

one. These have passed with the early Christian communisms, the monastic communities, individualistic and socialistic colonies alike.

Fairhope is different of course, and to this difference is due the measure of success it has attained. It is seeking to demonstrate to the world the practicability of the Single Tax, and it makes its appeal to the spirit of democracy ignored by the world outside and largely by such colony experiments as have preceded it. But it must not itself violate the fundamental law to which it appeals. Its limitations imposed by the laws of Alabama of themselves rob it of the possibility of making anything like a full and complete demonstration of the Single Tax. It ought not further to circumscribe its value as a partial demonstration by such regulations as cast discredit upon its democracy and cause dissatisfaction that will render impossible the harmonious working of all the elements that compose the colony. It seems to us that the government of Fairhope is the business of all the people of Fairhope. It is impossible for us to imagine how men who have learned their democracy from Henry George should be able to take any other view of it. Democracy is the only working principle we know of. A demonstration of the Single Tax under any other form of government, we fear, must be too faulty and incomplete to be of any great value.

We prefer not to allude here to any of the charges of mistakes in administration, to the Fairhope steamer, to the wharf, and to other matters touched upon by our correspondents. But we want to point out that these evidences of dissatisfaction are really vital to the success of the colony. In the plan of government adopted for Fairhope the burden of justification is upon those who have rejected the democratic form of government for the autocratic. We insist therefore that these matters are properly subjects for criticism by Fairhoppers not members of the corporation without subjecting the critics to unfair imputations as to motives, and by "outsiders"—Single Taxers to whom Fairhope is appealing for moral and material support.

Of course, it remains to be said that the justification for Fairhope's form of government is that it is necessary to the preservation of the Single Tax that the colony be administered by members of the corporation. We are by no means certain that this is so. Surely there is a method by which the claims of democracy and those of the equal rights to land may be reconciled. There must be some legal pathway out of the dilemma. Surely the laws of Alabama provide for some legal form of trusteeship which offers a solution of the difficulty. Just as the members of the Fairhope corporation have shown a disposition to concede a voice to the tenants in the disbursements of rentals—a voice denied hitherto but recently accorded them, which denial it

is necessary to say, was not essential to the preservation of the Single Tax features of the Colony, so the Fairhope Industrial Association may see its way to further concessions to the spirit of democracy without endangering the Single Tax features of the colony.—THE EDITOR.

## News—Foreign.

### GREAT BRITAIN.

PROGRESS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—TORIES FEAR THE MOVEMENT FOR THE RATING OF LAND VALUES—THE ROCK ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WILL SPLIT.

The most noteworthy feature of the movement in Great Britain is the rapid progress of the conversion of the House of Commons to the taxation of land values for municipal purposes. The House of Commons is, and has been for many years, overwhelmingly Tory. Even now, when a long succession of Liberal victories at bye-elections has bitten deeply into the government majority, the government commands on party questions a majority—at least on paper—of somewhere about 90.

Three years ago, in 1902, Mr. Trevelyan's bill for the Assessment and Rating of Land Values was defeated on its second reading by a majority of 71 votes. The majority against Dr. Macnamara's bill of 1903 fell to 13. In 1904 the second reading of Mr. Trevelyan's bill was carried by 67 votes, but the members of the government were warned beforehand that official opposition to the bill would probably entail their defeat, so they contented themselves with putting up one of their number to make a bitter attack upon the bill, and then "left it to the judgment of the House." The result was that 36 conservative members, who would probably otherwise have abstained from voting, recorded their votes in favor of the bill. But the government, although unable to deny the bill a second reading, were strong enough to prevent its going to a committee. It was killed by a skilful use of Parliamentary methods of delay.

This year—on April 14th—the bill, again in charge of Mr. Trevelyan, once more occupied the attention of the House. The circumstances were by no means favorable, as a large number of Liberal members were absent in the north of England, where the great annual conference of the national Liberal Federation was being held. Yet the bill once more passed its second reading, and by an increased majority of 90. Once more the government attacked the bill unsparingly; once more they failed to show the courage of their convictions by declining to make it a "party question," and once more they are using every possible device to rob the friends of the bill of the fruits of their victory.

On May 19th, the Scotch Bill for the

Taxation of Land Values came before the House. This is the bill drafted years ago by the corporation of the city of Glasgow. The government, as usual, put up one of its members to attack the bill. The Lord Advocate, to whom the task was entrusted, had professed himself in favor of the Taxation of Land Values during his election campaign, and had, perforce, to confine himself almost entirely to a clever attack upon the details of the bill, as apart from its principles. Throughout his speech there was a note of confident expectation of victory. It is always very difficult to interest English members in a Scotch bill, and in a rather thin house it looked as if the fate of the bill was doubtful. Yet it was carried by a majority of 20, and the splendid work done by the Glasgow Corporation with unflagging zeal for many years past was rewarded by a vote which registered the approval of the House of Commons of the principle of the bill.

The driving force behind these bills has undoubtedly been the great conference of municipal authorities organized and led of late years by Glasgow. No less than 500 municipal bodies in Great Britain and Ireland are now pledged to and working for the taxation of land values for municipal purposes. The question is no longer a party question. It is true that almost without exception all the Liberal candidates for the next general election are pledged to it. But, as already stated, a number of conservative members have already voted for the bills. Take one significant instance, Liverpool is a Tory stronghold. Of its nine members in Parliament eight are supporters of the government and one is an Irish Nationalist. On its City Council Conservatives are politically in a majority of two to one. Yet this Council voted in favor of the Land Value Taxation Bill by 51 votes to 30. Both last year and this, Mr. Trevelyan's motion for the second reading of his bill was seconded by one of the Tory members for Liverpool.

Of course, this great and growing municipal movement is not without its dangers. One of them is that politicians may be led to overlook the more general aspects of the land question. But the English League for the Taxation of Land Values is alive to this danger and is doing what it can to obviate it. Mr. Chamberlain's Protectionist propaganda is a great help, for it forces forward the taxation of land values as the one possible and practical "alternative policy" to the vast extension of taxation upon "goods" which he is advocating. There is no doubt that one very important factor in bringing about the present Protectionist slump has been the circulation by the English and Scotch Leagues of over 80,000 copies of Henry George's "Protection or Free Trade" in a half-price (six-penny) edition. Moreover, the question of the equitable distribution of the burden of the cost of government between national taxation and local rating is

before the public in many forms. The League lately issued a long letter to the press, signed by its President (Mr. J. W. Whitley, M. P.) and Secretary, showing that these questions could only be solved by a uniform and universal system of taxing land values.

At this time of writing (June 21st) the League is busily engaged in endeavoring to bring before Parliament a great objection on the evils of land monopoly. We have just received copies of an agreement made nearly six months ago between the government of Newfoundland and the "Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, Limited." The company appears to be an *alias* for the Harmsworths of the yellow press. The agreement proposes to hand over to these gentlemen a tract of the best land in an English colony, comprising the whole watershed of the Exploits River—a river nearly as long as the Thames, and estimated at an area of about 3,000 square miles. It is to be leased to them at a rent of \$2 *per square mile*, and the 99 years lease is perpetually renewable on the same terms. Although the ostensible purpose of the lease is to promote the establishment of wood pulp and paper industries by the company, for which purpose the right of cutting timber and sites for mills would have been sufficient, the lease gives the company practically unchecked control over the whole of this large area, together with all mineral and quarry rights, and other privileges which can only be described as monstrous. The Harmsworths are to be free from municipal taxation and practically free from customs duties—privileges which are denied to the citizens of the colony. Moreover, for the next two years and within 70 miles of the borders of their new territory the company has power compulsorily to dispossess any citizen of his land, and to take it for their own purposes, paying a compensation to be fixed by arbitration. It would be difficult to imagine a more cynical invasion of public rights than is possible under this agreement, which seeks to combine all the worst features of absentee landlordism with all the worst features of a state-fostered industrial "trust." Yet, with the present government in power, it is doubtful whether we can do more than expose the character of the transaction by a series of questions to the Colonial Secretary, and it is not quite certain that we shall be permitted to do so much. I fear that there is little hope of getting the King to refuse the royal assent to the bill, even though the people of Newfoundland, betrayed by their Legislature, are up in arms against it: for the King acts on the advice of his ministers.

FRED'K VERINDER,  
General Secretary English League  
for the Taxation of Land Values.

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