

flies. Quite the reverse is historically true. If you send men where the British flag does not fly you raise some great cry of freedom, and in the end the British flag does fly there. Referring to the general scheme, he said that the class of immigrants that Australia desired were those who had worked on the land. The Labour party in Australia dominates the politics of Australia. They have an immigration policy, a simple policy introduced by Mr. Hughes—that is, by drastic and confiscatory land values duties to break down the monopoly of land in Australia. I only mention this to show that the Australian Government has an immigration policy which is, concurrently with immigration, to break the monopoly of the soil, and the only men they will have are land workers. Therefore, so far as this Bill can be operative, it will be for the sending out from this country of the very men we require in this country, the men who can till the soil. It is just because they know that there will be a great demand on the part of discharged soldiers for a right to a foothold in these Islands that the Government are bringing forward this Transportation Bill. I hold very strongly that the first object of the Government should be to give these men an opportunity in their own country.

Defeat of the Government.

In a subsequent debate on the authorising of the expenses there was a good deal more criticism, and when the Bill came to be discussed by the Standing Committee, the Government representatives were defeated on two points, and on 20th May the Under-Secretary for the Colonies moved to postpone the next meeting till the beginning of July. It seems likely that the Bill as it comes out will be very different from the Bill as it went in!

The Land Question in Ireland.

In our May issue we printed extracts from three articles that had appeared in the *Statist*, giving a well-informed view of the Irish land question. They pointed to the need of a drastic measure which would break up the great ranching estates and bring them into use for cultivation by the people who had been driven on to inferior land and were living there in congested conditions. They presented by inference quite an emphatic argument for the taxation of land values.

We are glad to be able to supplement these articles with a still more positive expression of opinion taken from a very different source. They support the theme on the standpoint of land reformers, held ever since the days of the Land League, that landlordism, both in Ireland and in Great Britain, will have its life prolonged as long as public attention must be diverted by the bitter struggle for Irish self-government and all its side issues. That question once satisfactorily settled, political forces would be released to turn in freedom to more fundamental economic problems. Is it not patent enough that vested interests regard the Home Rule dispute as their barricade, and wish that the struggle and recrimination may go on interminably? That view is confirmed by all that is going on in Ireland to-day. But in the midst of their troubles, and despite the crisis they are passing through, Irish people and Irish "recalcitrants" have time to declare what they would do to remove oppressive taxation and to rid themselves of land monopoly in their own country. To give Home Rule with powers of that kind, and to reformers asserting such intentions, may well cause the reactionaries to pay the highest price which superior force can exact rather than submit! In *Nationality* of May 4th we read:

In many countries a tax on land values is levied, and this is a beneficial tax in its application. The object of taxing land

values is to throw the burthen on the land held out of cultivation, or in towns and cities on land not used or built upon. Its effect in Ireland would be to throw the burthen of taxation on the grazier, as tillage land would not be burthened. It would have the effect of forcing idle land to come into the market, so that those who wanted to get land to cultivate or to build on could have access to it on reasonable terms. Such a form of taxation would admittedly be a great advantage to Ireland provided the proceeds were applied to the national service of the country and the money spent here, which, of course, will never occur as long as we are tied to England.

Land-Value Taxation in Australia.

We print in this issue some extremely important statistics of the revenue raised in Australia by the rating and taxation of land values. It will be seen that in the Commonwealth as a whole the revenue so derived was over 5½ millions, or £1 2s. 8d. per head of population. In some of the States, however, the amount is much higher, for although the Federal Land Tax applies equally to each State, all the States have a land tax of their own, and in several of them local rating on land values has been carried to a very considerable extent. This is particularly so in Queensland, where all local rating is on land values, and New South Wales, where over 95 per cent. of the rates are taken from land values. It will be seen that the land value revenue in Queensland amounts to as much as £1 16s. 9d. per head, and in New South Wales to £1 6s. 8d. Detailed information as to local rating on land values is lacking for South Australia and Western Australia, but it is known that in the former twelve municipalities and in the latter forty-four road boards have adopted the system. In Victoria local rating on land values is optional to the municipalities, but has nowhere been adopted, owing to certain technical difficulties raised by the rating act, which it is now sought to amend. In Tasmania alone is there no legislation permitting rating of land value. The steady progress of the land value system in Australia is a striking tribute to its merit, and its adoption by one State after another is convincing evidence that its effects have been beneficial. It is clearly shown in the official reports that the effect has been to prevent speculation, and thereby to cheapen land and facilitate settlement. In the towns it has operated against the holding up of land on the outskirts and lessened congestion of building. The system has been so satisfactory that we may look for a considerable extension of it in the near future.

Labour Conference and the £5,000 Exemption.

The Inter-State Labour Conference opened here yesterday. The delegates include Mr. Ryan, Premier of Queensland, and many Federal and State Parliamentarians. Mr. Tudor, leader of the Opposition, was present as a visitor. The Conference, by 17 votes to 15, rejected a motion to strike out the exemption for estates of £5,000 capital value and under in the Federal land tax.—Reuter cable, dated Melbourne, June 18th; *Westminster Gazette*, June 19th.

This important news item is evidence that the defects of the graduated land tax are coming to be more clearly recognised by the Labour Parties of Australia. On the last occasion when this matter was raised only two votes, if we remember rightly, were cast in favour of removing the £5,000 exemption. Practical experience has demonstrated the disadvantages which it may readily be seen attach to exemptions and graduations. They facilitate evasion of the tax and prevent it from having its full effect in cheapening land and stopping speculation. The graduated tax does not, in fact, have the effect of penalising the large land speculator, because if the smaller owner is exempted or has a smaller tax to pay, the large owner is enabled to charge him a higher price for the land. The graduation does have the result