

"agricultural" land pays an average rate of about 3s. 11d. Mr. Verinder ("Land, Industry, and Taxation," pp. 84, 85) tells us that in this country town, with so much open land immediately adjacent, "the Public Works Committee lately (December, 1912) suggested four 'schemes' for providing municipal houses, none of which could be adopted because from beginning to end the price of the land was prohibitive, viz., £300, £506, £537, and just over £1,000. They had tried fourteen schemes, and approached fourteen men who held land, and who had said: 'We don't care for your Town Council: if you want our land, you will have to pay for it.' Alternatively they appear to have suggested some land adjacent to a sewage farm as a suitable site for workmen's cottages." If, instead of hatching fourteen "schemes," they had tried the Rating and Taxation of Land-Values—but, of course, the people are said not to understand this "hotly-controverted question."

#### The Tithe-Rentcharge (Rates) Act 1899 and Tithe Redemption.

It will be remembered that after the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, had given a dole to the farmers and ultimately to the landlord by making the taxpayers pay half the rates on agricultural land, the Tithe-Rentcharge (Rates) Act was passed to give a corresponding dole to clerical tithe-owners by making the taxpayers pay half the rates on tithe-rentcharge attached to a benefice. This Act was to continue in force as long as the Agricultural Rates Act, which was originally for a four-year period, but has since been continued from year to year by the annual Expiring Laws Continuance Act. The plea for the Agricultural Rates Act was the low price of grain; but that dole has been continued through years of high prices due to the war. In like manner the plea for the Tithe-Rentcharge (Rates) Act was that the value of £100 tithe-rentcharge had gone down to about £66; but this dole has been continued, though owing to war prices the value is now slightly over £109! Now, under the Tithe Act which has just become law, we find that this plan of making the taxpayer pay half the rates on the clerical tithe-owner's tithe-rentcharge has the effect of increasing the net annual value of it, and, therefore, of entitling him to claim more than would otherwise be the case in the event of the tithe-rentcharge being redeemed. Mr. Prothero, the President of the Board of Agriculture, explained that the new scheme of redemption would give the tithe-owner a sum equal to twenty-one times the calculated annual value less certain deductions, including deduction for what the tithe-owner had to pay in rates. He then observed that the scheme had been approved by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, "as the principal business authority on the Church side," and went on to say:

The advantage of it, of course, is that among other things it discriminates between the lay tithe-owner and the clerical tithe-owner. It would be manifestly unfair to redeem tithe for both these sets of persons on the same basis, inasmuch as the clerical tithe-owner pays only half the rates, while the lay tithe-owner pays the whole of the rates. Working on those lines, making those deductions, and taking twenty-one years as the multiplier, the purchase money for £100 of tithe-rentcharge would be

£1,879 10s. in the case of clerical tithe, and £1,711 10s. in the case of lay tithe.

Thus one effect of the dole to the clerical tithe-owner under the Tithe-Rentcharge (Rates) Act, 1899, is to give the clerical tithe-owner for every £100 of tithe-rentcharge that is redeemed a capital sum of £1,879 10s. instead of £1,711 10s., or, in other words, a bonus of £168.

#### DR. WICKSTEED AND HENRY GEORGE (From the Correspondence Columns of "The Inquirer," September 21)

It is perfectly true that Mr. Webster first called my attention to "Progress and Poverty" in my only visit to Aberdeen, and true also that I read it on my way home and that it "set my brain on fire." But, so far from being "sure that George was wrong," I associated myself with his followers, secured the vote of thanks to him in St. James's Hall, and had the honour of receiving him for a few hours in my house. I became and still am a member of both the Land Nationalising Societies.

But "with a brain on fire," indeed, and believing that the advocacy of Georgism, if successful, might lead to a revolution, I felt responsible for testing the doctrines of "Progress and Poverty" with the utmost severity of which I was capable. I found that the professed economists, as a rule, were not inclined to take George seriously; but Arnold Toynbee was an exception, and the two lectures on "Progress and Poverty" which he delivered under the late Prof. Beesley's chairmanship were organised by supporters of Henry George, on my initiative. A tragic interest attaches to them as Toynbee's last public effort. I suppose it is seldom that the most careful and authoritative utterance against a reforming scheme has been arranged for, without a reply, by the propagandists of the scheme themselves. Toynbee on his side, contrary to his inclination but in accordance with his principles, gave his assent (which I would not have acted without) to my proposal to have the sixpenny edition of "Progress and Poverty" on sale in the hall.

It was in connection with my interest in George, but rather to test my right to advocate his principle of land nationalisation than in order "to be able to refute him"—for I was straining at the leash and was willing to sacrifice everything except loyalty to truth in the cause—that I undertook the systematic study of economics. It has led me far from what was then my position, but it has neither alienated me from belief in land nationalisation nor dulled my admiration of Henry George or my gratitude to him.—  
PHILIP H. WICKSTEED, *Zenor*.

How wars are made the two following dispatches, published in the *Scotsman* of August 17 last, will perhaps shed some light. The overthrow of land monopoly is very much more than a national struggle. Privilege extends its bounds far beyond national boundaries, as Russia has also proved:

WASHINGTON, August 15.—Great Britain and the United States have joined in a diplomatic representation to Mexico against the oil land decrees, which, they contend, practically amount to confiscation. Meanwhile, the American and English oil companies have united in an agreement to refuse to meet the terms of the decrees.—*Reuter*.

WASHINGTON, August 15.—It is understood that the Allies need this year 430 million barrels of crude oil, of which the United States produce about 315 millions. The Mexican oil field can supply 130 millions. Under the latest decree Mexico attempts to make oil national property. Mexican petroleum would then become contraband, and consequently unsaleable by a neutral Government to a belligerent under international law.—*Reuter*.