robbed of his common lands, housed worse than the animals, denied any possiblity of a career of life, turned adrift into the towns to make way for sport—solitary, unorganised, servile. In the last half-century, while the population of the country has doubled, the agricultural population has decreased by a million."

Hardly a social reformer is left who believes in private property in land. The exploitation of the British people through their absolute dependence on land to live at all "is the least defensible kind of exploitation. The new Parliament after the war could adopt measures which, whilst helping to put a stop to this evil, would cause such a great acceleration of wealth production as to make our burdens much easier to bear. Let every workman elector boldly associate himself with the call of the Independent Labour Party for a good big healthy tax on land values.

How the War Burden may be eased.

In 1909, Parliament ordered a valuation to be made of all the land of the Kingdom. At fearful cost, it was to have been completed in 1915. The war came in 1914, and nobody now seems to know whether the scheme is hung up or abandoned. Sir Leo Money tried to do the valuation for them by estimating it in terms of annual value at £90,000,000, or say £2 per head. Well, even that sum accruing yearly to the State in the form of tax or rent would be a help. But in the countries where valuations have been made we have the following results—

New Zealand: Annual land value per head of population ..	..	..	.. £14/12/10
City of New York:	do.	do.	£14/16/3

Clearly then, if these figures are anything to go by, a mere 3/- land tax ought to produce about a hundred millions a year. But we need not seek to commit ourselves to definite figures before we get them. Town lands upon which buildings are erected already, for the most part pay a much heavier tax than 3/-, though it is called rate. We have only got to remember the certain effect of even a moderate tax if it had to be paid by the owners of unused or wrongly used land. In his pamphlet "Private Property in Land," Mr. E. Melland recounts the instance of a Yorkshire landowner who, for sporting purposes, had withdrawn a block of land from cultivation and was thereupon rewarded by having its rateable value reduced from 30/- per acre to 2/6 per acre. Without going more fully into a big question, let us remember this one essential point. Any legislative measure which brings land into use not previously used must increase the wealth of the country and make tax-paying easier for everybody.

BOOK REVIEWS

BRITISH INCOMES AND PROPERTY*

It is difficult to apprehend with what object or purpose Mr. Stamp has accumulated the mass of statistics and opinions of others upon the hundred and one uses to which the income tax schedules and assessments may be put. No conclusions appear to be derived from his immense study, and the reader can only lay down the book with a sense of astonishment that anyone should take the trouble to arrange and rearrange, tabulate and comment upon so much meaningless figuration. For the income tax schedules and assessments are largely meaningless as a statement of actual economic conditions governing the possession and distribution of wealth. They lead the investigator into all kinds of traps, as Mr. Stamp himself admits, but even he has not recognised the fact that Schedule A is the most dangerous of all, and is worthless as a means of estimating either the total "national income" obtained from, or the total capital value of, real property. The "annual value" under Schedule A is simply a statutory fiction, representing the figure at which properties may be supposed to let *in their existing condition* and is responsible for the most absurd anomalies in the case of out-of-date or derelict buildings on valuable sites and large mansion houses requiring much expenditure on upkeep. Mr. Stamp certainly appreciates the still more important fact that the schedule takes little or no account of potential value of land in or near towns; but the matter is passed over lightly and presently he is deep in his examination into all the calculations of his dead and living authorities who accept the Schedule as it stands In the end, Mr. Stamp himself attempts a new estimate of "national capital" and arrives at a figure of 14,300 millions with a "range of doubt (plus or minus)" of 1,900 millions. He includes, in this "capital," 1,148 millions of national debt.

There is incidentally some suggestive criticism of various estimates of the unimproved value of land in the United Kingdom and the late Mr. Max Hirsch's figure comes under review as not altogether trustworthy. Except in certain details we do not follow the author in this criticism. He treats with surprising indifference, as a painstaking inquirer, Mr. Hirsch's arguments by analogy drawn from the separate valuation of land and buildings in the United States and elsewhere. Even a superficial glance at Mr. Lawson Purdy's annual reports on New York Assessments should have saved him from dismissing that aspect of the subject with so little consideration.

In the whole book there is no greater wisdom than the sentiments quoted (p. 428) from a letter in the Economist July 1, 1915. This matter is in smaller type in quotation marks, but the name of the letter-writer is not given, and Mr. Stamp neither approves nor disapproves his statements. If some statisticians took the words to heart, they would reduce their monumental works (and they are many and wearisome) to the size of handy pamphlets. The letter is as follows:—

> "The aggregate of individual incomes is *not* the national income for the year, but the annual national income is something very much smaller. This is because in the aggregate of individual money income the same real incomes are counted again and again as they circulate from hand to hand within the year. As the principle I am criticising, viz., the addition of all individual incomes to find the national income, it would follow that the larger the interest on the National Debt the larger was the national income, which is absurd. The real national income—that annual flood of consumable commodities by which we all subsist—is much more near to be measured by the money value of goods produced and consumed within the kingdom plus the goods imported for consumption, which figure is immensely less than £2,200,000,000. Therefore, the amount of the annual national savings has been very seriously over-estimated."

The fallacy here exposed is surely obvious enough, and although Mr. Stamp has warned against it, he has not fully appreciated the hold it has upon even the most eminent statisticians. The "annual flood of consumable commodities" is the original fund and the only fund from which all wealth is distributed in certain directions—wages, interest, and rent. A tenant, let us say, pays £60 in rent out of wealth produced by him, which has an annual value of £300, and if it is not a business rent he cannot deduct it from his assessment. The result is he is assessed at £300 under Schedule D, and the owner of the rent is assessed at £60 under Schedule A. The pitfall is ready for the unwary constructor of figures. After burrowing into "official returns" he duly produces a valuation of the joint income of the two persons equal to £360! Multiply this case by the hundred thousand and then judge the utility of the calculations of "national income" figured on such a false basis. But to the making of books there is no end.

A. W. M.

* British Incomes and Property. By J. C. Stamp, B.Sc. (Edin.), London. P. S. King & Son, Ltd. Price 12s. 6d.