

- No. 102.—The Example of the Colonies. The Rating of Land Values.—South Australia.
 No. 103.—The Example of the Colonies. The Rating of Land Values.—New Zealand.
 No. 104.—The Example of the Colonies. The Rating of Land Values.—British Columbia.
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In-door and Out-door Meetings.

A number of members of the Parliamentary Land Values Group, including Messrs. R. L. Outhwaite, Francis Neilson, Josiah C. Wedgwood, F. Handel Booth and others, will take an active part in the speaking campaign at both the in-door and out-door meetings, all of which will be organised by the Progressive Committee with whom also the United Committee have arranged a special land values open-air campaign to commence on February 3rd. Among the speakers who will take part are Councillor Chas. H. Smithson, Harry de Pass, Edward McHugh, J. W. Graham Peace, William Reid, Fred Skirrow, A. H. Weller, A. W. Madsen, F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., and others.

The London County Council thus offers a unique opportunity to explain the rating of land values to an immense constituency, and to make a determined effort to establish, on the most powerful and influential local governing authority in the country, a majority of Councillors with power to represent before Parliament the demand of London ratepayers for the speedy removal of the existing anomalies and abuses in the rating law and the adoption of the new standard of assessment—the value of the land.

THE PROGRESSIVE LEADER ON LONDON'S NEED FOR THE RATING OF LAND VALUES.

The language of Sir John Benn, the Progressive leader, in his opening speech of the campaign at Queen's Hall, May 16th, 1912, is very significant. After some striking illustrations of the burden of the rates, and their detrimental effect on industry, he continued:—

Fortunately a change in our basis of rating is in sight. The separate valuation of sites set up by the Finance Act will soon, we hope, enable the local authority to transfer part of the burden to the land. Suppose we started in London with a modest penny on the site value, pooled it and redistributed the proceeds. I find that only three boroughs would have to pay on net balance, and all the rest would benefit. It would mean a transfer of some £200,000 per annum from the City, Westminster, and Kensington, for the benefit of the rest of London, and of that large sum the wealthy old city would have to find £170,000.

"Very hard on the City," some City man may say. But look at the growth of its rateable value. In 1881, £3,535,994; in 1911, £5,677,902—a rise of over two millions in rateable value within a generation. Much of this is increment of site value, and I cannot think it unfair to intercept for the common needs of London, part of this increment which is so largely due to the daily influx of the 300,000 workers from "London."

Striking instances can be quoted from other places than the old City. Let us go to another division of London—Woolwich. In 1845, 250 acres there brought in for their owner £750 a year, representing a capital value of, say £15,000. But the Government built an arsenal there. Five thousand houses were required, and the happy landowner secured an annual ground rent of £14,500. He has already received a million, and in twenty years the whole property, worth a couple of millions, will fall into his hands. And Woolwich is struggling with a rate of 8s. 8d.—i.e., 1s. 2d. over the average rate for London!

The case for putting some of the burden on the land is indeed overwhelming. These figures do not, however, give any adequate idea of the far-reaching importance of transferring part, at least, of the charges now based on the value of land, buildings, machinery, and even trading profits to site value pure and simple.

THE MUNICIPAL REFORMERS AND THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

(To the Editor of LAND VALUES.)

DEAR SIR,—From a mass of valuable information compiled from official records by Mr. J. D. Gilbert, J.P., L.C.C., and contained in London Reform Union Pamphlets Nos. 12 and 23, N.S., I have culled the following:—

June 22nd, 1909: "Parliamentary Committee brought up a long report with resolutions of protest against the Budget and suggested amendments thereon.

Voted against the following Progressive amendment to the report:—"The Council welcomes the Finance Bill because it establishes the principle of taxing the unearned increment of land, and of undeveloped land in London, and thanks the Government for the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the proceeds of such taxation be divided between the Treasury and the local authorities."

May 3rd, 1910: "On resolution of Finance Committee: "That the Council adheres to the views expressed in its memorandum forwarded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 8th September, 1909, as to the basis of allocation of the moiety of the duties on land values assigned to local authorities, and desires again to emphasise its opinion that having regard to the local character of such duties no part of such moiety should be earmarked by Parliament for supplementing in any way the subventions from the Imperial Exchequer in aid of services of a national character locally administered."

Voted against following amendment to insert after "Council": "regarding the whole question of Exchequer grants and rating as in pressing need of revision, and being strongly of opinion that land values should be taxed and rated in such a manner as to secure to each locality the socially created increment value attaching to land."

Voted against following amendment: To omit all words after "authorities," and insert: "but desires that powers be given to local authorities to use the new valuation of land for the purpose of local rating, so that the rates may be divided between the ground landlord and the occupier according to value."

June 11th, 1911: Finance and Local Government Committees. Joint Report on evidence to be given before Departmental Committee on Imperial and Local Taxation, they recommended amongst other things: "That the Departmental Committee on Imperial and Local Taxation be informed that the Council understands that the Committee will probably consider the question of the rating of site values, and that in that event the Council will be glad to have an opportunity of placing its views before the Committee, should the Committee decide to receive evidence with reference thereto."

Voted against Progressive amendment to add the words after "views": "In favour of such rating."

Yours faithfully,

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.