

A prominent real estate dealer, who has just retired as Chairman of the Scranton Board of Assessors, writes:

"The Pittsburgh plan has worked very satisfactorily in Scranton, particularly with the backbone of the community, the owners of homes. It is also appreciated by apartment house owners and by business men who had faith enough in Scranton to invest great sums of money in buildings that are adornments of the town.

"It works displeasure to the builders of 'tax-payers,' the construction of which, however, our zoning ordinance adopted by the last administration, has effectively banned for the future.

"It has operated most equitably in the taxing of coal lands. The coal companies, who are permanently removing from under this city its basic wealth, have, by the operation of the Pittsburgh plan, to leave here a larger portion of that wealth than they would under the old method."

—P. R. WILLIAMS

"THE value of land rises as population grows and national necessities increase, not in proportion to the application of capital and labor, but through the development of the community itself. You have a form of value, therefore, which is conveniently called 'site value,' entirely independent of buildings and improvements and of other things which non-owners and occupiers have done to increase its value—a source of value created by the community, which the community is entitled to appropriate itself . . . In almost every aspect of our social and industrial problem you are brought back sooner or later, to that fundamental fact."—MR. H. H. ASQUITH (now Lord Oxford).

"UNDER our present system improvements are penalized. If a shopkeeper extends his premises, or a farmer increases the value of his farm by erecting improved buildings or draining the land, the rates are immediately increased. That is a tax on private enterprise with which I do NOT agree. Private enterprise of a character not subversive of the public good I would encourage. It little becomes the wealthy landlords who oppose the shifting of the burden of rates from houses, factories, shops and machinery on to the value of the land to criticise the speech I made at Newport. Why? I recently attached my name to a Bill for the taking of rates off machinery. Is that an attack on private enterprise?"—MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

"THE burden of municipal taxation should be so shifted as to put the weight of taxation upon the unearned rise in value of the land itself, rather than upon the improvements."—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

"THE taxation of land values is really no interference with security—it only means that that which does gain by the rates should contribute to the rates."—A. J. BALFOUR.

England

CAMPAIGNING IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

IN the fitful light of a flickering oil-lamp we faced an audience of agricultural workers in the Dorset village of Sixpenny Handley on a recent Saturday night. Application had been made for the use of the village school-room, but the Vicar, a Liberal we were told, refused to permit its use for so revolutionary a purpose as a meeting of the Commonwealth Land Party. There being no other place available it seemed the opponents of Justice might succeed in preventing our message reaching the villagers, when one more courageous than his fellows, because more independent economically, offered us the use of a barn he was using for the preparation and storage of pig's meat.

The barn was originally the Liberal Hall of the village, and even now bears upon its inner walls some of the posters issued by that political party way back before the Great War. There were no seats in the hall, for it had long ceased to be used as a place of meeting, but a resourceful farmer loaded a lorry with sawn planks and boxes to rest them upon, and willing helpers soon arranged these across the room. The pigs' meat, in sacks, was stacked along one wall, affording softer seats for those of our audience who had no objection to the decided odour which floated around, lingering like the scents of Araby—yet most unlike!

Promptly at the appointed hour, the villagers streamed in, and soon the hall was comfortably filled. Our Chairman, a local farmer-owner who in facing cheerfully the social ostracism that is the certain fate of any bold enough to challenge the existing order on the English countryside, opened the proceedings, and made quite clear to the rural workers present the root cause of their economic bondage. Without qualification or reservation, he expounded the full C. L. P. policy and urged them to support the demand we make for the immediate restoration of the land without any compensation. Such a bold advocacy from one known to them all as a farmer-owner made a deep impression, and prepared the way for the keen and appreciative attention given to ourselves. Questions followed, and these showed how well our hearers had grasped the message. The meeting lasted about two hours, and seldom have we seen a more attentive audience.

We could not help but recall to mind the retort made by that sturdy old Radical, Thomas Spence, who, in 1793 published his weekly paper entitled, "Pigs' Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude," in answer to Edmund Burke's sneer at the people as a "swinish multitude," The purpose of the publication was, in Spence's words, "To promote among the laboring part of mankind proper ideas of their situation, of their importance, their rights." Of course, Spence was imprisoned; but on getting out he resumed publication—but that is another story which,