

LAND VALUES.

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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 NEW PROTECTION MOVEMENT.*

(From a Land Reformer's Point of View.)

WE cannot give this timely pamphlet higher praise than by saying that its contents certainly justify its title. In it Mr. Chamberlain's latest unauthorised programme is considered from the standpoint of the earnest Land Reformer; its injurious and reactionary tendency is ruthlessly exposed, and the overwhelming advantages of the one alternative policy, of radical Land Reform, are championed in a manner which leaves little or nothing to be desired. The only addition we would suggest, should another edition be called for, as we sincerely hope it will be, would be a paragraph dealing with the direct and indirect effects of the Taxation of Land Values, with which we are convinced, from internal evidence, the author is fully qualified to deal. As it is, however, the pamphlet is one the circulation of which we trust every earnest Land Reformer will do his utmost to promote at the present crisis in our national history. For it is one which by reason of its earnestness, its sincerity, its

* *The New Protection Movement: From a Land Reformer's Point of View.* By LAWRENCE W. ZIMMERMAN. Price 3d. Post Free, 33d. from The Land Nationalisation Society, Lancashire Branch, 26 Brown Street, Manchester.

moderation, and its lucidity, must necessarily do good work in directing the attention of the people to that question of questions—the Land Question.

Effect of the Proposed Taxation of Food.

The necessary effects of the proposed taxation of food are briefly but convincingly dealt with—

"Send up the market price of corn," says our author, "and very soon up will go the farmer's rent, and the additional price of the corn will find its way into the pockets of the landowner. Thus over 40,000,000 of people would have to pay more for their food in order that the landowners may get more rent, a form of philanthropy which will not be very popular when once the facts of the situation are understood. . . . A duty put upon food stuffs imported from foreign countries would undoubtedly send up the price of all similar food stuffs in our own market, whether grown at home or in the colonies, for there can only be one price in the same market, namely, the highest price that can be obtained. The mischief of this scheme is that it would act as a boomerang—it would be thrown at the foreigner but would return to strike our own people."

The Present Position.

Unlike the official Free Trade Leaders, whether Liberal or Unionist, Mr. Zimmerman fully recognises that the position of the masses of this country is by no means a satisfactory one, but, on the contrary, calls aloud for some permanent and material amelioration—

"The outstanding fact of our national life," he truly says, "is that while the wealth of the country is always increasing a large percentage of the population is underfed and disgracefully housed. . . . As a nation we have already wealth enough and to spare, but the misfortune is that one considerable section of the people do not get a sufficient share of it. . . . Hence, notwithstanding our vast wealth, there are great tracts of apparently incurable poverty remaining in the country."

The Cause of the Evil.

In a few terse but convincing paragraphs our author traces the main cause of "this outstanding fact in our national life," as well as the steadily decreasing number of our agricultural population, to our system of Land Tenure, which, both in town and country, enables the landlords to appropriate the improvements of their tenants, and to claim as their privilege and heirloom the land values created by the presence, activities, and necessities of the whole population—

"It has been obvious all along," he says, "that Free Trade cannot accomplish the whole circle of economic reforms. Free Trade has done much, very much, but it has not, and cannot, do everything. It has enabled the country to acquire boundless wealth, and has fertilised wide areas of our national life. But the blame for the condition of the millions who still remain in abject poverty must be placed not on Free Trade but on our land system and on our system of distribution."

The words "and on our system of distribution" might, we think, with advantage have been omitted; for, as he in this pamphlet repeatedly demonstrates, it is the laws and institutions determining the relation

of the citizens to the land of the country they inhabit which are necessarily the main cause determining the "system of distribution" of the fruits of their individual and collective activities.

The Remedy.

Our people may be taught "that it is impossible to make agriculture a financial success in this country; that the land must inevitably go out of cultivation and the labourers continue to crowd into our towns." But Mr. Zimmerman, like ourselves, steadily refuses blindly to accept any such assumption. He holds, as we hold, that the earnest social reformer in this country, as in all countries, must necessarily be a Land Reformer; that the first forward step towards a higher plane of individual and social life necessarily involves a measure of radical and far-reaching Land Reform. As he well says—"The question is not merely at what rent the use of land may be obtained, but what rent the occupier will have to pay after he has put into it his best efforts—industry, capital, scientific knowledge." Hence it is that the power of the privileged classes to control the use of the land, and hence to appropriate the fruits of the reproductive labours of their tenants, must be wrested from them, and the use of the land, as well as the fullest possession of any permanent improvements they may individually make, secured to all upon equal and equitable terms. Thus, and thus alone, can agriculture be made to flourish in Great Britain; thus, and thus alone, can our waste places be repopulated and made to blossom like a garden; and what our author terms "the re-colonisation of England" be made possible. And, as we feel convinced our author would agree, the first step in this direction, the step which will make any other necessary steps both possible and effective, is the imposition of a substantial tax upon Land Values. However this may be our author summarises his proposals in the following words:—

"The artificial expedient of preferential tariffs could provide no cure for our existing social ills. The real remedy lies far deeper. The large percentage of our population who dwell on the poverty line must be afforded the opportunity of producing wealth from the only source of real wealth—the land.

"If millions are underfed the fundamental cause is that their labour, such as it is, does not exchange for sufficient food, and the way to provide more food is surely not by raising its price, but by opening up the means of supply which Nature has so lavishly provided.

"The re-colonisation of England would mean not only a large increase in the supply of food stuffs but also a large and profitable new market at home for our manufactures. A reformed land system would, therefore, mean more work, more food, and the consumption of more goods, both of home and foreign make."

In conclusion, we would express our gratitude to the author of this pamphlet, Mr. Lawrence W. Zimmerman, of Manchester, for his most timely and

valuable contribution to the literature of the Land Reform Movement in Great Britain. If Mr. Zimmerman voices the views, ideals and aspirations of the Lancashire Branch of the Land Nationalisation Society we sincerely trust to come into closer touch and co-operation with them, and cordially congratulate Lancashire on possessing Land Reformers who evidently know what they are fighting for and love what they know.

L. H. B.

ENGLISH NEWS AND NOTES.

[All communications respecting this column should be sent to the General Secretary, English League for the Taxation of Land Values, 376 and 377 Strand, London, W.C.]

The Annual Meeting of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values will be held on Wednesday, July 20th, in the Hall of Clifford's Inn, next 187 Fleet Street, London, at eight o'clock. Mr. Alfred Billson, president for the past year, will take the chair and open the meeting. The annual report and statement of accounts will be presented, and the officers, council, and executive for 1904-05 elected. The new president will then take the chair and deliver an address. Important resolutions will be submitted to the meeting.

* * *

Members of the League are requested to make a point of being present at this meeting, at which any reader of *Land Values* (even if not yet a member) will be welcomed.

* * *

Mr. J. H. Whitley, B.A., M.P. (Halifax), will be nominated by the executive as president for the coming year. Mr. Whitley has been for many years a member of the League, and during the past two years has served on the executive. The Movement owes him a special debt of gratitude for his hard work in connection with the Municipal Conference on Taxation of Land Values, and especially in connection with the committee appointed by that conference to draw up a Bill for England and Wales. He had thus a large share in shaping the Bill which Mr. Trevelyan (his colleague in Parliament and on the League Executive) successfully piloted through its second reading last March.

* * *

A Plumstead friend has purchased thirty copies of *Land Values* for June and sold them among his shopmates. He hopes to repeat this effort every month. It need hardly be said that such help is greatly appreciated.

* * *

A member at St. Anne's-on-the-Sea, Lancashire, who has also been helping the circulation of the paper, writes—"St. Anne's is peculiarly a place for illustrating the 'rotten' way in which we English deal with the land. Thirty years ago it was all sand-banks and shingle, and you could have land for little more than the asking, but now plots are being 'held up' for an annual rental of 2/6 per yard. Being a member of the League I never lose an opportunity of drawing the attention of the people here, both in the local newspaper and otherwise, to the robbery going on, and am glad to say that the Urban District Council—which is not elected on party issues—adopted a petition to Parliament in favour of Mr. Trevelyan's Bill."

* * *

The valuation of the land comprised in the parish of Finchley, which was made on behalf the League by Messrs. Batty and Eckert, and brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Asquith, has been the subject of a good deal of useful discussion since it appeared in *Land Values* in April last. The chief usefulness of such a valuation—and it is a great one—is that it enables us to work out in detail the effects of such a Bill as Mr. Trevelyan's upon the local rates,