

the landlord, who asked him, "What are you doing my good fellow? Do you know this is my land?" "Well," said he, "I must be on somebody's land, I have none of my own, sir." Sir Frederick Pollock, who, I think, is the greatest authority living on the English Land Laws, thought so far as he could make out, the general public has not a right to be anywhere except on the King's highway, in parks and public places which have been dedicated to public use, and I think he adds, on the foreshore between high and low water marks. Now, if you go on to the high road you are asked to "move on"; in a public park, which you probably help to pay for, you are not allowed to sleep; and if you go on to the foreshore I would advise you not to encamp there. I think it was Mr. Morley who once said that the land question was throttling the development of our towns. I am sure there must be many great towns represented here. I come from one and I can speak for it. The land question is throttling the development of our town. We are increasing largely our municipal tramways. At certain points there is great congestion of traffic, and if we could only get an acre of land there pull down a brewery and set it back it would be an immense public convenience, but the fact is as the chairman has so well expounded to you we have increased the value of that land to the individual owner so much, by our public improvements, that we cannot afford to buy it now when we want it, and even if we could afford to buy it, we cannot, without going to Parliament to ask for permission. You in London, for instance, need some of us in provincial municipalities to show you how helpless you are. When your London County Council wants to give you water, Parliament wont let them; when it wants to run a tramway on one of its great streets, it has to apply nine or ten times to Parliament for permission. Even your $\frac{1}{2}$ d. omnibuses have been stopped by Parliament (A voice: the steamers.) I am coming to them; and, finally your great splendid waterway, which divides this enormous population of five millions in twain, is shut up by Parliament. I wonder that this mass of people, the greatest that the world has ever seen, should sit down helpless under this treatment by Parliament. My resolution speaks of the present land system as confiscating improvements and restricting them. The fact is, we are creating "social property," as John A. Hobson calls it, which we do not get, but which goes to somebody else; we are creating more wealth than we can consume, and putting the balance into a bank which charges us interest upon it, instead of paying interest upon it. The society in whose interests we are met, aims to correct this by getting the land for the people, and into the hands of the people. At present, the land of this country is owned by those who are dead or not born. We want it for the people who are living upon

it. I think the moral is that we must alter the constitution of Parliament. Our municipalities are unable to move. Parliament hinders and does not help the attack upon any of these monopolies, and it is not likely so long as you pack those benches with the gentlemen who own the land and are receiving themselves wealth which you are creating, that laws shall be passed which should transfer the property they are enjoying into your possession. Do not any longer set cats to watch cream. This land question is the very gospel of politics, and I am delighted to meet so many reformers who are devoting themselves to that reform. (Cheers.)

WEST AUSTRALIA.

The following is from our breezy little West Australian contemporary *Taxation*, of Kilgarlie. Its mention of some of our devoted brothers of the antipodes whose names are so familiar to us, will be of interest:

"No matter where a single taxer speaks some hobnailed politician, who hopes to plant his number 10 on the floor of the House by always howling Labor with a big L, prates about what the Labor Party has done for the single taxer. One does not hear the single taxer bragging about what he has done for the Labor Party. It is, however, just as well to take stock occasionally. In New Zealand there is absolutely no labor party in the Australian sense. John Ballance was a single taxer and introduced the land reform, and it has been kept going by that big jawed Irishman, O'Regan, barracking in season and out of season. Another of New Zealand's ablest politicians, Geo. Fowlds, was elected for Auckland in spite of the labor element, with a big L. In New South Wales the land tax was carried through by Geo. Reid. The Labor Party helped it is true, but if the Freetrade Party had not taken the matter up it would have been in the air yet. Take Queensland. Sir Samuel Walker Griffiths got the local single tax before the Labor Party was thought of. The party has been a power in Queensland for years, and the progress of our movement has practically been at a stand still. In South Australia just the same tale has to be told. In West Australia we will only cite one little incident. At the last Federal elections the single taxers circulated 35,000 copies of *Taxation* all over the colony during the campaign, and not an issue but barracked hard for the Labor candidates, and the present writer drew the editor of the *Westralian Worker's* attention to the matter, the reply was, that paper could only support their own candidates. They wanted two seats out of six, and, beyond a miserable inch or two, no mention was made of our candidate in return for what we were doing. The change has to come quick and lively. The land question is the bottom question, and we're going to have it settled. If the Labor Party are going to waste session after session on their tin pot reforms that have practically no effect, we'll

have to 'get together' and put some single taxers in the House. We already note with pleasure some signs of change in the support of Mr. Thomson for the Central Province and Crawford Vaughan in South Australia. In this article it would just be as well to point out that if single tax leagues are to be kept out of conferences because they will not support indirect taxation there is going to be some trouble. We are after justice for the whole of the people, and while we are fighting for that it shall go hard, but we will see that some small measure is dealt out to us."

NEW ZEALAND

Last March the County of Southland, in the middle island of New Zealand, which has an unimproved land value of £30,000,000, adopted the Local Option in taxation law by a vote of 919 to 574, after a vigorous and exciting contest. This result shows that the people of the middle island are determined not to be left behind their neighbors of the North island in securing for themselves the benefits of the taxation of land values.

SOUTH AFRICA.—JOHANNESBURG.

Land Values of Glasgow, gives a report of the debate in the City Council, which we quote:

"On Wednesday, March 26th, the Johannesburg Rating Bill, to which we referred in our last issue, was submitted to the Town Council of Johannesburg.

"The Chairman, Mr. W. St. John Carr, in moving the reading of the Rating Bill, pointed out that the principle underlying the Bill was that the only rateable property should be land in respect of its leasehold, freehold, or quit-rent value; and that buildings should not be rated. He contended that the value of land within the municipal area was not due to the individual enterprise of the owners, but to the collective industry and enterprise of the community and the expenditure of public money. Hence, by making land values the basis of assessment, the community would share, if only to an infinitesimal extent, in the value due to its industry and enterprise, and the expenditure of its own revenues. He pointed out that such a system of assessment would induce those who held land for speculative purposes to be more ready than hitherto to make it revenue producing, or to dispose of it on reasonable terms to those who would put it to practical use; and also that it would encourage citizens to acquire land to build on and improve, without fear of being fined, by increased taxation, for so doing. Hence the general effect would be to induce people to build on and improve land, to reduce rents, and to make houses both cheaper and better. In conclusion, he pointed out that rating land values only would not involve a greater burthen on the stand-holders and land users

than heretofore, but on the contrary, owing to the broadening of the basis of assessment, would tend to lessen it. And, finally, that it would not weaken, but rather strengthen, the credit of the town.

"Mr. F. Lindsay, in seconding the motion, pointed out that there were two important principles contended for in the Bill. Firstly, the assessment of land value only; secondly, legislation with a view of preventing the individual, whose holding or interest in the land is assessed, shifting responsibility for the payment of such assessment on to others. He emphasised the fact that, while the assessment of land value tends to reduce both the rental and selling price of land, the taxation of buildings tends to make rents higher and accommodation worse. In conclusion, he contended that their object was to make each citizen bear his fair share of taxation, or pass his interest on to those who were willing to pay the taxes justly leviable in respect thereof."

One member in opposition to the bill said that the gentlemen responsible for this bill, "seem to have absorbed some of the single tax heresy so favoured by Henry George and the Sand Lot Orators of San Francisco, but discredited by thoughtful economists." Moreover, he thought "the innovations of the Bill, even if they were correct in principle, ill-timed and inexpedient," and likely to interfere with the borrowing powers of the community.

Mr. W. Hosken said that he thought they were all agreed on the principle of levying rates on the freeholder, who in the past has escaped scot free. He expressed his surprise at Mr. Jennings' deprecatory allusions to one of the greatest men America had produced in modern times—Henry George: and referred to the effrontery of the Johannesburg *Star*, which he thought should be rechristened *The Fossil*, in making similar references to a man who was held in high respect by tens of thousands and possibly millions of English speaking people."

Mr. Andrew Mackie Niven, who may be the first mayor of Johannesburg, said opposition to the measure could come only from those land monopolists and land speculators, whether individuals or corporations, who did understand the question, but whose selfish anti-social interests were diametrically opposed to those of the rest of the community. He defended the proposal as democratic, as a direct benefit to industry and to the industrial classes, be they rich or poor. In conclusion, he contended that there would probably never be a more favourable opportunity to initiate such a just, beneficial, and necessary reform in the system of assessment.

Land Values in commenting upon this new departure says:

"In the discussion on the Johannesburg Rating Bill, it was pointed out that in 1898 the total valuation of Johannesburg was, in round numbers, £14,500,000, of which £6,-