

ENGLISH LEAGUE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30th, 1911.

THE work of the League during its TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR just closed, though highly satisfactory both in quantity and quality, suffers somewhat in the recording by comparison with the exceptional year which immediately preceded it—the year of the famous Budget, of its rejection by the House of the Lords, and of its triumph at a General Election. The special opportunities of that time called out special efforts, which—whether measured by the number of meetings, the amount of money subscribed, or of literature distributed—could not reasonably be expected to be repeated on the same scale so soon afterwards. It is true that there has been a General Election during this year also; but it was fought mainly on the question of the Lords' Veto. To the distraction of public attention caused by the Parliament Bill has since been added the long-drawn out preparations for and celebrations of the Coronation. These matters have not been without their effect upon the sale of literature, and upon the number of meetings held and of subscriptions received, during the first six months of 1911.

Another fact must be borne in mind in examining the Financial Statement for the past year, which will be submitted, together with this Report, to the Annual Meeting. The flourishing Yorkshire Branch of the League became, on January 1st, 1911, an independent organisation with an office of its own (at West Bar Chambers, Boar Lane, Leeds), and with Mr. FRED SKIRROW (formerly Yorkshire agent of the League) as its Secretary. The subscriptions of the Yorkshire members are now, of course, paid into the local Yorkshire fund. This has caused an apparent diminution of the income of the London office which, however, is very largely out-balanced by the generous response made by the local members to the appeal for an adequate income for the new YORKSHIRE LEAGUE. The English League was specially represented at the formal public opening of the new Yorkshire office by the Assistant Secretary, Mr. WILLIAM MUNN.

The Tyneside Branch of the English League has also been reorganised, with the generous help of the "United Committee," as the NORTHERN LEAGUE. It has offices at 90, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in charge of Mr. WILLIAM REID, Secretary. The Executive sent a letter to MESSRS. ROBERT BROWN and JAMES VEITCH, the Hon. Secretaries of the Tyneside Branch, expressing their hearty appreciation of the work done for and through the Branch.

The MANCHESTER LEAGUE (formerly the Manchester Branch) continues to do splendid work. One of its members, Mr. JOHN BAGOT, of Middleton, has provided the movement with a very cheap edition of HENRY GEORGE'S *Progress and Poverty* (in paper, 4d.; cloth, 8d.), which is selling largely on both sides of the Atlantic and in the Australasian Colonies.

The Executive desire also to congratulate the Branches at PORTSMOUTH and in the ISLE OF THANET on the excellent work done, mainly by a few men and with small resources.

The TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING of the English League was held in Essex (Large) Hall, London, on July 20th, 1910. The chair was taken by Mr. LEWIS H. BERENS, Hon. Treasurer, and afterwards by Mr. H. G. CHANCELLOR, M.P., the newly-elected President. Mr. J. O'GRADY, M.P., moved, Alderman P. W. RAFFAN, M.P., seconded, and Mr. E. G. HEMMERDE, K.C., M.P. (the out-going President) supported, the following Resolution, which was carried:—

That this annual meeting of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values heartily congratulates the Right Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the passing into law of the Finance Bill, 1909-10; expresses its gratification at the setting-up of machinery for the valuation on a capital basis of the whole of the land in the United Kingdom; and urges the Government to complete the Valuation with all possible expedition, in order that it may be made the basis of such a system of taxation, national and local, as will relieve the materials, processes, and results of industry from the burdens of taxation and rating.

Mr. CHANCELLOR has now completed his year of office, and the Executive have endeavoured to express their appreciation of his services to the League by nominating him for re-election as PRESIDENT for the coming year.

Towards the end of last summer, a circular, offering the services of the League's Lecturers, was sent to about 5,000 political associations and clubs, debating societies, and other bodies in

connection with which lectures or discussions on economic subjects are known to be held. These circulars were sent out on behalf of all the Leagues in England and Wales, and in many cases their results will appear, not in this report, but in the lecture lists of the local Leagues at Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham and elsewhere. For the first time, about 1,200 Conservative and Constitutional Clubs were circularised. Several debates with representatives of the LAND UNION have been held, mostly on "neutral" ground, and have proved both interesting and useful.

The Executive take this opportunity of congratulating the League on the help which is being given to the movement in general by this new landlord organisation—its President, its speakers, its pamphlets, and (now) its monthly JOURNAL. Our proposals have only to be discussed in order to be accepted. Useful discussion is impossible unless "the other side" is fully represented. The landlord's case is stated—ably enough, though not always good-temperedly—by the Land Union. If, by continually "magnifying the office" of the United Committee it has brought many new friends to the Associated Leagues, it has, as continually, weakened its own case by its rancorous attacks on Mr. FELS. This is perhaps one of the many reasons why its proposals are ignored by the Conservative Party, and its help publicly repudiated by Tory candidates in industrial constituencies.

LECTURES have been delivered or MEETINGS addressed by the GENERAL SECRETARY and other speakers at the following places during the past twelve months:—

London (109), Abbott's Langley (2), Apsley, Barnet, Barnsley, Basingbourne, Bath, Bedmond, Berkhamstead (2), Betchworth, Blackburn (3), Blandford, Bournemouth (2), Bovingdon, Brighton, Bristol, Brierfield, Broomfield, Burslem, Cambridge, Chester-le-Street, Chingford, Chipping, Chiselhurst, Chiswick, Cirencester, Crawley Down (2), Crosshills, Croydon (4), Deal, Dorking, Downham Market, Ealing, Eastbourne (2), East Grinstead, East Ham, Epsom, Fareham, Finchley, Flint, Fowlness, Frome, Gedney (Lincs), Glastonbury, Gloucester, Godstone, Guiseley, Grays (4), Hailsham (3), Halifax (2), Hanley, Hanwell, Harrow (2), Heathfield (Sussex), Hemel Hempstead (2), Hinchcliffe Mill, Horley, Hornsey (4), Horsham, Hoyland, Huddersfield (6), Ilford (2), Jarrow, Keighley (8), King's Langley (2), Kingston-on-Thames, Langford (Beds), Leeds, Leek, Letbury, Leigh (Essex), Leyton, Leytonstone, Liversedge, Longridge, Manchester (3), Maidstone, Middlezoy (Som.), Mitcham, Morpeth, Newbury, Newcastle-on-Tyne, New Southgate, Northampton, North Shields, Oakworth, Penistone, Peterborough, Petersfield, Portsmouth (3), Preston, Ramsgate, Reading, Redburn, Richmond (Surrey), Ribchester, Rochester, St. Albans, Scarborough, Sevenoaks, Silkstone (2), Silsden (2), Skipton, Southampton (3), Southgate Village, Stonor, Surbiton, Swindon, Taunton, Thriplow, Tottenham (2), Upper Mill, Walthamstow (3), Wells, Westerham, West Ham (5), Weston-super-Mare, Westwood, Wharcliffe, Whitechurch, Whitstable, Wigginton, Willesden (5), Wilston, Windhill, Wood Green, Worcester Park, Yatton, York (5); Scotland (12).

One very interesting experiment was due to the enterprise of the London Liberal Open-Air Speakers' League, which arranged for its members at various centres in London several parallel courses of educational lectures on the Land Question, all of which were delivered by members of the "United Committee." The courses were cut short by the sudden announcement of the General Election. The lectures delivered by the GENERAL SECRETARY of the League at the Essex Hall centre are included in the above enumeration of London lectures.

The above list of meetings could be greatly extended if it were possible to include all the meetings addressed by members of the League in connection with the December General Election. As many members of the League were candidates, and many others were speaking on their behalf, the total number of meetings during the election must have been very large. But no complete list of them is available, and very few are included in the above list.

There is one very promising section of the educational field which cannot be worked adequately from the central offices of the League. The "first half hour" at the numerous "Adult Schools" all over the country affords an opportunity of addressing a gathering, usually small, but always attentive,

of earnest and thoughtful men, at which outside speakers on social questions are welcomed. Larger audiences of men are gathered by the "P.S.A. Brotherhoods," thousands of which hold Sunday afternoon meetings, usually, but not always, in connection with some religious body. At these, short addresses (20—25 minutes) on social subjects are frequently given. In either case, the restriction of travelling facilities on Sundays makes it difficult to reach these meetings by means of our usual lecturers. But there are many members of the League, unable to lecture at a distance from home, who might greatly help the movement by an occasional address at a neighbouring Adult School, P.S.A., "Men's Meeting," or a local branch of the Church of England Men's Society. Some members are already doing good work in this way, and the Executive earnestly appeals to others, as time and opportunity permit, to follow their example, and to send a note of the time and place of their addresses to the office for the encouragement of similar efforts elsewhere. The GENERAL SECRETARY, who has frequently spoken at such gatherings on "The Bible and the Land Question," is preparing a small book on the subject, which it is hoped will be useful both to the speakers at, and members of, such meetings. It will be published in October next.

Many Women's Liberal Associations have gathered good audiences for our speakers during the past few years. As women's meetings are usually held in the afternoon it is sometimes difficult to find a speaker. Moreover, many of the Associations greatly prefer women speakers, Mrs. EDWARD R. PEASE, of Limpsfield—lately elected a Rural District Councillor and Poor Law Guardian—has rendered the League most valuable help all over the country by lecturing to Women's Liberal Associations, and the Executive, while tendering her their most grateful thanks, hope that other women-members will feel able to give similar assistance.

Mrs. PEASE has also been specially helpful in a department of the League's work which is still in great need of extension—the carrying of our principles and proposals into the VILLAGES. The GENERAL SECRETARY has addressed meetings in several villages, and reports the audiences as very sympathetic and intelligent, ready and indeed eager to support our proposals for rating reform. There is no greater service that the League's members and friends can render than to help the London office to utilize (or to make) opportunities for addressing rural meetings.

The EXECUTIVE has met 19 times, and the CENTRAL COUNCIL four times, during the year. In connection with Council meetings, three well-attended PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS have been held in Essex (Large) Hall, as follows:—

October 24th, 1910.—On "The Relation of Taxation of Land Values to Free Trade," opened by FREDK. VERINDER, General Secretary. (Chairman: E. G. HEMMERDE, K.C., M.P.)

January 24th, 1911.—On "Our New Parliamentary Programme," opened by JOHN PAUL, Editor of "LAND VALUES." (Chairman: H. G. CHANCELLOR, M.P.)

April 24th, 1911.—On "Land Value Taxation in the Australasian Colonies," by C. H. CHOMLEY, Editor of *The British Australasian*. (Chairman: H. G. CHANCELLOR, M.P., President).

It is hoped that Mr. CHOMLEY'S address may shortly be published in pamphlet form.

Delegates from the League have taken an active part in the INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE CONGRESS (Antwerp, August, 1910), where the GENERAL SECRETARY read a paper on Land Values Taxation in relation to Free Trade; in the very successful MANCHESTER CONFERENCE (September 30th—October 2nd), organised by the United Committee and the Manchester League, where the GENERAL SECRETARY again opened a discussion on the same subject; and in the Conference, organised by the I.L.P. (October 7th and 8th) on the "Abolition of Destitution and Unemployment."

Mr. VERINDER'S Antwerp paper has since been published as a penny pamphlet, and copies have been distributed to the members of the Cobden Club, the Financial Reform Association, the Eighty Club, and the National Reform Union. It is now in its second edition.

The delegates of the League have also taken their part, with the representatives of the other associated Leagues, in the work of the UNITED COMMITTEE. The GENERAL SECRETARY has served on two important sub-committees of that body, viz.: one which (in conjunction with representatives of the Parliamentary Group) drew up the Memorial to the Government; and another which was appointed to prepare a scheme for propaganda in the rural districts. The Fourth Annual Report of the Committee, recently published, contains a full account of the work of the central office at Westminster of the Land Values Publica-

tion Department, and of all the associated Leagues in Great Britain and Ireland. A copy will be sent, on application, to any member of the League, who has not already received it.

The following organisations have become AFFILIATED to the League during the past year:—

Barnsley Trades and Labour Council.
Cirencester Women's Liberal Association.
Kensal Rise and Brondesbury Liberal Association.
Rye Division Liberal Association.

The monthly journal of the movement, "LAND VALUES," published at the League's office, continues its work of inspiring and informing the Leagues, and of recording their work. It now enjoys an average monthly circulation of 7,500 copies. Special supplements are frequently published, containing full reports of Parliamentary debates on our question. It is posted every month to all members of the League who subscribe not less than 2s. 6d. a year to its funds, and a copy is sent to any Public Library willing to find a place for it in its reading-room. The League's office is also the headquarters of the LAND VALUES PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT, the work of which is most ably carried out by Mr. WILLIAM MUNN, Assistant Secretary of the League.

Abroad, as at home, the movement owes much to the personal and financial help generously given by Mr. JOSEPH FELS. Throughout the British Empire, from Vancouver to Sydney, in the United States, on the Continent of Europe, the proposals and principles which HENRY GEORGE began to formulate in California forty years ago,* have now active and devoted bodies of adherents. For the news of a movement which has now become world-wide, the pages of "LAND VALUES" must be consulted. But the Executive cannot refrain from giving a special word of welcome to the newly-formed SPANISH LEAGUE, which owes its existence to the persistent labours in the press and elsewhere of Señor ANTONIO ALBENDIN, and other Spanish members of the English League.

Forty-eight members of the League were candidates at the GENERAL ELECTION of December, 1910. Of these, 38 were successful (20 of them by four-figure majorities, and four unopposed); the President, two Past-Presidents, and four Vice-Presidents of the League were returned to the new Parliament. It is specially to be regretted that Mr. HEMMERDE (President, 1909—10) failed in his gallant attack on Portsmouth, and that Mr. W. R. LESTER, M.A. (President, 1907—8) came short by 37 votes of winning Mid-Norfolk.

The result of the Election, as a whole, was the return of the Government with an undiminished majority, pledged to the limitation of the Lords' Veto, and including many staunch advocates of the Taxation of Land Values. The LAND VALUES PARLIAMENTARY GROUP has been re-constituted, and its members have been keen to avail themselves of such immediate opportunities as were open to them in a House of Commons mainly absorbed in the details of the Parliament Bill, and of State Insurance. But so long as the Valuation is uncompleted, the work of the movement, in Parliament and in the constituencies, must be mainly one of preparation and education. A joint sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Group and of the United Committee, with the GENERAL SECRETARY of the League as one of its members, prepared a scheme of practical reforms, such as could be carried out as soon as the Valuation is finished. The proposals are nearly identical with those put forward by the English League in 1905. They have now been presented, by a deputation from the Group, to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose entirely sympathetic reception of it has led the *Land Union Journal* to remark (June, 1911, p. 1) that—

We now have the highest official admission that the appointment of the Local Taxation Committee is a definite step towards the Single Tax, a part of a great preconceived scheme for the confiscation of private land. . . . It is a step—a further step—in the direction of the reforms advocated by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, from whom the memorial emanated.

The Prime Minister is reported as saying that "he regarded the question as of great importance, both in its urban and in its rural aspects, although in his opinion the rural aspect was more urgent at the present time."

The memorial ran as follows:—

We, the following Members of Parliament, desire to place on record our grateful appreciation of the efforts of the Prime Minister the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the other Members of the Cabinet, in placing upon the Statue Book of the country the Budget of 1909—1910, which for the first time recognises the principle of the

* *Our Land and Land Policy*, 1871.

separate valuation of land, and thus provides the foundation necessary for such further reforms as will result in securing for the people of this country a more equitable distribution of the burdens of the State, in securing to each the results of his own labour, and in opening up the land to those who can make the best use of it.

We therefore respectfully urge the Government to continue and develop the policy inaugurated by the Budget by:—

- (1) Making Land Values available for public needs;
 - (2) Freeing industry from monopoly and undue burdens of taxation;
 - (3) Completing the policy of Free Trade by
 - (a) Securing greater opportunities to produce in our own country by affording greater opportunities to use the land; and
 - (b) Abolishing the duties that remain on the food of the people.
- We ask that this policy may be carried into effect by:—
- (1) Hastening the completion of the valuation of all land, apart from improvements, provided for in the Budget of 1909—1910;
 - (2) Making that valuation accessible to the public;
 - (3) Empowering local authorities to levy rates on the basis of that valuation;
 - (4) Levying a Budget Tax on all Land Values, to be applied
 - (a) In providing a national fund to be allocated toward the cost of such services as 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.

It was signed by 173 Members of Parliament (Liberal, Radical and Labour), eight of whom signed with certain reservations. The GENERAL SECRETARY has written, and the Land Values Publication Department has published, a penny pamphlet ("Form IV.: What next?") in explanation of the reforms asked for in the memorial. A resolution in support of these proposals will be submitted, on behalf of the Executive, to the forthcoming Annual Meeting. To educate Parliament and the electorate on this "next step programme" will be the main work of the associated Leagues during the coming year.

[All communications for the English League for the Taxation of Land Values should be sent to FREDK. VERINDER, General Secretary, 376 and 377, Strand, London, W.C.]

AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE ON THE SCIENCE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY BY PROFESSOR GOLIGHTLY OF THE ENDOWMENT UNIVERSITY.

Young Gentlemen: We might as well understand each other at the outset. The object of this course is culture, not education. It would not be proper for you to graduate unable to say that you have studied political economy, but it would be suicide for us to tell you the real facts of the case.

If, for instance, the question of watered stock ever comes up, I beg that you will not press me for a satisfactory reply. This university now holds and derives an income from many stocks which are waterlogged to the dewpoint. If we educated the people to such facts, our endowments would decrease in number and value and our income would ultimately vanish altogether.

Also, please, never ask me the real source of wealth. If it should ever occur to you that a large part of this university would have to be abandoned, but for the ceaseless toil of countless children in sweatshops and mills and mines, do not embarrass me by asking about it.

Do not ask me to explain the single tax or the ethical basis of land ownership, for a large part of our income is derived from valuable sites.

Do not ask me to explain Socialism or any other scheme for a more equitable distribution of the fruits of labor. We are on the comfortable side of the present arrangement. Let us not look a gift horse in the mouth. If it so happens that those who do the meanest work get the meanest pay, let us accept it as the will of God or as an axiom in our pursuit of knowledge.

Do not ask me to explain the high cost of living, at least not to the point of making it lower. High prices mean high dividends. High dividends mean beautiful college buildings and a high-salaried faculty. It is not for us to dwell upon the sordid side and emphasize such concomitant facts as squalid tenements and workmen under-nourished in mind and body.

In short, young gentlemen, we are willing to take up most minutely the by-gones of the middle ages and of more remote antiquity. We may even pursue science in so far as necessary to promote a more rapid and a more easy production of wealth, but we cannot discuss with you the proper distribution of that wealth. We must keep away, not only from the practical side of the present, but from all pleasant dreams of the future.—ELLIS O. JONES in LIFE (New York).

A PROGRESSIVE REACTIONARY.

Dealing with the proposal to spend public money to promote immigration to South Africa, General Hertzog, a prominent member of the Botha Cabinet, addressing his constituents at Smithfield, on June 4th, said:—

"Before their money could be spent on the importation of immigrants it must be proved that they would be a boon to the country from an economic point of view, and that could only be the case when a real demand for more population existed. Speculators who possessed millions of morgen would welcome immigrants to enhance the value of their ground, and mining proprietors would also have the same reason for favouring the scheme, because many people would be drawn to the towns and white labour would become cheaper. 'What interest,' asked the speaker, 'has the country in immigration? I cannot see it.' It was often said that more immigrants were wanted to make wages lower. The happiest country was not the one with the lowest wages. The most prosperous country was the one with the highest wages. People would be astounded at the number of poor as compared with the number of rich in some of the countries in Europe, and unless they in South Africa were very careful they would arrive at the same state of affairs.

"On the average, the people in South Africa were independent, and therefore more happy and prosperous than were the people on the average in countries with larger industries, such industries being built on the poverty of the people. Society, remarked the speaker, was based on a false foundation, and that being so, they would always have their thousands and millions of paupers. But who could show any reason why South Africa should hasten towards that condition of affairs? Rather let it come through normal development. Why, then, should they use State money to bring their own sons and daughters to the level of those people in Europe to which he had just referred?"

THE TIMES (June 27th, 1911) expresses the opinion that this speech "admirably illustrates General Hertzog's position as leader of the reactionary elements in the Botha Cabinet." We, on the contrary, are inclined to think that the insight into the Social Question which it reveals "admirably illustrates" at least one of the qualities necessary to General Hertzog becoming a leader of the truly progressive elements in South Africa, who have good reason to fear seeing their sons and daughters being reduced to the level of their fellow-worker in the older communities of Europe and America. Under the established conditions neither limiting the population nor increasing the population will prevent this. For, as General Hertzog did well to emphasise to his fellow-citizens—"Society is based on a false foundation." Let South Africa remedy this in South Africa; let her establish her society on a true foundation, on the foundation of Social Justice, and then spend as much public money as she can spare in bringing to her shores others to share the general prosperity that will inevitably follow. In the meanwhile Progressives and Radicals everywhere have good reason to thank General Hertzog for his manly stand and his outspoken utterances, even though they may not be approved of by the authorities at Printing House Square. It is quite time that such people were forced to learn the lesson that the interests of land owners—resident or absentee—land speculators and mining magnates and the interests of the masses of the people of the country, are not necessarily identical, but far more often diametrically opposed one to the other—what may better the financial interests of the one may worsen the living interests of the other. General Hertzog apparently recognises this fundamental political fact, which the democracies of the world instinctively feel and should no longer be allowed to ignore. For our part we sincerely thank this Progressive leader for having voiced [it in unmistakable terms, even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of THE TIMES, *et hoc genus omne*.