

down here again it will be more unsatisfactory still. I suggest, before the Acquisition of Land Bill comes downstairs, that they very seriously consider the proposal made by the Glasgow Corporation, by the Manchester Corporation, and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Peebles, namely, that when you are acquiring land you should have the same valuation for that purpose as the valuation which you have for the purpose of taxation. That would be a fair and reasonable basis—fair for the one purpose and fair for the other. The Government have altogether over-estimated the opposition to the proposal when they suggested it, and they have altogether under-estimated the great feeling that will arise if this measure goes through, and if public money, instead of assisting housing, is simply poured into the pockets of the landlords.

Sir D. MACLEAN: I am sorry to touch upon a point which is rather controversial, and that is the question of how you are going to get the land, and at what price you are going to get it. I hope, Mr. Speaker, I may have your indulgence if I go for one moment beyond the limits, strictly, of this discussion. There are, at the very moment, at least two great measures which are based upon land acquisition before Committees at the same time, and the Land Acquisition Bill is, of course, the basis of these measures. Very few members can find time to attend those Committees. I tried to attend three Committees upstairs to-day. I looked in, but it is a hopeless business. Really it has become very painful to us. I am sure we all want to legislate swiftly, but I am sure we want to legislate carefully. I do hope that we shall find some method of bettering that position as soon as possible, because it is really getting very serious. On this question of the acquisition of land, let me say once again—I am tired of saying it, but I am going on saying it—the price at which you can buy the land is the basis of how these measures are going to work, and the country will not stand the burden, which the present measure seeks to impose on communities and on public utility societies, of buying land at a market price which largely represents the blood value of the War.

Land Acquisition Bill.

The Report Stage of the Land Acquisition Bill was taken on June 25th. Clauses 1 and 2 were debated, and Sir Donald Maclean's amendment, moved with the object of basing compensation on the value of land as assessed for taxes was defeated. The only concession made by the Government was that in assessing compensation "regard shall be had to all returns and assessments for taxation made on or acquiesced in by the claimant during the three years next preceding the assessment of compensation." These words have no force. They do nothing to alter the instructions to the valuers that land shall be purchased at its value "in the open market." An extract from the report of the debate is held over till our next issue.

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS

JUSTICE THE OBJECT TAXATION THE MEANS

(An Address by Henry George)

HOW MODERN CIVILISATION MAY DECLINE

(Reprint of Chapter 4 Book X
of PROGRESS AND POVERTY).

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THE IMPENDING ECLIPSE

(The following article by Mr. J. C. Stewart appeared in the *HIGHLAND NEWS* of April 26th as his parting word to the readers of that paper. The *HIGHLAND NEWS* changed hands in the beginning of the year, and Mr. Stewart has now retired from the editorship. During his thirteen years' tenure of office, week by week, he has fearlessly and brilliantly expounded the case for the Taxation of Land Values, *per se* and its relationship to all other social problems and aspirations for the commonweal.)

We are on the eve of Peace. It may be that in a few days the historic Peace document will be signed. But will it be a real Peace? Doubtless, so far as war between nation and nation is concerned, it will, but, let there be no question concerning it, we shall not have Peace between man and man. Society has been so organised in civilised countries that you have a few in authority and the rest slaves. But let us not look to the ends of the earth; only fools do so; let us confine our inquiry within our own British frontiers and what do we find? We find that the ruling caste in Britain have made laws throughout the centuries expressly intended to place their less-favoured fellow-men in a position of inferiority, and in that position they remain to-day. Politicians mouth about equality of opportunity and pass Acts of Parliament by the volume which they allege are calculated to bring that desirable end nearer, but instead it seems to recede until to-day the ruling caste has infinitely more power than it had years ago, and the "common" man, instead of being recognised as being entitled to equal opportunity, is so bound up with the barbed wire of Regulations that he cannot call his miserable wage his own, much less his soul. That is slavery, and nothing is to be gained by denying the simple fact. But if we say that Britain is a slave State, we must prove it. We must show how, when men, women and children are not sold in the market-place, the condition of the people is yet a condition of slavery. Just imagine Britain to be a small island with one hundred men on it, one of whom owns all the land, with the same powers as regards withholding it from use as have the landowners in town and country in Britain. Could not that man, by exercising his power to the full, demand, and, unless he was killed, could he not obtain as much of the produce of the labour of the remaining ninety-nine men as he could if they were his property? Assuredly he could, for the alternative to accepting his conditions would be death. Upon a larger scale, and through more complex relations, the same cause operates in the same way and to the same end in Britain to-day—the ultimate result, the enslavement of labourers, becoming apparent just as the pressure increases which compels them to live on and from land which is treated as the exclusive property of others.

Having shown that Britain is a slave State, and proceeding on the basis that the first thing to do with slaves is to free them, let us touch shortly upon the type of legislation to which for years we have been treated chiefly by Governments calling themselves Liberal. We have had Factory Acts to protect the slave; Insurance Acts to provide him with medicine at his own expense; Medical Service Acts to induce people to live in outlandish places; Children's Acts; Poaching Acts; Education Acts, and a host of others, all of them with two positive provisions—the protection of the few and the further enslavement of the mass. . . .

What, then, can the slaves do to free themselves? One thing only. They must concentrate upon the abolition of the law that makes them slaves. They must obtain their freedom. In other words, they must extinguish private ownership of God's gifts to all men—the land, the air, the water, the rain, the minerals,

the wild birds, the fish—everything which is not made by human hands, for to none of these can individual man show a just title.

And that brings us to the end of our argument, it being necessary merely to state a practical proposal for abolishing slavery in the Britain which the young men of the nation won from the grasp of the enemy. We can rate and tax all land in proportion to its value. The initial impost may be small. That does not matter, for we can increase it as rapidly as we care to, until eventually the true rent of Britain is paid to the British people. Thus and then, and not otherwise, nor till then, shall the people of Britain be free.

We have gladly made it our task in the Highlands of Scotland to advocate this method of attaining liberty, because we believe that Liberty can be attained in no other way. Our advocacy has been consistent for over thirteen years. During that time we have found it necessary to condemn every Liberal Party measure that did not make for our goal—and there were many. We have in these years alienated many of those who counted us as their political friends. Perhaps the reason for this is to be found in the unfortunate blindness of party politicians. Some of them are paid; some are expecting favours; some are mere place-hunters. We have spared them in a way that they did not deserve. Throughout the Highlands, we know, we have made many friends and many converts, but many more have still to be made. For the future, we must take other and better means than these columns to spread the gospel of Justice, and we trust that the darkness of the impending eclipse that is now upon us will pass away, and that we may yet see the morning star of Liberty arise.

HENRY GEORGE AS ECONOMIST AND PHILOSOPHER

The *Irish Weekly and Ulster Examiner*, of 17th May, discusses a statement in the *Saturday Review* to the effect that: "All the authoritative works on political economy have been written by men in libraries on documentary evidence. Adam Smith was a Scotch professor; Ricardo was a stockjobber; Stuart Mill was a clerk in the India Office; and Bagehot was a banker."

This criticism, says the *Irish Weekly*, ignores Herbert Spencer, whom John Stuart Mill characterised as "one of the acutest metaphysicians of recent times, one of the most vigorous as well as the boldest thinker that English speculation has yet produced." Herbert Spencer was a schoolmaster. Another great political economist ignored by the critic in question was Henry George, a compositor, who in his book, "A Perplexed Philosopher," subjected Herbert Spencer's renunciation of his own work on "Social Statics" to a critical examination which showed Spencer to be a careless thinker. Henry George wrote of Spencer that the views of his later life "show him to be as a philosopher ridiculous, as a man contemptible—a fawning Vicar of Bray, clothing in pompous phraseology and arrogant assumption logical confusions so absurd as to be comical."

The preceding paragraph recalled to the writer the awe with which university-educated men were formerly regarded by the working classes. That day is gone. The workers observed that in the main, on the part of men described as educated, their chief aim in public life was place and power—the welfare of the people a very secondary consideration; and that the vast majority of the British Universities returned

Conservatives to Parliament. Henry George was a working man, and he did much to destroy the awe with which the University men were formerly regarded. He wrote in "A Perplexed Philosopher":—"A man of special learning may be a fool as to common relations. And that he who passes for an intellectual prince may be a moral pauper there are examples enough to show. There is no vulgar economic fallacy that may not be found in the writings of professors; no social vagary current among 'the ignorant' whose roots may not be discovered among 'the educated and cultured.' The power to reason correctly on general subjects is not to be learned in schools—nor does it come with special knowledge. It results from care in separating, from caution in combining, from the habit of asking ourselves the meaning of the words we use, and making sure of one step before building another on it—and above all, from loyalty to truth."

It is ideas like the foregoing that have revolutionised thought amongst the masses and made thousands of working men, while giving to "educated people" the respect they are due, think out political and Labour problems for themselves.

HOW TO GET HOUSES BUILT

Mr. J. A. Mactaggart, a well-known builder in Glasgow, writes to the *GLASGOW HERALD* of May 23rd:—"Owing to various causes house building by public authorities lags, and private house building is completely frozen up. Meantime tenants are offering and paying £25 for a small flat, building operatives are going idle, and firms like my own are doing nothing. Sir Thomas Munro proposes that the limit in the Bill to authorise loans to private parties be increased from £500 to £750 per house, and also states that without subsidies nothing is likely to be built. The Secretary for Scotland demurs to subsidising private parties from State funds. May I be allowed to point out that if the burden of local rating is taken off new houses there will be no need to subsidise either public or private house building so far as large towns are concerned? To prove my statement I am willing now to build and complete within, say, two years, 2,000 houses and to pay to the local authority or to the Government the full market rate of interest on 85 per cent. of the value of the houses, plus an allowance for sinking fund. The remaining 15 per cent. of value I shall find privately. The essential condition of this offer is that the houses are to be relieved of local taxation, except so far as the value of the ground (per Form IV. valuation) is concerned. Any increases over the first rents got for the houses to be also subject to local taxation."

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