
	£	£
Income .. .. .	185,090,000	187,189,000
Expenditure .. .	178,545,000	186,885,000
Surplus .. .. .	6,545,000	304,000

These totals are made up as follows:—

	REVENUE.		
	Receipts.	Estimate.	Inc. or
	1911-12.	1912-13.	Dec.
	£	£	£
Customs .. .. .	33,649,000	33,900,000	+ 251,000
Excise .. .. .	38,380,000	37,700,000	— 680,000
Death Duties ..	25,392,000	25,450,000	+ 58,000
Stamps .. .. .	9,454,000	9,400,000	— 54,000
Land Tax .. .. .	750,000	700,000	— 50,000
House Duty .. .	2,130,000	2,000,000	— 130,000
Income Tax .. .	44,804,000	44,100,000	— 704,000
Land Value Duties	481,000	545,000	+ 64,000
Tax Revenue .. .	155,040,000	153,795,000	—1,245,000
Post Office .. .	25,750,000	29,175,000	+3,475,000
Crown Lands .. .	530,000	530,000	—
Suez Canal, &c. .	1,281,000	1,289,000	+ 8,000
Miscellaneous ..	2,530,000	2,400,000	— 139,000
Total non-tax revenue ..	30,050,000	33,394,000	+3,344,000
Grand total .. .	185,090,000	187,189,000	+2,099,000

	EXPENDITURE.		
	1911-12.	Estimated 1912-13.	Inc. or
	£	£	Decrease.
			£
<b>I.—CONSOLIDATED FUND SERVICES.</b>			
<b>1. National Debt Services: Inside the Fixed Debt Charge—</b>			
Interest and Management ..	17,455,000	17,333,000	— 312,000
Repayment of Capital .. .	7,045,000	7,167,000	+ 312,000
	24,500,000	24,500,000	— 500,000
<b>2. Development and Road Improvement Funds ..</b>	1,710,000	1,225,000	+ 445,000
<b>3. Payments to Local Taxation Accounts, &amp;c. ..</b>	9,636,000	9,584,000	+ 35,000
<b>4. Other Consolidated Fund Services .. .</b>	1,693,000	1,709,000	+ 2,000
Total Consolidated Fund Services ..	37,539,000	37,018,000	— 18,000
<b>II.—SUPPLY SERVICES.</b>			
<b>1. Army (including Ordnance Factories) .. .</b>			
	27,649,000	27,860,000	+ 170,000
<b>2. Navy .. .. .</b>	42,858,000	44,085,000	— 308,000
<b>3. Civil Services ..</b>	46,001,000	49,859,000	+2,771,000
<b>4. Customs and Excise and Inland Revenue .. .</b>	3,951,000	4,254,000	+ 259,000

5. Post Office Services .. .. .	20,547,000	23,809,000	+2,727,000
Total Supply Services .. .. .	141,006,000	149,867,000	+ 5,619,000
Grand Total .. .. .	178,545,000	186,885,000	+ 5,601,000

The outstanding fact of the Budget speech, from the financial point of view, is the statement that the whole of the surplus of six and a half millions—the greatest realised surplus in the history of British finance—will be held in abeyance pending a further proposal to the House. According to the DAILY NEWS, the explanations current in the lobbies were three, viz.:—

(1) That the Government wishes to be provided against a large loss of revenue through the possible, though happily improbable, continuance or recurrence of the coal and railway strikes.

(2) That the uncertain position of the naval controversy in Germany justifies the holding of a temporary reserve with a view—in certain contingencies—to Supplementary Estimates by the Admiralty.

(3) That a considerable grant is in contemplation for the due inauguration of the national insurance scheme.

The following are interesting points from Mr. Lloyd George's statement:—

The super-tax of 6d. on incomes of over £5,000 produced £3,000,000.

The extra 2d. imposed by the 1909 Budget on unearned incomes and upon earned incomes of over £3,000 produced last year £4,900,000.

With regard to Death Duties, 441,000 adult deaths occurred in the Kingdom during the year. The total property passing at death was £270,000,000. Half of this property belonged to 970 persons. Three fourths of this property belonged to 7,000 persons, who owned £5,000 and over. The total produce of the Death Duties was £6,300,000.

The estimated cost of the Insurance Act for the current year is £2,600,000.

The estimated cost of the Small Landholders Act (Scotland), is £200,000.

Education is estimated to cost £364,000 more, the Army £170,000 more. The increase in Post Office estimates is due to purchase of the National Telephone Service.

The estimated loss of revenue on spirits, beer, tobacco, and to a certain extent tea and sugar, in consequence of the coal strike, is put at £800,000 up to 31st March, and adding the prospective loss, £1,200,000 in all.

**"MINUS" SITE VALUES.**

In our March issue we gave figures and particulars of an appeal under the Finance Act (1909-10) against the assessment of site value at a "minus" figure. This case has since been decided in the Lands Valuation Appeal Court in Edinburgh, and was reported widely in the Press. The following is from the TIMES report of the Appeal (19th April):—

The appellants were George Herbert, of Pollokshields, and others the testamentary trustees of the late George Herbert, who lived at Milngavie. They objected to the original assessable site value, fixed provisionally at *minus* £545, on their property in West End, Park street, Glasgow, on the ground that the amount was insufficient, and that it should be stated as *nil*. The Commissioners of Inland Revenue held the objections incompetent, and the Reference Committee remitted the matter to Mr. Thomas Binnie, Jun., one of the referees under the Act.

Mr. Binnie determined (1) that the original assessable site value of the land was *minus* £545, but, if it should be decided that a *minus* original assessable site value was illegal under the act, then he alternatively determined (2) that the original assessable site value of the land was *nil*.

Certain figures were agreed upon. By section 25 (4) "the assessable site value of land means the total value after deducting (a) the same amount as is to be deducted for the purpose of arriving at full site value from gross value." Deducting £4,320 (the amount to be deducted for the purpose of arriving at full site value from gross value) from £3,775 (the original total value) left an original assessable site value of *minus* £545.

The appellants before the referee insisted that the Act did not allow of the original assessable site value being fixed at a *minus* quantity. The referee did not agree with that view.

#### THE JUDGMENT.

Lord Johnston gave judgment that Mr. Binnie's first decision was wrong, and that the alternative decision was right, affirming that the original assessable site value was *nil*. The appellants were found entitled to expenses. The question was whether the general provisions of the Act were consistent with a literal or rather an algebraic application of its 25th section by which in many cases assessable site value, which was the basis for the calculation of increment value, might be found to be mathematically a *minus* quantity. The site value was just the value of the owner's interest of the site. That might be *nil*, but it could not be a *minus* quantity. It was conceived of as an assessable value. An assessable value must be positive and not a negative value. It might be that the value of the owner's interest in the site was reduced to *nil* by reason of the predominating value of the fixed charge. It might in time come nearer to meeting the fixed charge and yet still be *nil*. Yet the Court could not find ground in the intention and scope of the statute for the implication that the value of the owner's interest was here to be stated not at its true value *nil*, but at the amount of the deficiency to meet the fixed charge or at a *minus* quantity.

Lord Salvesen concurred. He said that he proceeded mainly upon the ground that the language of the statute must be construed according to the ordinary and popular meaning of the word used, and that the word "value" could not include a *minus* value. He could not gather that the word "value" was to have a mathematical or technical meaning as distinguished from its ordinary signification.

Lord Cullen also concurred.

#### AN ADDITION TO THE IMPERIAL AND LOCAL TAXATION COMMITTEE.

According to the *GLASGOW HERALD* of April 20th, Lord Provost Stevenson, Glasgow, has been invited by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to become a member of the Departmental Committee on Imperial and Local Taxation.

#### HOUSING CONDITIONS IN DOWLAI. A STRIKE SIDELIGHT.

In the *MORNING LEADER* of April 1st, a Special Correspondent of that paper gives a harrowing account of the housing conditions in Dowlais, a mining town in South Wales. This is one instance of how the strike has done good in at least drawing attention to the terrible poverty and helplessness that crushes the majority of the workers. The following is the *MORNING LEADER* Correspondent's story:—

There will never be a right understanding of these widespread and disastrous strikes until it is known by everybody that the awful distress they cause (as I have found in South Wales) is, in the main, but chronic poverty turned into absolute destitution by one week's idleness.

Welshmen are angry with certain London journals because their correspondents have told the country that the strike has made children hungry, and it is a fact that one or two correspondents have had to leave Welsh towns. The Welshmen were angry not because these writers said there was suffering in Wales, but because they said the strike caused it.

I can understand the anger which that rouses here, for there is no excuse for such a mistake. The most unintelligent man in a hurry would not be so stupid as to make it. It is wilful perversion of the truth for a base purpose.

Yesterday I journeyed up the Rhymney and Merthyr valleys to Merthyr and Dowlais, and I think if I could set down all I heard and saw in those valleys, then the determination of the miners would be better understood in London. . . . In these lovely valleys, which even the collieries and the tips cannot entirely disfigure, poverty overcrowded into uninhabitable hovels is a shameful horror, and an offence to whoever passes.

Dowlais, for instance, makes a decent person physically ill. I admit it is an extreme example, but there is no word which adequately fits the infamy of its continued existence. It is not a town, but a disgusting and infectious disease.

One leaves Dowlais astonished, not so much by what he

has seen as by the fact that a civilised community, careful of its future and its growing life, should not at once cut it out, for it poisons the social organism to which it is attached.

The Welsh rebel is not argued into a frame of mind by Karl Marx; the base of his creed is not an economic theory, but an ethical one. He is a rebel for the same reason that some people are religious—cruelty and injustice make a fanatic of him.

What is Dowlais like, then, you ask? To be quite candid, Dowlais is largely unprintable. It is a monster devouring its young. Its folk are largely cave-dwellers on a blackened hillside; its houses were built on the assumption that a labourer is worth no more than 12s. a week, and its problem of overcrowding is so gross that Londoners who remember the East-end rookeries have no data for guessing at Dowlais.

Now that the coal war has put nearly all in Merthyr, Penydarren, and Dowlais—all one town really—either out of work or on short time, the distress here may be judged; but I forgot any question of privation made acute when I got to Dowlais. Except that Dowlais is black, it reminded me, in its smells, squalor, and heaped and promiscuous hovels, of the native quarter of Algiers. One gets lost in a welter of hovels on a steep and dirty hillside, which are kept apart by a few thoroughfares, but are piled indiscriminately one on another.

It is a huddle of dens; its rooms are as dismal as caves, and a decent life in such a place would be a heroic life. A large number of the houses are either back to back, or built against the hillside. They have no through ventilation and their meagre windows admit little light.

You enter a habitation from above, and find ladders and narrow passages, ramifying into varying dens, where Spaniards, Irish, and Welsh families are intermingled, and by luck—your head aching with the sulphurous smoke and the smell of garlic and things which cannot escape from the warren—at last you emerge lower down the hill.

I heard that the lodgers were arranged on a day and night shift in some Dowlais houses, the beds being always occupied.

Though I left sick and ill with what my guide (who knows Dowlais well) was determined I should experience, he still had one more thing to show me. He took me to a two-roomed hovel where a large family lived, far below the level of the street. Before it was the steep slope of black refuse from the ironworks, and there, in a corner of that tiny kitchen, filled with children, was waiting for burial the confined body of the mother's sister.

#### THE ANNUAL INCREASE IN MANCHESTER LAND VALUES.

At a meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Manchester Town Council on 6th March, in the debate on the Glasgow Corporation's appeal for support in petitioning Parliament for powers to rate land values, Councillor Johnson, according to the *BURY TIMES* of 9th March, said that in 1881 the Manchester Corporation sold land in Cross Street at £60 a yard, and a few years ago they paid £137 a yard for land in the same street. The annual increase in the value of Manchester land was one million pounds.

#### THE TABARD STREET (SOUTHWARK) CLEARANCE SCHEME.

According to the *ESTATES GAZETTE* of March 30th, on March 13th the Local Government Board issued an order confirming the London County Council's scheme for the clearance of the insanitary areas of Tabard Street and Grotto Place, Southwark, and Crosby Row, Bermondsey (see *LAND VALUES*, December, 1910).

The gross cost of the improvement as submitted to the Local Government Board, exclusive of the cost of erecting new dwellings, was estimated at £468,500, to which must be added £4,800 for laying out an open space, making a total of £473,300. The value of the surplus lands and rehousing sites was put at £85,000, making a net estimate of £388,900, exclusive of the cost of the open space. The requirement of the Local Government Board in the matter of rehousing reduces the value of the surplus land by £8,500, making a total estimated recoupment of £77,100, whilst the exclusion of St. Stephen's Vicarage from the scheme will result in a saving of approximately £1,500, so that the gross cost of the scheme is now estimated at £467,000, and the net cost at £389,900.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISCUSSION.

## THE BUDGET LAND VALUE DUTIES.

STATEMENTS BY MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND  
MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

In the course of his statement introducing the 1912-13 Budget in the House of Commons on 2nd April, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—

I have no doubt I shall be asked, What about the Land Taxes? From the kind of statements which are being made, anyone might imagine that I had anticipated the Land Taxes would produce millions during the first few years, and that I relied on them as the mainstay of my financial provision for necessary reforms. It was quite the reverse. I made it perfectly clear that the tax which I put forward as the most productive, the Increment Tax, was a tax which must necessarily be postponed for a few years, and, as a matter of fact, Lord Rosebery, in his great attack on the Budget, referred to the Land Tax as "that violent onslaught on the land which is, according to the statements of its promoters, to bring in little or nothing." That was said at the time. Indeed, for the first few years I agreed that half the revenue from them should be given to the local authorities. I could not, therefore, have felt dependent on the revenue from the receipts of the Land Taxes for the purposes of defraying the general charges which I saw in sight. They have been in operation two years. Last year I estimated the revenue at £700,000. They have realised £200,000 less than that, but that is less than one per cent. of the total finance produced by the Budget. Let me point out that in the nature of things they cannot, for a few years, produce a large revenue. The valuation will not be complete for four or five years from the date of the Budget—I said so at the time—and you cannot levy the Undeveloped Land Tax until the valuation is complete. We have already valued one-fifth of the land of the Kingdom. I have no doubt at all that, preliminary difficulties having been overcome, and the staff having been increased, we shall value at a greatly accelerated pace, and at the end—well, within the three years I have mentioned—we shall have in this country what they have in every other civilised country, a great national survey of the land, which will be available for the purposes of the readjustment of local taxation, and which, I have no doubt, will be available for equally important public purposes of another character.

But even if the whole Undeveloped Duty came in I never put it higher than £300,000. The Reversion Duty I never put very high, and the Royalties I put at £350,000, and they again cannot go higher without putting more on them. Therefore these three taxes were never estimated to produce very much in future. The three were estimated to produce less than a million sterling, and the only tax which I looked forward to as being of a very productive character was the Increment Duty. I am still of that opinion. But, in the very nature of things it is a tax which will yield revenue only in the future. Why? You tax upon the increment on the value as fixed in April, 1909, and you have to wait until the land increases in value from that date. There was an Amendment passed in Committee that there should be 10 per cent. on the top of that. You have, therefore, to wait not merely till the value of the land grows, and it is growing very rapidly in spite of the Land Tax, you have to wait till it grows above the 10 per cent. which is added on. I have a test which I am prepared to put to those who contend that these taxes are not going to produce much money. We give a certain amount of money to the local authorities for themselves. We give one-half of the Land Tax. I believe that bargain expires next year. If there is anyone in this Committee who believes that these taxes are not going to yield a real revenue in the future this is their opportunity. Are they prepared to release the Exchequer from the obligation which it is under to restore that half to the local authorities? If so, for how much? I am quite willing to make a bargain, and I have no doubt at all that, if it is done on the estimates placed on the Land Taxes on public platforms and in the House of Commons by their critics, the Exchequer is going to make a very good bargain indeed.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN APPEALS FOR AN  
INQUIRY INTO THE VALUATION.

Did anybody ever pretend he (Mr. Lloyd George) was not going to get a great deal of money from the taxes he proposed in 1909-10? To some of the most remunerative of the taxes then imposed for the first time no objection in principle was raised from this side of the House. The remarkable thing about the Budget of 1909-10 after three years' experience was that the taxes about which the battle waged fiercest, for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer contended most strongly, to which he attached the greatest importance, which really were the children of his own particular love, have yielded revenue utterly negligible on a balance-sheet so huge as ours at the cost of an expenditure far exceeding that revenue in amount. Nowadays the Chancellor of the Exchequer no longer pretends that these taxes are or were ever meant to be in their present form and as approved by the House of Commons a great fiscal machine. No such claim is made for them.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Yes, certainly.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: On the contrary.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The right hon. gentleman may take his own view. I claim that increment duty will produce a very considerable revenue.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Hope springs eternal in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's breast. He has estimated the revenue from this duty and the other land taxes several times on a constantly decreasing scale, and it has never come up to any of his estimates. The real merit of the tax in the eyes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in the possibilities that lie behind it. As the right hon. gentleman says to-day, so little did he think of the tax that he gladly made a present of half of it to the local authorities. He who has bragged of the relief he has given to the local authorities has said:—"Was it likely I should expect to get much from that when I gave away half of it to the local authorities? Do you think I am the kind of man who is likely to give away a tax if there is money in it?" We who know the Chancellor of the Exchequer will readily respond with the negative answer which he expected from us. The value of the tax, it is said, lies in the valuation which was introduced as the necessary basis of it. It is worth while to spend some millions in getting a small revenue, because you get a really trustworthy survey of the land values of the country on which you can base the reform of local taxation and from which you can draw boundless resources for the Treasury.

If the valuation were perfect and if you on that valuation raised fresh taxes in relief of rates, you would not have touched the great inequality of our present rating system—which is the unequal treatment of realty and personality. The more you put on to your new valuation in relief of local rates the more you are taxing realty, or at least you are only shifting the burdens from one form of realty to another. You are not bringing in personality to share the burdens which now fall with undue weight on realty. This valuation is by common consent a fanciful valuation. You are valuing something which in nine cases out of ten never comes into the market. Your tax is levied not on any definite basis of fact, but on a balance of speculative opinions as to probabilities and possibilities, on what some arbitrator may determine as being the most reasonable mean between the unreasonable speculations of expert witnesses employed on either side. Is that a hopeful basis for raising large sums of money? I think everything that has happened in the fixing of these values has tended to confirm the opinions we expressed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not found a suitable basis for a workable system. The matter becomes of increased importance when the Chancellor of the Exchequer points to this as his great resource against future needs. It becomes urgent to test the accuracy of the valuations which are being made. Last December I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed that we ought to have an inquiry at an early date into the character of the valuations that had been made. He thought such an inquiry might produce results very unpalatable to us. I do not inquire whether the results are going to be unpalatable to individuals or not, whether they are going as a whole to prove the case of one party or not, but I say that when such importance is given to the valuation as the Chancellor of the Exchequer gives when on it depends the amount of taxation payable by countless people throughout the

country, it is of the greatest importance that we should know whether it is one that ought to command our respect, whether it has been satisfactorily carried out, whether the conditions of the law which regulate the way it has been carried out are such as can be fulfilled satisfactorily in practice.

I invite the Chancellor of the Exchequer now, without further delay, to appoint this commission of inquiry. I call it a commission of inquiry, but I do not want to bind myself or the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the exact terms I use to describe it.

#### RATING SURVEYORS' ASSOCIATION ON THE TRACK OF THE UNITED COMMITTEE.

The following words are from a rather prosaic paper by Mr. W. P. Ryan, F.S.I., read at the general meeting of the Ratepayers' Association, appearing in the *LAND AGENTS' RECORD*, March 23rd.

While we are comforting ourselves with the belief that there will be no time for legislation affecting rating and the incidence of rates and taxes for some time to come, a most vigorous campaign is being carried on throughout the country to educate the people as to the immense advantages which it is alleged will result from taxing the land; to the relief of the ratepayers.

To those who do not take the trouble to make themselves acquainted with what is afoot, it will come a surprise to learn that the "United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values" published in 1911 no less than fifty million and distributed 230 million leaflets from house to house in 234 constituencies, upon which work they expended £5,000.

The income of this Committee for the past year was £10,651.

This Committee has 176 Radical and Labour members of Parliament pledged to its programme, who have presented a Memorial to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which they ask:

- (1) That land valuations under the Finance Act be hastened.
- (2) That such valuations shall be accessible to the public.
- (3) That local authorities be empowered to levy rates on the basis of these valuations.
- (4) That a budget tax on the basis of such land values be applied to:
  - (a) providing a national fund to be allocated towards the cost of education, poor relief, main roads, asylums, and police, thereby reducing the local rates, and
  - (b) in substitution of the duties on tea, sugar, cocoa, and other articles of food.

The United Committee is now drafting a Bill for the rating of land values.

I pause here to point out to you that though the proposals contained in the Memorial are ostensibly designed to reduce local rates, the real intention is not to relieve local ratepayers, but to relieve the Imperial Exchequer of some twenty-six to thirty millions, now paid as grants in aid towards the relief of local rates, and to impose local taxation to raise that sum, in addition to the present rates.

Beyond the publicity gained by house-to-house canvassing for the principles of confiscation, 200 newspapers published special articles sent out by the United Committee's Press Bureau, and 200 newspapers, in addition, published items of news and letters on the subject.

*LAND VALUES*, the monthly journal of the United Committee, has a circulation of 90,600 copies per annum.

The literature of the United Committee has been distributed in 105 English boroughs and eighty-seven counties.

I have gone into these details to show you that serious work is being done, and neither expense nor trouble is being spared to propagate the principles of spoliation.

Most of you are, no doubt, aware that a Departmental Committee is now sitting, which has been appointed to

"Inquire into the changes which have taken place in the relations between Imperial and local taxation since the report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in 1901; to examine the several proposals made in the reports of that Commission, and to make recommendations on the subject for the consideration of His Majesty's Government, with a view to the introduction of legislation at an early date."

This Committee has been and is now hearing evidence on site value taxation and the relative merits of that method of assessment and the existing method for Imperial and local taxation.

The United Committee has not yet put forward any witnesses to expound its policy, but its representatives in Parliament, known as the "Land Values Group," have, I understand, sent delegates, who have given evidence on behalf of that group.

These delegates have essayed to prove the justice of imposing such additional taxes on land as will provide an annual sum sufficient to defray (1) the cost of the mainly national services, (2) the whole cost of local expenditure (as recommended by Sir Lawrence Gomme to the Royal Commission, p. 242). The amount required to defray the cost of (1) to be raised by levying a Budget tax on all land values. The suggested levy to be national, and the area of such levy to be large enough to allow the proceeds from the high values at the centres of population to be pooled with the small yields of the rural districts, so that the municipalities shall not enjoy the benefit of the levy for the locality in which the lands are situate, but the money so raised on lands within their area is to be spread broadcast over the country. The Land Values Group allege that "the claims of the rural districts to share in the land values of the towns, and of the East End to share in the land values of the City and West End, seem indisputable."

The Group demands that the Budget valuation should be amended—

- (1) To make provision for periodical re-valuation to give a basis for annual levies.
- (2) That the assessable site value should include the whole unimproved site value without deduction for fixed charges.
- (3) There should be excluded from the assessable site value the value of all agricultural improvements made within the twenty-one years prior to the passing of the Act.
- (4) The assessable site value should include the value of minerals whether worked or not.

During the debate in the House of Commons on February 17th, Mr. Lloyd George promised that the evidence given before the Departmental Committee would shortly be published. I am, therefore, not guilty of any breach of confidence in referring to information as to the proceedings which I have gleaned.

#### THE NEW LABOUR DAILY ON MINING ROYALTIES.

In the first number of the *DAILY HERALD*, published on April 15th, appeared the following editorial under the heading "Get on or Get out."

It is lamentable that the coal strike, with all its attendant tragedies, should have been allowed to conclude without public attention having been focussed on the scandal of the mining royalties. The "owners" of these burdens on industry did nothing—need we say?—to put the coal under the earth. They do nothing now to help bring it up. Why then should they be allowed to bleed the community to the tune of six millions sterling per annum? These millions are ripe, rotten ripe, for drastic taxation; taxation of a character that will in the course of a few years transfer them from the pockets of the drones, who now benefit, to the coffers of the State. There are other sources of unearned increment which it is scandalous that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should ignore. The Government and the Liberal party are pledged to the hilt to the Taxation of Land Values. When are they going to translate those pledges into action? The Lloyd George Budget of 1909 made but a beginning—and a timid one at that. It is monstrous that while the workman is still taxed to the tune of millions per annum on his food, the landlord, "who grows richer in his sleep,"—of course at the expense of the community—should get off practically scot free. If the Government wish to regain the lost confidence of the workers, let them give proof of their earnestness in this matter. Failing that they must not be surprised if the power passes from their hands to those of a party whose proposals are more thorough going, and who, above all, are in real earnest.

## NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT.

## WIDNES.

There was a full attendance at the Widnes Liberal Club on Monday evening for a meeting under the auspices of the club and the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. Mr. P. W. Raffan, M.P., for Leigh, was to have been the speaker, but was detained in the House of Commons, and his place was taken by Mr. John Bagot, of Middleton. Mr. Twiss, chairman of the club, presided, and supporting him, in addition to the speaker, were Councillor D. Lewis, Mr. Weller, Secretary Manchester Land Values League, and Mr. Frank Fox, of Warrington. The chairman announced that Mr. Max Muspratt was unable to preside owing to the dislocation of the train service.

After an interesting speech from Mr. Bagot on the cause of labour unrest, in which he showed that it was a wages problem and that land values taxation was the remedy, Mr. Fox moved the following resolution:—

This meeting declares its hearty approval of the proposal to tax and rate land values contained in the recent Land and Taxation Reform Memorial, and calls upon the Government to put those proposals into operation at the earliest possible moment. Further, in view of the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the valuation of land will not be completed until 1914, this meeting urges the Government to consider other methods of valuation if the present method cannot be carried out more speedily.

Mr. A. H. Weller seconded, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

The WIDNES WEEKLY NEWS of March 29th gave a good report of the meeting.

## MID-DERBY.

Under the auspices of the United Committee, Mr. R. L. Outhwaite addressed two large public meetings in the Division on Land Reform and Labour Unrest. The first was held in the Public Hall, Belper, on March 13th. In the absence of Mr. J. G. Hancock, M.P., the member for the Division, owing to the coal strike, Mr. H. M. Gray, C.C., presided, supported by many prominent local progressives. Mr. Outhwaite showed how the underlying cause of the great labour unrest that is manifesting itself on all sides was to be found in land monopoly. The only way to raise wages was by creating fuller and freer opportunities of employment by opening the land to production by the Taxation of Land Values. The meeting was well reported in the DERBY REPORTER of March 15th. The next meeting was at South Normanton, and the miners attended in such force that many were unable to gain admittance. The enthusiasm provoked indicates that the Derbyshire mining fields offer a fertile ground for the promotion of the land value taxation cause.

## STEPNEY.

Under the auspices of the United Committee and the English League for the Taxation of Land Values and the Stepney Liberal and Progressive Association, a public meeting was held at the Stepney Meeting Hall, on 18th April, when Mr. Francis Neilson, M.P., gave an address, entitled "The Land and the People." Mr. W. Groves took the chair in the absence of Mr. W. S. Glyn-Jones, M.P., and others present were Mr. J. A. Hardy, Mr. J. S. Henry, Councillor Florence, and Mr. Underwood.

The Chairman said there was no doubt in the very near future there would be drastic alterations in the scheme of taxation in this country, and the taxation of land values would be the basis upon which the change would be made.

Mr. Neilson, M.P., said the land question was very much the same in all parts of the world. It did not matter what one's station in life was. Economically their interests were identical—everything had got to come from the land. The solution of the economic unrest lay in the land question, and they were going to urge the Government on as fast as it could go to deal with this question. Land, declared the speaker, got its value from the presence of the community. Where there were many people, land was costly; where there were few it was easily had. Therefore the people

had a right to a bigger share in its value than they had at the present time.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a resolution was unanimously carried urging the Government to deal with the land question at the earliest moment, on the lines of the Land and Taxation Reform Memorial, signed by 176 Members of Parliament.

## MANCHESTER LEAGUE.

1, Princess Street, Albert Square, Manchester.

The following meetings were addressed during April, in addition to those already announced in LAND VALUES:—Astley Bridge, L.Y.L. (D. Catterall), Queen's Park Parliament (W. Noble, T. H. Ligo, and D. Catterall), Oldham Road Brotherhood (A. H. Weller).

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

- May 1.—Queen's Park Parliament, 7.30. W. Norman.  
 .. 8.—Queen's Park Parliament, 7.30. W. P. Crossland.  
 .. 12.—Oldham Road Brotherhood, 3.0. W. Noble.  
 .. 15.—Horwich L.Y.L., open-air. A. H. Weller.  
 .. 17.—N.W. Manchester L.Y.L., open-air. W. P. Crossland.  
 .. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.—Economic Class Meetings at League's Office, 8.0.  
 .. 14.—North Manchester Branch Meeting at Queen's Park Congregational Institute, 8.0.

Members of the Newspaper Correspondence Group will continue to meet in the League's office on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Much good work is being done, 25 letters having been printed in eight different newspapers since the Group was formed a month ago.

Encouraging proofs of the value of the Economic Class have been shown at some recent meetings, when members have read papers revealing the thorough grasp of Single Tax principles they have gained from the study of PROGRESS AND POVERTY. Perhaps even more encouraging is the spirit displayed by our men.

Mr. Catterall's work in Astley Bridge has also borne good fruit. The L.Y.L. Economic Class there has closed for the summer season, but Mr. Catterall leaves a group of earnest young men who have been enabled to "see the cat" under his able guidance, and who will, no doubt, carry the message of PROGRESS AND POVERTY into many new quarters.

It has been decided to begin the summer campaign in the parks on Sunday, May 12th, and Mr. G. F. Musson, of the North Manchester Branch, has undertaken to arrange meetings in the parks on that side of the town, leaving the Secretary to devote himself to those on the south side. This division of labour will probably result in our holding two meetings each Sunday instead of one, and with this increased activity on Sundays and street-corner meetings in different parts of Manchester on week-day evenings, we shall need all the help of speakers and supporters that our friends can give us.

The Secretary is constantly learning of the unceasing labours of those "quiet" men who might easily be mistaken for passive Single Taxers—men who devote every spare moment to propaganda work amongst acquaintances and strangers, distributing leaflets and in other ways working on Sundays and week-days, and carrying on the same labour of love even during their brief holidays. The Manchester League numbers many such heroes amongst its members who are spreading the light in these unseen but splendidly effective ways.

ARTHUR H. WELLER, Secretary.

## YORKSHIRE AND NORTHERN LEAGUE.

West Bar Chambers, 38, Boar Lane, Leeds.

The Political Economy Classes at Halifax, Keighley, Penistone, Huddersfield, Sheffield, and Leeds have all concluded their course of lectures. Councillor C. H. Smithson, who conducted the Keighley Class, was entertained at a Social Meeting held in Keighley on Tuesday (23rd). During the evening he was made the recipient of a Memorial Set of Henry George's works, together with MY STORY, by Tom L. Johnson, and a pipe.

The members of the Keighley Class are now arranging for an open-air campaign. At Huddersfield Mr. John Archer is endeavouring to bring the adherents of the cause into closer touch, and the Leeds Class has developed into a discussion class for the training of speakers, and two meetings have already been held, on April 11th and 19th. Those who attended the Sheffield Class want to keep together, and are arranging for summer rambles when addresses will be delivered at places visited.

Since we last reported, meetings have been held at Leeds (William Reid), Halifax (C. H. Smithson), Keighley (William Reid), Huddersfield (William Reid), Bentham (F. Skirrow), Holbeck (William Reid), Bradford (F. Skirrow).

During the two months which have elapsed since Mr. Reid left Newcastle, we have not been in such close touch with the counties of Northumberland and Durham. We know, however, that our local friends in Darlington have been doing good work, and we can always rely on our Newcastle friends doing what they can. Next month we will report more fully and with greater detail as regards these and other centres.

A series of meetings to be addressed by the secretaries are being arranged in the Holmfirth Division.

F. SKIRROW, Secretary Yorkshire District.

WILLIAM REID, Secretary Northern District.

#### PORTSMOUTH LEAGUE.

60, Upper Arundel Street.

Under the auspices of the Portsmouth League for the Taxation of Land Values, Councillor Pile gave an address at the Co-operative Hall, Garnier Street, on March 27th, on the subject, "Why I believe in the Taxation of Land Values."

Mr. Pile took the line that under present conditions useful and necessary public improvements could not be carried out because of the burden of the rates as levied nowadays. If land values were taxed the burden would not fall upon the urban community but upon those who got the full value of public expenditure. Those were the people who could best afford to bear it. Again, if this were done the burden on house property would be reduced, rents would come down, and there would be fewer empty houses. Further, the rating of land values would bring vacant land into use, and that would mean the employment of more labour and an increase in wages. No matter which side of the question he elaborated, there were enough solid advantages which would accrue to the public to make him, as a member of the Town Council, support the principle of the rating of land values. Mr. J. McGuigan proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor Pile, and Mr. Irving seconded.

WM. KING, Secretary.

#### MIDLAND LEAGUE.

20, Cannon Street, Birmingham.

On Sunday, March 31st, the Secretary addressed a meeting of the Men's Afternoon Class, held in the St. Saviour's Church Room, Saltley. There was a good audience who keenly followed the address on "The Anti-Poverty Campaign," and, at the close, many questions were dealt with. Lord Norton, who is "tenant for life of one-third of Saltley," sat on the left of the Chairman, and, in proposing a vote of thanks to the speaker, said he rather preferred to rate incomes, and he also thought that solicitors' fees should be reduced, instancing as a specimen of lawyers' charges on a sale of land amounting to £60,000—"quite a moderate transaction"—the fees came to £2,000. Comment on these alternatives to the rating of land values is unnecessary.

In the afternoon of April 15th the Secretary addressed the West Bromwich Women's Liberal Association on the subject of "How Land Reform will bring Comfortable Homes," and in the evening he spoke to the Young Women's Liberal Association on "Tax Tea or Land: Which?" Both Associations seem to be well organised under the presidency of Miss Hazel, the energetic sister of Dr. A. E. W. Hazel, whom the Liberals consider won the seat although the judges decided otherwise at the petition. However this may be, if the men appreciate the Taxation of Land Values as these audiences of women workers seemed to do, there should be no trouble in securing the return of a good

supporter of our reform against Lord Lewisham or any other Conservative supporter of the present system of rating and taxing improvements for the benefit of land owners.

#### ANNUAL MEETING.

The Third Annual Meeting of the League was held at 6.30 on Wednesday, April 17th, at Messrs. Roberts' Café, 20, Temple Street, Birmingham.

The chair was taken by the President, Mr. Joseph Dawson, J.P., and there was an attendance of about forty members and friends, including Messrs. County Councillor George E. Brown, J. Douglas Graham, J. A. Patrick, J.P., Walter Priestman, Councillor J. Emlyn Williams, F. Harper, J.P., Councillor John Fryer, T. Palmer Newbould, E. O. Boston, J.P., W. F. Beston, J.P., Rev. A. C. Auchmuty, Edwin Price (Hon. Treas.), W. Wallis, Gilbert Thompson, W. Doubleday, H. J. Lewis, and others.

Many apologies were received. Mr. Geo. Cadbury expressed his regret at not being present, "with best wishes for the success of the meeting." Others who could not come were Messrs. J. W. Wilson, M.P., T. F. Walker, J.P., Councillors Harrison Barrow, J.P., W. A. Cadbury, J.P., A. W. Lester (Walsall), F. B. Darling, S. Bettmann (Coventry), and Geo. Cadbury, Jun., Messrs. Edward Smith, J.P., G. E. Lowe, J.P., C. T. Bishop, J.P., Jos. Hood, J.P., and Dr. Gisbert Kapp. Mr. John Paul was unfortunately detained in London, and Mr. Herbert New, hon. sec., was unavoidably absent.

The Third Annual Report and Financial Statement were read and approved. The officers of the League were re-elected with the following additions to the list of Vice-Presidents: Geo. E. Brown, C.C., F. Harper, J.P., Ald. Price Lewis, J.P., Mr. C. Vernon Pugh, J.P., and Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P.

A very cordial vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Chapman Wright, for his work as Secretary during the year, and in reply Mr. Wright expressed his sincere appreciation of the help which was at all times so kindly extended to him by the members and friends of the League.

The meeting then adjourned to partake of tea, which had been most kindly provided by the President.

On resuming the chair, the President gave an address, which was well reported by the Press, on the progress and prospects of our Reform, and moved the following resolution:

That 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 by the Budget, by empowering local rating authorities to levy rates on the land value basis.

Councillor Geo. E. Brown, of the Stafford County Council, in seconding the resolution, gave an address on the Rating of Land Values, illustrating his points by many local examples of the injustice and absurdity of the present system of fining those who employ labour and rewarding those who withhold their land from use.

Many of those present took part in the discussion which followed, and the resolution, on being put to the meeting, was carried by a unanimous vote.

Councillor J. Emlyn Williams proposed, and Mr. J. A. Patrick seconded, hearty votes of thanks to the retiring officers, to the President for his hospitality, and to Councillor George Brown, for his most interesting address. The vote was carried unanimously, and the business then concluded.

At this meeting Councillor Geo. Brown made the very encouraging statement that in every contest connected with the Stafford County Council they expect to place in the field a candidate who is in favour of the rating and taxation of land values. That is the policy which spells "success," and it is a policy which we shall not fail to keep before our friends in Birmingham. It is one we should steadily aim at if we cannot attain it so readily as Mr. Brown and his supporters.

#### THIRD ANNUAL REPORT.

The object of the League may be stated as the untaxing and unrating of the good things that people desire to be more plentiful, such as food, housing, up-to-date factories, well-tilled farms, &c., and the making scarcer of a bad thing—idle land—by taxing and rating those who fail to use their "land" opportunities.

Such a programme should be received by the citizens of Birmingham with every encouragement, were it not for the prevalent idea that the League theories are much too good to be true for real life, and to overcome the inertia caused by this belief necessitates a persistent propaganda to show the justice and practicability of our reform.

So far as the support given to the League has permitted, every means of "spreading the light"—meetings—open-air and indoor, debates, newspaper correspondence, and the distribution of literature—have been utilised. *LAND VALUES*, the monthly organ of Land Value Taxation and an indispensable compendium of reasons for the reform and notes of its progress, has been well circulated, together with about forty thousand other pamphlets and leaflets of the United Committee. A 96-page pamphlet, "100 Reasons for the Taxation of Land Values," published by the League, has had the first edition of ten thousand almost sold out. This pamphlet was quoted in the House of Commons in a debate on the Housing of the Working Classes, by Lord Wolmer, who, however, is apparently not converted by "100 Reasons."

In addition to the usual open-air and indoor meetings, "Land Value Circles" have been successfully conducted by the Secretary at Selly Oak, Bilston, and at Wolverhampton. Our thanks are also particularly due to Councillor Chas. H. Smithson of Halifax, who spoke to a specially convened League meeting in September, and to Mr. Joseph Fels, who addressed a well-attended meeting of Birmingham business men in October.

A new feature in the work of the League and in the history of Birmingham municipal contests occurred in November, when the Secretary contested the Edgbaston Ward with the rating of land values as the chief item in his programme. To obtain, after a very brief contest, upwards of eight hundred votes in support of this method of rating reform is considered a most satisfactory result in view of the decidedly conservative character of the Edgbaston Ward. This contest is the forerunner of many municipal fights in which the rating of land values will be the definite issue.

The action of the City Council of Glasgow in forwarding a resolution on the necessity of rating land values to other authorities has been followed by the League communicating with upwards of forty Midland Rating Authorities, and forwarding to members of many councils literature with letters urging discussion on the question. The successful fight made by Messrs. J. C. Wedgwood and Geo. E. Brown on the Stafford County Council to ensure due consideration of the Glasgow proposals should encourage progressive members on all rating authorities to see that adequate discussion is given to rating reform. In Birmingham the City Council will have opportunity of considering this matter on May 7th, when a resolution is to be moved by Councillor T. Foster Duggan.

The membership of the League, which is now 150, offers ample opportunity for increase, and it is believed the coming year will see many new adherents.

The financial report leaves much to be desired in regard to an increase in the annual local subscription list. There has been, however, an excellent response (in many cases by those who already give freely every year) to special appeals for donations to the election fund and for literature; it is also estimated that payments to the extent of £85 have been made by friends and other associations for printing, rooms, &c., which have been used for League propaganda.

It is due, however, to the generous financial support of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values that the Midland League is enabled to carry on its work, yet the need for the existence of the League was never more clearly shown than by the recent increase of the burden of rates. Those who complain so bitterly should realise that relief can only come by persistent work in enlightenment and organisation, and that it is only by adequate financial support that rating reform can be secured within a reasonable period. But if our Colonies can change from the old obsolete system and abolish all rates on houses, shops, factories, &c., why cannot Birmingham and other Midland towns be also up to date on rating reform? In Sydney alone, £5,656,759 was spent in new buildings during last year, chiefly as a result of the "unrating" of buildings. Let Birmingham be true to her motto "Forward," and Land Values MUST be the basis of our civic revenue.

CHAPMAN WRIGHT, Secretary.

#### THE TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.



A. W. DAKERS, B.A.

Single Taxers all over the country will be interested to hear that the President-elect of the Teachers' Conference, held during Easter week, is our old and valued colleague, Mr. A. W. Dakers, B.A., of Newcastle. He was elected by a large majority to the position of Vice-President, which carries with it the Presidency for the coming year.

Mr. Dakers has led a strenuous life, and is noted for his attachment to the Single Tax cause, as well as for his work in the National Union of Teachers. His elevation to the highest honour which his scholastic colleagues could confer on him is somewhat unique, he being the only one who has ever reached such a position without having attained the position of head-master. On the whole, the honour which comes from election by one's equals is to be preferred to one bestowed by those in authority.

When the Newcastle Single Tax League was formed in 1895 Mr. Dakers was elected Secretary. Since then he has continuously rendered help by pen and voice. He also was active in promoting the Conferences on the Taxation of Land Values, held in Newcastle in 1900 and 1902. For years he acted as Chairman of the Executive of the Tyneside Branch of the English League, and later he has held a similar position in the Northern Land Values League. In 1896 he obtained by private study the degree of B.A. (London). He has been continuously a member of the N.U.T. Executive since 1903, a vice-chairman of the Law Committee, a president of the National Federation of Assistant Teachers, and a pioneer of the movement for smaller classes.

For the position he now occupies he was nominated by associations representing 47,432 members, and was supported amongst others by the L.C.C. Women Teachers' Union and the National Federation of Women Teachers. Having broad democratic sympathies, it will be readily realised that he has been foremost in the fight for fair treatment of the children of the poor, and some of the recent improvements in this respect owe a good deal to his advocacy.

On the Taxation of Land Values he describes himself as a whole-hogger, and argues his case from the standpoint of Henry George and his book *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*.

## THE ENGLISH LEAGUE.

376 and 377, Strand, London, W.C.

In forwarding his annual subscription, and the names of one or two local sympathisers, a member of the League writes: "I think it would be well in next month's LAND VALUES to point out to the charitable that any sum given to the League's funds is far more effectual in abolishing distress than if given in indiscriminate charity. For instance, thanks to the work of the 'Single Taxers,' thousands of men are finding employment on the land in Australia, who would at present be swelling the ranks of the starving and unemployed here, but for the initial success of our propaganda in that far-away land."

The movement has sustained a very heavy loss in the death, on April 1st, of the Rev. Thomas Hill, Vicar of North Somercotes, Lincolnshire, and a Vice-President of the League. When Mr. Hill joined the League about a quarter of a century ago he was a curate in London. It was during his curacy at St. John's, Waterloo Road, that he communicated to Mr. Verinder the facts about the rise in rents which, in that parish, followed the freeing from toll of Waterloo Bridge, and thus furnished an illustration of the origin of land values which has probably been more frequently used, in writings and speeches on the London land question, than any other. Mr. Hill has been vicar of a large rural parish in the North Lincolnshire marsh for about 17 years, and his experiences among a community of small agricultural freeholders made him one of the most ardent advocates of the taxation of rural land values. Many members of the League will remember his earnest appeals at our London meetings, which he frequently attended, at the cost of a special journey of nearly 300 miles, in order to plead for the application of our principles to the rural districts. He wrote many letters to the Press on behalf of the movement—to the Church papers, the NATION, the DAILY NEWS, &c., &c., and some of the extremely useful and outspoken papers which he read before church conferences have been published from time to time.

The LOUTH NEWS writes of him: "He was politically more than a Liberal. He was an ardent disciple of Henry George and his gospel of Single Tax. One of the most memorable incidents of his residence at North Somercotes was the fierce duel between Sir Robert Perks and himself at a political meeting three years ago. The late Vicar had taken a prominent part in the agitation that led up to the Budget of 1909, over which Sir Robert severed his connection with the Radical Party. At a meeting at North Somercotes Sir Robert quoted and answered some of the writings of the late vicar in the latter's presence, and his reply was made in exceedingly rapid phrases to an audience at high tension of excitement, and it was expected that he would collapse, because he was known to have an affection of the heart, but his speech was terminated by the collapse and sudden death of a member of the audience sitting in the front row. The tragedy subdued political strife and the crowded audience filed out slowly."

Mr. George Linskill (175, Lovett Street, New Clew, Grimsby) continues his untiring work on behalf of the cause in a Lincolnshire district not far removed from the scene of Mr. Hill's labours. Largely as the result of his work, and of the help of Councillor R. Johnson, the Grimsby Town Council has resolved to support the Glasgow municipal movement, in spite of the contrary recommendation of its Finance Committee. The Cleethorpes Council has also had a discussion on the subject, which stands adjourned. Mr. Linskill is trying to get the question considered by the local Board of Guardians, and is keeping the whole matter well before the public by lectures and letters to the local newspapers.

He has thus found a few friends who are willing to help in the formation of a local Branch of the League. "I have been for many years," he writes, "patiently doing a little rough spade work, and I think that if a local Branch could be established a good deal more useful work could be accomplished." The General Secretary hopes to be able to visit Grimsby shortly, and to give some help, on behalf of the Executive, to the local workers.

Mr. S. G. Seal, one of our most active members on the South Coast, attended a Housing Conference on April 17th, called by the Southampton Trades and Labour Council. To a Resolution on the usual Housing-and-Town-Planning lines he moved the following addendum:—"That bad housing and overcrowding arising out of our present system of Land Tenure and Rating, we urge our Local Authorities to support Glasgow and other towns in petitioning the Government for power to levy rates on a land value basis with the exemption of improvement values; the present system of rates acting as a hostile tariff upon the building industry." The motion was ruled out of order!

The attendance at the quarterly meeting in Essex Hall on April 24th was somewhat below the average, but the discussion was unusually brisk and interesting. Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., President, was in the chair, and opened the meeting with a very brief speech, giving as his reason that it was desired to leave plenty of time for the expression of all views. Mr. J. W. Graham Peace, a member of the Executive, spoke for about 35 minutes on "Land Value Taxation *versus* Land Purchase." Quietly and temperately, but with clear and cogent arguments, he discussed the Tory scheme of Land Purchase with State aid with a view to the creation of small ownership, and the Land Nationalisation Society's scheme of State purchase with a view to "Land Nationalisation"; and contrasted each in turn with the League's programme of Land Value Taxation. In the discussion which followed there took part Dr. V. H. Rutherford (formerly M.P. for the Brentwood Division of Middlesex), Mr. Willis (Land Nationalisation Society), Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., C.C., Mr. Sparks (L.N.S.), Mr. W. R. Lester, M.A., Mr. John H. Dobson, C.C., J.P., Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, M.P., C.C., and Mr. J. J. Boutwood, J.P., of Hastings. After Mr. Peace had replied, a vote of thanks to the chairman and opener was moved by Mr. John Paul (Secretary of the United Committee), seconded by Mr. F. Verinder (Secretary of the League), and carried. Among those present we noticed Mr. G. Croser (Editor of LAND AND LABOUR), Mr. Crofton Black, Junior (Land Union), Mr. Henry W. Ley (first Secretary of the L.N.S.), and many members of the Central Council of the League.

### MAY MEETINGS.

- Thur. 2.—Cromwell Hall, Putney Bridge Road (for Putney Liberal Association): Fredk. Verinder, "Land Values in Picture and Story" (with lantern slides). 8 p.m.  
 Thur. 9.—Sevenoaks Women's Liberal Association: Mrs. E. R. Peace, "Rating Reform." 3 p.m.  
 North Hackney Liberal Association, Linden House, 126, Stamford Hill: Fredk. Verinder. 8.30 p.m.  
 Mon. 13.—Executive. 8.30 p.m.

FREDK. VERINDER, General Secretary.

### GREENWICH.

On April 23rd Mr. Herbert Barr, of the League of Young Liberals (Dulwich Branch), addressed an open-air meeting at Christ Church Street, Greenwich, on "Unemployment and Its Cure." Mr. Barr showed how land monopoly was at the bottom of the question and that land values taxation was the remedy. He made special reference to the question of mining royalties, using with effect the "Lusitania" example.

### ALD. P. WILSON RAFFAN, M.P., AND THE LONDON LIBERAL FEDERATION.

At a special meeting of the Council of the London Liberal Federation, held at the National Liberal Club on the 22nd April, Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, M.P., delivered a stirring address on the "Taxation and Rating of Land Values with special reference to Housing, Unemployment, and Free Trade." He demonstrated clearly the urgent need for rating of land values, and appealed to Liberals in London to make this subject the chief plank in their platform at the coming London County Council election. His arguments were illustrated with a number of striking instances in London of the injustice of the existing rating law. Mr. Raffan's speech was followed by an interesting discussion, which showed that the meeting was heartily in favour of his proposals, and was determined to put them in the forefront of municipal politics in the next L.C.C. campaign, as well as in the more general field of their propaganda.



**CAMBRIDGE.**

We are pleased to record the election to the Cambridge Town Council of Mr. Austin H. Peake, after a land values campaign. He writes:—"I succeeded by a majority of 25, having in 26 days got an increased vote of 30 (360) on a poll in which 49 less electors voted. The poll on March 21st was to elect three councillors, and on April 17th this by-election was held to fill a vacancy caused by the creation of an alderman. I advocated rating reform, and the Glasgow Bill most strongly. I believe a large measure of my success was due to this."

**NEW PAMPHLET.**

Under the title of "The Rating of Land Values: The Case for Hastings, Harrogate and Glasgow," the United Committee have published in pamphlet form the speech of Mr. R. L. Outhwaite at Hastings on February 27th on the Housing question. The object lessons from examples taken from the three towns named are instructive and valuable to speakers. The price of the pamphlet is one penny, and copies can be obtained from the offices of the United Committee, 11, Tothill Street, Westminster, London, S.W., The Land Values Publication Department, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., or any of the various Land Values Leagues' offices.

**MEETINGS IN CUMBERLAND.**

On the 15th April a meeting under the auspices of the local League of Young Liberals, was held at Carlisle in support of the Taxation of Land Values. Mr Charles Crompton was in the chair, and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite spoke on the connection between land monopoly and labour unrest. There was an excellent attendance and a good report in the JOURNAL next day. On the 16th a visit was paid to Brampton in the North Cumberland Division, where an open-air meeting was held, the speeches of Mr. Crompton and Mr. R. L. Outhwaite being cordially received by a well-attended meeting chiefly composed of labourers. Next night the same speakers to a large interested crowd spoke at the Cross in Carlisle. Mr. Crompton is pursuing an active campaign in this district which has already provoked much inquiry and discussion. A great amount of literature is being distributed and eagerly read.

**MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE RATING OF LAND VALUES.****FURTHER SUPPORT FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR THE GLASGOW PETITION TO PARLIAMENT.**

In support of the Glasgow Town Council, the Swansea Union have passed a resolution petitioning Parliament to grant powers to municipalities to rate on land values and decided to circularise other local rating bodies asking them to pass similar resolutions.

In addition to those named in our last issue we have information that 25 local authorities have passed resolutions in support of the Glasgow Town Council's petition to Parliament. So that, as far as we know, 50 local authorities have up to the present decided to support the Glasgow Corporation. The additional 25 authorities are:—

Clydebank Town Council, Grimsby Town Council, Aberdeen Town Council, Keighley Town Council, Airdrie Town Council, Swansea Guardians, Blackburn Board of Guardians, Blagdon Council, Eastbourne Guardians, Cathcart Council, Govan Council, Ardrossan Council, Mountain Ash Council, Eastwood Council, Dundee Town Council, Wemyss Council, Dalziel Council, Hamilton Parish Council, Huddersfield Guardians, Edinburgh Parish Council, Dewsbury Board of Guardians, Lesmahagow Council, Leith Council, Peterhead Council, and Kingston-upon-Hull Council.

In many instances the resolution has yet to come up for discussion, and in others it is still under consideration. The debates that have taken place on the resolution in the various bodies have been most informing, and in the case of several Councils, after a lengthy discussion, the resolution has been lost by a bare majority.

The fact that there is a House of Commons Committee now sitting to inquire into the relation of Imperial and Local Finance has in a great many instances influenced local authorities to allow the matter to drop until the work of this Committee is accomplished and the report published.

**SCOTTISH NOTES AND NEWS.****ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH LEAGUE.**

The 21st annual meeting of the Scottish League was held in the Religious Institution Rooms, 200, Buchanan Street, on Saturday, 30th March, at 7.30 p.m. The President, Mr. Mackendrick, occupied the chair and the hall was well filled. The Secretary's Report dealt with the work of the League during the year ending December, 1911. The propaganda work of the year had been carried on with great activity. Unlike the previous two years it had not been a year of large demonstrations, but was eventful in the vigour and briskness of open-air meetings. The Organising Committee arranged for meetings during the spring, summer, and autumn months in towns and villages within 30 miles of Glasgow, and about 150 of this kind were held; in all, over 300 meetings were held.

The circulation of literature has been, as usual, very large. Between manifestos, books, pamphlets and leaflets of various kinds there has been well over 400,000 separate publications issued from the League's Offices. This part of the propaganda has been exceedingly well maintained. Added to this the League has posted to members and subscribers, and by means of a free list, 18,000 copies of LAND VALUES during the year.

There is, as in former years, an active press propaganda in many of the principal Scottish newspapers. In this respect the League is very well equipped indeed. There are few members of the Executive who do not take part in this useful and interesting form of pushing the cause along.

The League took an active part in four contested by-elections during the year—East Lothian, Tradeston, Kilmarnock, and recently in St. Rollox. In all of these elections there was a large amount of the League's literature circulated, and some 90 meetings were held. The League never has been better equipped for this kind of work. It has now a band of speakers that can undertake any kind of platform work, either indoor or open-air, lecturing, debating or general platform exposition of the principles of PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

The Political Economy Classes are a fruitful source of propaganda. In all there have been five classes during the year. Two in the class room of the League, one each at Rutherglen and Barrhead, and the Prize Competition Class, formed on 9th February of this year. The students who have attended these classes number 140. The Executive are convinced that in this way much useful work has, and can be done to propagate our doctrines. The teachers of these were Mr. William Cassels, Mr. M. Wilson Paul, M.A., and Mr. Francis C. R. Douglas.

A large amount of propaganda has been carried on among the branches of the United Irish League, and in this work the League's speakers have had the greatest encouragement from Mr. J. O'D. Derrick, the Irish Organiser.

The Loch Lomond Right-of-Way dispute gave the League an opportunity of some useful propaganda. Demonstrations were held under the auspices of the Right-of-Way Committee during August and September. These were large demonstrations of crowds varying from 15,000 to 5,000. There was a large quantity of literature sold and distributed. There was also a large number of meetings held in Alexandria, Bonhill, Renton, and Dumbarton, under the auspices of the League after the demonstrations had ended.

The outstanding feature of the year's work was the two-days' conference in the recent History Exhibition, held in the Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow. In conjunction with the United Committee, the Executive decided to hold the Conference the 11th and 12th September, 1911, and the work of organising was handed over to the Secretary. The Conference was a brilliant success. Even those among our friends who are rather hard to please freely admitted the fact. The Conference marked another important step in our propaganda, and really set the Municipal Campaign for the rating of land values on its feet, inasmuch as it called the attention of the whole

country to the supreme importance of making Land Values the basis of Local Rating.

Mr. Alexander Mackendrick, President, and Mr. David Cassels, Hon. Treasurer, were re-appointed for the ensuing year. Vice-Presidents and an Executive Committee were elected to carry on the work. The following resolution was unanimously passed:—"That this meeting of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, while expressing the ardent hope that the disastrous stoppage of the coal-mining industry will soon be terminated, directs attention anew to the vital relation of the Taxation of Land Values to these lamentable disputes—(1) in its relation to mining land the Taxation of Land Values will protect the interests of the community, the miners and the mine owners by ensuring that no pits shall go out of use owing to the enactment of a royalty charge which the pit cannot afford, and (2) in its general application the Taxation of Land Values will open up land freely to labour, and by establishing the natural minimum wage—*i.e.*, the return which a man can obtain by employing himself on land freely available for him—will provide without the necessity of wasteful strikes an automatic regulation of wages in all other industries."

The campaign in mining districts was finished at Larkhall on Sunday, 9th April, when a demonstration was held from 4 p.m. till 7 p.m. The speakers were Messrs. J. Henry (Chairman), Graham Cassels, F. C. R. Douglas, D. Macdonald, and Andrew McLaren. A large quantity of literature was distributed.

Some of the Parish Clerks and Inspectors of Poor have quite original ideas of their own. The following is an extract from a letter from a Berwickshire Inspector of Poor:—"I have received 'The Land Values Bill, 1912,' and have read it through, without being able to make head or tail of it. There is far too much of this faddy or heroic legislation in vogue at the present time. The best thing that could happen to Great Britain would be to shut up both Houses of Parliament for at least ten years, and allow the Executive to administer properly the laws which we already possess. "The Parish Council meets on first Thursday of May, when I shall submit your Bill, but I hardly expect they will take any notice, notwithstanding that there are six Radicals and three Unionists in the Council."

As this gentleman seems quite unfit to advise the members of his Council on the merits or demerits of the Bill, he has been asked to furnish the names and addresses of the six Radicals and three Unionists, so that they may have some small chance of considering the matter for themselves by receiving copies of the Bill and Mr. Dundas White's notes thereon.

The following resolution was passed by the Montrose Parish Council on Tuesday, 9th April:—"That this Meeting of the Montrose Parish Council, held at the Town House on the 9th day of April, 1912, is in favour of Rating Land Values, supports heartily the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, 1912, introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Dundas White, M.P., and urges the Government to give facilities for passing that Bill into law without delay. "That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the Secretary for Scotland, the Lord Advocate, and Robert Harcourt, Esq., M.P."

This resolution, with copy of Mr. Dundas White's Bill and his notes on the Bill, was posted by the League to every assessing body in Scotland (nearly 1,200), and 1,700 political, trades union and other bodies interested; in all, nearly 3,000 postages have been sent out. About 50 replies and acknowledgments have been received, and about half of those who have considered the resolution have petitioned in favour. It will, however, be a considerable time before the returns are complete, as many of the Associations do not meet except at fixed times, and may not discuss the resolution at their first meeting.

Meetings have been arranged for May at the following places:—Helensburgh, Paisley, Johnstone, Uddingston, Kirkintilloch, Partick, Clydebank, Alexandria, Dumbarton, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Hamilton, Blantyre, Lennoxton, Renfrew, Denny and Dunipace, and Dalry. Helensburgh

and Denny will be special efforts as the Town Councils of both burghs have ostentatiously declined to support Dr. Dundas White's Bill.

The speakers at these meetings will be Mr. F. C. R. Douglas, Mr. M. Wilson, Mr. Paul, Mr. Graham Cassels, Mr. D. Macdonald, Mr. A. McLaren, Mr. Robert Cassels, Mr. William Cassels, Mr. Adam Muir, Mr. J. Henry, Mr. M. Fairley, Mr. A. M. Little, Mr. J. Gordon, and Mr. J. Busby.

The Executive of the Govan Liberal and Radical Association have passed a resolution in favour of the rating of land values, supporting heartily the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, 1912, introduced by Mr. Dundas White, M.P., and urging the Government to give facilities for passing that Bill into law without delay.

A Glasgow correspondent writes: "I went to Tradeston on Wednesday night, 3rd April, to hear Dundas White on the subject of 'Industrial Unrest.' He made a splendid job of driving home the Land Values question. It was quite a treat to listen to such a lecture outside usual party politics. I heard Baillie Pratt lecture on the Insurance Act the other night, and I was as much astonished as I was pleased to hear him tell the meeting, when referring to the social legislation of the Government, that the land clauses of the 1909 Budget were of far greater importance to the people than either Old Age Pensions or the Insurance Act. His audience cheered him grand."

JAMES BUSBY, Secretary.

#### MR. HAMILTON'S MOTOR VAN CAMPAIGN.

Mr. Wm. D. Hamilton writes of his campaign with the motor caravan, to which we referred last month (April 14th): "I have only one meeting to chronicle since last writing to you and that was at Dalry yesterday in the public square between a great church on one hand and a 'pub' on the other. We had a group of interested and wondering well-ordered people who seemed for a long time to think, judging by their demeanour, that something would go off about the apparatus and blow them to smithereens. This very often is characteristic of our first visit to a country town. Upon the whole we had a good meeting for the time of day—4.30 p.m., and some earnest young men asked me if I were going round the country and were exceedingly anxious to know when I would be at Dunlop. It has been impossible to do anything in April up to yesterday owing to the weather, but I hope to get in some good meetings during the next few weeks."

#### EDINBURGH LEAGUE.

##### £1 A DAY FOR STARTING A NEW INDUSTRY.

Under the auspices of the League, a meeting in support of the Municipal Campaign for the Taxation of Land Values was held on 29th March in St. Vincent Hall, St. Stephen Street. Mr. D. J. Downie presided, and said that just now a valuation was being made of the land of the country, under the recent Budget. The Glasgow Town Council had passed a resolution on the subject, and some of them had felt that the Edinburgh Town Council should follow suit.

Mr. T. F. Binnie, the president of the Edinburgh League, addressed the meeting. He referred to the spread of the movement in this and other countries, which, he said, had taken a very strong hold on the public mind. The very foundation of their question was economic study. Why was it that they were taking such an interest in this subject? The real reason was not that they were pursuing the study of economics themselves. They were studying economics because they felt that great social problems were upon them. The committee which had been started to bring fresh industries to Edinburgh had faced every question except one, and they would not face it—the land. He instanced a case where a man had to pay £300 an acre on which to erect a building, and had to pay rates on this, a pound a day for the awful evil of founding an industry. If that land was worth £300 when the man built on it, it was worth it before, and should have been on the valuation roll at that figure (Applause.) They wanted to make land too heavy to hold unduly, and industry to be free, with the very least burden possible upon it. The Town Council of

Edinburgh was the slackest on this subject of the whole Councils of Great Britain.

Mr. James Kirkwood moved the following resolution:—

That this meeting is of opinion that powers should be granted to local authorities to assess for purposes of local rating the land values created by the community, and requests the Edinburgh Town Council to petition Parliament to grant these powers.

Mr. J. L. Brown seconded the resolution, which was supported by Mr. Cunningham and adopted, and it was agreed to send a copy to the Town Council and to the three members of the ward.

#### INVERNESS TOWN COUNCIL AND LAND VALUES.

In our April issue we reported the meeting of the Inverness Town Council, at which it was unanimously agreed to remit the consideration of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, to the Law Committee. The Law Committee subsequently considered the Bill, and decided by 4 votes to 3 to recommend the Council to petition Parliament in its favour. On 1st April, at a meeting of the Council, Councillor Geo. Young moved that the Law Committee's finding be approved. This was seconded by Councillor MacLennan. Bailie Macewen then moved that without pronouncing any opinion as to the economic doctrine of the Taxation of Land Values, the Council considered that having regard to local circumstances, the Land Values Bill would not benefit Inverness. This was seconded by ex-Bailie John Mackenzie, and after a lengthy and informing discussion was carried by 12 votes to 6.

#### PARTICK LIBERALS SUPPORT RATING OF LAND VALUES.

At the annual meeting of the Partick Division United Liberal Council, held under the Chairmanship of Sir George Green, in the Douglas Hotel, Glasgow, on April 12th, the following resolution, by Mr. Wm. Moir (Maryhill) was carried unanimously:—

That this Council urge upon the Government the great desirability of doing everything in their power to expedite the land valuation now proceeding, and further, calls upon the Government to introduce and pass into law a bill empowering local authorities to impose and levy a tax for local purposes on the valuation of land in the United Kingdom as ascertained under the Finance (1909-10) Act.

#### GLASGOW LIBERAL COUNCIL AND LAND VALUES.

At the annual meeting of the Glasgow Liberal Council, held in the Trades Hall, Glasshouse Street, on 5th April (reported in the GLASGOW HERALD, 6th April), an animated discussion took place on the Taxation of Land Values. Ex-Bailie Peter Burt presided over a good attendance. After a resolution expressing confidence in the Government and approval of its policy had been proposed and seconded, Mr. Burt proposed an addendum to the resolution, in the following words:—

Further, that this meeting is in favour of the rating of land values, and in view of the statement that the land valuation now being made will not be completed until 1915, supports heartily the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, 1912, introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Dundas White, M.P.

They had had the Liberal Party in power now for six years, he said, and those who had been fighting in the wilderness for 20 years to bring them into power had looked forward to splendid fruit being the result of the change. They had had some good Acts from the Liberal Government—notably the Parliament Act. At the same time, to his mind, the great gauge by which they measured all governments was the condition of the people. He did not think they could say that the mass of the people had derived very much benefit yet from the legislation they had had. Some of it had done good. He instanced the Old Age Pensions Act, but said it merely touched the fringe of the social problem. Mr. Lloyd George in his Budget statement had shown that three-fourths of the wealth of the country was in the hands of a very few people. When the Liberal Government went into power one of the great promises was that they were to attack the land, which was the root of all the monopolies that appropriated the

wealth. Had the Budget of 1909 been carried as originally proposed with regard to the land he (Mr. Burt) believed there would have been no coal strike. What was at the bottom of that strike was that a very small proportion of the wealth produced went to the miners. In the Taxation of Land Values they had the key to the whole position. He complained that the Government had not carried out their promises in that connection by postponing the completion of the valuation of the land. He felt that the real reason the Liberal Party were losing elections was that they had not in essence fulfilled the promises of the General Elections. Let them not think it was altogether because the people were being misled by misrepresentations of the Insurance Act. Let them face facts. The people did not vote for them because they were against their views. What the people wanted was bigger wages, and the quickest way to get a bigger share of the wealth produced was by breaking up the land monopoly through the taxation of values.

Councillor Muir seconded. He said they were not anxious to do anything that would harass the Government. He complained that the Government were afraid to give them a direct tax upon land. They were afraid because there was a section in the ranks of the Liberal Party who were determined to do everything possible to divert the attention of the people from the land question.

After a lengthy discussion the resolution with the addendum was unanimously approved.

#### DUMFRIESSHIRE.

##### HOME RULE AND THE LAND QUESTION.

On March 29th, according to the DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY STANDARD, an overcrowded meeting was held in the public Hall at Kirkconnel under the auspices of the Dumfries and Kirkconnel Branches of the United Irish League. Mr. Nigel M'Millan, The Knowe, presided.

Mr. J. O'Donnell Derrick, Glasgow, organiser of the United Irish League for Scotland, delivered a stirring and racy address on "Home Rule."

Mr. Adam Muir, of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, delivered a telling address on the land question. He said that almost every measure intended for the benefit of the working classes only enabled the landowners to draw increased rents, and he insisted that the first step towards real progress either in the direction of raising wages, securing better homes for the people or reducing local rates, lay in taxing and rating the value of land for municipal and national purposes, in unrating buildings and untaxing the food of the people.

The following resolution, moved by Mr. Nigel M'Millan, and seconded by Mr. Peter M'Cartney, Kirkconnel, was unanimously adopted:—

This meeting affirms the right of the people of Ireland to a National Parliament, declares its belief that the opposition to Home Rule on the part of Unionist and Tory politicians, and their play on racial and religious passion, is in order to retard land reform measures for Great Britain in the interest of the landowning class, and congratulates the Government on their resolve to introduce next month a measure of Irish Home Rule. We urge the Government by means of this year's Budget to levy a tax on the value of all land, and to levy the tax on as high a scale as will make it unprofitable to landowners to keep coal and other mineral land unworked. This meeting urges this reform, because if the tax be sufficiently high it will force all presently unworked valuable mineral land into the market for use, thus creating additional employment, helping to raise wages through the increased demand for workers, while the increased output of coal will tend to decrease its selling price.

The secretary was then instructed to forward a copy to Mr. Molteno, M.P. for the county; Mr. Gulland, M.P. for Dumfries Burghs; Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. J. E. Redmond.

#### SPRINGBURN, GLASGOW.

A resolution similar to the one passed by the Dumfries and Kirkconnel Branches of the United Irish League was passed unanimously by the Springburn United Irish League on March 24th, on the motion of Mr. William Kelly, seconded by Mr. Robert M'Dowell.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

### "WAGES AND LAND" AND "LAND OR LAND VALUES."

Two books under the above titles, from the pen of Johan Hanson, have recently been published by Svenska Andeleförlaget, Stockholm, Sweden. Knowing the author we are satisfied that they will be valuable and instructive, but—unfortunately we have no translator at hand. In *THE PUBLIC* (February 2nd, 1912), however, Mr. Eric Oberg gives a good account of both these books. Of the former, "Wages and Land," he says:—

"The author takes us back as far as the thirteenth century in England. He shows us how, contrary to common conceptions, the wages of labour have not constantly increased through the ages. The golden age of labour in England was the fifteenth century. The purchasing power of average wages in England, referred to the common standard of the price of bread, was in the year 1500 twice that in 1550, and more than four times that in 1803, and six times that in 1812. Abundance of free land and high wages—total monopolisation of land and starvation wages—have gone hand in hand.

"A most interesting part of the book is that which refers to the causes of the rise of wages in England during the past century. While many other causes, of course, have been contributory, the fact that millions of acres of free or cheap land became available to the toiling masses of Europe during the past century, has been the primary cause of the victories of labour in its struggle for a living wage. These millions of acres were across the sea, but not inaccessible, and America's cheaper soil has, indeed, been the irresistible economic force that has elevated the conditions of labour in Europe, and especially in England."

Of the latter, *LAND OR LAND VALUES*, he says:—

"In a book of over 200 pages, the author has furnished a very complete review of the progress of land value taxation all over the world, the methods employed, and the results achieved. The book is the revised and enlarged edition of an appeal addressed to the members of the Swedish Riksdag (Parliament). It contains a mass of information, giving details of the system of taxation in every country, state or city where any kind of land value taxation is in force. Methods for ascertaining site values are dealt with, notably the system used in New York City."

### THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY.\*

The ordinary school history mainly directs the attention of the scholar to trivial and unimportant things, to the names, marriages, quarrels, illnesses, conquests and deaths of kings and queens, ignoring the real vital issues shaping the destinies and determining the social, political and economic evolution of the nation. Hence it is that the study of history does not hold their attention, that the impressions left by it are blurred and indistinct, as well as false and misleading. To correct these impressions, to give his readers some clue to the labyrinth of history, some clear conception of the real causes producing the Great Britain of to-day, seems to have been the aspiration of the author of this book. And on the whole he has well accomplished his task.

His aim, as he tells us in his Preface, "has been to trace the travelled road of the English people towards Democracy, and to point out certain landmarks on the road, in the hope that readers may be turned to examine more closely for themselves the journey taken." Hence he gives us short but lucid accounts of the early struggles against the absolutism of the Crown; of the first timorous aspirations and tentative steps towards Representative Government; of the popular insurrections of 1196, 1381, 1450, and 1549; of the uprising against the tyranny of the Stuarts; of Lilburne's democratic protest against the military rule established by Cromwell; of the doings and theories of Winstanley and his Diggers; of Constitutional Government under Aristocratic dominion; of the gradual rise of the Democratic idea, as formulated in the writings of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Rousseau, Thomas Paine and others; of the era of Parliamentary Reform and the enfranchisement of the people; and finally of

\**THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY*. By Joseph Clayton, M.A. Publishers: Cassell & Company, Ltd., London. Price, 2s. 6d. net.

Democracy at work during the present century. Mr. Clayton's comments and criticisms of the writings of Democratic theorists, such as Locke and Rousseau, are specially worthy of attention; and his shrewd comments on some modern movements are of real value. But we regret that he did not omit his summary of the work and character of men still living and active amongst us; for, apart from other considerations, these seem to us to detract from the permanent value of his work. Still it is a book which we should like to see widely circulated amongst the rising generation. Its attractive appearance and the moderate price at which it is published, make it specially suitable for birthday gifts and school prizes.—L. H. B.

### BOOKS RECEIVED.

**Taxation and Anarchism.** Auberon Herbert and J. H. Levy. The Personal Rights Association, 11, Abbeville Road, London, S.W. Price 6d. net.

**Individualism and the Land Question.** The Personal Rights Association. Price 6d. net.

**Local Legislation, 1909-1911:** A Collection of Provisions contained in Private Acts of Parliament obtained by Provincial Corporations and Urban District Councils in England and Wales. By Frank Noel Keen, LL.B. W. Southwood and Co., Ltd., London.

**The Case for Socialism.** By Fred Henderson. Jarrold & Sons, London. Price 2s. 6d. net.

**Things that Matter.** Papers upon subjects which are, or ought to be, under discussion. By L. G. Chiozza Money, M.P. Methuen & Co., Ltd. Price 5s. net.

**The Student's Guide to Political Economy.** By F. H. Spencer, LL.B. Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London. Price 2s. 6d. net.

**Common Land and Inclosure.** By E. C. K. Gonner. Macmillan & Co., London. Price 12s. net.

**Essentials of Socialism.** By Ira B. Cross, Ph.D. The Macmillan Company, New York. Price 4s. 6d. net.

### SOME APPRECIATIONS OF "LAND VALUES."

A Glasgow correspondent writes, April 2nd: "LAND VALUES for April is up to high water mark, and is greatly relished by those who have seen it."

Another correspondent, also from Glasgow, writes, same date: "In reading the March issue of LAND VALUES, I felt it was a pity that this paper could not reach the home of every working man. I thought it a most valuable pennyworth. Apart from the splendid teaching of the paper, the reports you give of some of the debates in the House of Commons is worth more than the money. I am unemployed now, because of the coal strike, but when I get back to work I will not fail to pass round the literature you have sent me, as well as the March and April copies of LAND VALUES."

A third Glasgow correspondent writes: "I cannot refrain writing you to congratulate you on LAND VALUES and its Supplement this month. I have been devouring it, and I must confess the information given in its columns of the work that is being done both here and abroad is inspiring. I think that Wedgwood in the House and Smithson in the country, not forgetting all the others, are really doing heroic work. Fels' interview is a treat. The whole matter in this month's paper (March) is like a triumphal procession, and the great work that is being done is bound to yield fruit at no distant date."

A Member of Parliament 'phoned: "This month's paper (April) is splendid. Send 100 copies to my agent."

A Rural District Councillor sent on 2nd April "a list of names and addresses in his district for this specially good number."

A teacher of Political Economy writes: "Your reports of Parliamentary Debates in LAND VALUES Supplements must be kept up. They are of immense value."

A London correspondent writes: "We were delighted to receive the paper (LAND VALUES) this morning and devoured it with interest and pleasure."

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The Secretary of the Portsmouth League writes (April 10th): "We are all more than pleased with this month's issue of LAND VALUES; it is excellent in every particular."

#### "HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RATES AND TAXES."

Mr. John O'Connor, Royston, writes:—

I have just finished reading the pamphlet with the above title. It is indeed excellent in every way, particularly as a method of propaganda. The "get-up" could not be improved for the purpose for which it is used. The lavish manner in which the facts are packed in it and the way they are displayed ought to arouse considerable interest in the land question among working men. I, at any rate, am one person whose interest has been stimulated. I have read at various times a few articles and pamphlets on the land question, but nowhere have I come across such an array of solid fact and so interestingly displayed as in the pamphlet "How to Reduce your Rates and Taxes." It is hardly possible to praise one leaflet more than another—they are all good. But those which will make the most direct appeal to working men and most easily understood are, I think, Nos. 31, 7, 33, 27, and 40.

No. 31 makes a particularly powerful appeal, and is calculated to arouse all the resentment of the workers against a system so absurd and unjust.

With a case such as you have, backed up by the absurdities and anomalies of the present system, the wonder to me is that the land question has not become a more prominent feature of the working man's interest.

# MY STORY,

BY

**TOM L. JOHNSON.**

*The Autobiography of a Great American.*

Edited by **ELIZABETH J. HAUSER.**

This book, which is of the most profound interest to Single Taxers, can now be procured, price 9/6 post free, from THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES, 11, Tothill Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

## COLONIAL AND FOREIGN.

### MR. JOSEPH FELS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES.

The SQUARE DEAL, for March (the organ of the Tax Reform League of Ontario), gives much space to meetings addressed by Mr. Joseph Fels in various towns in Ontario. As we have reported in our previous issues, Mr. Fels has accomplished a great amount of speaking and writing during his recent visit to Canada and the United States.

A further large batch of cuttings from United States newspapers gives evidence of his activities by voice and pen in the States since his Canadian trip. One article which he contributed to the PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC LEDGER of 7th April is particularly bracing. Its indictment of landlordism is so forceful that the most biased reader could not fail to be impressed.

At a dinner given by the Manhattan Single Tax Club, held February 22nd, he praised the work of the United Committee. Mr. and Mrs. Fels sailed from New York, on the "Mauretania," 24th April.

In a letter, dated Philadelphia, April 13th, Mr. Fels writes: "I am inclined to become personally more militant when I get back, and I propose to take the stump when and where I can be really effective. I should like to get before business organisations, such as Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, the Surveyors' Institute, and such like. Nothing would give me more satisfaction than to get before the Surveyors' Institution to answer some things which some of the members have been saying about me. Please keep your eye open for the right kind of appointments for me."

### 100,000 DOLLARS FOR THE BEST MONUMENT TO TOM L. JOHNSON.

The following is a copy of a telegram sent by Mr. Fels on the 11th April to the Hon. Newton Baker, Mayor of Cleveland. It tells its own story:—

"Papers announce Committee to-day deciding nature of memorial to Tom L. Johnson. In Tom's name, were he alive, and for those believing as he did in equal opportunity and economic freedom, I protest against other monument than the use of memorial funds to bring about the Single Tax and consequent destruction of special privilege. If this only appropriate course be taken, I agree to double the amount of subscriptions up to \$100,000. Tom L. Johnson worked for a great principle. To further that principle is the only memorial worth while."

### UNITED STATES.

#### FREE TRADE CAMPAIGN.

Twenty years ago Henry George's PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE was printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Six members of the House divided the book among them, and each, under the "leave to print" privilege, introduced a section into the RECORD as part of his remarks during a debate on wool. These members were: Hon. Tom L. Johnson, of Ohio; Hon. William J. Stone, of Kentucky; Hon. Joseph E. Washington, of Tennessee; Hon. George W. Fithian, of Illinois; Hon. Thomas Bowman, of Iowa; and Hon. Jerry Simpson, of Kansas. By an old rule, whatever appears in the RECORD is privileged to be sent through the mails free under a Congressional frank. PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE had therefore become frankable. Funds were raised by popular subscription to meet the expense of printing, and in the form of a sixty-four page pamphlet, one million and sixty-two thousand copies were printed and circulated.

This circulation took place in the second Presidential struggle between Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison. History repeats itself. Now, again, in a Presidential campaign the tariff is to be the dominant issue.

The Fels Fund Commission of Cincinnati, Ohio, will at once undertake a tariff educational campaign with a new edition of PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE. It hopes to circulate a million copies. It will charge 2½ cents a copy to cover the bare cost of printing and handling. The type will be such as is used in ordinary newspaper editorials.

Each book will be enclosed in a sealed, franked envelope, ready for addressing and dropping into the mail. Anyone can get as many copies as they care to subscribe for.

### HENRY GEORGE JUN.'S VIEW OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Henry George, Jun., writes (March 19th):—  
 "My interest in your great politics is lessened only by an intense interest in political and economic things here. Our progress is in all directions at once: backward and forward, clearly defined and confused; but thank God we are moving and moving fast. Perhaps it is the national characteristic that makes our people confident that we are going 'to come out all right.' You and I have a philosophy which goes down to the bottom of things, and we can feel confident that with an active, nervous, inquiring people, progress is sure if we can only keep up the inquiry. My feeling is that just now this matter of keeping up is certain. The high cost of living is the spur. We persist and will continue to persist under the reign of privilege, and so I am more and more hopeful. The tariff debate grows more radical, the attack on privilege becomes more drastic, and we have less and less to fear that any appreciable measure of Socialism will be attempted in this country, wherever else it may be tried. Of course the taxation of land values is not really on yet. We have a large measure of it in our municipalities. To get more will mean a hard struggle. Yet our ideas are making friends everywhere, and the coming Presidential campaign with a revived democratic party opposing the protective principle, our progress will be quick indeed."

#### £8,712,000 AN ACRE!

The most valuable bit of real estate that has recently changed hands is, according to the New York papers, the site in the city mentioned of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan's projected new "skyscraper" office building in Wall Street, opposite the Stock Exchange, at the corner of Broadway, which has cost, it is stated, the record price of £200 per square foot, or a total of £1,800,000 [or at the rate of £8,712,000 an acre—Ed. L.V.].

Forty years ago Mr. Morgan's new investment was bought by Mr. Anthony Drexel for less than £100,000, so that the "unearned increment" may be put at twenty times the original cost.—ESTATES GAZETTE, 9th March.

#### EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SITE (NEW YORK). INCREASED VALUE.

The board of directors of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, whose fine offices in the Broadway, New York, were recently burned down, have voted that the site of the building, which faces on to the Broadway and Cedar, Pine, and Nassau Streets, shall be sold, if a satisfactory price can be obtained, because of its greatly enhanced value. Last year the value of the site itself, exclusive of the building, was assessed at £1,900,000, but in view of the rapid increase in property values in lower Broadway this is regarded as now far below the mark, and some experts place the present value as high as £4,000,000. And so the directors have voted that if a "satisfactory price" can be obtained this handy little plot of ground shall be sold.—PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW, 9th March.

#### LAND VALUES IN SEATTLE.

According to the TOLEDO NEWS-BEE of March 9th, in 1866 John H. Nagel took up 160 acres of free land in what is now the heart of Seattle. In 1874 Nagel became insane and was sent to the State asylum, where he remained, a charge on the public, until 1897, when he died. A trustee for his estate had been appointed by the court when he became insane, who sold parcels of land from time to time, to pay the taxes on the balance. The remainder in 1898 was worth fully £60,000. Now it is evident, says the NEWS-BEE, that this value was not created by John H. Nagel, who was in an insane asylum and that it was created by the people of Seattle. It is also evident that when this £60,000 was given to Nagel's non-resident heirs, who did nothing to earn it, that it was taken from the people who did create it. Every man, woman, and child in Seattle was poorer because of this being taken from them. "For if anyone gets without earning, others must earn without getting." Some people doubt the claim that land values are created by the growth of the city, and are not due to the efforts of those who now appropriate them. The case of John Nagel seems to argue for the land-tax proposition.

### THE POSITION IN NEW ZEALAND.

Writing from Auckland on 24th January, Mr. Arthur Withy, who left England some two years ago, to take up the work of furthering the land values movement in New Zealand, says:—

The results of the elections here must, on the face of them, have been a great disappointment to you all at home. And you would especially be disappointed and surprised at the defeat of the Hon. Geo. Fowlds in Grey Lyme. But, happily, the results are not so bad as they look. Mr. Fowlds is by no means downhearted. He is as full of fight as ever, if not more so, and he is determined to make a strenuous three years' campaign, with a view to getting at least a compact Land Values Party, if not a Land Values Majority, in the House next time.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and I think the result of the election was a surprise to practically everybody here and to none more so than to the Opposition themselves. Sir Joseph's acceptance of an hereditary title, his autocratic action in giving the Dreadnought "on his own"—folks call him the Dreadnought Baronet!—and compulsory military service are generally accepted as the chief ingredients in his unpopularity; but I feel convinced that what really settled his chances was the lack of "the Lloyd George touch." Only that saved the Liberals at home, and only that could have saved them here. The high cost of living is making itself severely felt. The tariff is equal to a working man's income-tax of 3s. 6d. in the £ on the average wage of £120 a year, while equal to only 1d. in the £ on £10,000 a year. House rents are one-third higher than they ought to be because of the taxes on timber, builder's ironmongery, corrugated iron, lead piping, paints and varnishes, &c., and speaking generally Is. is worth in purchasing power only 8d. or 9d., if as much, as compared with what it would be under Free Trade conditions.

The people feel this in their bones; though of course, very few indeed know what is hurting them and how to put things right. But Ward, instead of taking immediate steps in last year's Budget to reduce the cost of living on the lines suggested by the Hon. Geo. Fowlds, must needs fool around wasting time and money by appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the cost of living. A George Fowlds Budget would, I believe, have saved the situation.

At first sight it looks as if a wave of reaction had passed over the country, Massey's Landlord Party having captured 37 seats, while Ward has only 35, Labour and Socialism 4, and one Independent. (The House numbers 80 members in all, of whom 4 are Maories, returned by Maori constituencies. Of these, one, Mr. Ngata, is a member of the Ministry, and therefore included in Ward's followers above, while the other three are unattached.) But an analysis of the votes cast shows that the great transfer of votes was not from Ward to Massey, but from Ward's Liberal Labour Party to a more advanced section—Labour, and, to a small extent, Socialism.

Of the votes cast—

48.22	per cent.	were for the Government (Ward).
36.31	" "	Opposition (Massey).
12.73	" "	Labour and Socialist.
2.62	" "	Independent.
0.12	" "	Prohibitionist.

The total votes throughout the country were:—

For Masseyism	.. ..	173,648
Against	.. ..	304,681
Majority against	..	131,038

In Wellington (five seats) the totals were:—

For Masseyism	.. ..	15,748
Against	.. ..	19,889
Majority against	..	4,141

Yet the Opposition captured four seats out of the five! So that the large number of seats held by the Opposition is simply the result of the fluke working of our electoral system, the anomalies of which the second ballot seems if anything to accentuate. As a matter of fact, Massey got only 36 per cent. of the votes, but he holds 46 per cent.

of the seats in the House; whereas under a just system of proportional representation the result would have been:—

Government .. .. .	37
Massey .. .. .	27
Labour and Socialist .. .	10
Independent .. .. .	2

Such a result would have put a very different complexion on matters, especially as under a just proportional system such men as Messrs. Fowlds, Hogg, McLaren and Mack, to mention a few only of our supporters who were defeated, would have certainly been elected. I of course attacked the very citadel of privilege and monopoly in the North Island, if not throughout New Zealand, and though the propaganda work undoubtedly did much good, with such a tide against the Liberal Party as that which proved to be running, I had no chance.

With such a narrow voting margin between parties, and with the balance of power in the hands of such diverse elements as four Labour and Socialist members, three Maories, and one Independent, the position is necessarily one of very unstable equilibrium, and almost anything may happen. It is impossible to gauge the situation at all, till things have settled down somewhat.

One of the most hopeful features of the situation is that the Labour Party, though it had in the late fight little or no organisation, increased its vote from 14,000 in 1908 to 56,000—a four-fold increase; and it is also very well affected towards the Taxation of Land Values. A strenuous attempt is being made to get this party well organised before the next general election, come when it may, and branches of the Labour Party are being established here, there, and everywhere.

The land plank of the party's platform is pure Single Tax:—

"A land system shall be established which shall bring into the most productive use, either by private or by public enterprise, all natural resources; shall make absentee ownership and private monopoly in land impossible; shall secure to the land holder all the values created by him and those only; all such values to be exempt from all taxation; and shall secure to the public in an annual tax all the values created by the public."

But the Taxation of Land Values is not as yet included in their "immediate fighting platform." This, however, will, I think, soon be remedied. They have invited us to co-operate with them, and on February 12th next Messrs. Fowlds, McNab, O'Regan, and I are to meet Prof. Mills, the Hon. J. T. Paul (Upper House) and Messrs. McLaren (late member for Wellington East), and Mack (Labour candidate for Parnell) in Conference at Wellington to discuss preliminaries. All the Labour representatives are strong believers in the Rating and Taxation of Land Values, so we have every hope that the Conference will agree to Mr. Fowlds' "New Evangel" tax proposals being given the foremost place in the fighting platform. If so, while of course not merging our identity in theirs, we shall be able to work *con amore* with the Labour Party, uniting all the workers of New Zealand, all the useful people, employers and employees alike, for thus is Mills' aim, in the fight against the privileges and monopolies by means of which the useless people now exploit the useful people of the dominion. We have good hopes that every section of the workers, except, of course, the general strike revolutionaries, who are quite hopeless and impossible, will pull together with this in view.

I am already in touch with several of the Labour Party Branches. The Wellington Branch want me to deliver a series of open-air lantern addresses under their auspices. Last week I addressed a number of meetings at Hastings and Napier, and after my address to the Hastings Labour Party, they passed, unanimously, a resolution "strongly urging the adoption of proportional representation and an immediate reduction of the cost of living by substantially reducing railway rates and the customs taxes on necessities, the funds required for this purpose to be raised by the Taxation of Land Values." Other hopeful signs are the letters of inquiry we are getting from all parts of the country and the fact that we have had quite a run on *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* in Wellington and have to order more from Mr. Huie—our nearest source of supply. We find that Mr. Bagot's cheap edition takes best.

*LIBERATOR* will show you that we are still keeping the fight going.

#### FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

A Melbourne correspondent writes (15th March):—

First let me say how refreshing it is to read of the strenuous work going on in Tothill Street, and to note the hopeful and determined spirit which your letters breathe.

The various items of news of the movement are deeply interesting and stimulating.

All that you write of the progress and prospects in the Old Country convinces me more than ever that your field is a vastly more promising one at present than Australia.

The Protectionist virus is more rampant than ever, the people generally have never been so prosperous, the Federal Labour Party are under a dark cloud and it is just the hardest thing in the world to get the public interested, much less enthused, on questions of political economy; still more difficult to arouse discussion and interest on our particular subject in face of the fact that our only two metropolitan dailies practically ignore anything we do. To illustrate this:—McHugh has delivered four addresses in one of our principal public halls: only two of which have been noticed by either of these papers and then in only very brief and garbled reports. The two or three other open-air meetings he has held have, of course, been entirely ignored. The four addresses just referred to have been fairly well attended, the audiences tapering down from about 600 to, say, 200.

A country tour is now being planned for him with an old and very energetic Single Tax campaigner—a Mr. Lyght—as advance agent and runner-up, and I think this work will be more effective as there will not be in the country towns the numerous counter-attractions which prevail in this big city, and furthermore the Protectionist element is not so strong in the country.

For the purpose of this campaign it has been thought well to form a fresh body under the title of "The Free Trade and Land Values League," which will be a wider umbrella than the Single Tax League, and we are hopeful that some good propaganda and educational work will result, also that they will gather in a goodly number of subscribing members to the cause.

Rating Reform is to be an integral, if secondary, part of the campaign work, and no doubt good work will be done by McHugh and Lyght on this subject as well as on the more general question.

As to the political situation generally, a decided reaction seems to have set in in most of the States against the Federal Labour Party, and there is reason to believe that the leaders are anxious as to the outcome of the next elections in April of next year.

The disappointing and perplexing thing about Australian politics at present is that the fight does not proceed on any issues of big principle such as you have in England. There is still the Labour Party with its crude sectional and Socialist programme on the one hand, and on the other all other sections of the community more or less alarmed and bent on getting them out of the way. So much is this the case that old-time Free Trade organs such as the Melbourne *ARCUS* and the two big Sydney dailies have quite sunk the fiscal question for fear of alienating the strong Protectionist element in the Anti-Labourite ranks.

You will understand that under these distracting conditions it is difficult to get a good hearing for our specific propaganda but we intend to follow your example and peg away with our work, as you are doing this year under somewhat similar circumstances.

I attended an interesting little Conference of Single Tax delegates of the Leagues in this State, New South Wales and South Australia, an account of which will probably be given in the next issue of *PROGRESS* and the *STANDARD*. Among the items discussed was a proposal from Charles Dana Miller, of New York, to issue a special edition of the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW* dealing with the progress of Land Value Taxation in Australia, after the style of the Vancouver number issued a few months ago. Although the Conference was of opinion that such an issue would have no particular local value it was thought that the debt we, in Australia, owe to your efforts in the Old Country and to those of Mr. Fels, placed us under an obligation to fall in with Mr. Miller's proposal, and so we decided to offer Mr. Hodgkiss's or Mr. Huie's services to write up the case

It appeared to us that a full statement of the development of the movement in Australia up to date might be valuable and encouraging to workers in the cause, in the U.K., Canada and U.S., even if it does not reach many outside this circle. I think you will be pleased to hear this.

I also took the opportunity last night of reading your letters to the Conference, and I can assure you that they were listened to with deep interest and admiration at the splendid fight you are putting up for the good cause. Particularly gratifying were the references to the gallant work of Mrs. Crompton Davies. Most inspiring is it to see a young married woman like Mrs. Davies devoting her energies to public work of this kind; would that we had a few such spirits among us here!

Many thanks for the various enclosures and pamphlets you have sent me, all of which are most welcome and will be digested in due course. I have not yet had time to read the report of Lloyd George's speech at the City Liberal Club, which you sent me. This is a treat in store. Apropos of your remark "no doubt it will only be reported in part in your papers" I am posting you separately the cabled reports (?) in the ARGUS and AGE of this speech, as well as of that of Bonar Law of a week earlier, to give you some idea of the wicked injustice served out in the Australian Press to the utterances of Liberal leaders, as compared with the prominence given to those of the Unionists. This case is a typical example and it applies to the Press all over Australia, as they draw all their cable messages through one central service in London. It is really a scandalous state of things and has had the effect of quite distorting the Australian mind as to the true position of the British political situation, because not only have we these garbled and meagre reports of Liberal speeches but a still more bitterly partisan spirit colours the weekly mail letter from the London correspondents of nearly all the leading Australian dailies. I wonder if the powers that be, among the Liberal Party, could do something to remedy this vicious state of things.

We all like McHugh immensely, and are deriving great benefit from his inexhaustible fund of knowledge and mastery of our question. He is a fine fellow, and I am sure his visit to us will do lasting good to the cause.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES.

From a letter from Mr. Huie, dated Sydney, 11th March, and from the STANDARD (the organ of the Sydney Single Tax League), we learn of his latest activities. Mr. Huie is Secretary of the Sydney Single Tax League, and the amount of work he gets through on behalf of the movement is inspiring. His latest campaign has been a series of five lecturing tours in the country districts around Sydney. Writing of the last trip he says:

"I was away for fifteen days on that occasion, addressed eleven meetings and had good reports in 17 or 18 papers. The five trips which I had enabled me to enrol 355 new subscribers to the STANDARD, besides getting a number of renewals. I sold £12 10s. worth of books and pamphlets, and altogether got an average report of about a column in sixty papers. The expenses were very moderate, as nearly all the meetings were held in the open air. I distributed over 30,000 leaflets myself. The audiences generally were good, and the work done was of a kind which I think should be constantly carried on. We ought to have a man at it all the time in the country districts."

Writing of the general situation in New South Wales, Mr. Huie says:—

"The Labour Party in State politics is doing nothing for us. It is likely that there will be a reaction, and a further term of Conservative rule. In fact, throughout the Commonwealth the Labour Party is becoming very unpopular. What it does in the direction of Land Values Taxation it does badly, and as far as the new State Government is concerned they have accomplished nothing. There is every prospect of the Labour Party being severely defeated at the next State Elections. I do not expect their successors will do much for us, so that the outlook, as far as State politics is concerned, is not very bright. What we have to do is to push on with the educational work, and make such a public opinion that parties generally will not be able to ignore it.

#### THE NEW CHINA AND LAND VALUES TAXATION.

In the OBSERVER (London) of 7th April, "Asiaticus" has a column article on "Socialism and the New China," in which he reports an interview at Shanghai with Sun Yat-Sen, the Chinese Reformer, from which we quote:—

Sun Yat-Sen, in an interview at Shanghai, has at last announced the reason of his retirement. "I have finished the political revolution," he says with premature confidence.

He now proposes to devote himself to inaugurating "the greatest social revolution in the world's history." With the full consent of the Government, he is to start his propaganda at once; and "the future policy of the Republic will be keen Socialism." Sun Yat-Sen declares that he is an ardent follower of Henry George, "whose ideas are practicable on the virgin soil of China." The railroads and the mines will be controlled by the Government. Henry George's single-tax system will be adopted, and Free Trade will be introduced—this is the first little qualification—"as far as possible." Here is surely an heroic programme.

There is very little doubt, from what Sun Yat-Sen says, that in a few weeks we shall behold China in a turmoil of Socialism and Henry Georgeism.

Then follows an account of how one Wang Ngan-Shi, a Chinese idealist of the 11th century, succeeded in instituting some sort of "Socialism." Land was annually allotted to farmers for cultivation, and a vast army of officials supervised and prescribed the character of their labours. Taxes were imposed on the rich, but the poor were exempt. Large fortunes were gradually destroyed. The sums thus accumulated by the State were distributed in old age pensions and in wages to workmen out of employment.

"Asiaticus" likens Sun Yat-Sen to Wang Ngan-Shi and predicts failure for the new policy as failure overtook the earlier policy.

What seems to be the correct report of the interview is reported in the PUBLIC (Chicago) of April 12th, and other reliable American papers. This is the PUBLIC's version of the interview:—

"I intend to devote my future to the promotion of the welfare of the Chinese people as a people. The teachings of your single taxer, Henry George, will be the basis of our program of reform. The land tax, as the only means of supporting the government, is an infinitely just, reasonable, and equitably distributed tax, and on it we will found our new system. The centuries of heavy and irregular taxation for the benefit of the Manchus have shown China the injustice of any other system of taxation. A single reasonable tax on the land will supply all the funds necessary to put China among the first of the civilised nations in political and economic advancement. We will embrace all of the teachings of Henry George and will include the ownership by the national government of all natural monopolies. No private interest will be allowed to tax and exploit the people through control of any material or service which is a necessity to life and happiness. These reforms China is certain to adopt, and under them we will grow into an industrious, peace-loving, prosperous people."

If Sun Yat-Sen is successful in establishing in China the Single Tax on Land Values he will put China at once in the front rank of advancing nations and make for himself an imperishable name. To the scoffer, the clever man in a hurry, with a hundred different schemes for a hundred detached-looking social problems, this, we are aware, will appear as fanaticism. But the Single Tax is only another name for economic freedom, without which no social problem can be solved. It is not an end in itself, but the means to an end. The Single Tax opens the door to human progress. It is liberty, and "where liberty rises there virtue grows, wealth increases, knowledge expands, invention multiplies



human powers, and in strength and spirit the freer nation rises among her neighbours as Saul amid his brethren—taller and fairer."

#### SWEDEN.

We learn from the PUBLIC (Chicago, U.S.A.), that Sweden has two new Single Tax papers. SNALLPOSTEN (The Fast Mail), a Gothenburg weekly, was taken over at the new year by Dr. Karl Elander, and turned into a Single Tax organ. Numbers at hand show it to be a lively one too. The other is an agricultural paper, ODLAREN (The Settler, or Clearer of Land), edited by A. L. Kilian, a leading Single Taxer, who proposes to treat the subject from the farmers' point of view. New Single Tax clubs are also springing up in different parts of the country.

#### DENMARK.

Mrs. Bjerne writes from Copenhagen (20th April):— We have been waiting for the results of the sample valuation, which have been promised us for some time. Now they have come, and we will be sending you a copy. I also enclose you a copy of POLITIKEN, in which you will find the comments of a leading Radical politician.

We are hoping that this sample valuation, which only proves that there is no difficulty in making a separate valuation of the land, will help us in passing a bill which is expected to be submitted by the Radicals, changing the tax on property to one on land values. According to their program the Radicals as a party are pledged to this measure and besides, to provide for a law by which all the increment accruing from this progress in taxation is to revert to the community or the State.

The new measure we expect will be to change the *duty taxes* to land values taxes. For that purpose we are going to work hard among the women. I send you some papers from which you will learn that we have succeeded in starting a Domestic Economy League, the first purpose of which is to investigate the amount of taxes paid on our food and clothing, with a view to discarding these indirect taxes. We have taken up the connection with about 50 papers who have pledged themselves to take all we send them. POLITIKEN has had favourable reports of the League and a large number of our leading "domestic economists," especially among the women, are joining up with us.

The land labourers at their congress on the 4th and 5th of this month, took a very strong position in favour of the land values tax. Like the Husmænd, they have made it the basis of their program. (I send you a copy of this program also.)

I believe you have been told of the Royal Commission on Rural Interests (Landbokkommissionen) which is sitting now. We have some very staunch supporters among the most influential of the Commissioners. The secretary of the Commission, who is to make out the report, has given much of his time to investigations concerning land values taxation and is a most reliable and efficient advocate of this

reform. We are very anxious to get permission to publish the report of this Commission as soon as possible, and expect it to be decidedly in our favour.

You see the movement is no longer limited to the society and to special advocates; there seems to be growth everywhere. To us who have worked at it for years it seems now only a question of time when the ideas of Henry George shall have conquered the legislation of this country. But of course, we must push on all the harder. The antagonism is yet to come and we must be prepared to fight "special interests" in this country as well as you are, though they may not be so strong here.

There seems to be unlimited numbers to fill the ranks. I believe that Dr. Starckes' training courses have done a great deal of good in calling forth new workers. In every league (there is now about eighty of them throughout the country) we have active helpers, people who are able to stand up for the cause and do platform work. I do not believe that any of the political parties have so many speakers as we have among our advocates.

#### SPAIN.

To at least one reader the most attractive feature of the IMPUESTO UNICO for April is an open letter by Mr. M. G. Oro to the President of the Chamber of Urban Property of Zaragoza. This naturally conservative body has considered the Single Tax idea, and the President appears to have preferred a "single receipt" as a better realisation of the proposals of Henry George, now grievously distorted by our Spanish Liga! The reform advocated is that of a current account with each ratepayer, including all the multiple taxes of Spain, and payable at intervals with a *single receipt*. There is a saving of several pieces of paper per annum! Jestings apart, it is of very great importance that a leading juriconsult of Aragon, Don M. Isábal, has brought our doctrine before such a Chamber in a serious treatise on land values; and that the Chamber decided to inquire if they could levy a Single Tax with a view to multiply and subdivide holdings. New Zealand experience is justly quoted as to the stimulus to town property given by untaxing industry, unreliable as New Zealand Liberalism has proved itself. A perfect reply to an ill-taught leading journalist, who said in the MADRID HERALD that Henry George was a second Marx, is given by a full translation of George's last article on the Labour Battle.

There are interesting notes on a project to lay waste a large section of Andalusia for hunting. (The Spaniards appear to be nearly as meek as the Scots in this.) Also details of the places of entertainment in Valencia, closed by high rates on structure values, following reduction of food taxes. Facts as to site values in Madrid, now inadequately or not at all taxed, as proved by recent sales. A good supply of foreign news, perhaps the best being a clear and short statement as to new methods of valuation in Germany. Japan also seems to get well into line, urban lands have been revalued after half a century—a useful first step.

M. J. S.

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# LAND VALUES

## SUPPLEMENT.

Extracts from Debates in the House of Commons on Small Holdings, The Housing and Town Planning Act and Rural Housing, The Cottage Homes for Aged Persons Bill, and The Acquisition of Land Bill.

MAY, 1912.

### DEBATES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

#### ON SMALL HOLDINGS.

Wednesday, 27th March, 1912.

During the debate on the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, the following discussion took place on Small Holdings:

**Mr. Charles Bathurst:** The President of the Local Government Board has repeatedly assured us in this House during the past few months that it is open to the county councils to exonerate the small holders from payment of sinking fund charges when those are added, as they have in most cases been added, to the rents of small holdings, and to fix those charges upon the ratepayers of the county. The President of the Board of Agriculture has similarly stated on a recent occasion in this House that he is prepared to assure the county councils that they may go forward with the process of exonerating the small holders from the sinking fund payment, and charge the ratepayers generally, and have the burden thrown on the county rates. It transpires now that loans upon this footing are being applied for to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and the Commissioners are, in reply, stating that they are not in a position to make any loans to county councils for the purpose of small holdings, unless the whole of the sinking fund charge is charged to the small holders in the rent of those holdings. What I want to ask the Government is, once and for all, to get us out of this anomalous position and to declare plainly what the Act of 1908 really means, and if the Small Holdings Act of 1908 cannot operate to enable the county councils to do what many of them would like to do, namely, to charge the sinking fund charges to the ratepayers generally in exoneration of the small holders, then surely it is the business of the Government, if that is their intention, to bring in as soon as possible an amending Bill, so as to save any risk of the county councils being surcharged in consequence of doing what is *ultra vires* an Act of Parliament.

I suggest that there are not two ways of construing that Act, and that the only construction to be put upon this particular section is that the county councils will be going beyond their powers unless they charge the small holders themselves with the sinking fund charges in their rents. That section is as follows:—

A county council shall not acquire land for small holdings save at such price or rent that, in the opinion of the council, all expenses incurred by the council in relation to the land will be recouped out of the purchase money for the land sold by the council, or in the case of land let out of the rent, and the council shall fix the purchase money or rent at such reasonable amount as will, in their opinion, guard them against loss.

I have the support of the Law Officers of the Crown, for at any rate a period of the time during which the present Government has been in power, in support of the view that that section cannot mean anything else than that the county councils must throw those charges upon the small holders. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the

Board of Agriculture is prepared, as I understand, to dispute that suggestion. If the Law Officers have changed their opinion it is only right that this House should know what the opinion of the present Law Officers is. It is very unfair upon the county councils, upon the small holders, and upon those Members in this House who are interested both in county government and in the small holders, that they should be left in any doubt as to what is the meaning of the Government's own Act of Parliament.

Why are the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues afraid of moving in this matter? At any rate, why are they reluctant to do so? I suggest, in the first place, that they are naturally not very anxious to offend the small holders, who are becoming exceedingly sensitive upon this matter. On the other hand, they do not like to take upon themselves the responsibility of doing anything which might raise an outcry on the part of the county ratepayers, who are already seriously overburdened largely as the result of Departmental administration. What are the two alternatives? One is that the small holders should pay for land which will never belong to them, but which will eventually belong to the county councils. We say, and I think the House will agree, that that is not fair to the small holders. The second position is that the county ratepayers, whether they like it or not, under considerable pressure from the Government, shall pay for land for which they may have no use hereafter if the small-holding movement turns out to be a failure. The only way out of this muddle and difficulty is so to interpret the Act, which I believe to be impossible, or alternatively so as to amend the Act as to make the charge for sinking fund a Treasury charge, and thereby make logical the process of pressure or of "gingering" which has been carried on to such a very severe extent in connection with the small-holdings movement.

**Viscount Helmsley:** It seems to me that there is both a question of fact and a question of policy which it is desirable should be considered. I would press very strongly that it is a most unjust thing to put these sinking fund charges, at all events for the purchase of the land, upon the small holder. There are two or three ways out of that difficulty. One is to put the charges upon the Treasury. Another proposal is that the county council should pay them through the rates in that they eventually acquire the land, and, therefore, presumably in the end, if they bought the land at a reasonable price—which is not always the price put upon it by the Government Commissioners—they will not ultimately make a loss when the land comes to be sold. A third alternative, which, I think, would be the best, is that of vesting the freehold of the land in the small holder. I can see no reason whatever why that should not be done. The loans will work themselves off in a period of years very little longer in most cases than the period over which the Irish farmers purchase their holdings. It seems to me it would be a far wiser policy immediately a small holder is put upon the land to invest him with the freehold of it, not making him pay any more than he pays to-day, so that under proper conditions, if he remained, he would become the owner of the land, but would not be able to mortgage it until the sinking fund charges had been paid off.

**Sir Alfred Cripps:** A much better system than the present, as the Noble Lord suggests, is to increase the number of small freeholders. Ownership is a very much better system than occupation. As I was going to point out, and as the Noble Lord has pointed out, when you have the occupier,

in the form of a sinking fund, really paying freehold value—for that is what it comes to—it ought to inure to his advantage when the time comes.

I therefore thoroughly endorse what the Noble Lord has said, that the proper solution would be to allow the occupier to pay or condition that if he pays for the sinking fund in course of time he becomes the owner. I entirely object to a charge being put upon the ratepayer by the Department which the legislature has not put upon him. If it is the law, if the auditors decide that the sinking fund cannot be put upon the rates, and if the local council should be surcharged, it is not within the competence of the Department to alter a legal principle of that kind. They must do it by legislation, and not by administration.

**Mr. Runciman :** The hon. Gentleman the Member for Wiltshire laid stress particularly in the fact that three Departments are concerned in financing the Small Holdings Act, and he thinks those three Departments at present are not in agreement on this subject. Let me, first of all, take the Local Government Board. There is no disagreement between the view held there and the view which we hold at the Board of Agriculture in regard to the sinking fund charges. None of the auditors, who, as the hon. and learned Gentleman knows, are semi-independent of the Local Government Board, have ever taken exception to that charge. The view of the Local Government Board is that nothing improper is done by charging the sinking fund upon the rates. I come now to the Board of Agriculture. I stated in this House, on the 5th March, somewhat briefly, the views which are now held by the Board of Agriculture. I repeat the words I used then. I said it was not the intention of the Government to compel the county councils to put this charge upon the small holders, and that there was nothing in the Act which compelled the county councils to lay this charge upon the small holders.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to quote the Law Officers' opinions. I must point out to him that to quote the Law Officers is contrary to practice. Anything done is done by those responsible as the heads of their Departments, and such legal guidance as was given to me justified me in saying there is nothing contrary to the 1908 Act in placing the sinking fund as a charge upon the rates. The other Department referred to is the Public Works Loans Commissioners. They acted strictly within their legal powers when they said they were not prepared to make loans to county councils in respect of a scheme—and one county council only is concerned—which throws the sinking fund charge upon the rates.

**Mr. C. Bathurst :** I happen to know the exact statement, and it was that they could not approve any scheme in which the sinking fund charge is not a charge in the rent of the small holder. That is what they say.

**Mr. Runciman :** That is only expressing it the other way round; it is identically the same thing. That was what they did in respect of the County Council of Wiltshire. But in that case they acted strictly within their legal rights. They may or may not make a loan according to their own discretion. It is not their duty to interpret an Act of Parliament or to say a certain course is legal or illegal. It is their duty to say whether they will or will not make a loan in this case, and they said that such loans in conformity with their views cannot be authorised. That is what they did. I told the hon. Gentleman last Thursday, and I repeated it on Monday, that we are now in communication with the Public Works Loans Commissioners upon this point. Communications are passing, and until they are completed I cannot say what will be the final decision of the Public Works Loans Commissioners. It is possible for the county councils to finance small holdings without going to the Public Works Loans Commissioners at all. If the Public Works Loans Commissioners were the only source the county councils would have to accept them whatever might be the views of the Commissioners irrespective of any legislative Act, but that is not the position. The county councils can, if they like, adopt other means. I admit a difficulty has arisen, and in a way which makes it impossible, I think, for the county councils to proceed in connection with the Public Works Loans Department's administration, and it is that we are dealing with at the present time, and until a decision is finally arrived at I do not mean to say more

about the functions of the Commissioners in respect of the administration of the Act.

The Noble Lord opposite asked me questions with regard to three alternatives which he thinks are open to those administering this Act, or, at all events, to those who are responsible for the policy of small holdings. I would like to draw a sharp distinction between the three alternatives. Sinking fund charge in respect of buildings should, I think, be borne by those who benefit by them during their lifetime. I think it is perfectly clear that those who use a building should during that portion of its lifetime pay their fair quota for exhaustion. Therefore, I do not think it is unfair that the sinking fund charge should be borne by the small holder in connection with buildings.

But difficulty arises about the period. Many are of opinion that in the life of a building the period is placed far too short. I know that in respect to some periods it has been pointed out, I cannot say with what justice, because the investigation is not complete, that provision is made for the repayment of the whole cost of some buildings over ten or twenty years, when it is well known that buildings of the same material elsewhere have existed for a period of forty or fifty years. That means the small holder, in respect of this building, has paid far more than the natural exhaustion of the building. I am quite alive to that fact, and with the concurrence of the President of the Local Government Board, I set up a committee of inquiry into the cost, life, and payment of buildings upon small holdings. The Local Government Board is represented upon that committee. It has already started its inquiry and has accumulated a good deal of information and is receiving assistance not only from county councils, but from private landowners all over the country, and I hope when we have that Report we shall be able to have more justification in asking for the extension of the period over which the payment is to be made.

When you come to the land an entirely different problem has to be dealt with. In the ordinary normal case there would be no exhaustion. In some cases the land will be badly used, but, on the other hand, the freehold would be worth a good deal more when the small holder went out. I have seen some poor land made good productive land as a result of the occupation of the small holder. But in normal cases you can say the small holding will be worth as much when the occupier left as when he came in. I think it is unfair that the charge should be borne by the occupier or owner. The Noble Lord opposite suggested three alternatives. It might be borne by the State. I believe that is not a good way to solve the problem. The next suggestion is that the county council should pay. I think the county council are justified in paying, and if they are prepared to pay the sinking fund I think they would be doing nothing illegal, and I should do everything to encourage them to take that course. I understand the Noble Lord holds very much the same view although he dislikes to add any further burdens to the rates. I should like to point out quite clearly that the large farmers are not the only ratepayers in the county. The small holders are also ratepayers, and they themselves are bearing in proportion to their acreage a proportion of the rates. They are paying a larger proportion in respect of their acreage in the way of rates than the large farmers.

**Viscount Helmsley :** Does the right hon. Gentleman mean small holders under the Act?

**Mr. Runciman :** Yes, the acreage is becoming now a very considerable one, running up to 100,000 acres, and before long it will be double and treble the size it is at present. These small occupiers are also ratepayers, and it is scarcely fair to suggest that they, apart from other farmers in the county, would be receiving benefit without bearing their proportion of the burden. My view is that under the present rating system they are bearing a larger proportion than, in justice, ought to be placed upon them. The third solution put forward is also pressed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, namely, that the sinking fund charges in respect of the land ought to be borne by small holders, and that they should become owners. That brings us back at once to the whole controversy over the Small Holdings Act when it was a Bill. All the old objections then raised to ownership being a solution of this problem stand again to-day. I mention only one to show that really it would be doing harm to the spread of small holdings and the small holdings' movement

if you were to say small ownership is the only solution of this problem. Men do not go into small holdings with the idea of remaining in them all their lives. A large number of small holders are those who take them with the idea of getting a step higher. They choose small holdings because they want to become large holders. If you are going to tie them down to their small holdings, you will be putting a most serious obstacle in the way of the spreading of the small holders' movement. I have seen many of the schemes which are now being worked, some of which are financed by benevolent landlords, and I have seen side by side with them county council holdings where you have at least thirty applicants for one holding. Under the ownership scheme you are tied down with many financial restrictions, which is a great disadvantage. What I have seen of these other schemes leads me to believe that there is really no demand for small ownership, and that there is an ever-increasing demand for small tenancies. That must be taken into account by any Government Department which has the administration of the Small Holdings Act. I admit the difficulty which has been raised, and so far as I can at the Board of Agriculture, I shall endeavour to remove that difficulty, and I hope to be able to do so.

### THE HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING ACT AND RURAL HOUSING.

Wednesday, 3rd April.

The following discussion on the Housing and Town Planning Act and Rural Housing took place during the debate on the motion for the Easter Adjournment.

**Earl Winterton :** I desire to raise a question connected with the operation of the Housing and Town Planning Act as it affects rural districts. The President of the Local Government Board, in answer to a question the other day, said that under the Act some 116 cottages had been built, and closing orders had been made in respect of 1,344 cottages in rural districts. He added, that did not mean all those houses were uninhabited.

I can say from personal experience that while these houses were being put in a state of habitable repair many families were without any lodgings of any kind; indeed, in some cases they had to seek shelter in the casual wards of the workhouses.

Where are these unfortunate people, who are being dispossessed of their only habitation, going to find shelter? In every village in England at the present time there is a lack of sufficient cottage accommodation, and the operation of the Act, by speeding up the process of closing insanitary cottages, has made the position infinitely worse.

**Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen :** The "back to the land" movement was really taking on in the country, and there is no doubt that the attractions of the town were dying down. People were going back to the country, but, owing to the entire absence of decent housing accommodation, that most salutary movement has been checked, and the people have been driven back into the towns, where they go to swell the overcrowding in the slums, and make the housing conditions in the towns infinitely worse than before.

Let me put one or two questions to the right hon. Gentleman. The first section of the town planning part of that Act says that the Local Government Board may sanction schemes for town planning. That is the whole object of that Act. The Act has been in operation for over two years. How many schemes for town planning has the right hon. Gentleman sanctioned? I do not know whether he has any figures different from mine; but, according to my information, he has not sanctioned a single one up to the present moment.

Under Section 55 of the Housing and Town Planning Act—the right hon. Gentleman's own Act—the Local Government Board are to issue general provisions as to the character of housing and town planning schemes, to show what ought to be done, and those regulations are to be included in the town planning scheme. Has the right hon. Gentleman carried out that Section of his own Act? Not at all. According to my information, he has not issued any sets of general provisions up to the present moment.

**Mr. Noel Buxton :** I should like to sketch the point of view of those places (*in Norfolk*) where an inquiry has been held, where housing has been admitted to be wanted, and yet owing to the inability to pay the rate necessitated there is an absolute standstill. One of those places I know very well, and I wish I could get my right hon. Friend to come with me and see one or two houses there which have been reported upon by one of these inquiries. I could show him a house there where two rooms are occupied by four beds, and the four beds by eleven people, and in that particular family, which is blessed with a large number of boys, no boy has a chance of sharing a bed with less than two other boys, and the beds are placed not where it is most convenient, but where it is extremely inconvenient, because of the number of places at which water comes through the roof.

I could show him another house where a family occupies for sleeping accommodation one room, not more than an attic, with another room, I was going to say, but in reality a mere cupboard, with no window at all, in which a child sleeps. These things are not altogether untypical of a somewhat widespread state of affairs. From the point of view of that village, where there is a general sense that something must be done, we are in an absolute quandary. Here one sees there is a general feeling duly expressed in the demand for inquiry and an inquiry has been held, a report has been made to the district council and the district council has occupied a day or two in debate upon the subject, and there has been a full inquiry into the maximum rent which could possibly be paid, and, finally, there has been on the part of the district council a resolution passed, after much opposition, in favour of building, but with this reservation, that the financial risk involved in the building should not go upon the district rate, but upon the parish rate. That offer was made to the parish council, and very naturally declined.

It must be admitted that the case of these low-paid rural districts is not being adequately met by the Housing Act. The social and economic machine does not work in respect to agricultural houses. There is the question, raised the other day, of a subsidy, and there, of course, there are all the objections of logic and of strict, sound economics; but I do not know whether as the lesser of two evils we may not be driven to a subsidy, to deal with what is an urgent practical question. I must allude to the problem of rating reform, which may be at the bottom of the trouble, and to a proposal which, I believe, to be a very practicable one, that of giving powers to local bodies to provide not buildings but building sites at a reasonable rate, upon which that large number of men who have saved a couple of hundred pounds might very likely build purely as an investment for letting purposes, even to agricultural labourers. That class of man builds somehow very cheaply, and if land were available at a reasonable rate there would be a very great deal more buildings even for the poorer agricultural labourers than there are now. That will be a matter of legislation. Of course, at the bottom of it all is the abnormally low wages paid to labourers. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend can tell me whether he could support the application to agricultural labourers of the principle of the minimum wage. The whole housing problem, and all the difficulties and rearrangements of the economic order, would solve themselves if the wages of farm labourers were adequate, and probably that is the solution which will be required in the end.

**The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Burns):** The fact is that although 1,344 closing orders were made, all the houses except 126 were put into decent and habitable repair. It is not correct to represent that 1,344 houses are in process of demolition. One thousand three hundred and forty-four closing orders were made, but they were only finally applied to 126 houses. The rest of the houses were made fit and adequate for habitation. Therefore the suggestion that because 1,344 closing orders were made the rural areas were short of that number of houses is not speaking according to fact. In fifteen months nineteen authorities in rural areas have built 153 houses at a cost of £30,208 at economic rents. The hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Norfolk knows that in the parish of Montagu, and also in a rural parish of Happisburgh, economic houses are being erected on economic lines. If the people there are not able to sustain themselves on economic lines my

suggestion to the Noble Lord and to Members in all quarters of the House is that they should join in criticising in the proper quarter the low standard of wages paid to agricultural labourers of 13s. to 16s. a week, instead of coming to Parliament for a bonus to landlords, who do not always do their duty, and to farmers, who do not always pay economic wages on which labourers can sustain themselves. I can assure the Noble Lord and his Friends that he will do more good for rural housing in the next twelve months, if they could get the wages raised only 1s. a week, than they will do by supporting a cadging organisation on the part either of farmers or landlords, and by coming to the House of Commons for ninnence a week subsidies for cottages to underpaid labourers in the country to be paid by unskilled labourers and charwomen in our large towns and cities.

I will take the chair for the Noble Lord at the first meeting that he will hold, say, in the county of Sussex or Dorset or Wilts, and will point out the injustice of asking a man on 14s. or 15s. a week to support a wife and family and pay 2s. 6d. rent out of his miserable wages. I am very glad to say that during the last few years the Local Government Board have sanctioned advances of nearly £3,000,000 for the purchase of 140,000 acres under the Small Holdings Act, and that in connection with that Act alone 1,015 cottages, independently of the Housing and Town Planning Act, have been provided in rural areas.

The hon. Baronet, in referring to the Housing and Town Planning Act, said, so far as I can gather, that there has not been a single application or any scheme sanctioned under the Act. You cannot have a scheme sanctioned unless application has been made. These are the facts. The preparation of fourteen schemes by fourteen municipal authorities has been already sanctioned by the Board. Applications for authority to prepare schemes have been made by three others. Notices have been given by eleven local authorities of other schemes. There are proposals in reference to schemes from twenty-two other local authorities under consideration at this moment, and negotiations are proceeding between the Board and thirty-nine other local authorities. In all there have been either sanctioned by the Board or are in course of development, not the minus quantity that the hon. Member suggests, but no fewer than ninety town planning schemes.

I need not tell the House that from 1906 to 1910, on much smaller schemes, and more on rural housing than previously, £448,000 in loans had been sanctioned by my Department; but better still, in 1911, and in the three months of 1912, £245,000 had been sanctioned in that fifteen months. As rural housing is being discussed, may I give a practical answer to a question which was asked to-day by the hon. Member for Wilton (Mr. C. Bathurst), in the form of a few simple figures? I am referring exclusively to the rural housing, and from 1890 to 1899 only £3,500 were sanctioned by the late Conservative Administration in that ten years. From 1900 to 1905, £6,800; from 1906 to 1910, £37,380; and from 1911 and for the three months of 1912—only fifteen months—I have had the pleasure of sanctioning £29,688, or just half of the amount of the previous twenty-two years. I am glad to say that in the last fifteen months nearly three times as much has been sanctioned as in the first sixteen years of the Housing Act.

I shall be supported in the view that we take as a Local Government Board that the rural housing problem is a serious one in the many ways in which this Government have taken steps in a way that no previous Government ever attempted. All of that would be relatively ineffective unless the landlords and all political parties in this country realise that instead of advocating dear food for men, women, and children, and low wages, the better plan is to raise the wages, and let those wages be good enough to enable the agricultural labourer, out of his higher wages, to build without subsidy from the rates or a bonus from the taxes, and live in a house of his own, or for which he pays rent from those higher wages which it is the duty of every one of us to the best of our capacity to secure.

## COTTAGE HOMES FOR AGED PERSONS BILL.

Friday, 12th April.

Order for Second Reading read.

**Mr. Harrison-Broadley :** I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

We have many measures for building houses in the urban districts; but in the rural districts it is a very different matter. There if we were to follow up the expensive methods that are in vogue in the urban districts, we should find that the agricultural labourer would not be able to pay the rent demanded by the authorities.

At present there are many cottages filled up with old people and with people who in some cases are able to do part of a day's work, but in many cases are not able to do any work at all. In some cases widows, mothers of families, reside in the neighbourhood; they are occupying these houses, and the young men when they grow up and marry find there is no house in the neighbourhood for them. What happens then? They have to leave and go into the towns. That is what is happening in our villages all over the country, and in that way we are driving away men more useful to the land than any you can import from the neighbouring towns and urban districts. By this Bill we hope to be able to build houses at the small cost of £120 per house. A house can and will be built for that sum, because, in the first instance, this Bill lays down that the land shall be given to the authorities, whether parish council or whatever it may be, free of cost. We have no doubt but that in every village we can find men willing to give to that authority enough land to build a number of cottages in that village. I have made inquiries into this question during the last few months and I have found out that the number of one for every hundred of population, as provided under this Bill, is not too large. In villages of from 300 to 400 population we find there are often more than three or four houses occupied by old people not able to do a full day's work. We find, indeed, there are seven on the average and that has been taken by me in many of the northern villages I have been in as the average. We wish to let these houses to respectable old people and people who are able to maintain themselves without the help and relief from the parish. In this way I think we can do very much indeed for these villages. We know there is great need in all our villages for extra houses, and I hope the House will consider it a good thing to pass a small holdings measure of this kind for the assistance of the agricultural labourers.

**Mr. C. Bathurst :** There is no doubt, as already emphasised recently in this House, that local authorities require something in the nature of a stimulus in order to induce them to provide cottages in circumstances which do not admit of economic rent being charged for a cottage in a case where both the value of the land and the cottage have to be taken into account in reckoning capital outlay upon which interest or rent has to be paid. In this case it is suggested that the stimulus be imported by a gift of the land by the landowner who is so disposed to the parish council, in consideration of the parish council for that gift being prepared to erect suitable cottages for aged persons, and to let these cottages at a rent which may be considered as more or less uneconomic, but which will not involve the local authorities or the ratepayers in any considerable loss, if in any loss at all. It may be said £120 is a low figure at which to put the necessary capital expenditure upon any cottage. But it should be borne in mind that the cottage contemplated in this Bill would be a two-roomed cottage upon the ground floor, which is eminently suited to the requirements of old people, who do not like to climb up stairs in order to get to their sleeping apartments, and is just the sort of cottage to be found in many villages to-day, but provided, as I think, in an undesirable way as a matter of charity and known as almshouses.

This Bill enables us to substitute for the old-fashioned almshouses, the very name of which indicates some loss of dignity on the part of the occupants, houses in which any self-respecting old man or woman can live at a reasonable rent which they can well afford with the help of the old age pension without any loss of dignity to themselves and without any loss of rent or interest to those who are interested as owners of the property.

The Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture considered this Bill on 4th April, 1911, when there were present representatives of fifty-six chambers of agriculture and agricultural societies throughout the country, including, I may mention by the way, several Liberal Members of Parliament, and a resolution was passed unanimously in favour of this Bill and of its acceptance by the House of Commons. Those representatives were intimately acquainted with the conditions of life in our villages and upon our farms, and that resolution was carried as the result of similar resolutions which had been passed by various chambers of agriculture all over the country. I venture to think, in face of such support as that, the House would be dealing unfairly with this Bill, at any rate so far as the agricultural population is concerned, unless it permitted its further consideration by accepting its Second Reading. I earnestly appeal to the House to accept the principle of the Bill, and to consider hereafter any Amendments which may be made with regard to its details. I would venture, before I sit down, to appeal to the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Wedgwood), who made a somewhat severe and caustic speech on the subject of the last Housing Bill before the House, to treat this Bill in a serious spirit, and as one upon which many earnest-minded and sympathetic men feel very strongly, and, whatever may be his criticisms, not unduly to indulge in satire, which will not kill the Bill, but which is only calculated to create sympathy with its provisions.

**Mr. Booth :** I beg to move as an Amendment to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add instead thereof the words, "this House, while recognising the importance of the housing question in town and country, refuses to treat the question in a piecemeal fashion, and expresses its desire that the Government should consider the whole question on receipt of the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Incidence of Local Taxation, giving due regard to their responsibilities as custodians of the public Exchequer."

This Amendment, of course, is meant to be in direct conflict with the passage of the Bill through this House at this stage, and I have purposely included in it a reference to the Departmental Committee on the Incidence of Local Taxation, because of the extraordinary clause in the Bill which seeks to exempt this particular property, which is to become the pet property of some indulgent country landlord, from the scope of the Budget.

**Mr. Pretymann :** It is not to be the property of any country landlord in any shape or form.

**Mr. Booth :** Special care is sought to be taken by Clause 10 to protect this property from the scope of the Budget. That is clearly so. The clause says:—

"No person shall be assessed or rated to or for any Parliamentary tax or local rate in respect of any land or buildings used exclusively or mainly for the purposes of this Act."

I believe the real father of the Bill sits on the Front Opposition Bench (Mr. Pretymann). He is a severe antagonist of what is known as the Lloyd George Budget, and he is averse to building a few cottages for people of sixty-five unless they are exempt from any Parliamentary tax or local rate. That seems to be such a daring proposal that I have thought it best to call attention to it. I regard this Bill as another instance of these Imperial private doles, and it seems to me it is about the most terrible instance we have yet had, because it is distinctly framed to subsidise low wages. I am against Imperial doles on principle. I am against hon. Members coming forward and appealing for public money to go to their constituencies in the shape of some little relief from some burden or other, but in this case not only is the Imperial Exchequer to be drawn on by these rural areas, but it is done in such a way that the man with decent wages cannot get any benefit, and the people with low wages are to receive the entire property.

**Mr. C. Bathurst :** These cottages are not intended for wage-earners at all.

**Mr. Booth :** If they are not intended for people who get any wages, what is the meaning of Clause 2, Sub-section (1),

paragraph (c), which says he is not eligible if his annual income exceeds £31 10s. per annum?

**Mr. C. Bathurst :** That is the limit within which it is possible for an Old Age Pension Committee to award a pension.

**Mr. Booth :** The Bill deals with people of sixty-five, whereas old age pensions are not given till seventy. Of course, if I am to have explanations of that kind, I do not think we shall get on with the discussion. The Bill deals with people of sixty-five, who have an income of £31 10s. The hon. Member distinctly informs the House this is not earned money. If you are putting up these cottages for agricultural labourers who have received such handsome wages that they have bought stocks and shares to give them an income of £31 10s. out of their savings, you are dealing with a class of whose existence I have been hitherto unaware. I hope hon. Members opposite will not object to my criticism that this is an Imperial dole simply because it deals with local taxation. It is the habit of hon. Members to pass legislation increasing the local burdens and then come here and complain that the Imperial Legislature has passed a measure which involves a large local contribution, and suggest that the Imperial Exchequer should pay the amount.

The Bill proposes to give powers to build these cottage homes to the local authority or the parish council, which later on is defined as the parish meeting. Do hon. Members know what a parish meeting is? It meets once a year. When I was about twenty-one years of age I took the chair at a parish meeting in my own parish, and we had bread and cheese and beer distributed free at the expense of the rates, whilst we discussed local affairs. The meeting came to an abrupt termination because my father, who was a Wesleyan society steward, hearing I was there, came to the "Bull's Head" and demanded that I should come out, and the meeting broke up and the affairs of the parish were thrown into confusion for years and years. The hon. Member opposite proposes that this parish meeting, which usually meets once a year, and which just a few people attend, should undertake the business of building cottages, because the erection of cottages is a business.

Clause 2 refers to the people who are to be eligible for cottages, and it says they must have lived within the area for twenty years. We have just got rid of that, or at any rate modified it in the Old Age Pensions Act, because it was found to be too harsh to insist upon twenty years' continuous residence. The framers of this Bill want to reimpose the old law of settlement. The idea is that the workman should stay in a village all his life, and should not choose his job or where he should live, and should never get up to that standard of independence which is so nauseous to the authors of the Bill. They want him to be there slaving away for twenty years before he is to be eligible for this bounty.

We now come to the provision as to the income of £31 10s. a year. Apparently the promoters of this Bill are prepared to say that anybody getting a decent wage should not live in these cottages. If a man earns about 12s. 6d. a week he can come in, but if he joins an agricultural labourers' union, as I hope he will—I think some agricultural societies formed under the National Insurance Act will try to develop in that direction, and I do not think that any good landlord need be afraid of it—if he joins an agricultural labourers' union he may get an advance from 14s. to 16s. a week, it may be doubled or trebled if Tariff Reform comes, and if he gets an advance of wages he must vacate the cottage. It must be remembered that men of sixty-five in the country districts are not done for. They are not obsolete, or only fit to be thrown on the scrap heap. The clause says that the combined annual income of a couple must not exceed £50. Look at the Machiavellian subtlety of that! It is brought in to exclude anyone earning £1 per week, or £52 a year. One pound may become a sort of ideal sum which an agricultural labourers' union will ask for, and agitation may fix it in the public mind. If the labourer succeeds in getting £1 per week he is disqualified from getting a cottage. I protest against legislation of that kind. A person to be eligible for a cottage home must satisfy the authority that his industry and mode of life have been such as to recommend him for the benefits under the Bill. That is introducing an inquisitorial

inspection into the lives of the people of this country which will not be tolerated. Under the Insurance Bill it was found impossible to provide for police inspection; the country would not tolerate it; but here you are to have this parish committee, this parish meeting or this parish council, consisting of a publican, a blacksmith, a churchwarden, a little shop-keeper, and, perhaps, a labourer or two, you are to have this coterie deciding the question of a man's industry and mode of life. The whole thing is abhorrent and repulsive in the extreme, and I cannot trust myself to do justice to my feelings regarding it.

Clause 4, Subsection (2), says that a tenant for life with the consent of his trustees may give an acre now and again for cottage homes, but it must not be part of the pleasure grounds, or the park, or the lands usually occupied by the principal mansion house. In Henry IV. a dandy officer on the field of battle objected to a corpse being borne between the wind and his nobility. Here you get the idea of a permanent mansion house with its pleasure grounds, its park and even your own pets. These people you want the dole for in these little houses are not to come too near your own mansion house. To put legislation of that kind before the working man is enough to make him lose all confidence in the representative principle. What does it mean? I suppose they are afraid of the smell of fresh fish from one of these cottages reaching their nostrils as they walk round their ample grounds or are afraid of them keeping hens or pigeons and picking a stray piece of nourishment from the home park. Why is that in at all?

**Mr. Pretyman :** It is taken verbatim from the Small Holdings Act passed by hon. Gentlemen opposite.

**Mr. Booth :** That does not make it any better. I dare say the hon. Gentlemen opposed the Clause at the time. Or perhaps it was put in as a bribe and a sop in order to remove obstruction. I have not been sitting here all these months and seeing the meetings behind the Speaker's Chair without learning something. I want to protest against legislation of this kind. Even if our own party has done it let there be an end of it. This is the time when we want labouring men to work in harmony and keep in the fabric of commercial life and the Constitution. This is like a red rag to a bull. It is inviting trouble. You are making food for Anarchist publications and leading articles in Socialist newspapers, and making a rod for your own backs. The labour troubles will not stop with the coal-fields. They will come down to these villages, and the next Jack Cade or Wat Tyler who appears from the country districts of England will receive a hearty welcome from the artisans of the North. The next labour problem in the next generation, to my mind, will centre round the condition of these villages. If the prospect of a mere handful of cottages at this low price would stave off a rural revolution there might be something in it, but it would precipitate it in my view. I do not know whether hon. Members realise that I have been down to several country districts in the South of England, and that I made an inspection in Sussex, where I found men living on small allotments in small houses of one storey, such as are contemplated by this Bill. These men are living on the lands of men who were press-ganged for Nelson's Fleet when we were fighting against the French. While they were away from home their lands were stolen. You will find in the names of the press-gang the same family names which appeared in the next generation in the workhouse books. Since then their sons and grandsons were turned out to break stones on the roadsides. That is why there is a burning feeling amongst the people, and sooner or later it will break out. I do not know whether the men who have large houses and pleasure grounds and parks wish to keep them away merely because they do not wish the smell of their neighbours; but I would remind them that the Socialistic Goth and the Syndicalist Vandal are looking at the mansions and at the "rare and refreshing fruit" in the orchards.

**Mr. Wedgwood :** I do not come to this House in order to improve the morality, the thrift, and the general good behaviour of the working classes. We are not here as grandmothers to instruct people and make them good, thrifty, industrious, and honest. We are here to see that they get freedom and justice, and the best possible con-

ditions. Really the desire of the well-meaning people opposite, in the governing of the working classes, to put them in their right place, is what is causing the industrial unrest in this country. The working classes do not wish to be interfered with in this way, and they would much rather that we left them free to govern themselves.

The local authorities can only build these cottage homes if the land is given to them or if they get it at a peppercorn rent. But there is absolutely no restriction upon the landlord securing the reversion of the lease, so that he may charge a peppercorn rent, and at the end of the lease get back not only the land but the houses as well. It is all very well to say that the landlord gets nothing out of the land, but if he gets back the land with the cottages it means that you are using the ratepayers' money directly to benefit the landlords of the country.

I was surprised at the presence of the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir G. Younger), and asked myself what was the reason of it. I came to the conclusion that it was not because Scotland was exempted, but because of Section 10, which seems to show some awakening of conscience on the part of hon. Members opposite. It provides that no person shall be assessed or rated to or for any local rate in respect of any land or buildings used for the purposes of this Act. Well, that is the beginning of the new era. There is a principle underlying the exemption of rates with which we on this side of the House heartily concur.

We believe that buildings should not be rated. If you want to encourage building cottages or any other sort of buildings, the best way to do so is to take rural rates off buildings so that new buildings may be erected. Here we find the thin end of the wedge introduced by hon. Members opposite—by the hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Pretyman) himself. It is very pleasant to see this principle embodied in this Bill by the hon. Member for Chelmsford. What is the ground of exemption from rates of these houses, the building of which he wants to encourage? His ground surely was that it was only by exempting them from rates you could afford to let them at 1s. or 2s. a week. That is perfectly sound, but what is not sound is that you should make this exemption from rates applicable to only one sort of property and thereby penalise unfairly other sorts of property. All we ask is that they should come forward a little bit and not leave this principle to apply merely to cottage homes for the aged and deserving poor, but should extend it to cottage homes for everybody in the country and exempt them from rates. By doing so they would encourage the building of them, and at the same time would be able to let these cottages at rents which are not so extortionate as those charged at present. The whole question depends upon some radical reorganisation of the rating system, the readjustment of local and Imperial burdens, and the exemption from rates of buildings and improvements as recognised in Clause 10. Along the other lines you are simply tinkering with it, if any local authority is ever enthusiastic enough to put this Bill into actual practice. You are only dealing with the problem piecemeal and not generally, and what is required is that you should deal with the whole problem and not try to stave off serious legislation by tinkering measures of this sort.

**Sir J. Spear :** There has grown up, and there has been created to no small extent by the Old Age Pensions Act, a further need for cottage accommodation, because we find that there is a large number of old age pensioners who have to go to the workhouse simply because they have not cottages wherein to reside. We want to see an opportunity given to provide that these old veterans of labour shall be able to end their days in the locality in which they live, and by this system of providing these little homes we shall contribute in that direction. There has always been difficulty in providing sufficient houses in the country. We know quite well that to build a house in the country and let it at a rent which the workman can afford to pay is an economic impossibility.

At Tavistock at the present time there are several old age pensioners in the workhouse. They cannot get little homes. We want to see a high standard of cottage promoted, but in the meantime, seeing that it is impossible that that can be accomplished, we want to meet the crying needs which have become manifest to us.

I know that we would all like to see agricultural labourers



better paid. [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear."] Hon. Members opposite cheer that, but they nearly always oppose any proposals brought forward that would contribute in that direction. They are always anxious to place on the land, which is our raw material, increased burdens, which mean an increased disability on our part to pay the agricultural labourer the increased wages which we are anxious to pay, and which we acknowledge he deserves.

**Mr. Barnes:** We stand for the principle of every man being free and independent, going where he likes, and identifying himself with his fellow labourers where he pleases. This proposal is entirely contrary to that principle and would upset it.

**Sir J. Spear:** The Bill does not interfere with that at all. A man may have left a district at any time during the twenty years. The Bill merely provides that those who have resided in the district for twenty years shall have the first chance.

**Mr. Barnes:** I have not forgotten that. The hon. Member says that the Bill does not prescribe that a man shall have lived in the parish for twenty years. It merely provides that he shall have a preference over the man who has not lived there for twenty years. What, as a matter of practical effect, does that amount to? The Bill says that you shall build one house for every 100 people in the district. Will there ever be any houses to spare for the men who have not that preference? Has that occurred to the hon. Member opposite? I have not forgotten the point made by the hon. Member, but I am a Scot, and of a practical turn of mind, and I look at things in the light of how I think they are going to turn out. This Bill will work out in the direction of tying a man down to a parish, to a landlord, and interfering with that mobility of labour that is at the basis of trade union organisation. Therefore it is a Bill which, from that point of view, must have our unhesitating opposition.

**Sir F. Banbury:** I disagree that whenever there is a case of hardship you should call it social reform and come down, either on the State or the ratepayer, and say you must remedy it. When my hon. Friend uses that kind of argument I see no difference between that principle and the principles held by the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley (Mr. Lansbury).

This measure is not going to benefit the working classes generally in the rural districts, because it is only going to apply to these particular cases. The applicants must be sixty-five years of age, and they must have lived twenty years in the village, and if there is no person who has lived twenty years in the village, then you may take some man who has lived there for a shorter period. What is going to be the effect of that? Supposing there is a man who has lived there for twenty years and he is over the age of sixty-five he gets a cottage. Supposing he dies and there is nobody of sixty-five years of age who has lived twenty years in the village, and somebody else has to be put in and before he dies there turns up another man who is sixty-five and who has lived in the village for twenty years. Are you going to turn out the other man who has usurped his position? If not, what becomes of the preference provided for under this Bill? Are we going to become a State-managed concern in everything? Is the State to come forward and build houses and see everything possible is done for us? I have never been brought up in the belief that the proper way to make a great Empire is for everyone to rely on their own individual efforts. I admit there have been Bills introduced, especially for Ireland, with which I have not agreed, but I never remember a Bill having been brought forward quite on these lines, and I am certain, if it becomes an Act, it is not going to remain on these lines. The very first thing that will happen will be that people will come forward and say the provisions are unworkable. "We cannot, in a town, build a house for £120, and the limit must be increased." Then they will say it is necessary the age should be reduced. "There are many cases of hardship where the man is not sixty-five, but where it is necessary he should have a house found for him. He is not in a good condition of health." You will, therefore, have the age reduced. Once you introduce this principle, you will have to go a great deal further than my hon. Friends desire, because their object is to meet cases of hardship in rural districts. I have had some

experience of building cottages in rural districts, but I have never been able to build one for £120. I do not pretend to be a rich man, and I do not throw my money about; and if I could build a cottage for £120 I would do so; but I have never been able to build a pair of cottages under £410, and then they were not very good ones; and they were built with stone, which was provided free, and which came from a quarry only one mile and a-half away, so that the cost of cartage was not great. They were built with 12-inch walls, which is not sufficient for stone, and the next pair I built had 18-inch walls, and they cost £450.

**Mr. Booth:** Did you comply with the local by-laws?

**Sir F. Banbury:** I did after a great deal of trouble. In neither of those two cases did I build any drains. I do not think they are necessary in the country. The local authority said I must build drains, whereupon the Thames Conservancy said I was not to do so, because they would communicate with a ditch, which communicated with a stream, which communicated with the Thames, and the sewage would eventually come to London. I had one inspector saying, "You must do it," and I had another saying, "If you do we shall fine you," and I exercised that fertility of resource with which some years spent in this House in conflict with hon. Members opposite has provided me, and I managed to defeat both the inspectors.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Herbert Lewis):** This Bill proposes to create a special kind of property with special exemptions for a special class of persons, to be selected by parish councils. It creates a special class of privileged people, who are to be assisted in a special way, and this special class is to exist in very small numbers, in a few cases scattered here and there throughout the country. I think that this country is very tolerant of anomalies. It is the most patient country in the world under anomalies, but we ought to pause before we created another anomaly of the character proposed by this Bill.

I suggest to the House that a Bill which has been before the House for some years, which has not been demanded by a single public authority in the country, and which will add another and unnecessary and futile anomaly to our system of local government, is one which the House of Commons will do wisely to reject. I trust that we shall not add another burden to those of which the contributors to local taxation so loudly and, I am afraid, so justly complain.

**Mr. Pretyman:** In the rural districts, particularly in the eastern counties, there are many parishes where no houses are available except those which are required for able-bodied labourers upon farms.

When a man who has worked on a farm all his life is drawing towards the time when he is unable to work any longer, this condition of things arises. The cottage is probably part of the equipment of the farm. It has been provided by the owner of the land, and is let with the land to the tenant farmer, who lets it to the labourer, not at an economic rent, but at a rent usually of 1s. 6d. per week for the five-roomed cottage, with a quarter-acre of land. The position of the man in a cottage of that kind working on a farm is really analogous to the position of a domestic servant working in a house in which he or she lives. It is really part of his wages, and it is necessary in order to carry out the duties that the man should live on the spot. I do not think any hon. Member opposite would suggest that it would be reasonable when a domestic servant leaves the employer to expect that that servant should continue to reside in his house. That is really the position in a somewhat modified sense, and the same principle applies to the man who is living on the farm and whose work is as necessary to the cultivation of that farm as is that of a domestic servant to the ordinary work of a house.

The occupier at the present time is put in this horrible position. He has a man living in a house, and for that man he has a high respect. The man has worked for him perhaps forty years, and is now past his work. On the other hand, he is bound to provide labour for the working of his farm, and he is in the position that he has either to go without the labour which the farm requires or to ask that man to leave the house, knowing that there is no other house available in the district. That is a problem which was constantly presenting itself to every occupier of land in the

rural districts. They have spoken to me about it hundreds of times, and it is discussed as a problem of daily occurrence.

The hon. Gentleman the Member for Blackfriars is an ardent trade unionist. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme is an ardent land taxpayer. Every Bill that is brought into the House on any subject is merely put to the test: "Will it advance the cause of my trade union? How does it bear upon my theories of the taxation of land?" If it does not happen to fall in with either of these particular objects it is forthwith condemned. We in the rural districts have no fads of that kind. We ignore the operations of trade unionism in our rural districts, and, in view of some of its later phases, perhaps it is well for us to do so. In regard to land taxation we certainly suffer under it, and have no particular cause to like it.

**Sir F. Cawley:** In the part of the country where I live it is usual for large farms to be let with from one to five cottages upon them. The farmer pays the rent of his farm, which includes the cottages, and I think that is a very bad system, because when a labourer is discharged he has to leave his house. In many cases the farmer requires a younger man, and the older man has perforce to go about his business, which necessitates him leaving his cottage. I think it is a great pity that there are not some small houses to accommodate these people. The want of these houses has been proved up to the hilt. I think this scheme will meet the difficulty, and, although my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme objects to anything that would palliate the lot of the agricultural labourer because he wants some great scheme of land reform, I do not think we ought to listen to that sort of argument. We ought to do something to benefit the people who live now, and may have to live for many years, under the present conditions rather than wait for this Utopia which the hon. Member is going to bring about by an alteration of the Land Laws.

**Mr. W. Crooks:** The hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford Division (Mr. Pretymann) and other hon. Members have treated this question as though we thought they had no sympathy with the poor and that all the sympathy was on this side.

**Mr. Baird:** Nobody will deny that the difficulty of housing in rural districts is appalling. In many cases it is impossible for young people to marry in agricultural districts because there are no houses where they can live. If you make the houses now occupied by the old people available for the young people and put the old people in houses which are perfectly suitable and adequate for them to spend their declining days in, you will be doing good not only to those old people, but to the whole agricultural district.

**Dr. Chapple:** My real objection to this measure is that it deals with effects and not with causes. The object of this hand to mouth legislation is the picking up of evils and the applying of immediate remedies while ignoring the causes that produce these evils. The evil in this case is that there are agricultural labourers who arrive at the age of sixty-five having worked for fifty years without being able to put aside a sufficient amount of their earnings to provide a home for the rest of their days. The real difficulty is low wages. Wages have been so low that the agricultural labourer has not been able, as every toiler should be, to put aside a sufficient amount to make a home when he is unfit for further toil.

**Mr. Albert Smith** continued the debate when

**Mr. Harrison-Broadley** 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 put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided: Ayes, 69; Noes, 131.

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

**Sir F. Banbury** rose—

And, it being after Five o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

## ACQUISITION OF LAND BILL.

Friday, 19th April.

Order for Second Reading read.

**Mr. Alexander Harvey:** I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill which I am about to ask the House to read a second time is intended to enable those who manage the affairs of our local districts to acquire land for the present and future use of their inhabitants more readily, and by a less expensive process than is possible at the present time. The Bill gives the larger elected bodies wide powers with regard to land which is at present in an undeveloped condition. It allows these bodies to purchase such land within the confines of their district, or in their neighbourhood, at a price ascertained for the purposes of the Finance Act, 1909-10. The Bill proposes that such land so acquired, may be used by the authorities for any immediate purpose for which they obtain powers, or may be held by them for such future use as they may determine. The Bill has two limitations. Clause 2 puts a limitation upon the amount of land the authority may acquire, by limiting the amount of money that they may from time to time expend. Clause 3 reserves from the operation of the Bill certain classes of land, such as gardens, parks, and land required for the amenities of a dwelling-house.

The local authority, which could look into the future and which had secured for the purpose of future development cheap land in its immediate neighbourhood, would certainly, far better than at present, promote its public communications, its roads, and its tramways in a very much more economical fashion than is possible just now. The great point is that as this land, now cheap and giving little return, developed in value, the profits of that development would go to those who are supervising the lives of the people of the town and providing funds for future development and improvement. I maintain that this Bill proposes nothing which is unjust. Land, of course, is a legalised monopoly, and I do maintain that to buy out for public use a monopoly of this kind at its present value cannot be called oppressive or unjust to those who at present hold it.

The second part of the Bill is taken up with an attempt to cheapen the transfer of land when public authorities require it. The power to purchase is limited to purposes already defined, and which the authorities can have by Statute or in one way or another. The Bill provides that there shall be, when land is compulsorily purchased, one arbitrator. The machinery by which the purchase is to be effected is set out in the second Schedule of the Bill.

**Mr. Whitehouse:** Private enterprise in housing has entirely failed to give us healthy conditions of life for the poor and the working classes of the nation. Let me remind the House how inadequate is the provision that we can now make for schools for the poor of our large towns.

**Lord A. Thynne:** So far as the acquisition of sites by the Education Department of the London County Council is concerned, we buy land in the open market, and the only time when it is possible for vendors to extort money from us is if they find that we, a big public authority, are obliged to buy a particular site. We have circumvented that difficulty by means of elaborate arrangements for secret purchase, which enables us to buy our sites at the current market rates.

**Mr. Whitehouse:** Those current market prices are so excessive that the local authorities have to buy the cheapest possible site, without always considering its position. They buy a site as small as possible. It means that the physique of the children suffers, that the whole well-being of the children suffers, that they are being reared educationally under cramped, narrowing, and unhealthy conditions. Schools in the East End of London have been built without any ground whatever for playground, and the school is therefore bounded perhaps on one side by a very narrow and noisy street, and on the other side perhaps by a railway line. Here the teachers and the children spend the whole of the school day.

**Sir Alfred Cripps:** The proposals of this Bill are grotesquely absurd and unjust. I do not only say that from the point of view of the landowner. I say it equally from

the point of view of the local authority, because whatever our views may be as regards the land it is a monstrous thing to attempt to stereotype a price which under certain circumstances at least might be an entirely unfair burden upon the local authorities and the ratepayers.

I quite agree it is enormously important as between the owner and the local authority that you should have as far as possible a cheap method and an easy method, and a method which, if it works, would be equitable and not prejudice the result, and which would secure that the owner gets the market value and no more; and, what is of importance, that the local authority pay at the market value and no more. It does not matter whether in land or anything else; it makes no difference whether you are dealing with land or any other commodity. You cannot have any value without there being scarcity in proportion to the demand.

If you take the land in this country I really do not think you can say that in a very large proportion of cases its value is beyond what hon. Members opposite imply that is when it points to the cost of production; that is to say, the money spent upon the land is above the ordinary land values in force at the present time, and considerably above them in a number of cases.

There is no property of any kind in this country so difficult to deal with as undeveloped land. There is no property whose valuation is of a more speculative character.

It is a most difficult matter, and if there is one business direction in which more money has been lost than another it is by the over-valuing or the under-valuing, as the case may be, of undeveloped land. So you are dealing in the first instance with a matter which it must be admitted on all hands is of the greatest complexity and difficulty.

I will take a certain number of acres, and perhaps the hon. Member for Newcastle will agree with this argument. Take a large number of acres valued at £250 per acre, and the local authority wishes to have the back land portion. The price is £250 per acre all round, and, according to ordinary valuation, the back land would be £100 per acre and perhaps less, because there is often a difference of two or three times the amount between the value of the back land and the front land. Under these conditions the civic authorities, in order to acquire that land, might have to pay three or four times its value. Is that encouraging the civic authorities and getting rid of the artificial value of land? On the contrary, that is creating it. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of dealing with land can come to no other conclusion.

The *prima facie* effect of this proposal is to enable the London County Council to expend upon the most speculative purpose of acquiring undeveloped land a sum which might be two or three times the amount of the National Debt of this country. I will deal with the only suggested limitation in the Bill. What is it? The only suggested limitation is found in Clause 3, Subsection (2), and really the comedy of this is worth following. It provides that they shall not expend a sum greater than the amount of the rateable value of all the land within their area, or expend in any one year for that purpose a sum greater than one-fourth of that rateable value without having a resolution in favour of the purchase. If they get that resolution they can do all that I have said, because their power is absolutely unlimited. Let me refer for a moment to the poll to be taken with regard to this resolution. This is the ludicrous side of the Bill, and I want any hon. Members who have got this measure to look at Part II. Can anyone believe that any sane persons can make such a suggestion who have any knowledge of local government? Take the County Council area of London. You will have to have a meeting of the electors, and there are about one million of them. Before you can have the thing finally decided it is to be decided by a show of hands after a reasonable interval, that being determined by the chairman. Just conceive what that means. Where are you going to have this meeting of one million electors of London?

**Mr. Barnes:** This Bill does not apply to Scotland, but it so happens that in Scotland there are certain municipal authorities that can buy up land out of the fund which is there called the Common Good, and a good deal has been done already out of this Common Good towards applying the principles of this Bill. An hon. Member last night twitted me with supporting this Bill because he thought it

was inconsistent with the principle of land value taxation. He went on to say that it was a thing that would not be done by the Glasgow Corporation, which had a great deal to do with popularising the principle of land value taxation. It so happened that the Lord Provost of Glasgow was here last night, and after the Adjournment I got him to make some inquiry as to what had been done in Glasgow. He was able at the moment to give me the assurance, so far as his memory went, that the principle of this Bill had been applied by the Glasgow Corporation. He went by the midnight train, and in a wire to me to-day from Glasgow tells me that the principle in Part I. of the Acquisition of Land Bill has frequently been acted on by the Corporation of Glasgow. A second telegram from him says that within the last ten years the Glasgow Corporation, out of Common Good, has acquired 329 acres. Thus you see that the Glasgow Corporation has not bought up all the land around Glasgow. I do not know where those 329 acres are, but knowing as I do the Glasgow Corporation, and knowing them to be business men, I think it is fairly certain that the corporation have bought this land in certain areas where they were going to run tramcars, and where, perhaps, they desired to build houses for the better housing of the working people.

Here let me say I rather regret the patronising way in which some hon. Members speak about working men or the working classes. As a matter of fact, I support this Bill, not as an alternative to the taxation of land values which, if ultimately and fully applied, would, I believe, have the effect of enabling the working classes, as they are called, to house themselves without any detailed or grandmotherly attention on the part of this House or anybody else. But we are a long way from that. I do not suppose I shall live to see the full and final application of the principle of the taxation of land values, and as I am a Scotchman and a practical level-headed man, I hope, I want to see something done in my own time and generation to relieve the congestion of the large towns, where I know people are housed under conditions which altogether preclude the possibility of decent, let alone dignified, family life. I want to see something done in my own day and generation to enable factories to be placed not in the centres of the towns where they are now, but out in the country amid green fields where the people can have the breath of heaven playing about them. Therefore, until we have the full realisation of the ideals of my hon. Friend behind me, I want this Bill, which seems to me a moderate proposal to arm the local authorities of this country with such powers as to prevent landlords scooping the pool, and taking the advantages which have been honestly earned by the local authorities acting on behalf of the people within their municipal areas.

**Lord A. Thynne:** The hon. Member for the Stretford Division (Mr. Nuttall) told the House that this Bill had the support of 100 vice-presidents of the land Nationalisation Society, and the whole tenour of the speech of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division (Mr. Barnes) was a frank acknowledgment that he thought it beneficial to place in the hands of local authorities the power to speculate in such land on their borders as they, from their knowledge and shrewd aptitude for business, consider likely to enhance in value.

I should like the House to consider whether it is wise and in the interests of the local authorities to give them the power to speculate on a very large scale in the purchase of land. The Bill proposes to confer upon local authorities the power to acquire an unlimited amount of land, not necessarily land situated within their own area, but land which in many instances, in the case of great towns, would be to a large extent situated within the area of other local authorities. They are to be allowed to acquire this land, not for any special defined purpose, not to enable them to carry out any of those statutory obligations placed upon them by Parliament, but with the same motive and for the same purpose as those which animate the ordinary land speculator in acquiring land with a view to making a profit.

This idea of converting the great corporations and local authorities in England into land speculators on a large scale rests on a profound fallacy—a fallacy which lies at the root of many of those specifics for dealing with the land question that find so much favour with some hon. Members

opposite, such as the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Wedgwood) and the hundred vice-presidents of the Land Nationalisation League. Take a case which recently happened near London, where the construction of a golf course at Coombe Hill by a few private individuals has enhanced the building value of all the land adjacent. What is the position? Under this Bill it would be possible for the London County Council to embark on a large land speculation and to buy for purposes of possible future profit building sites all round Coombe Hill. [An Hon. Member: "Not while you are on the county council."] The hon. Member is certainly correct. I should use what little influence I have with any municipality to prevent their embarking on a large speculation of that sort, and to concentrate their attention on the statutory public health functions for which they primarily exist.

If the House looks at the question from the point of view recommended by the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division, I do not believe that it will for one moment dream of making the municipal authorities of this country speculators in land on a large scale. On the other hand, I feel that if the hon. Member opposite had made out a case and had shown that it would enable local authorities to acquire land on better terms for the great public services for which they exist, the House would look with a more kindly eye upon the Bill. I should be the very last Member in this House to deny that local authorities have in the past and are still being confronted with very real difficulties in acquiring land for public purposes. In all those instances which were cited by the Seconder of this Bill of acquiring sites for the building of schools, for fire brigade stations, for street improvement, and for carrying out the functions of the authorities under the Housing Act, we are confronted with very great difficulties indeed.

In the first place, I would remind the House that, as has already been suggested, there are times when the municipalities are called upon to pay something more than the market rate. It is only natural when there are only one or two sites suitable for a given purpose, such as the building of a fire brigade station or a school, that those sites acquire a monopoly value. We have so far as London is concerned done a great deal to circumvent that. I think if we take our purchases, whether for sites for fire brigade stations or schools, for street improvements or for the carrying out of our duties under the working of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, we may congratulate ourselves that since 1888 we have not paid an excessive price for any land which we have purchased, and that we have got fair value for our money.

I suggest to the House that this Bill will do nothing for facilitating the operations of public authority either in the matter of housing or in any other of those important spheres of activity which they are appointed to discharge; that this Bill is not honestly intended to achieve any such purpose at all; that it is put forward, with the idea at the back of it by the members of the Land Nationalisation Society, in order to make the municipal authorities of this country the largest landowners within their area. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything about the inadvisability of doing that. This is part and parcel of the scheme of land nationalisation. That may or may not be a sound policy, but I object to this Bill upon far narrower grounds, namely, that if you pass it you are going to shake to its foundations the whole basis upon which our municipal credit at the present moment exists without increasing the efficiency of the municipal bodies to discharge the functions they were originally appointed to discharge.

**Mr. Wedgwood:** This Bill, introduced as it is by the Land Nationalisation Society, does bring forward a great matter of principle far wider than all the details that have been commented on by hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, and it is at the present time very important the House should look at it from every point of view. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking on April 2nd of this year, in making his financial statement, said:—

"We shall have in this country a great survey of the land which will be available for the purpose of the re-adjustment of local taxation, and which I have no doubt will be available for equally important public purposes of another character."

When he made that statement, I immediately had this Tax and Buy Bill, as it used to be called, in my mind's

eye. I know he was throwing out a feeler to see whether this Tax and Buy Bill would not be a possible opening for Liberal legislation in years to come. The people I represent in this House more particularly are the single taxers of the country. They are an energetic body of people, although their numbers may not be very great. They have been the life blood of Liberalism, and they invariably put their principles before party politics. These people made the success of the great election fight of 1909-10. They threw their whole soul into the fight for the Budget, and they secured a victory for the Liberal Party. But these people were not satisfied with the Budget, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows perfectly well they did not approve of the Increment Duty and they did not approve of the Reversion Duty. They fought for the Budget in order to get the valuation. I do not think, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer brings forward one of these Land Nationalisation Bills and hopes to secure the support of the whole body of the land movement in some future election fight, he can expect to get the support of those single taxers throughout the length and breadth of the country. The land taxers are not the same as the land reformers. They have no sympathy with them, and they view reform on these lines as tinkering measures, having no bearing whatever on the vast poverty problem facing the people of this country at the present day. It seems to us that in this matter of the land question, we have offered to us by the Government one thing after another as sops to keep us quiet and to prevent us getting to real business. We have had the Small Holdings Act; we have had the Town Planning Act; we have had the Increment Value Duty, and now we are to have this opportunity for local authorities to purchase land and to go into the speculative land business.

We want a plain, simple proposition for destroying the power of land monopoly. All these other proposals are mere dodges and sops to evade the issue and to show the Government is dealing with the land question when, as we know, they are not dealing with it in the right way. This Bill, of course, is the Land Nationalisation Society's Bill, and I would like to congratulate Mr. Hyder on having got it debated in this House. There is no single taxer who does not hate this Bill and hate the idea of land nationalisation as being nothing more nor less than a landlord's dodge for getting compensation. Let me indicate to the House what this Bill actually does. The Bill is divided into two parts. I have not much comment to make on the second part which provides possibly better machinery for enabling the local authorities to purchase land required for school sites, fire stations, or something of that sort. It does not, however, improve the existing machinery in the only way Liberalism ought to improve it. It is merely a simplification in the rules of arbitration. You are not taking, when you require land for schools, the Budget of 1909, or any subsequent valuation as the basis of the purchase price. You are going back again, as every scheme for land purchase has gone back for sixty years, to the Land Clauses Consolidation Act of 1845. Part II, merely repeats, perhaps with some slight modification, the principle that in buying land you are buying something for which special compensation is required, and these enormously high prices have always been extracted from either local authorities or railway companies. The second part of the Bill, although not going as far as I should like, is unobjectionable, and has a great deal to recommend it, and, if it were passed into law, I think it would be to the advantage of the whole community.

It is the first part to which my objection is principally taken. The first part of the Bill involves the purchase by local authorities generally of what is called undeveloped land. Nobody has yet touched on the question what undeveloped land is, and if you look back to the Finance Act of 1909-10 you will find it is a rather peculiar feature of that Act, as anyone who has had much acquaintance with operations under it will know, that it is possible for the owner of building land round a town to drive a coach and four through the Act in every direction. He has only to spend a certain sum on putting down roadways, and then it ceases to be undeveloped and no longer liable to taxation. In the same way any land which can be by some fiction let with a cottage a mile or two away is also not undeveloped land, and I have no doubt that the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Mr. Pretyman) knows many

other ways in which it is possible to get round this question and to see that land is not classed under the Budget of 1909-10 as undeveloped land. There is really only a small amount of land which is technically undeveloped, and it is possible to reduce that quantity very considerably within the four corners of the Finance Act. In so far as a local authority can purchase undeveloped land it may do so under this Bill. But it does not do anything whatever towards destroying the power of landlordism in the country; it merely sets up a new landlord in place of the old landlord.

It is the land speculation itself that we object to, and whether the process of ripening is carried out by the local authority or by a private landlord, it is equally bad in either case, and it is no satisfaction to us to know that the power of speculation is put into the hands of corporate bodies in addition to being in the hands of private landlords. That is our case against this Bill.

What is the local authority to do with undeveloped land when it has purchased it? There are three things it can do with it. It can let it lie idle, it can let it ripen, as they are doing in Germany, and hold it year by year until it will fetch such a price as will satisfy the consciences of those responsible for dealing with it. In that case there is every year a dead loss on the money borrowed. I agree with the Noble Lord opposite that a dead loss of that sort is going to be very bad for the financial credit of the local authority. The second alternative is that it can build upon the land. It can put model houses upon it. That is a practical proposition to put before the local authorities. They may buy the land and immediately set to work to employ clerks of works and builders to put up houses, but the first result, if that is done, is that local enterprise in the building line ceases entirely. You cannot get local enterprise to compete with a county council which is going in for the building business on a large scale. I demur entirely to the idea that the people of this country want to have houses built for them by the State: that they want, from infancy to the grave, to be looked after by brass button brigades. I have had some experience on a council which owns a good deal of land. We let it to tenants, and we make the unfortunate tenant, before he can have a small holding, sign an annual agreement. He has to promise not to let off the land for beasts to graze upon, not to put any nails into the buildings, not to put up advertisements. I only wonder we do not require him and his wife to go to bed at nine o'clock and to attend church on Sundays. The fact is the tenant probably finds he has exchanged one old woman for a committee of old women. That is the result of State ownership of land. If the local authority takes the second alternative and employs people to put up houses on the land, it will mean the destruction of private enterprise in building, because it cannot hope to compete with a local authority. In the second place, you will have constant interference with the freedom of the individual who inhabits your model dwelling; and, thirdly, you will have pressure brought upon the local authorities to let these model dwellings at charity rents, or uneconomic rents, and thereby assist the employer to get cheaper labour and to pay lower wages than he does at present. The second alternative is, to my mind, worse than the first. I would sooner that they acted like private landowners, and held land up and let it ripen until it reached a decent figure, than that they should go into business as builders and owners of model property and slum property. There is another alternative, which they have accepted in Germany, and which might be accepted here—that is to lease the land to private builders, and let them build just as they would if they were leasing land from the ordinary landlord.

Immediately you introduce the question of the State or municipalities leasing land to private persons you are back again in landlordism, just where you were when you started. What sort of lease are you going to give the man who leases the land? If you give him a seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years' lease he will have no incentive to put it to the best possible use, or to put up decent houses, because he knows that at the end of the lease the land will revert to the local authority. If you give him a thirty-three years' lease he will not do it; if you give him a ninety-nine years' lease he may. If you give him a ninety years' lease, are you not re-establishing the landlord problem just when you are trying to escape from it? I speak on this subject about the country on about four days a week. At the

end of one's meetings it is the commonest occurrence for someone to get up at the back of the audience—some well-intentioned person, like the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. J. Parker) or the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow (Mr. Barnes), who have backed this Bill—and say, "We agree with you, but why not nationalise the land?" I have to say that while the Conservative party are against nationalisation and the taxation of land values, and it is only the taxation of land values that is really opposed by the Whigs of the Liberal Party, therefore it is the taxation of land values that is the thing for the working classes. The real point one always makes in reply is to say "Nationalise the land! But what are you going to do with it when you have nationalised it? Are you going to let it out again, or are you not?"

I had the honour to be a member of a Committee which considered the land question in Nigeria. We found that the whole of the land there had been declared public property by Sir Percy Girouard. Therefore, we began with a clean slate and nationalised land. Immediately we were faced with the problem of what we were going to do with the land, what sort of security we were going to give to the people who wanted to use the land, and what incentive to put it to the best possible use. Some said give a ninety-nine years' lease; others said give, as in East Africa, a thirty-six years' lease, while others said give a seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years' lease. All sorts of suggestions were made as to what should be done with the land. Finally, we decided to give the people a seven years' lease, with a promise of renewal at a rent based on the unimproved value of the land they occupied, and to give them a renewal at a rent which took no account of the capital they had employed in improving the property, building upon it, draining or manuring. That is a system spoken of by Mr. Morel, on his return from the Congo, as a model system for the British Crown Colonies in Africa.

My objection to this measure is centred on two points. In the first place, it is a measure of land reform which does nothing whatever to cheapen land or to make it easier for those who want to use land to get it. In the second place, it is a measure of land reform, which, unlike our reform, does nothing whatever to stop the exploitation of labour or the growth of poverty in this country. It does nothing whatever to make it easier for a man who wants to get land to use it, who is at present compelled to work for wages for a master, to get that which he wants, but merely transfers the ownership of land from a private landlord, often good, but sometimes bad, to a public authority, and I do not believe it is possible, human nature being what it is, or that the public authority will be able to give that man any fairer or better treatment than he gets from a private landlord. I hope, therefore, that the House will not accept the Bill as any sort of measure of genuine land reform. It is a makeshift, a piece of tinkering with the existing system, with which we will have nothing to do. It will do no good in the long run. It will make it easier for some local authority to acquire a school site and so reduce the charge upon the rates, but it has nothing to do with the destruction of poverty, and will not put an end to the exploitation of the working classes.

**Mr. Pretyman:** Anybody, municipal or otherwise, is entitled to buy land at its present value, and I, for one, say that if a municipal authority desires to acquire land for public purpose it should have the land at a fair value and should not have to pay additional problematical value because the land might at some future time obtain a higher value than it has to-day. But when land has really an actual prospective value that value ought to be paid—that is, the real market value. The Bill is clearly designed to enable local authorities to purchase land at a price which may be considerably below its actual value at the time.

I am not at all sure that this Bill is in order, because this valuation does not yet exist, and, as far as I can understand, it is impossible, in view of recent decisions in the Courts, to carry it out. It was only yesterday that the highest Court of Justice in Scotland decided that the whole of the minus valuations under this Act are virtually absurd, or, at any rate, illegal. The valuation stands condemned, not only as regards those minus valuations, but as regards the whole basis of valuation, because that is on a regular ascending and descending scale, and once you destroy the bottom section of that scale you have got to invent a new scale, if you are to cover all the land of the

country. Therefore the whole basis of the valuation is gone. That and other decisions clearly point to the fact that nothing more hopelessly unreliable or fantastic than this valuation as a basis for the acquisition of land or any other form of property could possibly be imagined. The total value is fixed, and I have here two instances of total value ascertained under the provisions of the Act. The total value fixed by the Budget of undeveloped land, which includes all agricultural land throughout England, and every bit of land not built upon, is to be compulsorily acquired by the local authority at its total value. In one instance that I give, a piece of land, which was valued on the 31st January, 1911, had its total value fixed at £700. There was a good deal of consideration, and then, on the 21st June, 1911, the total value was altered to £1,000, and on the 6th September, 1911, it was altered to £1,100.

It is upon the variability and value of the land that the whole Budget is based. Now you come to this Bill, and, of course, the Government will naturally be bound, in the interest of consistency, for which I know they are famous, to oppose this Bill, because the whole principle of it is that the value of the land is fixed; that you are to have the value fixed as on the 30th April, 1909, and that, at any rate, for five years afterwards you ought to be able to buy all land in this country at that fixed value, and it is not going to alter in value at all. One is absolutely bewildered in trying to defend the owners of land in this country against unreasonable and unfair spoliation by this House. One really hardly knows which way to look. We have one set of hon. Gentlemen who desire to obtain the land at its lowest value by expropriation, and they are represented by supporters of this Bill. We have another set of hon. Gentlemen who desire to obtain the value of land which at present belongs to private individuals by taxing the owners out of existence. It is some consolation that those two sections of hon. Gentlemen have fallen out, and that they cannot agree upon the principle of this Bill.

**Sir Rufus Isaacs :** To my mind this Bill lays down, and, if carried, would affirm very important principles. The first is that you should give greater powers to the local authorities to purchase land. As the House knows at present the powers of local authorities though wide are restricted. Any particular local authority would not be entitled to purchase land except to use it for a specific, definite, and statutory purpose. If the local authority has acquired land for a purpose, and does not intend to carry it out immediately it is in a difficulty, for it cannot use it for another statutory purpose, but has to dispose of it to a private owner. These are the difficulties under which the local authorities labour in the exercise of their powers in relation to the purchase of land. This Bill says that the local authority can have power to purchase land in the area or the neighbourhood of the local authority, and it may purchase it—to my mind this is a very important principle—notwithstanding that it does not require it for any immediate or specific purpose. So under this Bill it may get the advantage of purchasing land when it is thought that that land will be required by the local authority within a few years. When it is not immediately required the local authority will be able to step in, give notice of the purchase, acquire the land compulsorily, and then when it has got it, use it for that purpose or for any other purpose that may seem fit to it.

I submit to the House that this Bill ought to have a Second Reading, so that we may at any rate get, by a Resolution of this House, that principle definitely affirmed. We shall really then have advanced very considerably.

So far as the present law goes our municipal local authorities do not buy at a fair value when they purchase land. They pay a very unfair value generally and a very much higher price than the actual value. There is not a single Member of the House who will contradict the proposition that no sooner does it become known that a local authority desires to purchase a piece of land than the price immediately rises by an appreciable amount in the mind of the owner.

The whole question of what is a fair value was dealt with by the hon. Member for Chelmsford and the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, who upon this subject always has a good deal to say that is worth listening to. The hon. Baronet asked, "Why do you say the total value and why do you not say the gross value," and he referred to it as it appears in this Act. There is good reason for that. The gross value contains a number of other things such as encumbrances and burdens which you could not properly take into account, and which must be borne in mind when you are fixing the price to be paid by the purchaser to the vendor, and the total value represents much better the commercial value than the gross value.

**Sir F. Banbury :** Does the right hon. Gentleman say that the total value is the market value?

**Sir Rufus Isaacs :** I say that the total value represents the market value at the time it is fixed. There must be some means of adjusting the value upon a fair value fixed upon the total value in April, 1909. I am sure my hon. Friend who seconded the Second Reading will agree with me that that is the way in which it should be carried out.

**Sir R. Finlay :** That is not the Bill.

**Sir Rufus Isaacs :** What is the good of saying that. It is often the case in Private Bills that it is pointed out in discussion that the principle laid down in the Bill does not carry out the real intention of the promoters, and that point can be met when the Bill gets in Committee.

**Sir A. Cripps :** Once you go away from the valuation fixed you get back to the present system.

**Sir Rufus Isaacs :** I never suggested you should go away from the valuation as fixed. On the contrary, the whole argument I am addressing to the House is that it is a useful principle to have affirmed by this Bill that your datum line for the valuation of land to be acquired shall be the total value as fixed in 1909. You must not forget that every five years you get a revaluation. You have a revaluation of the site value, and in the same way it must involve your getting at the total value, because unless you do you cannot get at the site value. The observations I made in answer to the arguments of the hon. and learned Gentlemen were really to the effect that I was prepared to introduce Amendments which will meet some of the criticisms directed to the details of the Bill. I am asking the House to support the Second Reading of a Bill that affirms the principle that the local authorities shall have the right to buy land in anticipation of their requirements, and shall not be confined to their immediate and specific requirements, and further that they shall have the right to use that land not only for any particular requirement, but for any other requirement which they may think necessary at the time, and, again, that there shall be fixed some definite figure as the basis upon which the calculation is to be made instead of the very wasteful and extravagant system which applies in many cases now under the Lands Clauses Act, which adds not only to the price but to the cost, and which involves certainly more delay than would be the case if the principle of this Bill were accepted. I am asking the House to accept the principle of the Bill, and to leave it to the Committee, when we get there, to discuss all these various matters which have been raised.

**Mr. Hicks Beach** continued the debate.

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

And it being Five o'clock, the Debate stood adjourned.