

LAND VALUES.

Twelfth Year.

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"OUR POLICY."

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacred to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—*Henry George.*

THE ALIENS BILL.

THIS Bill, the second reading of which was passed in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, May 2nd, is in every way worthy of the great and patriotic "Imperialist" or Tory Party, of the Party which, at the command of a wealthy group of financial adventurers and company promoters, themselves mainly "aliens," and to the indignation of all our free, self-governing colonies, has so recently flooded the Transvaal with hordes of yellow "aliens" under conditions that can scarcely be distinguished from those of slavery. Under such conditions, we presume, according to Tory views, the presence of "aliens" is not considered in any way detrimental to the progressive development of a country or to the well-being of its people. But "aliens" who cannot be thus enslaved, who for the most part are seeking refuge from enslavement, persecution, and oppression, whose one desire is to be able to earn their livelihood by themselves producing wealth, or by rendering services to those so employed; such "aliens," though their annual increase may not exceed one thousand, and though the names of many of them are already honourably identified with some of the most progressive industries of the country, are, in the eyes of the Tory promoters of this Bill, a menace to the prosperity, such as it is, of the toiling millions of Great Britain: a menace from which the

provisions of this characteristically Tory Bill is designed to guard them. And yet, and yet, as Mr. Charles Trevelyan did well to point out in his manly and statesman-like speech, when seconding Sir Charles Dilke's amendment—"Overcrowding and sweating are national institutions which the aliens find when they come here . . . their overcrowding and sweating is only part of a system from which our population suffers immensely more than the few aliens who come here": a system which may be found in full vigour in districts, agricultural and industrial, to which no foreign-bred workers, and but few foreign-made commodities, ever find their way. The famous statute of Elizabeth, to which Mr. Balfour ventured to refer in his speech, was found necessary, to save the toiling masses of this country from either perishing or rebelling, after they had been disinherited of their inalienable claims to the use of the soil of their native land, at a time when there were practically no "aliens" to be found in any part of this island. True it undoubtedly is, as Mr. Forde Ridley, M.P., was bold enough to declare in a speech supporting the Bill, that—"The huge sums that were now spent in relieving pauperism would be better spent in stopping the cause of pauperism." But this cause is to be found, not as he asserted in the admission of any hypothetical "crowds of aliens to undersell British labour," but in our home-made and landlord-made laws and institutions determining the conditions of land-tenure in this country. For in Great Britain, as in all other countries, to use the words of Henry George, "the tenure of land is the fundamental fact which must ultimately determine the conditions of industrial, social, and political life," the conditions of the working population whether native-born or "aliens."

Every man who settles down, and finds himself able to earn a living, in this or any other country necessarily gives employment to other co-operating workers, whose services he requires to minister to his own wants. In truth, the interest of all the workers of the world are identical; it is but the privileged classes, who to-day, unfortunately, form the governing classes, who have opposing and conflicting interests. And yet just as a few years ago, machinery, that wonderful hand-maid of labour, was popularly regarded as the enemy of labour, so to-day at the docks of Liverpool it is the "alien" or "foreign" Irishmen; at the docks of Marseilles the "foreign" Italian; in Germany the "foreign" Poles and Slavs; in the United States the "foreign" Hungarian, Italian, Poles, Englishmen, and above all the foreign negro—the descendents of those imported into the country in much the same manner as the yellow races are to-day being imported into the Transvaal; in the City of London the "foreign" German or Swiss clerk, and in the East End of London the "foreign" or "alien" tailor, bootmaker, cabinetmaker, cigar and cigarette maker, without whose presence many of these industries could not

exist, whom the resident native-born workers are being taught to regard as the direct cause of their impoverishment and dependent helplessness. Such legislators as Sir Howard Vincent and Major Evans Gordon may themselves believe this; but not the majority of those who voted for this Bill; and certainly not those official and Front Opposition Bench Liberals who, at the bidding of a handful of East London members fearful for their seats, failed to grapple with the question in debate and ran away from the division. Their courage is less than their knowledge. And, thanks to their puerile weakness, this Bill may prove an important piece of Tory stage-scenery during the coming General Election. Outside London, however, it is not likely to be very effective; as even the most Tory working-man can scarcely be persuaded to attribute to "the d—d foreigner" social ills existing in districts to which no such foreigner ever penetrates.

The Bill, however, is quite in accordance with Tory traditions and inherited policy, and in harmony with the views of those who would persuade the masses that they, not the land-holders, would benefit by the taxation of their food. For its real object, as Mr. Trevelyan also forcibly emphasised, is to divert the attention of the people from the real cause of the troubles that afflict them, as well as from the more serious and radical remedies to-day proposed to combat those very social ills against which it is avowedly directed, but which, in truth, it is quite incompetent materially to affect. It is, in short, a direct appeal to the ignorance, passions, and prejudices of the people. Privilege and monopoly is the enemy and enslaver of labour. The masses of the people are not yet sufficiently alive to this fact. Hence in every other country the same political party is carrying on the self same policy, and is striving for the maintenance of privilege and monopoly by persuading the disinherited "native" workers that in reality it is the "foreign" workers, who would either settle amongst them or exchange commodities with them, who are their real enemies. For they know full well that so long as the more ignorant of the people can be induced to believe this, no real, radical, and effective social reform is possible.

Everywhere, however, there are encouraging signs that this typical and universal Tory policy is losing its power to charm and to antagonize the workers of the world. Everywhere the more thoughtful are commencing to realise that the true interests of those who have to work for their livelihood are identical. To those who realise this, there are no "aliens," but all who work in the service of humanity, whether with brain or muscle, are brothers. The civilisation and progress of the world is, in truth, hindered, not promoted, by the impoverishment and enslavement of any single nation, whether white, black, yellow, or brown. Unfortunately, however, the domestic and

more especially the foreign policies of the powerful nations of Western Europe are based on the very opposite view. But it will never be well with the workers of the world till they have purified their minds from the false political and economic superstitions carefully instilled into them by those whom they have been taught to regard as their "betters," upon which such Bills are based; till, in fact, they have learned to realise that the workers of the world are brothers, not enemies; that their interests are identical, not opposing; that the prosperity of some necessarily promotes the prosperity of all. Till they realise this, and shape their ideas and ideals in accordance therewith, no real progress is possible; for they can always be deceived by such plausible appeals to their ignorance, passions and prejudices as the present Aliens' Bill. It would be well, indeed, if they could be taught to appreciate the full beauty and truth of the following words of a great French writer, Anatole France, which are true of all whom we may venture to call "aliens," and with which this article may fittingly close:—

"It would be to our advantage, to the advantage of the white races, that the yellow and the black races should be powerful, free and rich. Our prosperity and our riches depend on their riches and prosperity. The more they produce, the more they will consume. The more they profit by us, the more we shall profit by them. Let them enjoy abundantly of our work, and we shall enjoy of their abundance."

L. H. B.

PUBLISHER'S NOTES.

An extra supply of "Land Values" is again printed in view of the Special Report it contains of the Scottish Conference to promote the Taxation of Land Values, held at Edinburgh on the 28th April.

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FRANCIS PLACE ON THE LAND QUESTION.—"It is my hope and belief that the time will come when men will be sufficiently wise to agree that all the land shall belong to the people, and that, too, upon the plan, or some such plan, as Mr. Spence has promulgated, by which the people shall be the sole landlord and receive all the rent."—Letter to Whytoch, October 28th, 1839.