

LAND VALUES CONFERENCE AND PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION IN CARDIFF.

Under the joint auspices of the United Committee and the Welsh League for the Taxation of Land Values a Conference to promote the Taxation and Rating of Land Values was held in the Cory Hall, Cardiff, on Monday, October 11th. It was followed by a Public Demonstration in the evening, held in the Park Hall. Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, M.P., the Honorary Secretary of the Land Values Group in the House of Commons, and President of the Welsh League, presided both at the Conference and at the Demonstration.

The Conference was attended by 300 delegates representing Municipal Corporations, Borough and Urban District Councils, Co-operative Societies, Trades Unions, Temperance Societies, Liberal Associations and other public bodies. Mr. Raffan was supported on the platform by Mr. R. L. Outhwaite, M.P., Mr. J. Towyn Jones, M.P., Mr. Francis Neilson, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. Sidney Robertson, M.P., Mr. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., Bailie Hamilton (Glasgow), Bailie Pratt (Glasgow), Ex-Bailie Burt (Glasgow), Councillor Smithson (Halifax), Councillor A. J. Howell (Cardiff), Councillor J. Stewart (Falmouth), Mr. Joseph Fels (London and Philadelphia), Mr. John Paul (United Committee), and Messrs. Wm. Reid, Eustace Davies, and Wm. Meyrick (Cardiff).

There were also present, among numerous other public workers:—

Messrs. Alex. Walker (City Assessor of Glasgow), Alex. Mackendrick (Glasgow), A. W. Metcalfe (Belfast), Alfred Pedersen (Copenhagen), A. H. Weller (Manchester), S. Dugdale (Luddenden), F. Skirrow (Leeds), J. W. Graham Peace (London), A. W. Madsen and F. C. R. Douglas (United Committee), Chapman Wright (Birmingham), W. Pettit (London), Rev. A. C. Auchmuty (Birmingham), and Alex. McLaren (London).

THE CONFERENCE MEETINGS.

MORNING SESSION.

At 10.30 Mr. RAFFAN took the chair. He offered a warm welcome to the delegates, and after intimating a number of apologies for absence, including those from Mr. Clement Edwards, M.P., Mr. William Brace, M.P., and Mr. Richard McGhee, M.P., read the following messages to the Conference. Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, telegraphed:—

Success to your meetings. Future of this country depends on breaking up land monopoly. It withers the land, depresses wages, destroys independence, and drives millions into unhealthy dwellings which poison their strength. God speed every effort to put an end to this oppression.

Mr. Chas. P. Trevelyan, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education) telegraphed:—

"The land campaign is the opportunity of our lives. As the Chancellor said at Bedford, exposing the present evils, the first thing to do is to deal firmly, thoroughly, drastically, with the land monopoly. It is no use tinkering here and mending there."

Mr. Chas. E. Price, M.P. (Chairman of the Parliamentary Land Values Group) wrote:—

"I am satisfied there is no movement at the present time which more seriously demands the earnest consideration of the people of this country than the question of the taxation and rating of land values. At the same time I realise better than many how difficult is the task with which we have to deal, and the many converts we have yet to make."

Sir Alfred Mond, M.P., wrote, regretting his inability to take part in the Conference because he heartily supported the resolutions to be submitted. He had become more and more convinced that the proposals of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values were economically sound and practically capable of being carried out. Their present

rating system was a stumbling block in the way of progress. He wished them a successful conference on a subject on which the people of South Wales had every reason to be vitally interested.

Mr. RAFFAN said he believed the people of Wales would take a foremost place in the Campaign which they were now waging. He wished to make it perfectly clear that they were holding a non-party Conference, but they could not ignore the advance that would be made in the propaganda by the great speech of the greatest of living Welshmen, delivered at Bedford on Saturday. He was sure they, to whatever political party they belonged, welcomed the attack by Mr. Lloyd George on the land monopoly in that great speech—one of the strongest, most trenchant and eloquent attacks on the land monopoly ever delivered in our country. They were there to say that in their view they would put no obstacle in the way of such suggestions as giving a minimum wage to agricultural labourers, and security of tenure to tenant farmers, but unless they attacked the land monopoly at its source by a movement for the taxation of land valuation when the campaign was over landlordism would still remain entrenched and the attack would still be required to be carried on. All the self-sacrifice and devotion manifested by members of local bodies and rating authorities would go for nothing unless they got a fundamental alteration in their system of rating and taxation. The rural land question was of supreme importance because its solution would not only settle again on the countryside a contented and prosperous peasantry, but it would stop that dreadful drain to the towns, and that overcrowding of the labour market which reduced wages all round. Mr. Lloyd George admitted himself that while the Small Holdings Act had done something, it had failed to realise all that was expected of it. At present there was a complete stoppage in the work of small holdings as the County Councils could not obtain

land at a reasonable price. As soon as they went into the open market to secure land for the purposes of the Act up went the price immediately, both for purchaser and tenant. The result was that the small holder had to pay in bare rent twice as much as the farmer had to pay for similar land, although even the large farmer had already been rack-rented. That was only the beginning, for when the small holder settled down and started to do some improvements, along came the rate collector, who at once rated him on these improvements. Their system penalised improvement, and even the necessities of life. Mr. Outhwaite, who had made a special study of the subject, informed him of land rated at £1 an acre which, on its being put out of cultivation for sport coverts, was immediately on appeal

local authorities knew very well that when they wanted land for educational purposes or commercial purposes, although it might be rated at a nominal figure, up went its price as soon as the purpose for which it was wanted was known. The average price paid for school sites to-day was £1,000 an acre, which represented 1,000 years' purchase at the price at which it was formerly rated. They wanted to alter all that. The same applied to the housing problem in their mining villages and elsewhere. What inducement was there for any man to build houses in Ebbw Vale (Monmouthshire), where the miners' cottages were rated at 12s. in the £? Until men were made to pay the full value of the land they held up there could be no solution to the housing problem. All parties should unite in this crusade by



A GROUP TAKEN AT THE CONFERENCE.

David Davies. Mrs. Raffan. Alex. Walker. J. Dundas White, M.P.
Ex-Bailie Bort. J. Fels. Cr. Dugdale.
A. W. Metcalfe. Francis Neilson, M.P. Mrs. Hamilton. Cr. C. H. Smithson. Cr. A. J. Howell.
R. L. Outhwaite, M.P.
Isaac McKenzie. Bailie Pratt. W. D. Hamilton. W. Reid. P. Wilson Raffan, M.P. H. G. Chancellor, M.P. F. Skirrow.
reduced to 1s. per acre. That was an extreme case, but in England and Wales it was customary to reduce valuation for coverts to 5s. and 2s. 6d. But when they put the land to its proper use and put their buildings on it, up went the rates, multiplied twice, thrice, and fourfold. Until they altered that system by shifting their rates off improvements, and putting the rates on the unimproved value of the land, the Small Holdings Act would never get a real chance in this country. That was only one small aspect of a question which touched wages and housing. Members of pressing their leaders to deal drastically with the land question.

Mr. R. L. OUTHWAITE, M.P., submitted the first resolution, which was in the following terms:—

In view of the great and growing burden of local rates, the unfairness of their incidence both as regards districts and as regards persons, and their obstructive effect on industry and development both in town and country, this Conference declares that the cost of such services as Education, Poor Relief, Main Roads, and Police, which though locally administered are mainly national in

character, should be more fairly distributed between rich and poor districts by levying a National Tax on the site value of all land in the United Kingdom, thus reducing the burden of local rates; and further that, as to the balance of revenues required for local needs, local authorities should be empowered to exclude all improvements from their assessments and to levy rates on the site value of land alone. This Conference further affirms that both the proposed National Tax and the proposed local rates on Land Values should be paid by each person having an interest in land value and in proportion to that interest.

He said:—The Chancellor's terrible indictment of the land monopoly with its exposure of all the social evils resulting therefrom, made the question one of great public import, and one which would be tested at the next General Election. They, as land reformers, could have desired nothing better, and it was for them to see that the reform took the right direction. He had been charged with saying that the Government, in their land campaign, were out to catch votes. His argument was that, with the other great questions of Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment out of the way and on the statute book, there was no other issue but that of the land and rating and taxation reform, and his suggestion was that the voters would be out to catch the Government and declare to them that no longer must this anomaly, the withholding of land from the use of the people, continue. He wondered if the Chancellor fully realised the extent to which he was responsible for these conditions as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Chancellor was able to save the National Exchequer from bankruptcy by putting into a state of bankruptcy the local municipal exchequers. That was done by casting on the local exchequers an expenditure of something like 30 millions a year for National services which should be financed by the National Exchequer, and not taken out of local rates. And what the resolution asked was that those services which were national in character and in essence, the nature of which had been defined by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, should be financed by the Exchequer, although the administration of them could still be left with local authorities. They desired to transfer that burden to national shoulders. He found that the policy of the Young Unionist Group in regard to agriculture also called for a readjustment of taxation by placing such public services as main roads, asylums, police and higher education as a charge on the Imperial Exchequer. They found the Municipalities and the Young Unionists making these demands for the transference of this local burden, but the majority of them had no programme or idea to present to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the way he would find the money. He did not suppose it was their (the Young Unionist) duty to do so, they could merely point to the injustice and leave it to the Government to find the remedy, and they at this Conference asked that the money should be found by a tax levied on the land values of the United Kingdom. They asked that the cost of education and of the other national services should not be rated on certain localities, but on a rate struck on the land values of the whole country. That should be the basis of the system. Under the present system the cost of education fell heaviest on the locality least able to bear the burden. Obviously, where the poor lived, where the workers were crowded together there was the greatest number of children to be educated, and the greater number of poor to be relieved, and there the heaviest burden was cast. But where the rich lived there were fewer children to educate and the fewest poor to be relieved; there was consequently a smaller burden, although the rateable value was very much greater. They found a working-class constituency like Hanley rated at 11s. 3d. in the £, and Ebbw Vale at 12s.; and a delegate mentioned another place with 14s. Contrast these with the City of London, where the rates were 6s., just one-half. They declared

a great change would come about if they levied a land value tax over the whole country. That would at once transfer the cost from the shoulders of the poor of Ebbw Vale and Hanley to the broader shoulders of the ground landlords of great cities. It was in the power of the Chancellor to remedy this state of affairs, and they urged him to keep in mind, during his land campaign, these great evils and to bring about a transference of these national services on the lines advocated in the resolution.

Ex-Bailie BURT (Glasgow), in seconding the resolution, called special attention to the last clause, which specified who would have to pay the proposed rate or tax on land values. They had heard that some of their great landlords should be called upon to share part of their plunder. He was opposed to that. If it was plunder he did not want a portion of it; he wanted it all handed over. God gave the land to the people, and he did not intend that the Duke of Westminster, or Lord Bute, should lock it up. They were prepared to let bygones be bygones, and not ask a single penny back from these landlords, provided they shall not go on plundering the people any longer.

Mr. TOWYN JONES, M.P., Carmarthen, supported the resolution as the Benjamin of the South Wales Members of Parliament. He said the existing rating system, the basis of which was established by a landlord's Parliament as far back as 1603, was as the breath of death upon the community. The blood of the nation had been increasingly sucked from generations. Parliament session after session saddled local authorities with additional rates, and unless the existing rating system was put into the melting pot and entirely recast, they would soon be paying by compulsion a rate of 20s. for rateable value on property. To-day they found that the land was almost scot-free of rates, and all was placed on the community. They had no quarrel with landlords as such, but they had a big quarrel with the unrighteous laws which made it possible for them to eat up the vitals of the nation.

Mr. Jones repeated his speech by addressing the Conference in Welsh, and was received with enthusiastic applause.

Mr. ALFRED KEELING, Rhondda, asked Mr. Outhwaite how he was going to prevent the tenant or householder ultimately having to pay the taxation. In Mid-Rhondda and in Cardiff the majority of the people were living from hand to mouth, and they were absolutely at the mercy of every landlord, builder, and lessor.

Mr. OUTHWAITE stated that if he could hand on the tax to the tenant or lessee, the landlord would not object to the taxation of land values. If the tax was put on land held up, the owner would desire to put it to its best use. If he could not, it would come into the open market. Land would be more plentiful for building at its true value, and the greater area of land assessed would result in the rates being decreased rather than increased. In Mid-Rhondda the total area of the rating authority was 23,885 acres, and of that total the amount rated as agricultural land was 19,888 acres. The total amount raised in rates was £214,000 for the 4,000 odd acres, whereas the 19,888 acres only brought in £288. If three-fourths of this agricultural land were thrown into the market and put to use, instead of the landlords of Rhondda being able to raise their ground rents, they would have to reduce them.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

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Conference Report—(continued).

Mr. FRANCIS NEILSON, M.P., moved the second resolution, which stated:—

This Conference hereby declares its unfaltering adherence to the principles of Free Trade, meaning thereby the complete freedom of trade from all hindrances and restrictions; it affirms that this freedom can only be fully established when the land, the source of all wealth, is made free to labour and capital, and when all taxes, whether imposed for revenue or for protective purposes, which fall upon industry and improvement are removed; and therefore demands, in the interests alike of agriculture and manufactures, that public revenues be raised from the value of land which is due to the presence, growth, industry, and expenditure of the community.

He said they came to the bedrock of their principles in that resolution, which placed their claim on justice. It was the sense of justice that attracted him to the movement perhaps more than the machinery or the incidence of taxation. He had seen the injustice of the system which had driven their young men from the countryside. He instanced the fair land of Shropshire, where the population remained stationary although there were just as many lads and lasses born in Shropshire to-day as there were years ago. But the men could not settle on the land because of this system of land monopoly, a system of landlordism that was a system of tyranny. Such a condition of affairs had been brought about in Shropshire to-day that people dare not call their souls their own. The Parish Council could not help the people, because the members were the tenants of the squire, who supported the system of land monopoly. Some of the officials in Little Wallington would have died of fright if they had been seen by the Squire in the company of such a Radical as Neilson. These present systems perpetuated all the evils their social reformers were crying out against. They wanted no compromise on this question. So long as it existed it was bringing social damnation to millions of people.

Councillor A. J. HOWELL (Cardiff), in supporting the resolution, explained he was not there as a delegate from the Cardiff City Council, but merely as an enthusiast. He thought it was a shame that the representatives of a city which suffered so much from tied land should

not be officially represented to further that great movement.

Bailie PRATT (Glasgow) said he was particularly glad to be present with Councillor Hamilton, as officially representing the Corporation of Glasgow—a city which Scotsmen in their modesty never forgot was not only the second city of the Empire, but also the first municipality of the world. By 50 votes to 20 Glasgow had sent them there, and in doing so it had only been true to itself because for fully 20 years Glasgow had taken a leading, strenuous and consistent part in the propaganda for the Taxation of Land Values. Not only Glasgow was interested, but Scotland was interested. They were glad to join forces with friends in Wales. They were almost getting tired of Englishmen. They were going to give Englishmen a chance at the next election, and if they did not do better then they were going to be done with them for ever and ever.

The policy of the past in Glasgow had become the needs of the present. They were a practical people in Glasgow, and they were beginning to realise that the present state of affairs was about the worst possible from a practical point of view. Over a million people are in Glasgow, and nearly 150,000 are living in houses of one apartment; and over 50 or 60 per cent., more than half a million, are living in houses either of one or two apartments. They went on paying for their prisons, their poorhouses, their asylums, police system, fever hospitals, and their sanitary departments, and poured out money like water year by year—for these things, which were the outcome of the crowded conditions in which the mass of the people of Glasgow lived. They were beginning to wonder whether they had not put the cart before the horse. Glasgow, with

its million of people, was built on an area of 19,000 acres. Glasgow was the most crowded city in the United Kingdom. Of that total 14,000 acres of improved land last year contributed to the Municipal Exchequer £1,384,566, or £99 per acre. They had roughly 3,000 acres of agricultural land which contributed only £231, or at the rate of 1s. 7d. per acre, as compared with £99 per acre on the used land. Those figures spoke for themselves. The price they were paying could not be reckoned in money. They were suffering from the price paid in the lives, in the characters, and in the souls of the men, women and children.



MR. P. WILSON RAFFAN, M.P. AND MR. FRANCIS NEILSON, M.P.

Glasgow was going to do better service in the future in the cause of land values taxation. They had at the head of their municipality one of the most able, and most courageous of men. He had recently been in Canada and the United States, and he had come back with all his convictions strengthened in this matter. And he (Baillie Pratt) understood that the Lord Provost, breaking away from what had been a tradition for many years, was to take the chair at a meeting of business men to be held shortly and addressed by Mr. Joseph Fels and Mr. Dundas White, M.P. That was an indication that Glasgow was taking up this matter in real earnest.

On a show of hands the resolution was declared carried unanimously.

The Conference then adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference resumed at 2.30 o'clock p.m., Mr. Raffan again presiding.

Mr. H. G. CHANCELLOR, M.P., moved the third resolution, which declared that:—

In view of the repeated declarations and pledges of the Liberal Party during the past twenty-five years to abolish the remaining duties on the food of the people—the duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, sugar, etc.—and to substitute for them an equivalent tax on the value of the land, this Conference calls upon the Government and its supporters in Parliament to give effect to this policy at the earliest possible moment, thereby freeing the earnings of the people from vexatious and unjust taxation.

He said:—

The speeches they had listened to during the morning session made it clear that the system which put a hostile tariff on industry showed there was no Free Trade in that regard. The humble necessities of the people could not be said to be free. Those foods entered most largely into, and formed the larger portion of, the total expenditure of the working classes, and consequently a tariff on these goods bore most heavily on that class. It was true the Liberal Government had reduced the tax on tea by 1d., and also the tax on sugar by ½d. per lb., but these taxes were still a heavy burden on those incomes which were least able to bear it. It meant a tax on food from 5d. to 10d. in the £ on the very slenderest incomes. He felt pressure should be brought to bear on the Liberal Party, which had been pledged to abolish all taxes on the breakfast table. He and others had been greatly astonished to hear Mr. Asquith declare he was not committed to the abolition of those duties.

He recalled the fact that as far back as 1889 the National Liberal Federation had at Manchester declared for a free breakfast table and the taxation of land values and ground rents. That declaration of policy had been repeated at the Federation meeting in Sheffield in 1890. He himself had been present at the great gathering in Newcastle in 1891 and he remembered with what enthusiasm the famous "Newcastle Programme" was enunciated and received. That programme stated very definitely that the removal of the duties on tea, coffee, dried fruits, &c., was urgently called for and their place should be taken by the taxation of land values and ground rents. It was therefore idle for anyone to pretend that the Liberal Party had not associated itself, by the most binding pledges, with this policy. They were right in reminding the Government of these promises and demanding that they be observed.

Mr. SIDNEY ROBINSON, M.P., seconded the resolution. He said it was one of the first duties of land reformers to get those duties on the necessities of life removed. A free breakfast table he had always looked upon as one of the great planks of the Liberal programme.

As a Cardiff Councillor he remembered when the city came to purchase 50 or 60 acres of agricultural land; it was rated at something like £260. Directly the Corporation indicated they wanted it for the people its value went up at once to £150,000 or £155,000. There never was a better example of the necessity for the true taxation of land values. He felt there was no town in the United Kingdom which was better ground for preaching the doctrine of the taxation of land values than Cardiff.

Mrs. WEDGWOOD said Mr. Lloyd George had not said one word which would give official support to the programme of the Single Taxers. The Chancellor had sent them a telegram. He was very wise to do so. He had several Liberal members whose support he was extremely anxious to retain. She had no doubt he would send similar telegrams of amiable import but little intent. She thought they were absolutely wrong in passing a resolution calling upon the aid of the Liberal Party.

Mrs. Wedgwood's speech was received with considerable dissent from all parts of the hall.

Councillor WILLIAM HAMILTON (Glasgow) expressed his sympathy with Mrs. Wedgwood's views, and asked the meeting to beware of all political parties.

Mr. FRANCIS NEILSON protested against the statements made by both Mrs. Wedgwood and Councillor Hamilton. He felt he was well advised in keeping within the Liberal party and working for his principles through the Liberal party. That was the only way to make political headway. He had never been and he knew of no one who had been restricted from talking because he was in the Liberal party. He had never heard of anyone who had been dictated to. He advised everyone who advocated the Taxation of Land Values, whatever party he belonged to, to stay within and work through it in order to advance the cause.

After further discussion the resolution was put and carried unanimously.

Mr. JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD moved the fourth resolution, which declared that:—

This Conference affirms its deep conviction that the existing system of rating and taxation, by permitting the withholding of land from its best economic use, is directly responsible for overcrowding, low wages, unemployment, and the arrestment of desirable schemes of rural and urban development, such as small holdings, allotments, housing, and town planning; and emphatically declares that the remedy is to be found in rating and taxing land according to its value and not according to the use to which it is put.

He said he did not think the meeting should be turned into a squabble as to whether Mr. Lloyd George could be trusted or not. His speech at Bedford was not very satisfactory so far as any practical, definite programme was concerned. He would urge them not to trust any parties, but to think things out for themselves. When they saw that the Taxation of Land Values was going to make people free they could make the politicians move—they could even make the Member for Hyde (Mr. Neilson) move. They had had the fact emphasised that land monopoly was at the root of all evils and various methods

had been outlined at Bedford for alleviating the agricultural conditions, but what they wanted were means of breaking up the land monopoly. The Taxation of Land Values would break the corner in land. It would make land cheaper and more easily available.

Mr. JOSEPH FELS seconded the resolution in a speech which gave great pleasure to the Conference. He took a wide view of the problem. He was interested in the downfall of monopoly and special privilege everywhere. He

did not think any man should own more land than he could carry about with him.

After a well-reasoned speech from Mr. DUNDAS WHITE, M.P., in support of the resolution, in which he clearly showed the relation between rent and wages, the motion was put and carried unanimously.

Votes of thanks to the speakers and to the Chairman brought the Conference to a conclusion.

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION.

A public demonstration, attended by 3,000 persons, was held in the evening in the Park Hall. While the audience assembled, an organ recital was given and all joined in the "Land Song" as the speakers came on the platform.

Mr. P. WILSON RAFFAN, M.P., who presided, introducing the speakers, said that the land campaign must proceed until the land monopoly was ended, and from now on that would be the question which would swallow up every other question in British politics.

Mr. R. L. OUTHWAITE, M.P., on rising, had an enthusiastic reception. His speech was devoted to the Memorial policy of readjusting the relations between national and local taxation by means of a tax on all land values throughout the country, the balance of local revenues to be obtained by rates levied only on the value of the land. He recalled the message they had received that day from Mr. Lloyd George and the hopes that had been raised at Bedford. The Bedford declaration would shake the world.

It had gone far and wide already and from the Victorian (Australia) Free Trade and Land Values League there had come a telegram as follows:—

Congratulate you on George's proposal to rate land values as far surpassing all his other cabled remedies and marking real advance towards economic justice. Cabling £1,000 towards your own campaign.

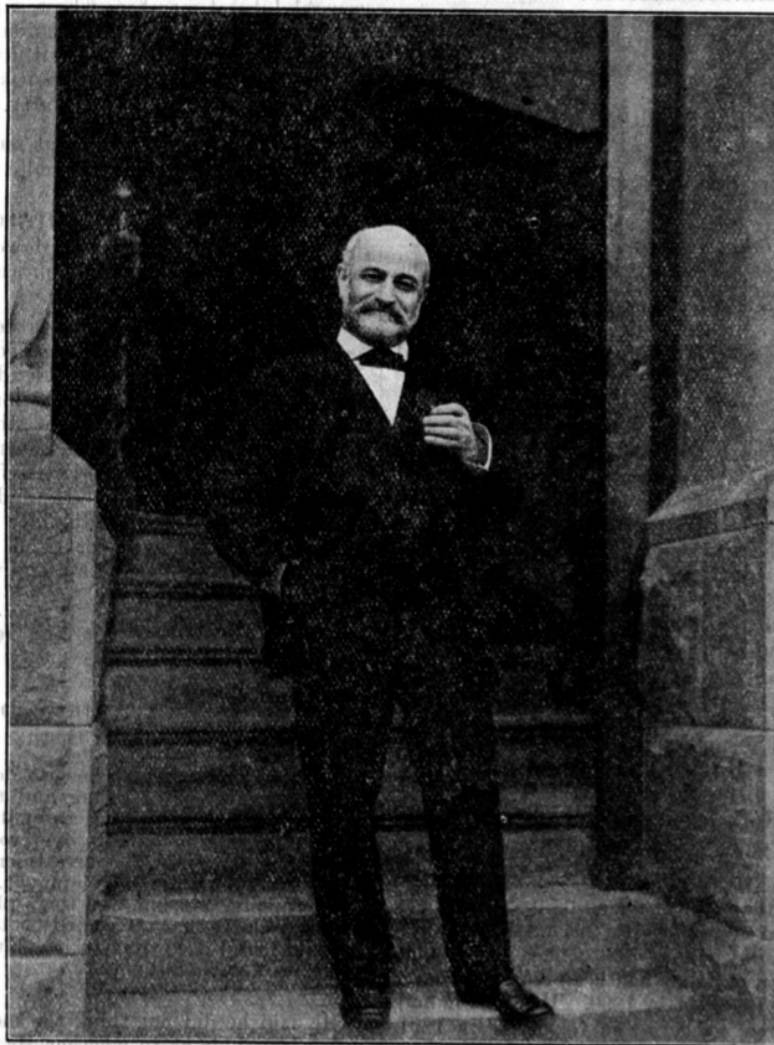
He as an Australian himself was proud to have the opportunity to convey this message. It came from those who were fighting for the Taxation of Land Values in

Australia, but who at the same time knew very well that advance on these lines in Great Britain would not only regenerate economic conditions in this country, but also give a lead to the whole world. The magnificent encouragement they had received from their Australian associates should inspire them to redouble their efforts to concentrate the issue on their proposals which were indeed the only way in which social conditions could effectively be reformed. The Colonies were watching this campaign because their fathers were the men who had been driven from the countryside of the homeland. The spirit of unrest was among the toiling mass, and the country would be stirred to its depths before this economic question was settled.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE, M.P., described the penalties which, he said, arose immediately an effort was made to improve the housing of the community. Some-

times it was stated that land was of very little value, but they found that was a delusion when they tried to buy it.

He instanced a number of cases where land having a nominal value for the purposes of rating could only be acquired at exorbitant prices. The site for a lighthouse at Strumble Head was an example. It had had no value



MR. JOSEPH FELS ON THE STEPS OF THE CONFERENCE HALL.

at all on the assessment books, but the price was £400 when Trinity House bought it. He did not say that this was not the value of the land, nor did he mind the landowners putting a good price on their land, but whatever the value of the land was, whatever reserve price the owner stated, the land ought to be down on the rate books at that figure and it should be rated accordingly. The fundamental fact to be borne in mind was that land was essential for all existence. Even if it were possible to live in the clouds, the cloud would be over some person's land and the occupier of the cloud would be required to pay rent. Land was also essential for production, trade, and exchange, and no gifts, no experience, nor equipment could make good the denial of access to land. If between two cultivators one had all the training and no land, and the other had land but no training, he was prepared freely to back the man without the training.

In introducing Mr. Fels, the CHAIRMAN said he was one of the most generous supporters of their movement. He had offered, if others would co-operate with him by subscribing up to £10,000 a year, to give pound for pound, even if it meant he had to subscribe £10,000 himself annually.

Mr. FELS, on rising, was received with musical honours, which he declared, amidst laughter, to be an "awful waste of breath." He said he would take the "bluff" from Australia and duplicate the subscription from Victoria for the general fund. He was willing to make them believe there was going to be "something doing" in this great campaign. After making a vigorous statement of the case for the taxation of land values, he wanted to know what they were prepared to do to help the movement. A league, with able officers, had been organised among them to educate opinion in South Wales, and that league should be supported. They wanted men and they wanted funds to strengthen their demands, and he therefore called on the enthusiast who had so warmly applauded both his and the other speakers' sentiments to subscribe what they could afford that night. Whatever was given to the collection he would duplicate, and the money would be specially devoted to the funds of the Welsh League.

The "Land Song" was sung while the subscription was being made, envelopes and cards of membership having been placed on each seat in the hall.

Mr. FRANCIS NEILSON, M.P., delivered a stirring address which, sounding an ethical note, made a deep impression on the audience. He spoke of the great message Henry George had given mankind, and urged every one present to find inspiration in his writings. Henry George's philosophy gave them a vision of a new kingdom right here in this world, which by their own efforts could easily be established. He recommended his listeners to visit the literature stall, which was at the back of the hall, and study the question for themselves.

The Meeting concluded with votes of thanks to the speaker and the Chairman.

OTHER CONFERENCE MEETINGS.

SATURDAY, 11th OCTOBER.

Previous to the Conference proper several meetings were held under the auspices of the Welsh League. These supplemented the propaganda work of the Conference, and proved to be a valuable part of the general campaign of which Cardiff was the centre during three days.

On Saturday afternoon an open-air demonstration was held in Cathays Park, at which Councillor Howell (Cardiff) presided. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. Francis Neilson, M.P., J. Dundas White, M.P., Joseph Fels, Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., and Bailie Hamilton (Glasgow).

RECEPTION IN THE PARK HOTEL.

On Saturday evening the League entertained the delegates to tea in the Park Hall, and an address was delivered by Mr. Joseph Fels on the progress of the movement in Canada and the United States. He pointed to what had been done in such cities as Vancouver and Edmonton, showing how the principle of taxing land values had been carried as a practical scheme, and had been attended with magnificent results. The movement was spreading like a wave over Canada. In the U.S.A. he could instance Houston, Texas, as a place where increase of taxation on land values and decreased taxation on improvements, with abolition of taxes on personal property had brought great industrial expansion.

Mr. Fels paid a tribute to Mr. Pastoriza, the Commissioner of Taxes in Houston, for what he had done in carrying out a great reform in face of the law. In Mr. Fels's homely language, Houston was "wiping other Texan towns off the map" by attracting their population, and they were tumbling over one another to discover and appreciate the secret of Houston's increased prosperity.

Mr. Francis Neilson, M.P., Mr. Dundas White, M.P., and others took part in the discussion, which was followed with great interest by all present.

SUNDAY, 12th OCTOBER.

THE LAND QUESTION AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

On Sunday afternoon Mr. W. A. Meyrick, President of the Cardiff Young Liberals League, read an able and scholarly paper on the relation between the peace movement and the agitation for the taxation of land values. Councillor C. H. Smithson (Halifax) presided.

The following is an abstract of Mr. Meyrick's paper:—

The Difference that the Idealist Finds between What Is, and What Ought to Be.

Poets used to sing of a golden age when nature gave of its plenty unasked, and when war and the sounds of war were unknown. This was an age of peace, and those poets seeing little prospects of the coming of such an age, put it in the past. To-day we are supposed to have another such age of peace. We are told so constantly by kings, ministers, preachers, and press. If so, we have not recognised it. So let us say we have peace, but do not enjoy it.

Western Europe has peace. Germany builds ships at a beggaring rate, and mobilises armies in the cause of peace. The German taxpayer, not knowing why, foots the bill. France, in the same sacred cause, takes another year from the life of its people. Austria, Russia and Italy follow suit. In Eastern Europe, where, if anywhere, we had come to believe war justifiable, we find the war of deliverance sinking into a mean quarrel for the plunder.

Here in Britain poor John Bull is getting a rough time from his many advisers. He throws his money by handfuls into the sea, on land, and now into the air, and all in the sacred name of peace.

It is time for some sanity to rule in this world, to put a stop to the headlong gallop down the road to ruin.

Our movement has its part to fulfil in the matter.

In the first case, the people must get a control over the war makers, the diplomatists, and all others who encourage such a distorted view of human relationships. We must grasp the essential truth of brotherhood of humanity, of community of interest.

Ideas have a unifying influence on mankind. Common ideas are a bond. Our propaganda in every land is drawing the bond together. We recognise a friendship, an alliance in the fact that we are all fighting a common enemy: land monopoly.

The success of our movement would be the biggest blow ever delivered against war. The present economic system

has divided every nation into classes. There are the leisured few, the toiling many, and the submerged proletariat. A poverty-stricken mob is the greatest danger to a nation's stability. It is unstable, restless, without anchorage, with nothing to lose but its poverty. There is an element of fluidity in it, which renders it capable of being stampeded in any direction. This class is always a fruitful cause of wars.

Again, trade jealousy is another curse. Trade follows the flag, we are told, and as a result there is the land hunger of nations, the endeavour to seize dominions, to create closed markets. Our movement stands for free markets, and as such is an element for peace.

Another danger in our economic system is the small leisured class, from whom our soldiers and diplomatists are drawn. Their traditions are warlike, their hopes of honour rest in war. If our movement reduces this class, as it must inevitably do, here again we have a positive aid to peace.

In short, in our movement for freedom of production, for crushing the land monopoly, lies the greatest hope for

International Peace. With our success comes the real golden age, which we recognise as lying, not in the past, but in the future.

An instructive discussion followed Mr. Meyrick's address. There was complete harmony with his view, and although the speeches all sounded the same note, each presented a different aspect of the case, and there was not a moment when the interest flagged.

ROATH PARK LIBERAL CLUB.

On Sunday evening Mr. Joseph Fels addressed a mass meeting at the Roath Park Liberal Club. The room was packed to overflowing. Mr. Fels gave a very instructive and witty address. He had his meeting entirely with him. He acknowledged a vote of thanks by presenting the mover with a leather-bound copy of *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, saying he wished he could prophesy that such an admitted friend of the movement was to take over the representation of Cardiff in Parliament.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISCUSSION.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE AT BEDFORD.

Mr. Lloyd George inaugurated the Liberal Land Campaign at Bedford on October 11th. The speech was devoted almost entirely to a statement of evils caused by the existing system of land tenure. We reprint those parts of it which are likely to be most interesting to our readers.

Influence of Rates.

Then there are rates which come in. (A voice: "That's it. Go for the rates.") There is the poor victim there crying. (Laughter.) You cut up a farm into small holdings and up go the rates. I will give you a case in Worcestershire. I do not say in every case; I will give you an example. There, before small holdings were established farms were assessed at £30. The County Council buys them. Up go the rates to £45, and as much as £60. I mean the basis of the rates. In Berks the assessment was £96 before the small holdings. Then came the County Council and bought, and up goes the rate, assessment to £208. In Northumberland the assessment was £84. The County Council buys the farms for the purpose of small holdings, and up it goes to £152. I could give you any number of cases, and that is the beginning of what the trouble means in that respect.

Precedent in Patents.

I will give you another illustration, which will take us a step further. Supposing a man invents a patent process or a machine. It is there. The idea is a product of his own brain. He has created the property himself. Who created the land? (Cheers.) Can he do what he likes with that idea? If there is a monopoly in it, can he withhold it from the public? Can he sell his machine at any price he likes? Can he impose any conditions he likes? Not at all. There was an Act of Parliament carried within recent years—the present Government are responsible for it—in fact I was, when I was at the Board of Trade—but it was carried through the House of Lords without a murmur. There was not a landowner who protested against it. The Tory Party has acclaimed it ever since as the best Bill we have passed. So therefore, I take it, they accept its principles. They cannot think them unfair; they cannot think them unjust—they acclaim them.

Now, what are those principles? That if a man uses his monopoly in such a way as to prejudice any industry, if his prices are unreasonable, if the conditions he imposes are unfair, and if by that means he prejudices any industry,

the law can step in and do one of two things: it can declare what price is fair, it can declare what conditions are reasonable, or, if it likes, it can cancel the monopoly altogether. If that is fair for a property which is the creation of a man's brain, why should it be unfair for another monopoly, another commodity, certainly not created by the landlords, a commodity which is more vital to the whole conditions of life, to the prosperity, to the well-being, to the existence of this country than any other monopoly in any other form?

Discouragements must be Swept Away.

What next? And I want you to follow this closely. The discouragements which exist in the present land system for the tiller of the soil to put all his experience and capital into the development of the resources of the land which he cultivates, discouragements which I have enumerated—and I did that deliberately because it led up to these remedies—must all be ruthlessly swept away. The cultivator, be he large or small, must be completely protected against confiscation of the improvements effected by him in the conditions of the land, whether such confiscation take the form of capricious eviction or increase in his rent on his own improvement or the destruction of his crops by game.

One more. Every effort must be made to equip the cultivator for his task by instruction, by expert advice, and by other means. The cultivator must be assisted to get his produce to the market without paying excessive tolls to anyone—(cheers)—and without unnecessary delay, difficulty and expense in collection. (Hear, hear.) There must be improved and cheaper transport facilities for the bringing of produce to market, and for bringing the material required by the tillers for their business on to the soil. And more especially there must be an end put to the present system by which certain railway companies give undoubted preference to foreign produce. (Hear, hear.)

The present system of rating, in so far as it discourages improvement by either owner or cultivator and rewards the indolent or unenterprising or overcrowding owner who declines to put his land to the best use, must be reconsidered and recast. (Cheers.) Greater and wider facilities must be given to the State for the acquisition of land, whether for immediate or prospective use, and the land must be acquired on terms which are fair to the community as well as to the owner. The nation ought not to be burdened and crippled by having to pay for the capitalisation of flagrant abuses which are destroying its life, and these powers ought especially to be applicable where land is derelict or uncultivated or undercultivated. There ought to be