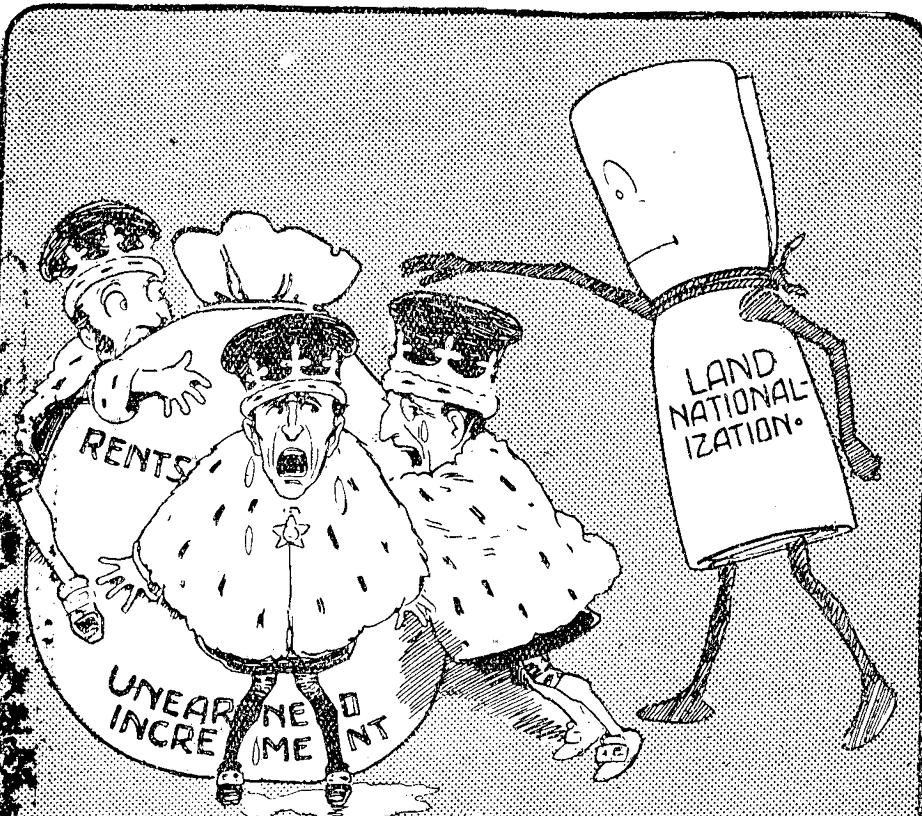

SOCIALISM, THE DUKES AND THE LAND.

By Wm. C. Anderson.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

I.L.P. Publication Department, 30, Blackfriars Street, Salford, Manchester, and 23, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

Socialism, The Dukes and the Land.

BY WILLIAM C. ANDERSON.

"Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
But leave us still our old nobility."

Late Duke of Rutland.

Ay, there they are—
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to its cold hard bosom.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

"Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad," runs the proverb. Have the gods decided to lynch the dukes? How else could our feudal barons be incited to make such sorry and pitiful exhibition of themselves? How, after recent happenings, can we be expected to keep alive our superstitious reverence for a lord? Have we not heard them bleating like sheep awaiting the shears, seen them descend to scurvy devices that would disgrace a mountebank?

For many years the workers, by means of unjust and indirect taxation, have carried with tragic patience a financial burden almost in inverse ratio to their resources. On the other hand, large landowners, though reaping where others sowed, escaped their fair contribution to national expenditure, mainly incurred in defence of their private property.

The Finance Bill seizes upon the rising values of land as being a fair and equitable source of revenue. And, behold, the old nobility and landed gentry wail piteously as if the end of their world had come. The earls are angry, the dukes are in despair, the marquises rage furiously, and the young bloods of the Tory party imagine a vain thing.

The taxation of land values appears to them the turret-top of fiscal injustice. And yet the dukes—Lord Rosebery's poor but honest class—mainly own agricultural land upon which no real burden is laid. All told, the taxes on ground values will realise only £600,000, and the landed interests are receiving back in grants and concessions more than they are asked to pay. The Development grant for agriculture and afforestation amounts to £500,000; another £600,000 will be spent on improved roads; and the latest concession relieves agricultural landlords of a clear £500,000 on the income-tax.

THE CALLOUS DEMOCRACY.

Despite all this, the landlords of the country, who, if well advised, would pay and look as happy and say as little as possible, continue their funeral dirges and disclose their woes, like a beggar his sores. They fully expected the democracy to fall a-sighing and a-sobbing with them, and, because nothing of the kind has happened, they make mournful wail over the degenerate times.

Time was when a labourer bent in lowly adoration, pulling humble forelock to the squire. To speak was to be obeyed; to smile was to radiate thrills of bliss; to frown was to cast consternation over a parish.

What has gone wrong? The dukes assail the Budget in the language of anger, sorrow, ridicule, misrepresentation, indignation, abuse. The Finance Bill, they allege, is fraught with direst and most fatal consequence. It will undermine national stability; it will drive capital from the country; it will rob the rich, and penalise the poor; it will subvert the social order, and spread devastation, ruin, and unemployment, o'er a smiling land.

And, strangely enough, no one seems the least alarmed. Indeed, the nation holds its sides in derisive laughter. I imagine the barons charitably conclude that the people (who unfortunately possess votes) have for the moment been deprived of their senses.

SCHOOLMASTERS ABROAD.

But that is hardly the explanation. Whilst the rich have been absorbed in their game preserves, the political schoolmaster has been abroad among the poor. The I.L.P. holds 100,000 meetings a year; the dukes have to face a democracy armed with the weapons of historic knowledge and the zeal for social justice. From our standpoint the Budget is valuable, not so much for what it actually does, as for the principles it admits and the issues it raises.

It is proposed to take 20 per cent. of the future rise in land values due to communal effort; to exact a 10 per cent. reversion duty; to impose a tax of ½d. in the £ on undeveloped land, and of 5 per cent. on mining rents and royalties and wayleaves. Sir Francis Mowatt has pointed out the extent of the burden placed on the rich. The income of the nation, he says, exceeds £2,000,000,000, and savings of at least £30,000,000 are added each year to the national capital. The wealth of the nation is upwards of £70,000,000,000. The new taxes on land and capital are about £1,750,000,—that is to say, half a farthing in the pound of the national income, or one-seventieth part of a farthing in the pound of the national wealth.

THE RAGING OF THE RICH.

And yet the wailing and moaning of bankrupt marquises and distracted dukes is almost past belief; the whole land is rent with their piercing cries. The Marquis of Lansdowne has compared the Chancellor of the Exchequer to a species of sea-gull known as "the swooping robber." The Primrose Earl tells us the Budget is Socialism, and Socialism the end of all things. Owing to the Budget, the Marquis of Exeter, who still draws £30,000 a year, has actually dismissed some of his workmen, without sacrificing any of his pleasures. Lord Harrington says his hounds will have to go if the Budget is passed, whilst the noble Duke of Beaufort expresses the amiable desire to "see Winston Churchill and Lloyd George in the middle of twenty couple of dog-hounds." In future the Earl of Haddington will be obliged to reduce by two guineas his subscription to the Cheshire Agricultural Society. The Duke of Devonshire asks us to be careful, lest we kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. So lamentable is the present plight of Lord Bathurst that he informs us he does not enjoy or spend on himself one penny of his rental from 10,000 acres of land, including his land and houses in Cirencester.

The owner of Willersley Castle does not see how he can exist on £1,300 a year, and has serious thoughts of emigrating to California where there are "no irritating taxes."

The Marquis of Tullibardine, who will inherit a dukedom and the estates of Atholl, has hospitably entertained a "commission" of tanners, shuttlemakers, printers, ironmoulders (not to mention two London lawyers), who in return for his exceeding kindness have issued an impartial and authoritative report, proving the value and utility of his lordship's deer forests from the standpoint of the nation. The Earl of Malmesbury writes that "should the Budget pass, he will be unable to put his buildings and cottages into a proper state of repair."

It is indeed passing strange and wonderful. I should be glad to know on what grounds the indignant earls and dukes argue their exclusion from taxation. I should be glad to understand what service they imagine they render the nation, in return for the landlords' exorbitant rent-rolls, exceeding £200,000,000 a year, with an additional £8,000,000 in the shape of mining royalties. I should be pleased to hear their justification of a land system which permits 28 dukes to hold between them nearly 4,000,000 acres of land, which allows the Duke of Sutherland, President of the Tariff Reform Council, to own 1,350,000 acres of land, whilst the mass of the people are landless serfs. Let us glance at one or two of the distressed dukes, and see whether we can discover the secret of their loud and sorrowful lamentation.

SHARPER THAN SHEFFIELD STEEL.

The Duke of Norfolk is bitterly hostile to the land taxes, which the rapid growth of an advanced Labour and Socialist movement has, among other reforms, compelled the Government to concede. He is a monopolist of monopolists, and would fain be the mouthpiece of peers against people, of dukes against democracy. His every vote in the House of Lords will go to buttress hereditary privileges against the wash and flow of a Socialist tide, making for humanity and freedom.

He distinguished himself during the High Peak election by his famous letter to "My dear Profumo," which, apart from its breach of parliamentary prerogative, probably did much to lose the election for his party. One is not surprised to read Mr. Joynson Hicks' rather candid outburst at Ramsbottom that "it would have been better for the Conservative party if, before the Budget was introduced, every duke had been locked up, and kept locked up until the Budget was over."

Not satisfied with his unfortunate electioneering experiences, the Duke of Norfolk stooped to take part in a supremely silly pantomime at Heron Court, when a large bonfire was kindled, and the Budget burned in effigy. The rent-roll of the Duke of Norfolk is estimated at £270,000, of which, it is stated, he draws £100,000 from the land values of Sheffield alone.

A large part of his possessions is the spoil of monasteries and churches, and the robbery of the Norman Conquest. In his "History of Confiscation," Sir H. Spelman mentions that one blueblooded ancestor, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, laid sacrilegious hands on no fewer than 13 religious houses, one of which in itself embraced 40 rectories, 11 manors, and the lands, tithes, and rents in 142 parishes in Norfolk. In one of his speeches Mr. Joseph Chamberlain made reference to another Duke of Norfolk who, during the Bread Riots which preceded the repeal of the Corn Laws, advised the starved multitudes to deaden the pangs of hunger by drinking hot water flavoured with curry powder.

The present lineal descendant from a long line of noble sires would make a fortune, had he no other source of revenue than the reversion of leases in Sheffield. A South Street draper, whose lease had still over six years to run, approached the duke for a renewal. This was accomplished on the following terms; the draper surrendered the unexpired lease; his rent was increased from £5 1s. to £150 a year, and he had to expend £1000 in improvements, besides paying all rates.

Some years ago the Sheffield Town Council bought the markets at a cost of £520,000. They were informed that the value of the land amounted to £400,000. Less than 90 years ago the income from all the land on which Sheffield now stands was considerably under £20,000.

Five years ago the Sheffield Corporation desired to make a new road which included some freehold land, with short unexpired leases, the property of the Duke of Norfolk. His ground-rent from this land came to £70 in all, but he put forward a claim for £54,000, and this was ultimately settled at £50,400.

How long is the nation going to tamely submit to plunder and spoliation? The people must decide. So long as they are permitted, the landed Shylocks will demand their full pound of flesh, as it is written in the bond. The Duke of Norfolk, I doubt not, honestly regards himself as a public philanthropist who should practically be exempt from taxation. Was it not ordained from the creation—or soon after—that the iron-workers of Sheffield, the labourers of Sussex and Norfolk, should grunt and sweat under a weary load, should drag out a life, black and bare and fettered, in order that their feudal lord should rake in his rents and royalties, and maintain, unblemished and undimmed, the splendours of Arundel Castle?

THE POVERTY OF PORTLAND.

The Duke of Portland is another champion of the Anti-Budget League. Speaking at Welbeck on August 3rd, 1909, he said:

"If the Budget proposals became law, they would cause much unmerited suffering among those hitherto employed on that and neighbouring estates. On his estate £1000 a week were spent in wages, and nearly 1000 individuals are employed. Through no fault of his, this sum would have to be diminished through the circumstances created by the Budget. Those who lost their employment would understand that it had been brought about by the financing scheme of the Government."

I shall deal later with the "employment" argument, which appears to be mainly a petty piece of intimidation and spleen. And it may be remarked in passing that the Budget in respect of its land proposals, will probably affect the Duke of Portland to the alarming extent of inviting him to contribute to the Exchequer ½d. in the £ on the site value of undeveloped land. But that is not the point with which I am now concerned. The Budget controversy has been useful as affording us an opportunity of studying the working of the inner minds of Dukes. The calm repose of the Vere de Veres has been rudely ruffled, and the result is illuminating.

The Duke of Portland labours under the sad delusion that he "keeps" the workmen and labourers to whom he pays the munificent average wage of a pound a week. He has not tumbled to the elementary economic truth that they keep him, that they patiently endure hail storms and rains and bitter winds, that the Duke and his family may be securely guarded from every blast. Labourers in Caithness and Notts and Northumberland and Derbyshire are out in summer's heat and winter's cold, digging, ploughing, trenching, sowing, reaping. They are weary of foot, bent of back, heavy-laden with years and toil, and not all their frugal industry will save many of them from the workhouse which they dread. Why? Because the best fruit of their labour is laid as rent at the Duke of Portland's feet.

If the Duke desires to know what service the Bentincks have rendered England, let him read his family history from the time when his Dutch progenitor, a favourite of William III, laid the fortunes of the House by wheedling large slices of crown lands and church lands from his monarch. The Bentincks greedily seized upon every public office which offered them income. They invented the most ingenious methods of levying toll upon the toil of the community. They resisted every demand for reform, including the agitation for the franchise and for the repeal of the Corn Laws. One of them, as was recently made plain in the law courts, could find nothing better to do with his immense wealth than to burrow senseless underground passages around Welbeck Abbey, and to buy extensive deer forests in the Scottish Highlands.

The Bentincks have been an enterprising family, and they have done remarkably well out of a long-suffering people. Happily even his financial troubles do not prevent the present broken baron from shooting heavy bags on the Braemore grouse moors, nor from enjoying good sport in the Langwell Deer Forest.

GRANDEE AND THE GAG.

Another friend of the poor whose lynx eye detects the cloven hoof of Socialism stamped on the Budget is the Duke of Rutland. The Duke breaks periodically into wild invective. Speaking at Leicester on July 14th, 1909, this ducal bulwark of the gentlemanly party said: "The Finance Bill was the product of Socialists, and if ever there was a body of men destructive to the labour market of this country, it was the Labour members of Parliament. Personally he should like to put a gag into the mouth of every Labour member in the country and keep it there."

I am sure of that. I daresay, His Grace the Duke, had he the power, would drag every Labour member to the stake and kindle the faggots round him. What great monopolist but would gladly gag those who speak the unpalatable truth? If the Duke's privileges rested on justice, instead of usurpation and tyranny, he would fear no attack from any quarter. Though I am a man of peace, I shall pray to be present when the Duke begins his gagging operations by tackling, say, Mr. Will Thorne, M.P.

MANNERS AND BAD MANNERS.

The Duke seems to suffer from nerves. Apparently he cannot sleep at nights for "the pirate crew of Socialist tatterdemalions" who dance round his bed. So frightful is his nightmare that even Mr. Winston Churchill appears in the guise of a "wild and brutal Socialist." But His Grace may rest his soul in patience. Despite the Budget, he will still have 70,000 acres of land and an annual income of £90,000. There is no immediate risk of the workhouse or the Thames Embankment.

I imagine that what the Duke is most afraid of is the Socialist principle which lies at back of these Land taxes, Reversion Duties, and Mineral Rights Duties. His Grace has succinctly refined Socialism as "undiluted atheism, theft, and immorality,—the most poisonous doctrine ever put forward." Whilst I cannot personally accept that definition, I cheerfully admit that a descendant of the Manners ought to know something of these things. Is it entirely honest, for instance, that the present Duke should own 140 acres of moor assessed at £13 10s. and that on one of the finest shootings in the country belonging to the same old English gentleman, 186 acres are assessed at the ridiculous figure of £45 a year?

But let us look into the past. Has the present Duke ever heard of a certain Thomas Manners, who was created Earl of Rutland by that devout religious reformer, Henry VIII? Does he know that the family fortunes were founded in the theft of Church lands and the enclosure of common lands? Has he read of the spoliation of Croxton Abbey whose rich lands ran into 50 parishes? Has he still in his possession a copy of the Inclosure Act for the parish of Braunston, under which the Duke of Rutland of that day seized 1,200 acres, the public property of the people, or the Inclosure Act for Olveston which yielded the Duke 2000 acres, or the Inclosure Acts for Harby and Waltham?

To encroach upon the highways, to despoil the Church, to drive the poor from their common possessions is moral rectitude and social holiness; to seek to win back for the people their heritage in the land is atheism, theft, and immorality. My sense of right and wrong must be strangely warped when I dare to differ from a Duke.

ENTER THE DUKE OF WALBOTTLE.

Next in order comes that stately peer, the Duke of Northumberland. This Duke who draws an annual rental of £160,000 from one county alone, not to mention his rent-roll from Surrey, Durham, and Middlesex, realises the need for economy and retrenchment which he thinks will "injure his poorer neighbours more than himself." This offshoot from the Percies, sobbing over the hardships of the poor outside his gate, is an imposing and impressive sight. Unfortunately he has provided us with more than one illustration of the real depth and tenderness of his regard.

When the Northumberland County Council applied to him for three quarters of an acre of land, on which to build a school near Walbottle, for the education of the children of the Duke's 'poorer neighbours," he sold it to the Council at the rate of £931 14s. an acre, for land assessed at £2 an acre, or 465 years purchase.

The Throckley Co-operative Society asked for land on which to erect a store for the miners at Walbottle. It was offered at 2s. 6d. per square yard. When the Committe mildly suggested that the price was excessive, they received a haughty reply refusing them land altogether, and in the end they had to pay the Duke 5s. per square yard for a less suitable site. A clause in the agreement forbade them using their own hall for meetings of which the Duke might not approve.

The Duke is Chairman of the Northumberland County Council and President of the Royal Sanitary Institute. Speaking, doubtless, with the full knowledge and authority which these various offices confer upon him, he informed the Lords, during the discussion on the Housing and Town Planning Bill, that "the provision of cottages is not an urgent matter, and it is much more important that owners should be safely guarded in the possession of their property."

Yes, much more important. There is nothing jerry-built or insanitary about Alnwick Castle, upon the decorating and beautifying of which a late Duke spent £250,000. Nor is there the slightest overcrowding or lack of cubic air-space in Sion House, Middlesex, another of his seats. Uncomplainingly the workmen have built stone on stone of mansions, castles, palaces, in which the rich spend their luxurious and oftimes useless and unprofitable lives, but when these workers, crowded together in plague stricken alleys, ask permission to build for themselves bright healthy homes, an arresting hand is held up by the monopolists who have added house to house and field to field. Our thanes and earls and marquises slumber amid rose-leaves of luxury; but they insist that those whose toil upholds the glittering show shall not escape the sharp and tangled thorns of penury and pauperism.

"The provision of cottages is not an urgent matter." In less than a fortnight after this cheerful declaration had been made, a closing order was obtained against twenty-two houses in Old Row, Walbottle, the property of the Duke of Northumberland, and occupied by miners who work at a colliery from which the Duke draws £2,500 a year in mining royalties. These back to back houses were damp, insanitary, and quite unfit for habitation.

COMFORT OF SUTHERLAND CROFTERS.

The Duke of Sutherland, the largest landowner in the country, has said "the authors of this Finance Bill should surely pause before compelling landowners to consider whether they are not compelled to make a serious reduction in payment, upon which the comfort and almost the existence of many of the workers on their estates depend."

Since when have the Sutherland landlords grown solicitous for their workers' comfort? Has the Duke forgotten that in six years, 1814-20, 15,000 people were evicted by methods of barbarism from the Sutherland estates, and their crofts and farms, covering 700,000 acres, merged in sheep runs or deer forests? Has he read reliable and impartial accounts of the unspeakable horrors, worthy of the Turk, which accompanied these wholesale clearances? The peasantry driven out with ruthless severity; houses by the hundred burned to the ground; pregnant women seized with premature labour; bed-ridden men flung homeless upon the heather. They have long memories in the Highlands and these monstrous deeds are still remembered. They smile grimly to hear a wealthy landowner seeking to escape from taxation because of his attention to the comfort of his workers.

LONDONDERRY LOGIC.

With countenance more in sorrow than in anger, Lord Londonderry has been adding his jeremiad over the times so sadly out of joint.

Speaking at Wynyard, Lord Londonderry indicated that as a result of new taxation he would require to cut down expenses. What did that mean? It meant "giving up his own individual pleasures on that estate. His great interests and pleasures were the maintenance of the shooting and the gardens, and, besides giving pleasure to himself, they gave employment to a large number of men. By the employment of labour, the amusement so-called of the landowner was really benefiting the working classes, and in addition (in his own instance) he was able to send out to the large towns adjacent heavy consignments of game in times of distress to relieve those out of employment."

Now a speech like that reveals a curiously perverted mental attitude, and there are one or two trifling points which have, I think, escaped his lordship's attention. Lord Londonderry does not deny that the money for national purposes must be found, and that someone must pay. If it comes to a choice of evils, does Lord Londonderry think it more serious that his expenditure on shooting should be interfered with, or the workers' expenditure on tea, sugar, and bread? Will not a lessened spending power for the many aggravate the unemployed problem? Has my lord reflected that a system of land ownership which encourages deer, foxes, rabbits, partridges, at the expense of a sturdy peasant race with fields of golden grain, may cause considerably more unemployment than presents of grouse can rectify? Has his lordship faced the possibility that national funds, wisely levied and wisely spent, must do more good than harm, must find employment for a larger volume of socially useful labour than can possibly be displaced? If by means of pensions we confer an additional purchasing power of £125,000 a week on our aged people, does industry and employment gain nothing thereby? If part of the money now asked for by the Chancellor be spent on road-making, forestry, land reclamation, and the like, will not both the workers and the nation stand to gain, even if the rich have a little less to waste on senseless luxuries and cruel sport?

How shoddy must be the foundations of our social system when a landowner is allowed to calmly argue that he confers boon and blessing on the working classes by allowing them to labour in order that he may have a life of amusement and pleasure. The argument about giving employment to others is the most spurious of all. By the same process of reasoning, the man who drinks himself to death might contend that he stimulates employment in the brewing industry; the burglar who builds a mansion out of his robberies might regard himself as a public benefactor, giving employment to masons, carpenters, plumbers, decorators.

Lord Londonderry's argument is worthless because of his failure to prove two things—(1) that the wealth expended on hunting fields and pleasure grounds could not be directed into more beneficient channels; (2) that a landowner is morally entitled to spend wealth exacted as unearned tribute from the labour of the community.

If thirty out of every hundred of the industrial population do not get enough food to eat, nor enough warm clothes to wear, nor decent healthy homes to live in, had we not better set ourselves to organise labour and the distribution of wealth to the end that these things may first be provided ere sending our working class women to be menials, and our working class men to be lackeys and gamekeepers, ministering to the idle or pernicious enjoyments of the rich.

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

We are assured by marquises that their hearts sympathetically bleed for the unemployed. The sight of a workless gamekeeper or an unemployed flunkey turning his back upon the baronial pile, as a result of penal taxation, brings bitter tears to their eyes. It seems a thousand pities that their lordships are only now beginning to trouble about the unemployed. Their commiseration comes too late. They have revelled, like Belshazzar at the feast, heedless of the handwriting on the wall. Democracy has weighed them in the balance and found them wanting. Their newly awakened passion for social righteousness kindles no response except, perhaps, scepticism and a feeling akin to contempt.

We would join the dukes in shedding tears over an unemployed gamekeeper or gardener if we could rid our minds of the memory of centuries of tyranny, oppression, and cruel wrong. The land system, which they defend, which has enriched them beyond measure, has been the most potent cause of poverty, slavery, and unemployment. It is the monopoly upon which all monopolies are built.

What have the dukes done with the sturdy yeomanry useful than the gamekeeper? In twenty years—1881-1901—the number of agricultural labourers declined by 300,000. They have been driven away by unjust conditions. Landlords have imagined that the labourers had no soul above the sod. Enough for them to have the unremitting toil of a galley-slave, followed by an old age of pauperism and want. They were expected to wax fat and prosperous, to be thrifty, respectable, and contented, on a wage of 16s. a week, to lead a life without pleasure in the past, joy in the present, or hope for the future.

They were deprived of land, lest land might confer upon them a certain measure of independence. Nor had they decent houses. The evidence of experts laid before Parliamentary Housing Committees revealed the painful lack of cottages. In return for a rack-rent the labourer was worse housed than my lord's hounds or horses. Cottages with no water supply, or a tainted supply; cottages without proper sanitary conveniences; damp cottages with leaking roofs; cottages with dingy, unhealthy bedrooms; grossly overcrowded cottages—such is the story of scores of districts.

Labourers and crofters have been driven from the soil. They have migrated to the industrial centres where already under existing conditions too many are swarming round the gates of dock, mill, and factory, and thus the pressure of the unemployed becomes more intense.

Dear dukes, your protests leave us cold. What have you done for the unemployed, for the labourers, for the poor? Presents of grouse and Christmas beef! But have they had justice, freedom, and hope—ready access to Mother Earth? Look at the silent countryside and think what you have done.

Ownership of land is a trust too vast for private hands. You have lamentably failed, and all your piteous howling but emphasises your failure and gives impetus to the movement for the public ownership of the soil.

The Dukes are alarmed because constructive evolutionary Socialism, with its demand for public ownership, has become a strong political force. Land valuation, with its public exposure of extortion and excess, is the prelude to land nationalisation. The day of the squire, as local Cæsar demanding servile obedience from his thralls, is waning fast. Often the labourers were terrorised into voting in such a way as merely to forge additional links in the chain that bound them to a cramped and narrow existence.

In future the intelligent workers will refuse to be dosed with the drugged wine of political make-believe. They will keep clear of orthodox party politics which is a spider's web to catch green flies. The advent of the Labour and Socialist movement has breathed into British politics an atmosphere of stern reality and sincerity. Socialism, with its ringing message of hope for the workers, has challenged landlordism and capitalism to mortal combat. Not all the deafening outcry of dukes will distract the people from the straight line of advance.

whose limbs were made in England? Where are their cottages? Where are their small holdings? Where are their common lands? Noble dukes, you will plead in vain for sympathy while the spoil of the poor is in your palaces.

We remember that between 1727 and 1845 Parliaments controlled by landlords, Parliaments whose members were the nominees of dukes, passed 1,385 Enclosure Acts. We remember that during those years one-third of the entire land of the country was enclosed—stolen from the labouring people. We remember that, as an outcome of a policy of legal spoliation and confiscation, every public road was crowded with landless, hungry outcasts, victims of landlord aggression. We have not forgotten that repressive laws were aimed against their disinherited "rogues and vagabonds," divorced from their birthright in the soil, that thousands of them were hanged—a drastic but ineffective method of dealing with the unemployed problem. As far back as Elizabeth's day it was the stealing of public lands by wealthy nobles that made the Poor Law necessary.

Old history, did you say? Yes, but old history which still yields a shameful harvest of bruised and broken lives.

Come to our own day. Our country has been burdened with the worst system of land tenure in the world. It has laid a crushing weight upon Labour, industry, and progress. The spectre of unemployment haunts the nation. We try to grapple with a terrible evil. We seek to amend or abolish the Poor Law; we insure against unemployment; we open unemployed bureaux, farm colonies, relief stations, municipal works; and all the time millions of acres of land that might blossom with corn and trees and fruit and flowers are locked up or put to anti-social uses; the villages are deserted, and the glens are silent and desolate, or tenanted by the game that have dislodged a strong peasant race, without which no nation can long survive.

All three kingdoms have been cursed by the blight of landlordism. For years Ireland has been bleeding to death. Her hardy sons and daughters have been banished over-sea. The agents of absentee landlords have drained the last penny of rent, like the last drop of blood, from the hard hand of crofters. In Scotland men and women have made room for deer; rabbits burrow amid ruined shielings in misty straths. In England landlordism has largely killed initiative and enterprise in agriculture. The farmer finds himself without security of tenure. He is over-rented, and must pay over three pounds to the landlord for every pound he secures for himself. If he improves his farm he is rewarded with a rise in rent. Turn where he may, he can hardly escape the baneful political tyranny of the squire. Is it wonderful that the problem of rural depopulation has become menacing and acute, that the rate of exodus from country to town has now reached 150,000 a year?

What of the agricultural labourer, who is surely not less

The Coming Force

The Labour Movement.

By Mr. Frank H. Rose.

A vigorous narrative of the rise and growth of the Labour Party. An instruction to those who are imperfectly informed and a reply to impatient and unkindly critics.

"The Coming Force" contains much that will give rise to acute controversy, but controversy which will be finally and permanently helpful to the Cause of the Workers.

No one connected with modern Trade Unionism, both in its political and industrial aspects, is better qualified by experience and capacity than is Mr. F. H. Rose to handle so important a subject, and he has dealt with it with characteristic force and fearlessness.

CONTENTS.

30TH THOUSAND.

Mining Royalties

And all about them.

By T. I. MARDY JONES, F.R.E.S.

Republished with additions from the "Economic Review," by kind permission of the Editor.

Price One Penny.

PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY,
23, BRIDE LANE, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

WORKERS!

Learn for yourselves what Socialism means. Study the question at your own fireside.

Read the following Pamphlets and Books.

Talks with John Bull on Labour Politics and Socialism. By Elihu.

No. 1. Whose Dog art Thou?
No. 2. A Nation of Slaves.
No. 3. Milk and Postage Stamps.
No. 4. A Corner in Flesh and Blood.
No. 5. Simple Division.

Socialism and the Right to Work.

Socialism. By T. D. Benson.
The Right to Work. By H. Russell Smart.
John Bull and his Unemployed. By J. Keir Hardie, M.P.
How Millionaires are made. By J. Bruce Glasier.
Socialism and Service. By T. D. Benson.
Darwinism and Socialism. By Lawrence Small, B.Sc.
Socialism and the Budget. By H. Russell Smart.
The Unemployed Bill of the Labour Party. By J. R. Macdonald, M.P.

By Philip Snowden, M.P.

The Workmen's Compensation Act made Plain.
A Straight Talk to Ratepayers.
The Individual under Socialism.
The Christ that is to be.
Old Age Pensions this Year.

All the above to be had at One Penny each from where you purchased this pamphlet or by Post from the I.L.P. Publication Department.

The Socialist Library.

Edited by J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P. Stout paper covers 1/- net, cloth 1/6 net.

1. Socialism and Positive Science. By Professor E. Ferri.
2. Socialism and Society. By J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.
3. Studies in Socialism. By Jean Jaures.
4. White Capital and Coloured Labour. By Sidney Olivier, C.M.G.
5. Collectivism and Industrial Evolution. By Emile Vandervelde.

Extra Volume 1. The Revolution in the Baltic Provinces of Russia. 18 illustrations.

I.L.P. Publication Department,

23, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

Mining Royalties

AND ALL ABOUT THEM.

SOCIAL evils are apt to arise unobserved, and to continue undisturbed till they become a permanent drag on society, or are only uprooted by strenuous effort. The effects of such evils may be discerned before their causes are clearly defined, and long before any adequate remedies have been found. So complex, indeed, are the issues at times that the very attempt to uproot long-continued abuses may introduce conditions more serious than those it is proposed to abolish. In any case a correct diagnosis of the situation must be made before the right remedy can be applied.

This fact is exemplified by the case of British mining royalties. The public generally, and the mining population in particular, have long looked upon the royalties which private owners of mineral land receive as a heavy burden. At first unobserved, and afterwards by the force of custom left undisturbed, the exaction of private royalties has become an established right. But there are strong indications that the demand for the socialization of these mineral dues is again becoming a popular topic. It is high time to move in the matter. But a note of warning is necessary. For the adoption of certain of the reforms advocated would, in effect, retard and not further reform. My object, therefore, is to present a review of the economic aspects of the subject, in the hope that this will indicate the lines along which reform should go, if it is to be of any lasting social benefit.

Here there is no call to trace the origin of private property in land or minerals. Yet a word is necessary about the historical development of mining royalties. As is well known, ownership of the land in Great Britain is vested in the Crown since the days of Feudalism. But for centuries the private holdership of land, which English law does not recognise as ownership, has gradually acquired all the economic force of absolute ownership. Hence the owner of the surface of the land also owns everything beneath the surface right down to the centre of the earth, and even farther if the landlord on the other side does not object. The rights of the Crown in land, and of the people in "commons," have been steadily encroached upon by landlordism.

Bainbridge, in his "Law of Mines and Minerals," states that by the time "that industry began to extend itself to mines of coal, iron, and such like other baser substances, the spirit of liberty and of private encroachment, fostered and protected by the genius as well as by the forms of English law, occasioned the assertion by individual landowners of rights that were exclusive of the Crown. Whence it appears that, in or about the year 1568, the respective adverse rights of the Crown and of private landowners became the subject of contention." The Judges decided "that only the so-called royal mines (gold and silver) belonged to the Crown, and that all the baser minerals belonged to the individual landowner." At first any mine worked for the baser metals in which gold or silver occurred at all was claimed as a royal mine. As this often happened it hampered the development of mining copper, tin, iron, and lead. A series of statutes of pre-emption have long since established private property in all minerals mined in Great Britain except the precious metals. The right of the Crown to royalties on English gold or silver was preserved less by the vigilance of its mineral department than by the fact that these metals were rarely workable at a profit. Even the minerals of a baser sort did not at first yield appreciable royalties. Coal a hundred years ago was a comparatively valueless commodity.

This is why we sometimes read, as if they were tales from the "Arabian Nights," of the fabulous fortunes made by lucky speculators in mineral property in the early part of the nineteenth century. Let one historic instance suffice. In the year 1748 the then Marquis of Bute leased to one Antony Bacon some 8 miles of mineral property around Merthyr, Glamorgan, for 99 years, at an annual royalty of £100. Some years later the lease was transferred to the Dowlais Co., in whose hands it remained until its expiration in 1848. The Dowlais Co. then found it worth while to re-lease that same property, not at the old royalty of £100, but at the immensely increased sum of £20,000 a year. This, too, in spite of the fact that vast quantities of the best coal and iron ore had, in the meantime, been worked away.

This increase in the value of coal was concurrent with the adaptation of steam as the motive power of industry. Coal then became the raw material of the industrial world; and coal is now to industry what food is to man—an absolute necessity. Along with the rapid development of our coalfields there has taken place an increase in the bargaining power of the landlords. Royalty owners have long since established a system of royalty charges on the strictest business lines of this business nation of ours.

Here a brief description of the British royalty system will elucidate the economic aspects to be considered later. And as seven-eighths of the royalties are paid on coal the method of payments in the coal trade will be given as applicable to mineral royalties in general.

Mining royalties are a payment which the landowners exact for allowing the removal of the minerals in their land, and are not to be confused with the mine rents for the use of the surface. All royalties are based on the tonnage system, though their amount and mode of payment varies in different localities and coalfields

Broadly, they are reducible to certain payment for each ton of minerals mined in one or more of the three following ways: (1) certain or dead rents: (2) fixed or scale payment per ton, or per foot per acre of minerals worked: (3) Wayleaves.

1. Dead rents are paid by all mines. The landowner stipulates that a certain amount of minerals must be extracted every year throughout the term of the lease, and exacts an annual payment on this basis. This is equivalent to a given charge per ton on the total amount which the lessor and the lessee agreed should be mined annually. Thus, if the rate be 6d. per ton, and the landlord stipulates that the lessee must raise 40,000 tons a year, the dead rent becomes an annual charge of £1,000. This the mineowner has to pay, whether he raises so much or not. The landlord insists upon this condition to protect his own interest; for if he allowed the lessee to work the mine without making such a stipulation, the lessee might not develop the mine until many years of his lease had expired, and would thus postpone the landlord's royalty receipts. On the other hand, it is obvious that during the first few years a new mine cannot yield very much, so that the lessee has to pay in dead rent for minerals he has not had time to work. To meet this difficulty and to avoid the payment of a second royalty on minerals already covered by the dead rent, the lessee is given an opportunity to work them later on. This is termed "working shorts." For instance, a lessee stipulates to pay a royalty of 6d. per ton on the minerals raised, and pays £2,000 in dead rent every year. This is equivalent to an annual output of 80,000 tons, and he must pay the £2,000 each year whether he raises the full quantity or not. But by the system of working shorts the lessee is allowed to increase his output beyond this limit, when the mine is better developed. This he may do up to the total shortage without paying extra royalties. But the privilege is usually limited to the first five or seven years of the lease. Hence, unless he recovers the whole of his shorts in that time, the remainder is liable to a second royalty of 6d. per ton, and, if he does not work them at all, or is prevented by physical difficulties, the dead rent will represent an absolute loss.

2. In addition to the dead rent, a fixed or scale payment per ton, or in some cases a fixed sum per foot thick of the seam per acre is charged. It is usually fixed throughout the term of the lease, and may range from about 4d. to 2s. a ton for coal, and from about 6d. to 6s. a ton for iron ore, in Great Britain. When based on a sliding scale, fixed or proportional, it may vary from one-tenth to one-thirtieth of the selling price at the mouth of the mine.

3. A wayleave differs from both the above, as it is simply a payment for right of way. It is a tonnage charge on the conveyance of minerals over or under the surface of land which is not part of the working area of the mine; or from one or more mining properties leased from different landlords along roadways

and up shafts constructed by the mineowner, usually on the most convenient land within his working area. The first form of wayleave occurs when the mine owner wants to transport his product over or under land adjoining his mine, which is not being worked, or is not owned by his original lessor. Thus it may happen that a portion of another mining or other property intersects his own like the thin end of a wedge. It may be necessary to pierce this barrier underground to convey the minerals to the shaft from their bed on the farther side; or to cross it overground to reach a public railway, canal, or place of shipment. For this privilege the lessee has to pay as heavy a wayleave as the owner of the right of way can exact. The second wayleave charge is made when the lessee wishes to avoid the expense of sinking fresh shafts on any of the estates within his working area. When this occurs the lessee has to pay his original lessor a way-leave for conveying minerals from lands leased from other landlords along the roadways and shafts constructed at the mineowner's own expense.

These several charges of dead rent, fixed or scale payments, and wayleaves are usually combined into one tonnage charge and termed royalty; all other minor charges, for the passage of air or water and so forth, merge into one or other of these three species. In the long run, of course, the various arrangements between lessor and lessee are a matter of bargain, and the policy of give-and-take rules. But the process of adjustment causes much needless friction; wayleaves especially complicate business calculations and involve much useless contention and negotiation.

The larger the number of separate estates which constitute the working area of a mine the graver the effect of wayleaves on the efficiency of mining, for each landlord exacts the highest charge he can, and the rapacity of the owners of rights of way is satisfied at the expense of the community. A glaring instance of this is the case of the Park Mile, a strip of land between Bassaleg and Newport, Mon., over which the G.W.R. carries millions of tons of minerals annually. Lord Tredegar, the owner of this property, charges a wayleave of 1d. per ton on these minerals. This exaction brought him in last year a royalty of £13,300. Such is the power of monopoly.

There is no means of ascertaining the exact total yield of mining royalties for the whole country, as they are assessed indirectly through the income tax on the profits of mines. The Royal Commission on Mining Royalties, which sat from 1889 to 1893, estimated their total yield for all minerals mined in the United Kingdom in 1889 as follows:—

	Royalties.	Wayleaves.
Coal	£4,008,353	£201,916
Ironstone and Iron Ore	561,122	14,781
Other Metals ...	87,068	—

Total of royalties and wayleaves, £4,873,240.

Since then there has been a distinct rise in the average royalties upon which the Commission based the above estimate. Mr. D. A. Thomas, M.P., whose knowledge of the coal trade is proverbial, states, in a private letter—

"There has been an increase in the royalties asked for, and the tendency is distinctly upwards. I should say for the South Wales smokeless steam coal that the increase during the last twenty-five years has been several pence per ton."

The nominal prices of coal throughout the country have also risen. Hence it is no exaggeration to assume an average rise of at least one penny per ton for all British coal mined in 1906. Allowing a fractional increase in royalties for other minerals, and for those yielded by metals but little or not at all worked seventeen years ago, the increase brings the total royalties up to at least £9,500,000 for 1906. More than £8,000,000 of this total, at an average of 8d. per ton, was paid on the total output of coal of 251,050,809 tons.

The problem of what is the effect of this royalty charge on the price of minerals is of more than academic interest. It is the vital consideration in any proposal for reform. In short, we may take it that it is only the equivalent of the royalty paid by the mine working under the greatest disadvantages which enters into the price of all similar minerals competing actively in the same market. Given competition, and assuming landlords know their business, the owners of all the better mines, however great may be the superiority of their mines, can only get the same remuneration as the worst mine. The surplus wealth the better mines may yield over the worst goes in higher royalties to the landowner. No part, therefore, of the extra royalties they pay affects the price of the minerals worked. Hence it is only the equivalent of the minimum royalty which enters into the cost of production of all the mines in any given competitive group.

Thus throughout the British coalfields there are about three thousand mines working annually. Obviously all these mines are not on a common level of productivity. Their royalty values are a twofold origin. They are partly a gift of nature, and partly the product of social demand. These are jointly the sole sources of mineral wealth. The first source represents the economic value of the total natural differential advantages of better quality, of lower cost of bringing the minerals to the mouth of the mine, and of better situation in placing the product on the market. These advantages are paid for in extra royalties by the better mines. The second source of mineral value is the monopoly power of the landlord to extort the minimum royalty from the mines working under the greatest disadvantages. The community must get coal at any cost and the landlord exacts his pound of flesh.

The proportion of the minimum to the total yield of British royalties cannot be determined with exactness. It is safe to put the minimum at not less than 5 per cent of the normal selling price at the pit's mouth as this is slightly less than the basis adopted by the Royal Commission. Taking the annual average of pit prices for all coal mined in the United Kingdom from 1890 to 1903 I find their mean average over that period is approximately as follows:—English coal, 7/6; Welsh, 9/2; and Scotch, 6/8 per ton. Five per cent. of these prices gives a minimum of 4½d. for England, 5½d. for Wales, and 4d. per ton for Scotland. On the separate output for each of these countries in 1903, the yield of each minimum royalty on this basis (omitting odd hundreds) would be for England, £3,010,000; Wales, £794,000; and Scotland, £583,000; total £4,387,000. Of course, some of the best coals in each country yield higher, and the worst somewhat lower minima than the average minimum taken here. But after allowing for all this it is quite safe to assert that for 1906 £5,000,000 of existing British royalties were a tax on the consumers of British coal. The average minimum royalty on British iron ore is about 3/6 per ton, and 2/- per ton on foreign ore. About one-half of the iron ores used in this country are British, and the other half is imported from abroad, chiefly from Spain. Taking 2/9 per ton as the average minimum royalty for all iron ores consumed in the manufacture of the 9,600,000 tons of pig iron produced in the United Kingdom in 1905, we find that this amounts to a total royalty charge on iron ore of £2,540,000. Of this sum one and a half million pounds was taken by British and the other million was a tribute to foreign landlords. But the entire burden fell on the consumer of British iron. Thus the coal and iron ore royalties paid to British landlords total about £9,500,000 for 1906, and the yield tends to increase annually. As pointed out in the case of the lower royalties paid on coal on the Continent. the fluctations in ocean freights and foreign tariffs are much more serious differential factors against us in international competition than the differences of royalty rates.

Enough has been said to show that royalties are both a cause and an effect of the value of minerals. They are a cause up to the amount of the minimum which the landlord will take for the depreciation of his mineral property; and an effect for all amounts above the minimum. Up to this point then, royalties are, in the first place, a tax on the mining industry, and ultimately on the consumer of minerals. Beyond the minimum they are the joint product of the prodigality of nature and the needs of society. But the landlord appropriates the full benefit and the community bears the entire burden.

The whole trend of progressive economic thought on taxation stimulated by the criticism of Socialism is to tax all forms of monopoly wealth. Obviously mining royalties is an extreme form of unearned increment. Professor Marshall states that:—

"The soil receives an income of heat and light, of rain and air, which is independent of man's efforts, and a special tax on these would not affect production directly." How much more just a tax on the treasures of the earth's crust. In the course of the Parliamentary debates on the Finance Bill when the coal tax was under discussion on June 25th, 1901, the present Prime Minister said :—

"And we say it is almost a scandal, certainly I think it is an economic scandal, that the sole person who has not to contribute to a tax of this sort is the man who does the least in producing the coal."

That a particular royalty owner has bought his royalty rights just as he would railway stock does not affect the fact that royalty wealth is an unearned increment, and theretore is as much *common property* as the air we breathe. Nor does the fact that because, unlike air, land and minerals are fixed in place, fixed in the grip of the landlord—and, as a consequence, the nation fixed in terrible social distress—this fact does not justify private appropriation of communal wealth.

No landlord ever contributed anything to the value of the wealth he extorts in royalties. It is highly amusing to be assured by the royalty owner that he regards his royalties as capital which he considerately invests in the interest of national industry. He does not, or will not, realise that the social system which enables him to exercise his ingenuity as a capitalist in this way, even when so exercised, is economically bad and morally wrong. It means that had he no such income, which is created by social activities, he would be compelled to choose between the lot of a penniless loafer and that of an industrious citizen. If he chose the first condition we could enact laws to make him do penal work. This we cannot do now as his wealth is a greater power in the land than is the public spirit to enforce work on the indolent rich as well as the idle poor. If he chose the second course he would be producing wealth where he now consumes it only, thus adding to national wealth and thereby to the national well-being.

Thanks to Socialist propaganda, public opinion is ripening on social questions in general. The new era of social reform will involve an increasing national expenditure, which again can only be met by a radical change in our national policy of taxation and by an extension of State and municipal Socialism. Some parts of the public revenue are more distinct than others and are more readily subject to a special tax. A graduated income tax is likely to prove the most effective means of socialising the bulk of the unearned incomes of large amounts. But a further specialisation of taxation is practicable with regard to such highly monopolistic forms of unearned increments as land rents and liquor profits. Mining royalties can also be easily ear-marked in this way.

There are various proposals to socialize the mineral wealth absorbed in private royalties. Briefly they are reducible to four a general reduction; their total abolition; or nationalisation; or taxation. The present advocacy of several of these in various quarters is a mistake of policy and a waste of political energy; for some one of them is surely more practicable than the others. Hence a thorough grasp of the probable economic effects of each of the above proposals should serve to point out which of them can soonest and best secure private royalties for the public revenue or distribute them in lowered prices among the consumers of minerals.

I. The demand for a general reduction of British royalties to the level of Continental royalties is advocated on the ground that our higher royalties are a serious burden for our coal and iron industries in competition with our foreign rivals abroad and at home. We have already seen that it is only the minimum royalty which enters into the price of minerals, and therefore the proposal can only apply to a reduction of our minimum to the level of the continential minimum. The prevalent opinion that mining royalties in Europe are extremely low is wrong. In France and in Europe generally the minimum is about 2d., and with us about 5d. per ton for export coal. It would give our coal owners an advantage on this score of 3d. per ton over our foreign competitors. But it is evident that if royalties were the only determining factor in the price of our coal in European markets, we should not be able to compete against them at all. The higher prices, however, which the better quality of British coal commands abroad and the difference in the cost of working and of transport are immensely more important factors in international competition than the difference between the royalty charges. Hence this proposal of a reduction is futile.

II. Total abolition is a more plausible as well as a more drastic proposal. It would sweep away the landowners' right to any payment whatever for the minerals beneath their lands. All they could claim would be surface rent and compensation for damage done by subsidence. As a first effect, abolition would ease the mining industry of the friction caused by royalties, and would increase the efficiency of mining. New mines might also be opened which could not have been started before because they could not afford to pay the lowest royalty which had previously been imposed. This, however, would only happen if prices did not fall by more than the amount of the old minimum royalty, and if the demand increased sufficiently at the lowered prices to absorb the supply of the fresh mines. Whether or not coal would cheapen in price to the full extent of the abolished royalty would depend upon the force of competition. No doubt the mineowners would endeavour to retain the advantage in higher profits, while the miners would try to secure it in higher wages. By joint action they might, for a time at all events, and to some extent appropriate what now falls to the private landlord, and prevent the distribution of royalty wealth in lowered prices among the consumers.

But there is another aspect of abolition which suggests that its value would be still more dubious. Abolition would make the strong stronger, and the weak weaker. It would strengthen the competitive powers of the richest and weaken those of the poorest coalfields. For the royalty system in mining, like rent in agriculture, is the great equaliser. It places every mine within each competitive group on a common basis; it is the landlord's handicap on the best over the worst mines in the competition for markets. Remove this equaliser and you at once introduce inequalites of advantage which will disturb the equilibrium of trade, and before the balance is restored may bring about the ruin of the worst mines in each competitive area.

This was fully realised some years ago by the Northumberland miners. In his evidence before the Commission, one of their leaders stated that:—

"The Northumberland miners were in favour of the abolition of royalties; but it was found some time after the agitation had gone on that as the royalties in Northumberland were less than the average royalties paid throughout the United Kingdom, and especially by our competitors (South Wales), it would not be an advantage to us Northumbrians to go in for abolition."

In addition to the objections already raised, abolition has one fundamental defect. It could not be a permanent cure. It could not prevent an ultimate reversion to the present or to a similar royalty system. Our guide to this conclusion is the history of leasing mining land on the continent. As the royalty systems of Europe are based on that of France a brief review of the French system will prove this.

In France the surface-owner of the land does not own the minerals beneath his property. Neither does the State own them. In fact, French law does not recognise any owner of minerals which are not the subject of a lease or concession. The State cannot even grant a concession to itself to search for minerals or to work them when found. What the State does do is to grant a concession to a second party, who is called the concessionaire, for a nominal royalty. He then becomes the owner of the minerals, and can work them or lease them for others to work without permission from the surface-owner. But, in addition to the ground rent for the use of the surface, he pays a trifling royalty to the surface-owner. The "State has the sole right of fixing its amount," and does so according to "custom and local usage." This royalty "is fixed once for all, and is not afterwards varied," and "is regarded as the homage paid by the French law to the surface-owner." With but slight modification the same system is established in Spain, Belgium, and Germany.

Thus the original concessionaires on the Continent get their concessions for a lower royalty—practically nil. If every concessionaire also worked the mines on his concession the price of minerals would be hardly affected by royalty charges. But there would still be an economic surplus produced by all the mines which had an advantage over the worst mines competing in the same market. For whatever may be the system of leasing mining land in any country which trades on the competitive basis, whether leased from the State or private owners, there is always an economic surplus so long as there are natural inequalities of advantage in the industry. This surplus, however, would be retained in extra profits by the concessionaires of the better mines, and the abolition of royalties would have but an insignificant effect upon the price of minerals.

The actual conditions of Continental mining, however, are not so simple and not so beneficial to the consumers. For very few of the original concessionaires work the mines themselves. Usually they are speculators, who lease their concessions to a third party, who again may lease to a fourth, and so on, until the actual mine-owner is reached. The point to observe is that the process of transference *gives rise to a royalty system* similar to our own. Each fresh lessor exacts a payment from his direct lessee, and the total rents paid by the several lessees to their respective lessors form a royalty. In this way the the generality of Continental mines now pay appreciable royalties, ranging from a general minimum of about 2d. per ton in the case of coal to a maximum of 8d. per ton in the North of France. For iron ore it varies from little or nothing to about 4s. per ton for rich ores in Spain. Capitalism can extract its monopoly value in some form in all countries.

Thus in the rest of Europe a system of royalties has risen on similar lines to ours; and the foreign concessionaires tend to fulfil more and more the function of the private landlords in Great Britain. This development across the Channel indicates the ultimate effects which would probably result from an abolition of royalties in this country. It may safely be assumed therefore that this fundamental defect, together with the previous objections pointed out, excludes the proposal for abolition from the sphere of practical reform. Ultimate rather than immediate effects justify State legislation; but in this case it is evident that abolition would not produce any beneficial results.

III. The most drastic proposal is to nationalise all private royalties and, of course, all minerals, as the two are inseparable The public ownership and control of minerals would have distinct advantages over the present chaotic system. The State, as supreme landlord for all mineral land, could effect certain economies which are now prevented by the rival interests of numerous landlords.

1. At present much coal is being wasted unnecessarily in boundary walls, which like the cell walls of a bee-hive, separate hundreds of mining properties throughout our coal fields. The State could save many millions of tons of coal to the nation by insisting, as the one landlord, that all boundaries should be worked away except those necessary for water barriers.

2. In the same capacity the State could also enforce way-leaves on fairer terms, and abolish underground wayleaves altogether. The present wrangling over the multifarious claims of numerous owners of right of way would thus be avoided.

3 In times of extreme depression of trade collieries are often closed down, and hundreds of miners thrown idle, when a temporary reduction of 2d. to 4d. per ton in royalties would keep them in continuous employment. The State, on grounds of social welfare, could abate its royalty claims until trade revived, and thus stave off the distress of unemployment in the coal trade.

4. It would materially facilitate the further step of nationalisation of the mines. The famine prices paid by the consumers, and

the starving rates paid to the hewers of coals, will rally the working classes to this reform.

5. It would yield a stable public revenue of £9,000,000 a year, and would tend to increase, minus the amount paid in Income Tax and the royalty receipts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Allowing for these deductions, there would still remain more than eight millions.

The one difficulty in the way is the matter of compensation. To admit the justice of compensating royalty owners, some enthusiast may urge, is to doubt the practicability of nationalisation. But it is futile to blink facts. The national indifference in the past to the exactions of the landowning classes has allowed private royalties to grow into a legal right. The growing public perception of the injustice of this development is a healthy sign of the slow awakening of the democratic consciousness of the people. But royalty rights have changed hands many times, have been bought and sold on the good faith engendered by custom and by law, and have become as marketable a commodity as any other form of wealth. If capital in other forms can be compensated, the difference is one of degree, not of principle, when royalty owners, and not factory or ship owners, demand redress for the public appropriation of their property.

The State could buy out the private royalty owners by terminable annuities, on a fair capitalized basis fixed by joint agreement or arbitration. The nation would thus get immediate control of all minerals, and the royalty owners would receive the equivalent of their royalty receipts for a definite term of years. This would probably require about £200,000,000, allowing for Crown royalties.

Assuming, with the unanimous conclusion of coal experts, that coal is likely to remain the raw material of modern industry indefinitely, the case for nationalisation becomes a matter of grave urgency. The recent Royal Commission on coal supplies estimated the available supplies of British coal at a depth of 4,000 feet to be as follows:—

	Tons.
In Proved Coalfields	100,914,668,187
In Unproved Coalfields	39,483,000,000
	140,397,668,187

In 1906 the total output of British coal was 251,050,809 tons, an increase on the previous year of 14,939,659 tons, or 6·33 per cent. The output for 1907 might easily exceed 260 million tons. Hence one is not over bold in assuming that, if coal will retain its position as the raw material of industry, the average annual output may well reach 300 million tons. This granted, and deducting 50 odd billions from the estimate of the Commissioners, our available supplies may be exhausted within 300 years. On this basis, and at the low average royalty of 6d. per ton, the total royalty yield of this supply would amount to exactly two-and-a-half billion pounds sterling. Three hundred years is not long in the life of a nation. Is posterity to pay this fabulous toll to landlordism? The £200,000,000 compensation, paid over a period of twenty-five years out of their own royalty receipts, would inflict no injustice on landlords, and would confer a boon on future generations of our people.

Coal Peril is even more imminent than appears from the above. The issue is not one of time but of cost. How long can we continue to maintain our output in competition with the other great coal producing countries, Germany and America? The order of exhaustion of the available coal supplies of Europe is estimated as follows:—

In 100 to 200 years—Central France, Central Bohemia, Saxony, North of England.

In 250 to 300 years—All British Coalfields, North France.

In 600 to 800 years—Saarbucken, Belgium, Aachen, and Westphalia.

The supplies of America are almost limitless.

The order of production is as follows:—Coal Production, 1905.

United States	...	333,000,000 tons.
,, Kingdom	...	236,000,000 ,,
Germany ...	...	169,000,000 ,,

The rest are nowhere. At no distant date Germany will probably also surpass our output and we will be regulated to third place.

The order of cost of production is steadily changing against us, and relatively in favour of America and Germany. The cream of our coal is being rapidly depleted; and 50 years hence we must resort to deeper and worse seams, which will only be workable at a higher cost. We shall be driven to the points of exhaustion and higher working cost much faster than Germany and the United States, with their larger and more accessible coal supplies.

In *The Coal Question* Jevons warned us 40 years ago of our industrial doom. All the signs confirm his prediction. He urged the Government to repay posterity for the depletion of the nation's mineral wealth by paying off the National Debt. I believe that this has not yet been done. The least assets we can bestow on posterity is a sound and just land and mineral system, freed of the cruel exactions of landlordism. Nationalisation can alone secure this. It will enable the Government to organise the production of coal more efficiently than it is now managed, and also secure the royalty values of minerals as a national asset.

Three out of the four proposals of reform have now been considered. I have endeavoured to show that a general reduction of royalties would be of little practical value; that total abolition is impracticable; and that nationalisation is the only effective as it must be the ultimate solution. But there is no immediate prospect of its political accomplishment. There are too many members in Parliament, Tory and Liberal, whose vested interests are opposed to the interests of the people. The Socialist element must dominate politics to a greater degree, and the Labour Party grow in numbers,

before we can legislate upon the preserves of our august legislators.
But there is one other proposal which, if adopted, may yet enmesh the slippery royalty owner in coils from which he cannot escape. Mining royalties could be taxed for national purposes; and it seems to be the easiest and quickest method by which society can claim back this form of social wealth. Thus a tax of (say) 12 per cent. on private royalties would yield about one million pounds revenue a year, and the tax could be gradually increased to the utmost limit. Royalty owners, of course, would object to the imposition with the energy born of self-interest, and the unsocial hardihood which the possession of a monopoly is apt to engender. But their resistance would be as nought before the persistence of public demand.

In any case it is the royalty owners who would pay the tax, and no one else. Thus, if the worst and the best mines are now paying a royalty of 4d. and 1/- a ton respectively, and a general tax of 25 per cent. were imposed, a royalty owner would pay a tax of 1d. a ton for the worst mine or 3d. a ton for the best. Neither could shift the burden on to his lessee, because the terms of existing leases could not be altered. Nor is it likely that the tax could be used later on to raise the price of future leases, as any increase in the cost of production would hamper such mines in their competition with the others. And the possibility that the lessees of new mines could shift the tax on to the consumers in higher prices is very remote, for new mines are too rarely opened to have an appreciable effect on general prices.

Apart from income tax, and in some cases (chiefly in Scotland) of a slight contribution to local rates, mining royalties escape permanent taxation. In the *Times* for December 23rd, 1906, Mr. A. B. Markham, M.P., disclosed this fact with regard to the coal royalties paid by the colliery company with which he is connected. He stated that his colliery in 1905 raised 846,642 tons of coal and paid £17,463 in royalty to the landlord. Out of this sum the landlord would pay £872 13s. in income tax. The company also paid £5,613 14s. 6d. in local taxation. But the landlord paid nothing. Mr. Markham also stated that a certain landlord "refused to lease his coal on the ground that good wine improves by keeping." The agricultural value of that same property was 10s. an acre per year. As a working coal area it would be worth £500 per acre a year. Yet this property is rated at its agricultural value only. Obviously there is need of a special tax on withheld land, either to tax its real value or to compel the holder to place it on the market when in demand.

Thus mining royalties are peculiarly fitted for special taxation. It is merely taking the principle of the death duties a step further—the socialisation of unearned increment. Some of the mining members of the Labour Party have here a splendid opportunity to prove their mettle. They should introduce a Bill for the taxation of royalties. If Parliament is ripe for a tax on land values, surely it is ready to tax minerals.

In conclusion, I think the British royalty system may well be retained in the main as it is, provided that we can secure a transference of ownership from private to public hands, either directly through nationalisation or indirectly by taxation. The urgency of reform grows with the continuous increase in the annual destruction of the earth's mineral wealth; and as an immediate political measure the taxation of mining royalties seems the more practicable proposal. Once started, such a special tax might grow on the snowball process, and gather up all royalties everywhere, rolling the whole at last into the State treasury for the public good.

Independently of any of the preceding proposals for dealing with existing royalties, something should be done at once to prevent the extension of the private landowners' claims to future royalties from virgin mineral land. The State should be empowered to exact the difference between the present marketable value of such lands and the royalty value they will fetch in the market when worked subsequently. The virgin Kent coalfield is a case in point. A few seams of coal and a rich vein of iron ore have been discovered there recently; and are now about to be worked by the Kent Coal Concessions (Ltd.). In their prospectus issued February 22nd, 1907, this Company state that the area they have secured is 40 square miles of this virgin coal measure, and is sufficient in extent to accommodate ten or twelve large collieries. But it will be some years yet before the real value of this coal area can possibly be known and its workableness proved. Should coal be found in workable quantities over an entensive area, equal in quality to the few seams already tapped, the Kent coalfield may become a valuable national asset. The fair country between the Canterbury of Chaucer and the Shakespeare Cliffs of Dover will yet be black with the toil of delvers to enrich the pockets of royalty owners who "toil not, neither do they spin." The State should at once declare all minerals which may be found in this and other virgin areas to be public property, and thus secure for the community the mineral wealth which the munificence of nature may bestow upon society at some future date.

Printed by P. Lindley & Co., The Pioneer Press, 20, Shudehill, Manchester, January, 1908.

THE "SINGLE TAX" LIBRARY.

THE "SINGLE TAX" FAITH:

AN ADDRESS

BY

HENRY GEORGE,

IN

TEMPERANCE INSTITUTE BRIDGETON,

Under the Auspices of the

LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE

(Bridgeton Branch),

On Wednesday, 31st May, 1889.

GLASGOW:

SCOTTISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE.

OFFICE: 39 HOPE STREET.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Address
BY
HENRY GEORGE,
IN TEMPERANCE INSTITUTE, BRIDGETON.

The Hall was crowded long before the advertised hour for opening the Meeting.

Among those on the platform were Rev. W. Leggat, Rev. J. M. Cruickshank, Rev. W. L. Walker, Rev. D. E. Irons, Messrs. Donald Macrae (Balallan), A. C. Morton (City Councillor, London), John M'Phun, John Murdoch, D. M'Lardy, David Baxter, Wm. Nicol, George Paton (Secretary of the Branch), John Gentles, Peter Burt, J. M. Cherrie, Councillor Dr. Neilson, John Ferguson, John Glover, Alex. Mair, Robert Montgomery, Wm. Mitchell, John Miller, Edward M'Hugh, Richard M'Ghee, J. Shaw Maxwell, Alex. Calder, Wm. Cochran, J. Campbell, J. Carmichael, James Willock, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Burns. J. Kinnaird, President of the Branch, in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN said:—Ladies and Gentlemen—The members of the Eastern Branch of the Scottish Land Restoration League have invited you here this evening to hear an address from a gentleman whose name and fame is well known to all of you. The address will not be upon the basis of any party, either religious or political, but upon the great question in which all kinds and conditions of men are deeply interested — the social condition of the people. The deep poverty in which the mass of the working people in this country is steeped is causing a vast deal of attention amongst the upper classes. The housing of the poor is attracting the attention of very high officials indeed—from the Royal Commission, headed by the Prince of Wales and Lord Salisbury, to the Synods of the Church. Strange it is to think that the workers —the men who produce all the wealth—are everywhere in a state verging upon poverty. Various schemes have been proposed, and we have for a long time carried out large schemes of charity. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are expended annually in this country to try and fill up this great gulf of poverty; yet the cry continually is that of the daughter of the horse-leech—more, more! The more that is given, the more is required! Charity is no cure for the evils of poverty.

Such being the case, it is our duty to carefully consider any scheme that is laid before us for the purpose of abolishing poverty. Mr George, several years ago, published his work, "Progress and Poverty." This book has received many and severe criticisms. It has been called by some the work of a dreamer; it has been accepted by others; it has been shuttlecocked about; but the men who thought the subject out discovered that at least the nucleus of the cure was in it. Further study brought about the conviction that it is not by the charitable dole—it is not by the death-bed bequest—that poverty can be cured. The only means that can abolish poverty is by doing justice—by acknowledging the right that men have to live upon this earth, and to live by their labour. Mr. George will deal with the mode whereby he expects that the wealth produced by the worker shall belong to the worker—that "he who works not, neither shall he eat"—and a brighter and nobler vision of the future shall be placed before the working classes, that all may live in comfort and enjoyment. Mr. George will answer questions which anyone may put. (Applause.)

Mr. George, who was received with tremendous cheering, again and again renewed, said:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—As I rise before this audience to-night, I do not feel as though I had anything to explain to it. I am inclined to think that this audience knows it all already. I feel in coming to Bridgeton as though I were in the house of my friends. Our chairman has carefully explained that this is not a political meeting, and that this is not a political party. All the same, I am very glad that you go into politics occasionally. All the same, while quite and completely agreeing with him, I believe that it is only through political action that what we wish for will ever be accomplished. I do not mean by that the attaching of ourselves to any party. I trust you here look upon your two great parties as we in the United States look upon ours—as good to use, bad to be used by. But what will compel respect and bring legislation is the ballot, and the determination to use it. (Cheers.)

I do not feel before an audience like this as I do when I go out to preach to the heathen; but, nevertheless, I have been told that it is always well to make at least a brief explanation of our principles, as there are certain to be some present who do not understand them. Let me then begin with a confession of what I may call the "Single Tax Faith."

We believe, in the first place, in the equality of men—not meaning by that that all men are of the same height, that all men are of the same weight, that all men can do precisely the same things in the same way. We recognise differences in individual men. When we say that all men are equal, we mean that all men are entitled to an equal chance. We believe—ay, I think I can say all of us, for I doubt if there be an atheist among us—we believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth; and we believe that He made the earth for the dwelling-place of all the human creatures whom He should call into it. We believe that He made it for all of them, and not for some of them, and we believe that they, all of them, are equally entitled to the use of His bounty. We believe, therefore, that every human being has an equal right to the land of his native country. We do not believe that the land of each country should be divided up in equal pieces between all its people. We do not believe that that would be possible, or even if it were possible for the moment, that permanent equality could be secured in that way. What we aim at is not merely the equality of the present generation with regard to natural opportunities, but the equality of those who will follow us. We do not propose to divide up land—let me repeat it again, because there may be those here who have formed their opinion of us from hostile newspapers. We do not propose to give to every citizen an equal piece of land. What we propose to do is to make them all equal sharers in whatever benefits result from the ownership of land. We recognise that land cannot be divided up equally. We know that land is not all of the same value, and that land values are constantly changing. We know that some people require the use of more land than other people, and that some require that use more directly than others. What we aim at is, that while one man may have 10,000 acres of great value, and another a less valuable piece, and another a piece of no value, and a fourth holds none directly, they shall all be put on the same plane. We propose to secure that by simply having land contribute according to its value to the revenues of the community—that is to say, to the whole people. We propose to reach this end not by dispossessing present landowners of their holdings, and then letting the land out again to individual tenants. We propose to take nothing formally from the present landowning class. We propose simply to put upon land values a tax, commencing, as we will have to do, slowly, and increasing it as quickly as we can—a tax that, as soon as may be, shall take for public uses, the annual value of land—that is to say, that premium which the advantages attaching to any particular piece of land gives to its holder; the advantages which enable him by the same labour, or the same expenditure, to enjoy a larger return, or a more valuable use. And in doing that, we propose to abolish all taxation that bears upon labour, that restricts production or accumulation, or tends in any way to lessen the amount of wealth in the community. We are, if I may recur to an American phrase, the Abolitionists of the present day, and it is in accordance with the fitness of things that at our head, in the glorious old commonwealth of Massachusetts, stands that true son of a true father—William Lloyd Garrison. (Great applause.)

We are the Abolitionists of the present day, not merely because our aim is the fulfilment of theirs, not merely because, as they abolished chattel slavery, we desire to abolish industrial slavery; but because our methods consist mainly in abolition. We differ from the Socialists in this important particular, we do not believe that it is necessary to construct any complex scheme to right the wrongs of society. We do not think it necessary to create any great machine. What we believe is alone necessary is to abolish restriction—to give free play to natural harmonies. What has won so many of us from the blank despair of atheism is that we believe—ay! we see—that there is an order, and a harmony, and a beneficence in social laws; that we see that the Intelligence that created this world has not been either a niggard or a blunderer; that we see that what is needed to abolish poverty is not charity but justice. What we aim to give is freedom.

Labour! the creator of all wealth! That labour should be a drug in the market—that all over the world the labouring class should be the poor class—what does it result from? Simply from want of freedom. All that labour needs is fair play. (Cheers.) All that working men want is justice; not charity, not condescension, not complex schemes of doing something for them. (Great applause.) To solve the labour question, all that we hold to be necessary is to recognise the principle that all men are equally children of the Creator—equally entitled to the use of His bounty; equally entitled to employ their labour on the materials He has provided, and equally entitled to enjoy its fruits. We have no quack remedy for social evils. Our remedy is justice—to restore to men those equal rights which the American Declaration of Independence says are given to each human being by his Creator, and are inalienable—cannot be bought, cannot be sold, cannot be given away, cannot be justly taken from men by the edict of any king or the enactment of any Parliament. (Cheers.)

We differ from the Socialists of all grades by attaching far less importance than they do to capital. We recognise the fact that the two primary factors of all production are land and labour. (Cheers.) We deny as utterly absurd the declaration made by a certain school of political economists whom the Socialists have copied, that labour cannot be employed until capital is accumulated. We say that it is labour that produces capital. We say that when, in any productive occupation, an employer employs men and pays them wages, that he is not advancing capital to them, but they are advancing capital to him. (Cheers.) We say—"Open to labour the indispensable element of all production, give to labour the use of land, open to men willing to work the boundless natural opportunities of productive work," and then the whole foundation of the social structure will be made firm and true; and if then there is any unemployed man, it will be because he does not want to work; if then there is any poor man, it will be because he deserves poverty. We say that then the power of the capitalist to grind labour will be absolutely gone; that then this divorce so unnatural—but that we have become so used to it that we think it natural—this divorce between labour and capital will cease; that every labourer will then have in his hands the power of becoming a capitalist! and that the mere owner of capital cannot grind. That then instead of the one-sided cut-throat competition with each other—of men debarred from natural opportunities of employing themselves, and forced to compete against each other for the wages of an employer—employers will be competing for workmen, as much as workmen compete for an employer. (Applause.)

So far from being deniers of the rights of property, we are the upholders of the rights of property. We think that there is a sacred right of property. We arraign the present order of things because it does not sufficiently respect the rights of property. We say that all that a man makes and produces belongs to him—to him alone, and to him as against all the world. And we say that, just as it is wrong for any one to take from another that which is his property, that which he produces, or which he gets by the free will of another who has produced it—that just as it is wrong for an individual to do that, so it is wrong for a Government to do it. (Applause.)

We in the United States denounce that monstrous tariff of ours as robbery; we denounce our tariff taxes of all sorts as no better; and we say that when, because a farmer has grown two blades of grass where one grew before, because a builder has erected a house where none stood, because a capitalist has put up a factory, because anyone by his exertions has gained wealth or saves it,—we say that when the tax-gatherer comes down on anyone of those and says because you have saved, because you have produced, therefore give us so much of it every year, that this is a violation by government of the spirit of the command—"Thou shalt not steal." (Cheers.) We say conversely, that to allow individuals to reap where they have not sown, to allow individuals to put into their pockets that increase of value which attaches to land by reason of the growth and improvement of society, is to encourage theft. And we say that, by abolishing all taxes upon the products of industry and by taking for the use of the community this value that arises from the growth and improvement of the whole community, we are simply leaving to the individual what belongs to the individual, leaving to industry and to thrift what are the natural rewards of industry and thrift, and taking for the community what belongs to the whole community. (Hear, hear.) We believe that the change, simple though it is, the mere carrying out to full expression of the principle of free trade—simple and easy though it is—will right the most fundamental wrong, will put all men upon the plane of equal opportunities. We do not pretend that it will accomplish all that it would be wise to accomplish; we do not pretend that after that is done other things will not remain; we do not pretend that there are no other monopolies. What we say is, that this reform is the most important, the most fundamental; that until it is effected nothing else can possibly avail; and that when it is effected, then the way will be opened for all other reforms. (Applause.)

As for this talk of compensation that you hear of occasionally, we hold that if there is to be any compensation, it should go, not to people who have unjustly profited, but to people who have unjustly suffered. (Hear, hear.) But in this simple plan of ours, moving on the lines of taxation, taking nothing from anybody, but simply changing the system of taxation, we hold that there is no room for anyone to raise the cry of compensation. (Cheers.)

I congatulate you, men of Bridgeton, on the great advance that those truths have been making. On the other side of the Atlantic, I can assure you that they are going forward most rapidly—more rapidly than when I was here before I could have dared to hope. Our movement is to-day making its way through the United States far faster than any such movement ever made way before; and I come to this side of the Atlantic only to find the same thing.

All over the country our ideas have been diffusing themselves. Many get them directly; many more get them indirectly. They are in the air. They are making their way through the thought of the whole nation; and when this question comes into practical politics, then you will see the supporters of the Single Tax springing as it were from the ground. That is the way with all great revolutions. The seed is sown, and in darkness and silence it germinates. You do not see the result until the Spring comes, until the rains have fallen and the warm sun shines down, then you see the little green shoots spring above the ground where all seemed dead. Men go on working away to disseminate a great truth, and those who are opposed look at the surface of things and say "nothing has been accomplished." But that thought is all the while eating away at the foundations of the ancient wrong, and suddenly there comes a little shock, and the whole great edifice that had before seemed as firm as ever comes crashing to the ground.

I, in my own time, have seen just such an epoch. Why, one of our best men, when I was last in Washington, Charles Nordhoff, said to me:—"When my first child was born, the first day its mother was able to sit up, I sat by her bed side and I said to her, 'Let us teach this child to hate slavery, let us teach it from its birth to do what it can to abolish that cruel wrong. Slavery will never be abolished in its time, but still during its life it may do something to hasten the day of abolition.'" Earnest as he was, hopeful as he was, Charles Nordhoff did not see that the day which he only dared to hope his grandchildren might see, was even then dawning. Yet so it was. That child could hardly prattle before slavery was dead! (Great cheers.)

We arraign day after day, week after week, this twin form of slavery, this bitter accursed injustice which disinherits men, which deprives little children of their birthright, and sends them out of the world before they have fairly come into it. The hoary wrong looks on the outside just as strong as ever. The price of land does not fall. Editors of newspapers and leading statesmen stick their heads in the sand like ostriches, and declare we are making no impression. But do not mistake, this great truth is now permeating the minds of men, and in God's good time we shall see the result. So monstrous is the present condition of society, so utterly unnatural is the wrong that disinherits men, that makes the great majority of people in a country like this utterly landless—men really without a country, without any legal right to the use of one square inch of that element without which men can neither work nor live—so utterly unnatural, so utterly monstrous, so utterly opposed to all clear thought, to all human perception of divine truth, is it, that it cannot endure when it is fairly arraigned. All we have to do is to bring it into discussion and it must go on. No one can travel through this country, no one can read the newspapers, without seeing that the Land Question is in discussion, that it is in reality the burning question of the time; and when the land question is discussed the days of landlordism are numbered. (Cheers.)

I congratulate you, men of Bridgeton, on what you have done, and I urge you to go forward. Much has been done, but much remains to be done. There are heathen yet to convert; there are people who seem to have no idea of any distinction of kind between a house and the lot on which it rests, between a sack of barley and the surface of the globe upon which it is grown, between a fish pulled from the sea and the sea from which it is pulled. Do not denounce the landlords, but as our Methodist friends might say—"wrestle with them." (Great applause.)

Here, for instance, is a pamphlet with which I was presented yesterday. Its printed title is—"Crofts and Farms in the Hebrides, being an account of the management of a Highland estate, by the Duke of Argyll." (Laughter.) This is the printed title, but as it comes to me it reads this way,—"Crofts and Farms in the Hebrides, being an account of the management of a Highland estate, carefully worked in the devil's kitchen by the Duke of Argyll—(great laughter)—one of the worst landlords in Great Britain." Now I hope the man who wrote that found some relief, but I do not think it helps to convert the Duke of Argyll. The Duke really looks upon himself as a great benefactor, and he describes how he and his ancestors have made the island of Tiree and the island of Mull. And he shows the necessity of landlords. He actually thinks that landlords, instead of being absolutely useless animals, are of the very highest use. (Laughter.) He says, "one of the great advantages of the landowner is that he can choose the persons who can live upon the land." (Ironical cheers.) He says, "perhaps there has seldom been a single case of the fundamental violation of that old doctrine of the old laws of Scotland that makes the choice of persons or the right of choice the most essential of the duties and of the rights of ownership. Without this right and that intelligent exercise of it, which is guided by the most natural and legitimate motives, I am satisfied that there would have been no increase in the agricultural products of Tiree, which have actually risen, and the island would have remained stagnant." Whereas, as he shows in another place, the improvement has been so great that the rent there is 220 per cent more than it was 30 years ago. (Laughter.) What a pity it is that we have not some one so intelligent as the Duke to be landlord for the whole earth. (Laughter.) There are lots of people here whose room he might think better than their company. (Renewed laughter.) You know what a great Scotsman said about the inhabitants of England—"twenty-eight millions, mostly fools." An intelligent earth-owner who would properly use his choice of people who should live upon his estate—why, see the good he might accomplish! (Laughter and applause.)

The Duke goes on in another place to tell how the people of one of his islands received a great benefaction from their landlord. He read in a newspaper of a gentleman who had discovered a way of making something out of seaweed. He entered into correspondence with this gentleman, engaged him, and got up a company for the manufacture of this chemical product from seaweed. They set up works on his island and employed the people to gather seaweed. The Duke says that three or four thousand pounds were thus dispersed among these poor people, and he dwells upon the idea that this money came to them from sources to which they contributed nothing—that it was, as it were, a pure donation to them, due to the scientific skill of the inventor and "to the proprietary rights under which alone he could obtain for his capital and efforts the requisite security of a lease." That is to say, the inventor contributed the knowledge, somebody else contributed the capital, and the Duke—he contributed the seaweed. (Laughter.) As for the people who did the work of gathering the seaweed, they contributed nothing. (Great laughter.)

Well, now you may laugh, but that gentleman (the Duke) is a Scotsman; he is a distinguished Scotsman; he is a distinguished member of one of the Scottish Kirks; and he represents Scotland in one of your legislative bodies—the House of Lords—and yet he actually thinks these things, actually seems to think that if there had been no Duke of Argyll there would have been no seaweed. Now don't you think there is a good deal of need yet for missionary work in Scotland? (Laughter.)

But here is something worse. (Laughter.) I cannot really laugh at this. A gentleman in Greenock yesterday told me that about six weeks ago the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, minister of the U.P. Church, preached there in Trinity Church, at Greenock, from the text—"We are debtors to the Jews, to the Greeks, and the barbarians." And he said in the sermon—"God has given the good things of this life to the rich that they may have the ineffable joy of ministering to the poor." (Cries of "Shame.") Ay—shame! Yes, it is shame! (Applause.) There are noble exceptions in all Churches, thank God! among Catholics, among Episcopalians, among Presbyterians of the three kinds, among Unitarians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Swedenborgians, Quakers. I know, of my own knowledge, of many earnest preachers who are working all they can to spread the light of the great truth, that God is no respecter of persons—that all are His children. (Applause). But that blasphemous doctrine—that *devil's* doctrine—is to-day preached and re-preached from thousands of so-called Christian pulpits. (Hear, hear). Ay, men! there is need of missionary work, of work among the Churchmen, of work among the so-called Christians, of work among those who go into the poorer quarters telling these poor people that the God above has created for them a happy world hereafter, without one single word about the world He intended for them here. (Cheers.) If the Church will not do its duty, let it be our privilege to do what we can to supply its place. Let it be our privilege to go abroad and among men wherever we can find them, to preach the glad tidings of the great gospel that the God above is really our Father; that this vice, and misery, and want, and suffering that festers in the very heart of our civilization, is not according to His will, but because we are miserable sinners: because we have transgressed His will; because instead of doing justice, we do injustice. Let us go with the hope, with the faith, that the truth must triumph; with the glad tidings that this world, without waiting for the next—by doing God's will, by obeying His law of justice—can of itself be made a Heaven; that there is no need of any involuntary poverty; that there is no need of overwork; that in His providence on this bountiful earth we might all be rich, in the sense of all having not merely the necessaries of life but the reasonable luxuries as well; that He has not brought forth men on such an earth as this to live on the average—as Mr. Ferguson tells me, statistics in this country show among the working-classes—only 25 years, but that, as the Old Testament tells us, peace and plenty and length of days will follow the people that obey His law, will follow the people who build on justice, while the judgments of the Everlasting will inevitably fall upon the nation who thinks it can build on injustice. Ay, and as you know, my friends and my brothers—ay, as you who have engaged in this cause know—there is in this work something that pays us for all we do as we go along. (Continued applause).

QUESTION.—How is the Single Tax to prevent the capitalist appropriating a greater share of the profits of labour than a fair proportion of the capital he has laid out?

MR. GEORGE.—I think it is going to prevent him from appropriating more than his fair share by enabling labourers to get their fair share. I think no one will work for any capitalist for less than he can get by working for himself, and as opportunities are opened in which the labourers make fair wages, they will not leave them to go to work for the capitalist for less. So long as in California 10 dols. a day could be had at the diggings, no capitalist—I don't care how rich—could get labour for less than 10 dols. So long as 5 dols. could be had, no capitalist could get men for less than that.

Now we do not mean to say that the Single Tax upon land values will induce everybody to go to farming, or to opening mines, or to building houses, but it will so free natural opportunities that many will do so—enough to take the surplus off the labour market. And the men who go to work in producing wealth will in their turn make an opportunity for others to go to work to produce. So that, instead of this chronic overproduction of goods and surplus of labour, as it is called, there will be increased activity in all departments. Let me tell you a little story that illustrates the present system. There is a gentleman in London—

an American, and a friend of mine—Silas M. Burroughs, of the firm of Burroughs & Welcome, manufacturing chemists, a thorough Single Tax man. His father was a distinguished man in New York, and represented his district in Congress. Travelling round the world, he got into a manufacturing business on this side of the water. He came the summer before last to New York. He preferred to live in New York, and wanted to establish his business there. We Americans say that what we want is manufactures. We have been forcing ourselves to pay two prices for manufactured articles on the pretence of encouraging manufactures. Here was an American who wanted to come home to set up a factory. But before you have a factory you must have a place on which to put it. You cannot hang a factory in the air. Now, Mr. Burroughs wanted a place near railroads and near water. He took a walk, and saw the very place he wanted. There is a peninsula jutting out into the Hudson River in the upper part of New York City. It is full of rocks and cedar trees; the railway on one side, and the water on the other. That little rocky peninsula was just the place he wanted. Nobody was using it. It is in exactly the same state to-day as it was when Henrick Hudson first sailed up the river. Here was a man who wanted to add to the wealth of New York. There was a place that suited him, and no one using it. One would think that Mr. Burroughs would only have to settle down, and build his factory, and everybody would say "Welcome!" Instead of that he first had to look around for the man who owned that natural opportunity. After some time he found him—(laughter)—and the man said he wanted 150,000 dols. for the land. Burroughs said to him—"You are not using it." "No," he said, "nor do I ever intend to use it, but I want 150,000 dols. for it all the same. I have been holding that place for years knowing that some one would come along, and want to improve it, and I intend to make him sweat for my waiting." Mr. Burroughs "moved on."

Then he went to the other side of New York, and there he saw on the East River a lot on which cows were grazing. He said, "This will do pretty nearly as well as the other place." He then went to the owner of this lot, who wanted 50,000 dols. an acre for it, although it was not being used. He "moved on" again. Then he went up the river, miles above the city of New York. He found plenty of places that suited him, plenty of places that no one was using. But he found that, even for land overflowed by the river, the owners wanted from 20,000 to 50,000 dols. an acre. Mr. Burroughs came back to London. The little peninsula remains there as rocky as ever, and the Hudson is flowing just as ever over submerged land on which, were it not for the "dogs in the manger," he would gladly have built. He did not erect his factory in New York, and the "demand for labour" that he would have made there does not exist.

Now this illustrates what is going on in all parts of the United States and in all parts of this country. The men who want to "improve"—the men who want to labour, and employ others to labour—are prevented from doing so by those who, having got possession of the land which is necessary to improvement and indispensable to labour, will neither use it themselves nor let others use it. If you were to tax out these "dogs in the manger" who are holding idle land around this town and other towns like this, do you imagine that any builders or any of the building trades would have no work? Do you not think that wages would go up as they never went up before, not only in the building trade but in all similar trades? Imagine the increased demand that would be caused by this prosperity; and imagine how it would affect the building of ships for example. Look at those Americans who are coming over here this summer. For about each American that is coming, I can tell you that there are a thousand who would like to come. What is the reason they do not come? They have not got the money—that is all. (Laughter.) What is the reason they have not got the money? Look at the millions of acres of unused land, and the millions of unemployed men who would like to be at work producing things, which in their turn pay for iron and steel ships, and you have the reason. So it is through all the avenues of industry.

QUESTION.—A certain shipbuilder in Glasgow died recently leaving over £1,000,000; does Mr. George think that the men who build and finish the ships receive a just return for their labour? If not, would he explain how the adoption of the Single Tax would remedy the injustice?

MR. GEORGE.—I think there may be some question as to whether this gentleman made his money in shipbuilding. In such cases there is generally another element comes in. (Hear, hear). Mr. M'Ghee tells me that it is so in this case. I have never seen the man who can be said to have fairly earned £1,000,000. In the present state of things, when men who are working receive only a few shillings a day, and the employer takes the surplus of their earnings, what enables him to do so is monopoly. And there is a great power which comes from aggregated wealth, by reason of which men are able to build up the various monopolies which give such opportunities.

But mark you how that comes. It comes from the poverty of other people. If the gentlemen on this stage are each worth £100, and I am worth £1000, I am worth ten times as much as they are, and I am that much stronger. If they have only £10 each, I am relatively enormously stronger, although I have yet only £1000. But if they have nothing, I am still more powerful alongside of them. Now this fundamental robbery of labour that keeps the wages down to the point of mere existence, that compels civilised countries to feed men on charity to prevent them dying by starvation, enormously increasing the power of the man who has means, is the denial of the right of men to work for themselves. Give all a fair chance to make earnings for themselves, by opening to use the indispensable element of all production, and that power would disappear.

And now, mark you, all these indirect taxes, all these taxes that fall upon wealth, tend of themselves—without going further—to monopoly, for this reason, that they raise prices. They require more capital to do a certain amount of business; therefore there are fewer people who can engage in that business. And those who do engage in it can pay the tax and get larger prices. One who never thought of the monopolising effect would suppose that the men in such a business would object to the tax; but, on the contrary, they always wish it kept up. Take for instance the tax on cigars. Instead of the cigar-makers wishing the tax abolished, they have used every effort to prevent Congress from reducing that tax on cigars. They know that the tax has had the effect of crushing out all the little cigar-makers, and they do not want this monopoly destroyed. They want it to take large capital to go into the cigar-making business. The same with matches. We put a tax on matches which crushed out the little match-makers, and made the price of matches three or four times as high as it ought to be. And the match-makers that were left fought bitterly the repeal of the tax.

QUESTION.—Would not the incidence of the Tax on Land Values almost immediately fall, not on the ground landlord, but on the tenant, and through him finally on the community?

MR. GEORGE.—I think the ground landlord would, even now, without any tax, add all he could to his rent; and for the life of me, I fail to see how any tax on ground values would give him power to add anything else. To make taxes fall upon ground values, you must tax all land values alike; that is to say, you must tax the value of the vacant lot just as fully as you tax the value of the used lot, and this, instead of enabling land owners to hold out for higher prices, would force them to sell.

QUESTION.—What is your view of that Land Nationalisation plan of compensating landlords by the payment of terminable annuities?

Mr. George.—This is the scheme of my friend Alfred Russell Wallace, who has done a good deal to educate public opinion with regard to the evils of our land system. But when it comes to a remedy, I think he is a little slow. I would like to do something in my lifetime, and not wait till my grandchildren come. Of course all these compensation schemes and annuity schemes are utterly impracticable, and it behoves us to be practical. Landlords never can be bought out. They may be bought out theoretically on a piece of paper, but as a matter of fact, they never can be bought out, and they know it perfectly as well as you do. I do not know whether I should speak of politics—English politics—but the gentlemen who conduct Her Majesty's Government are going to try and buy out £50,000,000 worth of the Irish landlords next winter; and possibly they may do that. I hope not. But if they do, I venture to say that the thing will stop right there. They will not do it again. Just look at the absurdity of the scheme, to take a little privileged class and spend the millions of the British taxpayers to make it greater. The smaller the privileged class is the better, because you can get rid of it much easier. But if I am any judge of public opinion, I think the people on this side of the Irish Channel have got a good way past any scheme for buying out the Irish landlords. (Cheers.)

Question.—Do you not think that the great increase of machinery floods the labour market? How will the Single Tax prevent this? (Cries of "Don't answer.")

Mr. George.—Oh, yes! The gentleman has probably been reading the *Scotsman*. So long as there is want in the world, so long as men want the things that are produced by machinery, there cannot be too much machinery. If machinery were brought to such a state of perfection that steam yachts could be made at a pound a piece, I myself would like to buy one. And so it is with everybody else. The forces of production cannot be too great. It is not that there is too much machinery, but it is that distribution is unjust. And the reason of that is the fundamental injustice which gives to some people that which by natural right belongs to all.

Mr. Peter Burt moved a resolution in favour of the taxation of ground values for local and imperial purposes, which was seconded by Mr. Richard M'Ghee, and supported by Mr. John Ferguson.

On the motion of the Rev. D. E. Irons, M.A., B.D., seconded by Mr. Donald Macrae, Balallan, a vote of thanks was awarded to Mr. George for his lecture; and Mr. George having proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Kinnaird for presiding, the meeting terminated.

24 Sept 89
6 108098

LIST OF BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

ON THE

LAND AND LABOUR QUESTION,

Which may be had on sending Stamps or Cash to Secretary of Land Restoration League.

	Published Price.	Sale Price.
"Progress and Poverty," by Henry George,	1/0	0/9
Do. do., do.,	0/6	0/4½
"Social Problems" (in Cloth), do.,	5/0	3/6
Do. do. (in Paper), do.,	1/0	0/9
"Protection or Free Trade," do.,	1/0	0/9
"The Peer and the Prophet,"—An Article by the Duke of Argyll, and reply by Henry George,	0/6	0/3
"Land and People," by Henry George.	—	0/1
"Rights of Man," do.,	—	0/1
"Crime of Poverty," do.,	—	0/1
"Speeches in London and Liverpool," by Henry George,	—	0/1
"Scotland and Scotsmen," by Henry George,	—	0/1
"The Land for the People," do.,	—	0/1
"The 'Single Tax' Faith," do.,	—	0/1
"Thou Shalt not Steal," do.,	—	0/1
"Moses," do.,	—	0/1
"Thy Kingdom Come," do.,	—	0/1
"Taxing Land Values," do.,	—	0/1
"Land and Taxation," by David Dudley Field and Henry George,	—	0/1
"The 'Single Tax,'" by Thos. G. Shearman,	—	0/1
"The Case Plainly Stated," by H. F. Ring,	—	0/1
"Individualism and Socealism," by Grant Allen,	—	0/1