

'bus may raise a new problem, involving a new set of rating authorities, just as often as its proprietors choose to change its route.

No, my good "Progressive" friends: this sort of thing won't do. The best basis of rating is the value of land. And one reason for this is, that, unlike your motor 'buses, land stands still and is always there.

To argue that motor 'buses should be rated because trams are rated is only another version of the Tory plea for the rating of personal property. If the Moderates are wise they will accept the proposal, and prepare a list of other things—shopkeepers' stocks-in-trade, for instance—which at present escape rating. It will all serve to stave off the Rating of Land Values. But, of course, the true reason of all this foolish agitation is that the motor 'buses compete with the Council's trams. The Corporation of Glasgow is in favour of the Rating of Land Values. It also has municipal trams. But there is no complaint in Glasgow about the competition of motor 'buses with the municipal trams. The fact is that there are *no motor 'buses*. It would be worth while for the London Progressives to inquire how this comes about before they commit themselves to reactionary proposals.

FREDK. VERINDER.

A FIVE MINUTES EXPLANATION OF THE SINGLE TAX.

THE SOLUTION OF THE INDUSTRIAL CRISIS.

By ALFRED PEDERSEN.

(At a debate during the Vacation Course for Foreign Students at the University of Oxford, August, 1912.)

. . . The motion runs as follows: "That Socialism is the only solution of the industrial crisis." I am quite aware that it is impossible to oppose this motion effectively, if you have not yourself a better proposal for the solution of the problem. The slums in England and indeed all over the world are so horrible, the poverty question so urgent, that if you had no better proposal you *must* acknowledge Socialism. But as I think there is a better remedy I must for a moment call your attention to it.

So far as I know more than half of the land in English rural districts is unproductive, that is to say it is uncultivated, or as the Report of the Inland Revenue Commissioner, says: It is "pleasure grounds, parks and lands preserved for sport or recreation." And I certainly know that in London 17,000 acres of valuable land, of building sites are lying unused—of course apart from the useful parks. *Why are these 17,000 acres not used?* Is it because there are no workers to erect buildings on them? No, thousands of workers are without employment in London, though they very earnestly desire to be employed. Is it then because there are no men to live in the houses that these workers could build on the 17,000 acres of land? No, that is not the reason, for if you go to the slums of London, nay, to the slums of whatever town you choose in the world—you will find that there are people hardly having any roof over their heads, living in small dirty rooms under conditions that, as Mr. Lloyd George has lately said, are *not worthy the dignity of manhood*.

If we wish to solve the social problem, we must connect the idle man with the idle land. And how can we do that? We can do it by untaxing labour and taxing the valuable land. For if landlords have to pay a heavy tax on their land, they will not withhold it from use. The labourers will have better conditions in the country, the depopulation of rural districts will stop, the unemployed will get work in erecting buildings on the 17,000 acres now vacant, and the population of the slums will get better houses.

What then do Socialists say to this proposal of taxing land values? They say: Why tax land alone and not all other property? Ladies and Gentlemen, let me quote to you what the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George, has said about this argument. He said that it was "a piece of insolence which no intelligent community will tolerate." Why did Mr. George say so? Because land is different from every other commodity and consequently must be treated differently. Land monopoly is,

if not the only monopoly, by far the greatest of monopolies—it is a perpetual monopoly and it is the mother of all other forms of monopoly. Land is a necessity of human existence, it is the original source of all wealth, it is strictly limited in extent, it is fixed in geographical position—and last, not least, it is not created by human labour. Capital is created by human labour; if you tax capital, you tax labour and lower wages will be the result. If you keep land out of use unemployment will follow. But if you keep capital out of use it is the worst for you. Certainly, land is different from all other commodities. The value of land is the only value that is created by Society, and consequently the rent ought to go to Society. Let me in conclusion just show you one example in proof of this. An advertisement of land for sale at Westcliff runs as follows:—"A number of selected and choice plots. All within easy distance of Westcliff Railway Station, only a trifle further distant of the new Marine Drive. Within five minutes' walk of beautiful New Chalkwell Park, and abutting on the Leigh Road, with its frequent service of electric cars to and from all parts of the Borough of Leigh. . . . Freehold land is a safe, solid and substantial security, better than stocks and shares." What makes land so safe is, as you may see, the Railway, the Marine Drive, the park, the main road and the electric cars—and all these things are *not* created by the land-owner, but by Society. Another instructive advertisement is this:—" . . . Freehold land never shrinks in value, it is ever increasing, and the investment is growing more and more profitable *without any effort on the part of the owner*"—but of course on the part of Society and other people. . . .

UNUSED LAND, UNEMPLOYED LABOUR AND EMIGRATION.

Professor James Long has an instructive article on "Our Wasted Acres" in the SHEFFIELD INDEPENDENT of August 30th, the following extract from which will, we think, interest our readers. He says:—

I know of no more deplorable fact than the existence of large areas of waste land and the simultaneous departure of the men we need to till it to our colonies across the sea. We are at once deprived of a definite proportion of the thew and sinew of the nation and of the means of increasing our area of cultivated land. It is impossible to consider the questions, "Waste or derelict land," and the "Rural Unemployed" without concluding that the solution of the problem lies in the combination of the two. I have had many opportunities of witnessing the regeneration of poor land by the employment of spade labour. Some years ago, for the purpose of experiment and demonstration, the poorest field available in a given district was placed under spade cultivation by Dr. Bernard Dyer and Mr. Shrivell. The soil was naturally infertile, and lay upon a bed of heavy clay. By the addition of manure in carefully calculated quantities the field was converted into a highly fertile market garden. Among the many heavy crops produced were the following, with their average yield per acre during a short series of years: Spinach, 22 tons; rhubarb, 45 tons; cauliflower, 23 tons; cabbage, 27 tons; carrots, 16 tons; potatoes, 11 tons; sprouts, 11,500 lbs.; and asparagus, 2,160 bushels. With possibilities such as these land is lying waste, and the men who hunger for it are sent to Canada, where I have seen them pioneering on the bleak but fertile land of the Far West when they might have stayed at home and prospered.

Controversy is only possible with people who recognise a code of logic and honour.—ISRAEL ZANGWILL, in the JEWISH CHRONICLE.