

the hearing-hearers that the accused was of a new and different variety. He anticipated attack, he welcomed it, he ran to meet it with every weapon of fact, of humour, of legitimate pride."

Every friend of Louis Post is delighted to hear it and will congratulate him. In acting as he did and now in telling his story to the world he has not only confounded the ignorant critics who, in times of great national excitement, abound in all countries, but he has done a great service to all of us, which will not be forgotten. The extraordinary chapter in history here related will shake the faith of many of us in the ways of Governments. We can be grateful to Mr. Post for this telling exposure.

W. R. LESTER.

ROBERT C. ORR

We deeply regret to announce the passing away of Robert C. Orr, who died at Woking on 11th May in his 52nd year. He had been troubled with some internal disorder but, unfortunately, did not allow it to worry him until it suddenly became so serious that an immediate operation had to be undergone, alas, without success. He must have suffered for some time previously, but the end came peacefully and without complaint.

In his going we have lost one who has been a devoted adherent of the movement for many years, from the time when as a young man he interested himself in the work of the Scottish League. He came in a spirit ready to give all the service he could and his enthusiasm never flagged. Business took him to London when the land campaign following the 1909 Budget was at its height, and later, for a brief period, he joined the staff of the United Committee, rendering valuable assistance that required just the talents he possessed to gain the willing co-operation of workers belonging to the rank and file of the political Parties. As an advance agent of the Committee he took part in organizing conferences, demonstrations and propaganda work at Parliamentary and Municipal Elections. A keen politician himself, he delighted in helping in the distribution of the Committee's leaflets on a grand scale. It was no light task for Mr. Orr and his colleagues, and the achievement is on record. The success attending a good part of that effort was due in great measure to his quiet perseverance and to his tactful handling of the voluntary helpers who had to be enrolled in every district. In the result, 50,000,000 leaflets made up into 2,200,000 books were distributed from house to house in 234 Parliamentary constituencies.

Then came the six months' strenuous campaign in all the divisions of Wiltshire, the feature of which was the securing of 12,000 signatures to a petition to Parliament urging the Taxation of Land Values in the interests of the farmer and the agricultural labourer. What was done in these months makes a long and interesting story, in which Mr. Orr played an important part, busy all the time on cycle or on foot canvassing every corner of the countryside and organizing the meetings addressed by his co-workers and himself.

Mr. Orr was trained in farming and found an opportunity to return to that occupation before the war by renting a farm at Hitchin, and only recently he moved to Woking. In these latter years his visits to the office were less frequent, but we have still fresh recollections of his comradeship when the work of the movement engaged his special attention at Tothill Street. It was a pleasure to see him at the International Conference in Oxford last year where he rejoiced to be among the hosts of co-workers whom he had not met for a long period. With a lovable disposition he had an obliging and homely nature whose peculiar faculty is to have no acquaintances except friends. We convey our sincere condolences to his sister, Mrs. John Paul, to his brothers and to the family circle in their sad bereavement.

A. W. M.

ABOLISH RATES AND POVERTY!

By T. ATHOLL ROBERTSON, M.P.

(From an article in JOHN BULL, 17th May. The Editor in a foreword says: "The reorganization of the Land Valuation Department, announced in the Budget, foreshadows the reopening of the vital principle of Taxation of Land Values. This reform would, in the opinion of the writer, relieve unemployment, reduce rates and taxation and solve the housing problem.")

Land value, or economic rent, is an expression in terms of money, of the natural differences existing, or which are socially produced between one bit of land and another. The difference in fertility between an acre of light, sandy land in Norfolk, and an acre of heavy clay land which grows magnificent wheat crops in the case of Gowrie is a difference due to Nature. Each represents what may be called a "natural opportunity," but they are of different values for purposes of cultivation.

Slate quarries in North Wales and deposits of earth for brick-making around Peterborough are useless for cultivation, but they have an ascertainable value all the time. These and many others are Nature's gifts to mankind, and there is no semblance of justice upon which we can justify their monopoly by some, to the exclusion of all.

We cannot all live in a double-fronted house facing Hampstead Heath, or secure business premises in Bond Street, or plough the best loam in Hampshire, so "economic rent" comes into play as an equalist, operating by means of competition, and fixing the price to be paid by those who enjoy the greatest advantage.

A large percentage of the total land value of Scotland is situated on the foreshore of the River Clyde, a value contributed to by the whole of the people of Scotland. It is the same with the values of the City of London. A Colonial merchant rents an office in the City to market the produce of the wheat lands of the Far West of Canada. A Yorkshire or Lancashire spinner seeks a warehouse to handle the output of piece goods from his Northern looms. The china-clay merchant from Cornwall looks for a counting house.

The City of London is the hub of the commercial world. Every town and shire contributes something to its value. The miner, the engineer, the ploughman, the workers by hand and brain in all sorts of remote parts of the country, have made the value of the City. What a competition for room and for the opportunity to use land!

A grass park bordering a large city is let to a local butcher for a few pounds per annum as accommodation land, while a huge board announces the fact that this land is to let, or sell for building purposes.

If this land was rated and taxed on its true economic value, what would happen? The landlord would not go on paying rates indefinitely on something that did not yield a proper return; he would be compelled to let or sell the land to someone who would put it to its best use, or use it so himself. This would mean employment, houses and factories would spring up, roads, drainage and lighting must be done, there would be jobs for men.

The value created by this development on the undeveloped land around would accrue to the people themselves. The tax on wages would go, and the attraction of 160 acres of land in Canada would be small compared with the attraction of developing our own resources in the old country in the interests of us all.

The monopoly value of land would be squeezed out, and instead of sites being held up, and users begging the landlords for the opportunity to use land, the landlords would be searching round for users.

The gold-mine we want to work is on the surface of these islands. It is the thousands of undeveloped and underdeveloped acres of this old country of ours.

Under a uniform and universal tax on land values, the

huge values created in centres like London would contribute to the service of all.

May the Chancellor establish, and see that the Valuation Department functions. Complete the valuation—the value is there, and is enormous. Impose a tax on that land value, and we can take the rates off houses, factories, shops and every other improvement, and no man will be penalized for using his land well.

A tax on land values would mean the development of our own country, and would usher in a new era of prosperity and contentment. Let us keep our trade free, and free the land also, and we need fear nothing as a great democracy.

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION Land Values Resolution Adopted

At the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation in Brighton on 22nd May, the Eastern Counties Federation (on behalf of the Cambridge Liberal Association) submitted the following resolution:—

This Council of the National Liberal Federation believes that the taxation of land values coupled with the reduction of rates and taxes on improvements would discourage the withholding of land from use and would stimulate the use for which it is most suited economically. This reform would reduce the handicap under which small holdings labour, and would have beneficial effects on agriculture and horticulture, and consequently on the economic position of the agricultural labourer.

It would prevent excessive prices being demanded for building sites and for the raw materials required for building, and this, together with the reduced rates on finished structures, would materially assist in solving the housing problem.

The Council considers that this reform is an essential first step in the solution of these and other social problems, and that it should occupy a foremost place in the Liberal programme.

The resolution was moved by Mr. A. H. Peake of Cambridge and, as the DAILY NEWS reports, "carried against the opposition only of Mr. Arnold Lupton." The WESTMINSTER GAZETTE states that "only one woman spoke (during the session), Miss Garland, who racily yet lucidly expounded the Taxation of Land Values."

MR. ASQUITH ON LAND VALUES

Addressing a public demonstration held in connection with the Liberal Conference meetings at Brighton on 23rd May, Mr. Asquith said they would never get to the root of the problem of housing unless they treated it as a part of the larger question of the tenure and use of land, and tackle that question on the well-known lines of Liberal policy. The taxation and rating of land values was a reform long overdue.

WOMEN LIBERALS

The Sixth Council Meeting of the Women's National Liberal Federation took place at the Kingsway Hall, London, on 27th to 29th May. The eleventh item on the programme consisted of two resolutions on "Housing and Land Reform"; both were adopted unanimously.

The first resolution was moved by Miss A. M. Stacey (Buckhurst Hill) and seconded by Mrs. P. Wilson Raffan, and declared—

That this Council reaffirms its unwavering belief that the Taxation of Land Values is urgently needed in the solution of both Land and Housing problems.

The second resolution was moved by Miss Alison Garland (Wandsworth) and seconded by Mrs. Marshall (Worcester). It declared—

That this Council urges the Government to put into immediate operation plans for effectually dealing with the Housing question such as (i.) the reform of rating

and land systems; (ii.) the removal of restrictions on the supply of raw materials.

A touching episode was the sympathetic hearing given to Miss Stacey who, being blind, read her speech from the Braille. Miss Garland spoke with great vigour in her appeal to Liberals to use their influence in advancing the Taxation of Land Values.

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES

THE MCKENNA DUTIES, 13TH MAY

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Philip Snowden): When you have imposed a tariff, even a Free Trader will tell you that the taking away of that tariff may be followed by some temporary dislocation. That is one of the dangers, one of the evils, of tariffs. It is almost as bad as the political corruption which a tariff always engenders.

The Free Trade argument has always been the national or social argument. No Free Trader has ever said that you could not selfishly benefit one particular trade by giving it protection; but you do so at the expense of the people. That trade appropriates part of the purchasing power of the people who have to buy the protected commodity, and, therefore, there is so much the less for them to spend in encouraging employment in other industries. The repeal of these duties, therefore, is not calculated to reduce employment, but to increase it.

When the motor-car trade has gone through the inevitable reconstruction, when it has taken out its watered capital, when the trade has been put upon a sound financial basis once more, and has got into a healthy condition, it will find that it does not need protection, and it will get back what there is of prosperity in the trade at the present time. What these duties have done, as my immediate predecessor in office interjected a moment or two ago, is that they have brought in, in duty, something like £20,000,000. That is an abstraction from the pockets of the taxpayers of this country, and they would have had £20,000,000 more to spend. They would have had even more than that, because, as no one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman, if you impose an import duty of 33 per cent., when it gets to the consumer it is much more than 33 per cent. We are bound to honour the pledges that we gave when we were elected. There has been a good deal of talk about dissensions in the Cabinet, but there have been no dissensions in the Cabinet. Every member of the Cabinet feels that we were in honour bound to deal with this matter, and we are going to deal with it.

UNEMPLOYMENT, 22ND MAY

Mr. A. S. Comyns-Carr, K.C. (Liberal): We are prevented at the present time by the conditions prevailing in this country with regard to land tenure and the system of rating and taxation, which hamper the development of our national resources. If the Government would pursue more energetically the policy which they, in common with the Liberal Party have advocated, of removing those restrictions, we would find that these developments would take place by the energy of our own people. There is imposed on the top of that capital expenditure a huge burden of rates and taxes, the valuation for which is based upon the very expenditure which has been incurred in carrying out the scheme. That is a tax upon production which, at the present level of rating and taxation, is of a prohibitive character.

If the Government would pursue the policy of land reform and the reform of rating and taxation to which they are pledged, it would not be necessary for the Minister to come to this House to defend schemes, or the lack of schemes. We should see that development of industry which would relieve our unemployment problem following automatically upon the removal of these shackles, instead of requiring to be stimulated and promoted at the public expense by schemes under the control of the Government.