

"OUR POLICY."

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

THE COMING CAMPAIGN.

The campaign on the land question—on the Taxation of Land Values and the untaxing of industry—at the by-elections and in the newspapers, is being maintained with undiminished vigour and enthusiasm. We have attempted this month to give a synopsis of this "raging tearing campaign." The "Government unofficial inquiry" is now in full swing, and the results, we are told, will provide convincing facts for the coming policy on the land which Mr. Lloyd George is shortly to put before the country. This has naturally provoked much criticism, mostly of an entertaining character, of the policy we advocate. Meanwhile the by-elections have shown clearly that the Liberal party, if they are prepared to go in the direction of freeing the land from the shackles of monopoly, can command from the people the necessary driving power.

The reason for this is not far to seek. The mass of the people are not blind party politicians; they are more interested in their own social condition and future prosperity than they are in the fortunes of any political party. The eyes of the fool are on the ends of the earth, but the eyes of those who make a country great and prosperous are at home. The schoolmaster has been at work for a generation, and the people are getting to know that their enemies are not abroad, but are to be found in unjust laws which keep them poor in the midst of plenty, and to spare. What, after all, does it matter to the millions on the border line of starvation who boss the political machine either for personal ends or for petty ambitions? What the toiling people are after is better times, and these they implicitly and explicitly translate into, not more work, but higher wages and more leisure. This is the keynote to-day of democratic aspiration, and if those who control by government the destinies of the country cannot bring the trader and worker the better times they feel like having, then the governors of to-day will have to give place to others who will.

Nor are the workers in this respect pursuing a selfish policy. A man's chief interest is his home. In the well-

being of himself, his family, and his neighbours, he is free to make his country great both in material possessions and in moral fibre. In the absence of this well-being, in the absence of an equitable distribution of the fruits of labour social problems arise, and time which might be devoted to real progress is daily and hourly devoured in opposing schemes to solve the poverty problem. Hence it is that people are more concerned with the cares and trials of their own immediate condition than with the fortunes of those who take upon themselves the burden of Statecraft. This appears to be the lesson the advanced politicians are slow to learn, but they are getting to know. They have, we are convinced, about exhausted their stock of philanthropic measures to help the poor, at the expense of the poor. The cause of poverty is still left untouched by superficial palliatives, and notwithstanding all that has been done on these lines, the bitter cry of the over-worked, underpaid and badly housed worker is heard from the slums of town and country alike.

The prophecies of Free Trade have not been fulfilled, and the fulfilment is not going to be met by additional burdens on trade and wages. The case for land reform speaks for itself. The existing system has broken down, and it cannot be repaired by Small Holdings, Town Planning, taxes on future increment, fair rent courts and all the rest. The "deeper cut" must be made, and it will be one we feel sure, which will enable the community to look for its revenue in the direction of its own publicly earned values, at the same time making it a dear business for the land speculator who would keep desired land out of use at prohibitive prices. This is our simple plan; this is what we mean by the Taxation of Land Values and the untaxing of industry. This is what is contained in the Memorial of the Land Values Group in the House of Commons; this and nothing more. Nor do we urge that our policy is all that requires to be done to solve social problems; what we do affirm is that unless this policy is carried nothing else will avail. Our aim is to free the land from the fetters of monopoly; to open up to trade and commerce the natural sources of all wealth, and thereby raise the standard of comfort and efficiency all round.

We are out for freedom by way of abolishing all feudal or legalised restrictions to municipal life and development. We are for free trade in production, the complement of free trade in exchange. We want to see the prophecies

of Free Trade fulfilled, and we offer our policy as a means to this end. And here we submit we are on genuine Free Trade ground. It is on record that Cobden fully expected, when he set out on his campaign for Free Trade, that other nations would follow Britain's lead. Afterwards when he realised that this was not to be; that the advantages of his great liberty-giving policy were by economic law to crystallise in the higher land values of the industrial centres, he lamented the fact and called for a valuation of the land and for a taxation upon such value in proportion to the wants of the State. The Taxation of Land Values was Cobden's legacy to the Free Traders, and how they have trampled it in the dust will one day be accounted a discreditable chapter in the history of the Free Trade movement.

But the Free Trade machine could only despise Cobden's message for a time. Poverty has kept pace with all their prosperity figures, and those who stand for the Taxation of Land Values are in line with the thought and action which is making for economic and industrial freedom. The existing system of land tenure and taxation is up for examination, and as this proceeds the new and saner system which we exist to promote is not slowly being recognised as the only alternative. As the Lord Advocate has said: we are putting before our countrymen a plan of land and taxation reform which will commend itself to their common sense.

THE LAND QUESTION.

AS IT IS IN CORNWALL.

BY HAROLD SPENDER.

In the DAILY NEWS AND LEADER, 28th August.

The people of rural England, to judge from the emigration statistics, are now in full flight. They have waited long, but now they are going. They have ceased to believe in the possibility of English change. So they are now leaving us. They are going because they want room to live. They are leaving a country of enclosures and game preserves for a country where the gates of the land have been opened by strong, humane, courageous hands.

Here, for instance, is Cornwall, the most lovely and fertile of English counties. The long arm of Lyonesse reaches far westward into the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, and those waters from distant Mexico bring with them some of the warmth and richness of the land they have left behind. Here, alone of the English counties, the

flowers and plants of the tropics will thrive in the open air. Here, whenever the strong Atlantic winds permit, the land bears with little effort a luxuriant growth, fruits and vegetables springing up almost at a touch of the rich soil.

And yet the population has steadily declined for half a century:

1861	..	..	..	..	..	369,000
1881	..	..	..	..	..	330,000
1891	..	..	..	..	..	322,000
1901	..	..	..	..	..	322,000
1911	..	..	..	..	..	328,000

The slight recovery of the last Census (1911) means little, except that, with the immense new rush of tourists into Cornwall, there has come a population, largely of German and Swiss waiters, to minister to their needs.

LAND MONOPOLY.

Why, then, is the population practically stationary in one of the most fertile counties of England? The answer is not to be found wholly or mainly in the decline of the tin mines, which seem now to be recovering some of their lost prosperity. Nor in that fatal fascination of South Africa, which has encouraged in the extreme West of England a thoroughly bad form of emigration, taking the men, often not to return, except to die of miners' phthisis, and leaving the women to live empty lives of compulsory widowhood. Those things have hit Cornwall hard, but with good laws and a sound system she would have recovered. Recovered but for one thing. That is what has been roughly, but accurately, called the "land monopoly."

For there is no county of England where the land is more tightly held. Wherever you move among the people you hear one cry—the cry for land. Wherever you journey, by boat or on foot, you find little towns crowded and pressed together amid vast expanses of pasture-land. I have seen dirty, narrow, ill-built slums even in the little fishing villages—slums paying rents not much below the level of London. The smallest inquiry always reveals the fact that these slums are due to one and the same cause—the refusal to build or to sell land for building at prices possible for working-class habitation.

Sailing to the top of a little creek the other day, I found a village where not a cottage had a square yard of land beyond a window-box. I found that the landlord never on any account allowed his labourers to rent a garden. It might interfere with their willingness to work for the farmers.

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