

SOME ELECTION LITERATURE.

MR. OUTHWAITE'S ELECTION ADDRESS.

With the addition of two short paragraphs—the one dealing with local political affairs and the other with Home Rule, Disestablishment and Education—the following comprised Mr. Outhwaite's election address:—

THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH OF HANLEY.

The Task in Front of us.

Speaking at a Liberal demonstration at Woodford Green on June 29th Mr. Lloyd George said: "There is a task in front of us, a bigger task than democracy has ever yet undertaken in this land. You have got to free the land—to free the land that is to this very hour shackled with the chains of feudalism." In these words the immediate duty before the Liberal Party is stated and the lead is given, and it is on this issue I solicit in particular your support. Land Monopoly stands as a barrier against every endeavour to better the condition of the people. It hampers industry, depopulates the country side, rears the slum, creates unemployment, lowers wages, and extorts a vast tribute from the nation. I hold that the present Rating System encourages and perpetuates these evils. Great services such as Education, Poor Relief, Police, Main Roads and Asylums are cast upon localities without consideration of their ability to bear the burdens, and the revenue is raised by taxing the cottage, the factory, and the shop. In the Potteries the result of this system is that a crushing burden is imposed on the people and the trade of the district.

Rating Reform.

I solicit your votes in support of the following policy: That Education, Poor Relief, Police, Main Roads, and Asylums shall be treated as National Services to be financed by the Exchequer. That the money shall be raised by a National tax on the site value of land. The great municipalities of Britain have again and again demanded this reform, and the Glasgow Corporation is now leading the municipal movement for the rating of land values, having found all its efforts to improve its conditions of civic life brought to nought by land monopoly. In Hanley the need is urgent, for the rates inflict a tax of fifty per cent. on much of the capital expenditure necessary to promote trade and industry, and compel the worker to pay about 1s. 9d. a week on his cottage.

Unlock the Land.

Such taxation will force landowners to use, or let others use, their idle acres and so open up such opportunities to labour and industry as will provide a solution of the unemployed problem. I can claim to speak from practical experience on this subject. I took a prominent part in the agitation for land value taxation in Australia. The Federal Labour Party secured a majority on this issue at the last General Election and imposed a heavy land values tax. The first official report of the Land Tax Commissioner has just been presented and a cable states: "The report demonstrates the remarkable success of the Unimproved Land Values Tax in breaking up big estates. The Commissioner shows that estates valued at more than £18,000,000 were subdivided within nine months of the operation of the tax. As a result wages have risen and a Commission has been sitting to inquire into the "scarcity of labour problem."

Such taxation to break up the deer forest, game preserves and huge estates of Britain would work a peaceful revolution for the benefit of labour and industry.

I support the proposal of the Land Values Group in the House of Commons that the Increment Tax be abolished and a general land value tax levied in its stead, and that the tea and sugar duties be removed in the same way.

This is the policy I set against Tariff Reform which would extend monopoly, restrict industry, and throw the burden of taxation on the backs of the people.

How to Free Trade.

I have always been a convinced Free Trader. I consider that British enterprise should be relieved of burdens that hamper the maintenance of its foremost position in the markets of the world. I wish to see trade made absolutely free. In the Potteries high railway freights on raw materials imported and on local products exported are a grievous handicap to enterprise. If returned as your representative I shall urge the construction of a National Waterway to the seaboard to be open like a roadway free of charge to all users. With land value taxation in operation the construction of canals and great main roads for motor traffic will be profitable to the State through the enhancement of land values and the consequent increased return from the tax. This is the only sane method for the nationalisation of transport facilities and the same principle should be applied to the nationalisation of the railways so that freights may be lowered and wages raised.

The Way of Justice.

The Insurance Act will shortly be in operation. So vast a measure of Social Reform may need amendment in detail, and if the financial provisions are found to bear unduly heavily on contributors I shall urge that what the Prime Minister has called the "communal value of land" shall be taken for relief. I also hold that by tapping this source of revenue the age limit for Old Age Pensions can be beneficially lowered. By taxing land values the Governments of Australia and New Zealand have been able to grant an Old Age Pension of 10s. a week at 65 to men, and at 60 to women.

My experience compels the belief that Britain is a land of wasted opportunities, that poverty and undeserved misery result from laws made in the past to benefit monopoly and privilege at the expense of the people.

So I respectfully solicit your aid in support of the coming campaign for Rating and Taxation Reform which is certain to arouse such opposition from vast vested interests that the Government can only succeed if all sections of the democracy rally to its aid.

In brief I stand for the People against Monopoly and Privilege, for the old Liberal principle of Equality of Opportunity.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

R. L. OUTHWAITE.

Central Committee Rooms,

22, Tontine Street, Hanley.

Mr. Outhwaite used many short but practical and convincing statements, showing the connection between the Taxation of Land Values and local cases, in handbill form. These proved very effective. Below we reproduce three of them:—

Why Workers must live in Slums.

If you tax or rate any commodity made by labour you make it dear. A rate on a cottage is passed on to the user.

In Hanley a cottage assessed at £8 is taxed 1s. 8½d. a week and makes it that much dearer a week than if no rate fell on it. This increase is paid in the rent. By increasing the cost of a cottage the workers have to live in wretched abodes.

Cottage taxes create slums.

A tax on land values cannot be passed on to the land user by the landlord.

A tax on land values makes land cheaper by forcing the land withholders to let go, thus increasing the supply of land.

This is why the landlords call a Land Value Tax "Confiscation."

Abolish cottage taxes, make the ground landlord pay, and bring the workers out of the slums.