

the present system showing clearly the need of something different. After becoming convinced that the principles of Henry George were correct, he decided that the most satisfactory method of bringing them to the attention of the people was through the Initiative and Referendum. Prior to the Constitutional Convention of 1912 he was secretary of the N. H. Direct Legislation League, in that capacity delivering speeches on the subject in some fifty cities and towns of New Hampshire. The I. and R. was defeated in this Convention by one vote on division, and ten votes on roll-call. Since then he has been active in Single Tax work, speaking whenever occasion offers; also active in the councils of the Democratic party, having been a member of the State Committee for twenty years, candidate twice for State Senator, once for Governor's Council and once for Congress.

In his own state Mr. Duncan bears a high reputation for his knowledge of taxation. He frankly avowed his belief in our principles when a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives. "A forceful, interesting and experienced speaker on public affairs," says Governor Brown of that state, and adds, "He is a clear thinker and a deep student of public affairs and economic subjects, particularly that of taxation."

## South River Studying a Problem

CONSIDERABLE newspaper publicity has been given to the "favorable" tax situation of the borough of South River, N. J. (adjacent to New Brunswick), where by reason of the profits from the municipally owned water and electric plants no local tax has been levied this year.

Advocates of municipal ownership will no doubt hail this result with joy. Of course the rates charged must be much higher than the cost of service in order to yield such a profit. The municipal ownership partisans will reply, with much truth, that this is frequently the case when such utilities are privately owned. Nevertheless, the fact remains, that the people who use water and electricity are being charged more than the cost of service, and that in addition they will find their rents raised.

For in reply to an inquiry, the superintendent of Public Works says: "The production of both water and electricity now returns a nice profit each year to the Borough. This eliminates all local tax (state and county tax being as heretofore) and the effect on the price of land has been marked trend upward."

No matter what the capabilities of land are, land can yield no rent and has no value until some one is willing to give labor or the results of labor for the privilege of using it. And what anyone will give depends not on the capacity of the land but upon its capacity as compared with that land that can be had for nothing.

—HENRY GEORGE.

## Our British Letter

DESPITE his great majority, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, Tory Prime Minister, is not going to experience tranquility. Far from it, indeed, if the present indications are anyway reliable. The first duty of a Conservative Government, said the late Lord George Hamilton, upon one occasion, is to safeguard the interests of its friends. Having been a member of several there is no doubt he knew what he was talking about. The friends of the present ministry are now clamant for their quid pro quo.

### TARIFF THIEVES BEHIND GOVERNMENT

The manufacturers are calling out for the Safeguarding of Industries. They want to protect the British workers from the competition of the low-paid labor of foreign countries, so they say, but, so far, none has explained to the said British workers how it comes about that the labor in the foreign countries—all of them Protectionist, by the way—is low-paid. Are we to suppose that the specific which has completely failed to safeguard the foreign workers' wages will in some mysterious way prove effective when applied here in Britain? The Tariff Thieves behind the present Tory majority would have us think so, and in this are supported by the Land Lords, who see higher rents following on the closing of our ports by tariffs against the the granaries of the world. Readers of this journal know better.

The latest example of protectionist humbug is the application of the National Light Castings Association here in Britain to have "Roman baths" put upon the Schedule of articles to be "safeguarded." These necessary conveniences are of cast iron, and before 1914 were in plentiful supply at something below £5 a piece. Following the greatly increased demand due to the many housing schemes set in operation after the war, the price had reached £10 by 1920. Foreign supplies were quickly attracted to our market, and the price fell again to the present figure of £5. Now the home producer is seeking to get a duty imposed on the foreign-made bath so that he may rake off an extra £5 per bath—in the interests of the wages of his employees—but only a fool nut, or a Socialist Trade union leader will believe that.

Meanwhile, Mr Baldwin has all his work cut out to hold the balance between his Protectionist followers and those, of whom there still are a few, who though Tories, hold to the doctrine of Free Trade. Both sections are contending for his body, and it will be interesting to see who will win.

### THE POLITICAL LEVY AND THE DIE-HARD TORIES

Another matter that is causing some worry in the Cabinet is that of the present system of contribution to the Political Funds of the Trade Unions. Under the law as

it stands since the Act of 1913, every member of a Trade Union is bound to pay a contribution into the Political Fund, unless he shall have contracted out by notice in writing to the secretary of his union in the form prescribed by law. This throws upon each individual member the onus of deliberately refusing to agree to the levy, and as there is evidence to prove, in some cases immediately becoming a marked man. Today, the control of the trade unions has passed into the hands of the Socialist element who, of course, have the spending of the funds. So it is that trade unionists who are Liberal, Tory, or indifferent if not positively anti-socialist, are seeing their contributions going to propagate ideas to which they are often strongly opposed. Of course, this is unsatisfactory, and so some Tories, with that passion for justice which is characteristic—though you may not have noticed it—are pressing their leader to support a private member's Bill designed to remedy this state of affairs. By the Bill in question it is proposed to reverse the position, and to put upon each trade union member the responsibility of deliberately contracting in by signing and delivering a form to that effect. Those who have had any experience of the difficulty there is in getting the average workman to sign forms, will quite readily appreciate what this proposed change would mean. The Trade Union leaders see the red light. They know full well that were this alteration made there would be an end to the Political Fund—and to their power. These cry out against the "plot to wreck the Unions," and assisted by scare headings in the *Daily Herald*, seek to rally their followers to the defence. Amongst the Tories are many cooler heads who fear that such a frontal attack can only result in uniting the whole of the forces of Labor, now seen to be splitting apart by reason of fundamental internal differences, and so checking this fissiparous tendency. Between these two groups, Mr. Baldwin is finding no time to indulge his hobby of pig-keeping. At the time of writing, he has declined to go with the former group in support of their Bill, and it is "hoped" rather than expected that the Government will take the matter up "should there be time."

So there will be no chance of tranquility, and it would not be safe to count upon his Government lasting the full period of five years. Anything may happen.

#### PAPA ASQUITH PASSES

With the Liberals things are not any better. There is much brave talk of the renewed strength that is accruing to the Party as a result of the re-organization now in hand, but it remains to be seen what that will amount to when the next fight is on. The result of the recent by-election at Walsall was not such as to indicate an improvement. The outstanding event in the history of that party since the general election is the passing of Mr. Asquith.

On Tuesday, February 17, to the accompaniment of a lot of absurd ritual and ceremony that should long since

have been relegated to the realm of Pantomime, the newly created Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Leader of the Liberal Party, took his seat in the House of Lords—the body whose impudent claim to veto the legislation of the popularly elected House of Commons he was instrumental in curbing to a slight extent by his Parliament Act of 1912. The occasion led to an outpouring in the Liberal Press of a stream of fulsome praise of the "great leader" who had guided his party during the past seventeen eventful years. The writers of the columns of what may well be regarded as his political obituary notices, were all careful not to indicate the disastrous outcome of his leadership; but the historian of the future may be trusted to show greater regard for the truth.

#### THE DECLINE OF A GREAT PARTY

Succeeding to the leadership of a great party on the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in May, 1908, the new Earl leaves but a miserable remnant to be led by his doubtful and very uncertain friend Lloyd George.

There are those who attribute the disaster which has befallen the Liberal Party to the persistent attacks of the Socialists, but this is to accord to these persons a vastly exaggerated importance and influence. The present pitiful position of his Party is due to his own departure from the principle of Liberalism. As an "Imperialist" he was entirely out of sympathy with the policy of "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform" to which the Radicals were committed, and so from the very first his influence was cast against them in the counsels of the Party, and in favor of a policy of Jingoism but little differing from that of the Tories. His conduct in regard to the military "conversations" by which this country was committed to go to the aid of France in the event of her being attacked, can never be forgiven, and should not be forgotten. Well aware personally of the fact that we were so committed, he is recorded by Hansard, the official Parliamentary Report, as repeatedly denying in the House of Commons that there was anything in any way binding upon this country. England, we were told, was entirely free from any and every kind of entanglement. Again and again, from the January of 1906, when Sir Edward (now Lord) Grey, the Foreign Secretary—a fellow member with him of the Liberal Imperialist League—authorized the conversations between the British and French military and naval experts following upon the Algeiras Conference over Morocco, until the fateful 3rd of August, 1914, when it was no longer possible to keep up the deception, both these Liberal Statesmen deliberately lied to the House of Commons and to the Nation.

After we had been lied into the war, it was Mr. Asquith the Liberal leader, who fastened the yoke of conscription upon the necks of this people. Again, it was Mr. Asquith the Free Trader, who was responsible for the Paris Resolutions by which the first breach in the Citadel of Free

Trade would have been made had they become operative. That they did not was in no way due to him. As Prime Minister he consented later to the imposition by another Liberal Free Trader, of the McKenna Duties, duties that were openly protective, and in complete violation of the principles of Liberalism. In regard to Ireland, his failure boldly to deal with the open sedition of Sir Edward (now Lord) Carson, and F. E. Smith (now Lord Birkenhead) and also with those officers at the Curragh Camp who, encouraged by the immunity enjoyed by these two lawyers, threatened mutiny if the Home Rule Bill was placed upon the Statute Book, was in a large measure responsible for the Civil War that later raged in that unhappy country.

In economic matters principle weighed lightly with him, as was made clear by the inclusion in his manifesto for the last election of the item "Leasehold enfranchisement," previously denounced by him in public as a "colossal imposture." Such leadership must wreck any party. And the party that will tolerate it amply merits its fate.

#### WHAT ABOUT LLOYD GEORGE

With his "leader" out of the way, this uncertain and very nimble politician would seem to be given his opportunity. In England scarcely any one outside the very select circle of elderly ladies and gentlemen's servants who read the *Morning Post* takes the slightest interest in the proceedings of the House of Lords. Once a man joins that assembly he is to all intents and purposes dead. The lime-light is focussed upon the Commons, and so, with the commanding figure of the Old Parliamentary Hand removed, Lloyd George may be trusted to make the very most of this, his last chance to attain the leadership of his party. The interest for the C. L. P. everywhere will centre in his attitude toward the Land Question. He well knows the value of this as an issue, and may be depended upon to make full use of it. At the moment he has a committee of experts at work just as he had in 1912, and before long he will be on the stump with a "policy" designed to rope in the unwary. It will not be easily distinguishable from the Socialist "policy", nor indeed could it well be, seeing that Mr. George is no more prepared to go down to fundamentals than are our many brands of Socialists. True, there be those who are looking to one at least of the two Radical Groups within the Liberal Party to keep the little Welshman on a straight course, but these are doomed to disappointment, for the President of the Group has publicly declared that his Group is not for the purpose of creating division in the party ranks. It is a part of the Liberal Party and, therefore, will be expected to accept the official policy. To object would be to create division and so, in spite of protestations to the contrary, we shall in due course see this group committed,—in fact it is so committed at this moment by virtue of its President's declaration,—to the policy of Land Purchase which Lloyd George is continually advising,

An interesting situation will develop when the new Campaign begins; one that will afford the C. L. P. abundant opportunities for fighting, and which we shall make full use of to the utmost extent of the means at our disposal.

#### ALL IS NOT WELL WITH LABOR

Tranquility is not to be experienced in the ranks of the Labor Party. Ever since the Labor Government rode for its fall by precipitating the late election, so confident was it of victory, there has been an increasing dissatisfaction with the leadership of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. No attempt is made to conceal the fact, least of all from that gentleman himself. He has had to listen to some plain speaking from some of his followers, and matters had become so acute that at a Party meeting Mr. George Lansbury was nominated against him, but refused to stand. The respective merits of J. H. Clynes and J. H. Thomas have been openly discussed and the balance of opinion appears to lean to the latter, though it is doubtful if he could rely upon the support of the Clydeside contingent. Clynes is not considered strong enough, while Thomas is persona grata with all sides of politics other than the "left-wingers" of his own Party. One thing at least seems generally accepted by all parties and that is that MacDonald will not be the next Labor Prime Minister.

It is not to be wondered at that MacDonald should have been found out. The really remarkable thing is that the illusion lasted as long as it did. In a moment of unusual candor (or forgetfulness) he blurted out the truth at Brighton, in March, 1924, when he said we have not the courage to go down to fundamentals as we keep on patching up.

#### LANSBURY WOULD NOT BE CONTROLLED

An interesting recent happening in Labor circles is the resignation of George Lansbury from the *Daily Herald*. He had been editor from 1913 to 1922, when he retired on the paper becoming the property of the labor movement. That is to say it became a recording sheet for the Bosses of the few large Trade Unions, the chief officers of which were on its Board. The public were never told the reason for Lansbury's retirement at the time, and it is only now on his leaving the office of Manager that we are allowed to learn the real reason. The *Daily Herald* reporting an interview with its late Manager, (January 30, 1925) said: "In reply to a definite question; 'Would the *Weekly Herald* (his new paper) be under control of the Movement?' George Lansbury replied that, as he could not undertake to continue as Editor of the *Daily Herald* when the paper became official, so today it would be impossible for him to edit any paper controlled either by a board or by a committee." This throws a beam of light on to the position of the successor to G. L.'s chair.

It was this same G. L. who wrote in the *Daily Herald* as Editor (April 5, 19, 20) that "Discipline—iron, rigid dis-

cipline of the workers by the workers—is needed in Russia. It will be needed here whenever the workers come to power. We have no love for coercion of any kind, but we cannot visualise a modern State without it” As ever, the coercion is to be for the other fellow.

While the C. L. P. do not expect to get their position understood by a mentality like that, they appreciate the service he unwittingly renders to the cause of human freedom. Lansbury the Socialist contending with Lansbury the Individualist, is typical of the struggle now going on in the minds of men of all parties between the two irreconcilable ideas, viz., the Authoritarian versus the Libertarian. Out of that struggle must come an increasing desire for freedom, and with it the realization that in the freedom of the land will its economic basis alone be found.

—J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

## New Developments in Denmark

### A COUNTRY WHERE THE LAND QUESTION IS UPPERMOST

A NEW land value tax bill now before the Danish Parliament has been engaging the interest of the very able and energetic Single Taxers of that progressive country for several months. In December last a Conference was held under the auspices of the Henry George Association, to discuss this bill. The meetings on Dec. 7th were large, being attended by many others than Single Taxers, as the new bill has aroused interest in wide circles.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. F. Folke, President of the Henry George Association, who had been largely instrumental in calling the Conference. The Social Democratic Party, which presented the bill, was largely represented, as were the Radical Left, the Christian-socialist organizations, Tenants' Associations and many similar bodies. The morning meeting was open to the general public and was mainly devoted to an excellent summing up of the bill by H. K. Kristenser with questions and answers. At a more exclusive discussion meeting in the afternoon resolutions were passed, incorporating suggestions for improving the bill and bringing it a little nearer to a basis of sound land value taxation.

The Resolutions call on all friends of a sane and sensible land taxation method to rally to the support of the principles which underly this bill, to work towards a setting aside of all arbitrary differentiation in taxation, and towards a land value taxation which will render possible the repeal of all taxes on industry and consumption.

The following suggestions for improvements in the bill under consideration were offered:

1. That all differences in property taxation be struck out of the Bill, giving the rural population the same right to exemption on dwellings as are granted to the cities.

2. That the cities be given the same right as is accorded the rural communities to influence the amount of

the municipal land value tax, at least that they may increase this tax rate 15 pro mille above the rate provided in the Bill.

3. That all unnatural and unjust tax exemptions, as for instance on certain municipal property, be cancelled.

4. That the land value tax be imposed in such a way as gradually to smooth out the present inequalities in taxation on various kinds of landed property.

5. That, in computing the basic tax, there be no difference made between urban and rural districts in communities of mixed character.

6. That, in case the property tax is not cancelled entirely the exemption shall gradually come to include *all* houses erected since 1916 and not merely those built with state support.

A committee was appointed to present these resolutions and to watch the further welfare of the bill thru the houses of Parliament.

The general sense of the meeting was that the Bill, faulty as it was at present, would be worthy of support in case the suggestions above mentioned be accepted. It is the first important governmental measure definitely to separate land and improvement value and to lay a considerable measure of taxation for municipal purposes on the land values alone.

In Mr. Kristensen's speech to the Bill, the following facts which he gave regarding land value taxation in Denmark may be of interest.

A beginning was made in 1908 when the Municipal Council of Copenhagen sponsored a measure to change the municipal taxation on real property in such a way as to provide for a tax of 2% on increase of land value, thereby laying down the principle of a separate valuation of land and improvements on land. The bill did not meet the favor of the government and was pigeonholed indefinitely.

But the theory of the community's right to the values created by itself was not entirely lost, for later in the same year Svend Hogsbro, Minister of Transportation, appointed a Commission to study the matter of increased rental value of land along railway lines. The work of this commission resulted in the passage of a law in 1910 concerning railway taxation, a well meant measure which, however, was doomed to failure from the beginning, owing to faults in principle and construction.

Bad as it was, the measure took the matter of increase in land value into official consideration. The thought itself was already strongly in the public mind and when new financial measures were passed in 1910-11 an experimental valuation of land was provided for. A new bill in 1912 made the first tiny step towards a general land valuation.

The Municipal Tax Commission, appointed in 1910, and making its report in 1913, emphasized the necessity of a reform in taxation of real property and recommended the introduction of a separate valuation of land apart from