

THERE WERE FREE TRADERS IN THOSE DAYS

The Manchester Guardian, 12th December, has done a service in printing from its columns of 100 years ago the following extract from the "Address of the Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association." It is an appropriate supplement to the extract we gave last month from the Anti-Corn Law League pamphlet by Perronet Thompson. Seeing how applicable these thoughts are to the conditions of to-day, we may ask ourselves, have we then learnt *nothing* in these hundred years?

WHILST SUBMITTING to our fellow-countrymen the reasons which have actuated us in uniting for the purpose of effecting the total repeal of the corn law, we disclaim all appeals to exclusive political parties—we invoke the co-operation of every man who is capable of appreciating the true interests of the nation, and of every patriot who wishes to preserve the commerce, and through it to perpetuate the greatness and glory of England. . . .

Nor do we seek for privileges or immunities at the expense of other portions of the community. All that we ask is, that the artisan may be emancipated from the shackles which confine within arbitrary and unnatural limits the market of his labour, and that his employer may enjoy the right of enlarging, with the increasing wealth and population of the globe, the field of profitable employment of his capital. Whilst demanding the total repeal of a law which professes to protect the agriculturist, we are bound in fairness to call for the removal of all duties upon the manufactures of foreign countries imposed for the purpose of affording protection to ourselves. We desire neither to be benefited at the cost of consumers of cottons, silks, or woollens; nor injured for the benefit of the proprietors of cornfields and pastures. We do not seek to depend for a languid and slothful existence upon the fostering hand of monopoly

or privilege. Far from holding out the delusive prospects of advantages not purchased by the toil and industry of the people, we boldly tell our industrious countrymen that labour is the price at which every earthly boon must be purchased; and all that we seek in their behalf is the freedom which shall secure to them a recompense, great or small in proportion to the extent of their exertions. . . .

To those who behold in national wars the fruitful source of crime and misery, we call for co-operation. The ways of commerce are the paths of peace. In order that mankind may be united as one family, it requires only that they may be allowed to interchange freely the benefits which nature has so variously and superabundantly bestowed upon the different countries of the earth. We hold no sympathy with those who would make war with the sword, for the acquisition or preservation of commerce. No profitable trade was ever acquired by violence; and even if it were, it would no longer be commerce, but plunder. Whilst directing attention to those obstacles in the way of our foreign trade which are to be found in our own statute-book, we protest against the policy of those who seek to divert the public mind with false and criminal projects of extending our commerce by the aid of conquest and bloodshed.

THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE

By Andrew MacLaren, M.P.

SPEAKING IN the Debate on Land Nationalization in the House of Commons on 14th December, Mr Andrew MacLaren said:

It is very difficult to know where agricultural land value begins and urban land value ends. When you begin to segregate land in this way according to its functions you inevitably come into difficulties. It is better to look upon land quite irrespective of the uses to which it is put and ascertain the site value of the land, whether it is used for urban or agricultural purposes or any other purposes. In ascertaining the site value or the rental value of the land you are ascertaining only the value attaching to that land by virtue of the presence of the demand of the urban community round about it. I would warn the House, because on this matter I am very definite and determined, and will fight, if need be, against any attempt to raise public funds to pay for a value which is created by the community and at the same time call upon the community to pay for the value which it has created. It is immoral, it is not honest, it is not frank.

Look at the prices which are asked for land when it is wanted for smallholdings. What happens? As soon as any corporation makes a move to get land outside, or contiguous to, a city for smallholdings, it is called upon to pay extortionate prices; even whether it is for smallholdings or for any other form of agricultural development. Once the landowner—and I do not blame him because the situation is such that it encourages him to act in such a way—knows that there is going to be a national move to develop smallholdings, or any agricultural development, naturally he is waiting there. He does not raise the price of his land. He does not do it automatically, it is done for him the moment the national movement is set on foot.

I do not think it is possible, even with the best designs

or intentions in the world, to have a stable, worthy human society if it is divorced from its right to use the land in which it lives. We have not got that. We are bound to have the opposite, if land is held out of use, millions of opportunities in the land locked up, and on the very same land men without jobs. Land closed against human use means the Employment Exchange open to hand out doles.

Your unemployment problem is based on the present land system, and the slums that infest every city in this country to-day are attributable to the land system. There is no economic problem affecting mankind which is not traceable to the basic cause of the withholding of the rights of men to the use of land.

Under the heading "The Tale of '39," the *Times* (31st December, 1938) mentions a number of famous people who were born in 1839. Among those whose centenary will fall in the new year it includes "Henry George (advocate of 100 per cent tax on land values)."

The *Manchester Guardian* of 30th December in its column "Centenaries of 1939," includes Henry George . . . "whose fundamental remedy for poverty was the appropriation of economic rent to public uses by a single tax levied on the value of land, exclusive of improvements, and the abolition of all taxes which fall upon industry and thrift."

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John L. Reid of Edinburgh, who died on 26th November after a long illness, is to be remembered for his devotion to the Henry George cause. He was for many years a reader and constant supporter of this Journal and he took a keen interest in every kind of activity. The Magazine of the Augustine Church in Edinburgh, of which he was a Deacon, pays him a warm tribute as an honoured and respected man among his fellows. To Mrs Reid, to Mr Harris Reid (of South Shields) and to the family we express our sincere sympathy in the bereavement they have sustained.