

The Single Tax.

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"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 sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual. . . . Thus, if a man takes a fish from the ocean he acquires a right of property in that fish, which exclusive right he may transfer by sale or gift. But he cannot obtain a similar right of property in the ocean, so that he may sell it or give it, or forbid others use of it."—Henry George.

From a Liberal Point of View.

Commenting on the Bradford Election, the *People's Journal* says:—

That 1900 voters in a single constituency should have been persuaded to adopt "the nationalisation of land, mines, minerals, and railways, and the socialisation of all the instruments of production," is a fact of no small importance. Bradford, no doubt, is the strongest seat of Socialism in England, and the demonstration in favour of Mr. KEIR HARDIE'S impossible programme is not to be taken as measuring the electoral force of his doctrines in other centres of industry. Yet Socialism is in course of ascent. What are Liberals doing to arrest it? Take, however, the case of the excellent gentleman who went down to Bradford to champion the Liberal cause. Admirable orations he delivered, but of what were they chiefly composed? Of animadversions on the work of last session; descants on the Tory misdeeds in relation to land and education; homilies on foreign policy; excursions into the high and dry. How is such remote, and perhaps rather stale matter, to reach the minds of working men who are being captivated by the promise of a new kingdom on earth? What are the dry bones of Liberalism to them? All this, of course, means that Liberalism must come to grips with Socialism; it means that candidates who fight in industrial constituencies must possess more than a smattering of the history, the economics, and the statistics of the subject; it means that criticisms must play not less intelligently on the new doctrines of Socialism than on the old doctrines of Toryism, so that there may be a chance of popular aspirations being led into prudent and practicable channels out of those that are ineffectual when they are not positively dangerous.

If the Liberal leaders will take up the question of Taxing Land Values, and show how its application will destroy land monopoly, the greatest of all the monopolies that are responsible for social misery, they will soon discover, what the Single Taxers have already discovered, that the industrial classes can understand this reform as a practical measure; and that they are becoming more and more alive to its efficacy as a means of bringing them some measure of freedom and comfort.

If the Liberals must "come to grips with the Socialists," it must be with a question that proposes to strike at monopoly, and in the Taxation of Land Values they have one that, rightly understood and explained, will command not only the support of the working classes but of the Socialists themselves.

If this statement be doubted, we have simply to state that here in Glasgow, three years ago, the Independent Labour Party at their Annual Conference, with Mr. KEIR HARDIE in the chair, refused to support Councillor FERGUSON'S motion at the Town Council to tax land values for local purposes, and now every known Socialist in Glasgow, and every representative Socialist in the Town Council or in the Parish Council, is pledged to support this question above all other questions.

Three years ago the organised Socialists sneered the Single Tax out of court as "a capitalistic red herring." To-day they are marching into power and office on this same question. Three years ago the organised Liberals of Scotland proclaimed their belief in the

Taxation of Land Values, and have done since then no small amount of good in enlightening the public mind on the question. But the more official Liberals, the "drybones of Liberals," who speak for Liberalism from the high places of the party, are still marking time, as the *People's Journal* says, on the old theme of "last session's work; Tory misdeeds, foreign policy, and other excursions into the high and dry."

Very well. Let them remember that this is the criticism of one of their trusted and ablest journals, on their method, or want of method, in dealing with the aspirations of the advanced wing of the reform movement. The "nationalisation of the instruments of production" is a Socialistic bubble involving even if it were practical, an organised state despotism that can exist for good only in the minds of men who make their heads the slave instead of the servant of their hearts.

Liberals can have nothing to do with a party organised to waste their time in pursuit of the unattainable. But let them not forget that there is a Social Problem crying aloud for solution, and that the Socialists are appealing for support as the party whose principles can alone solve this problem. They are always on the aggressive. They take the unemployed in regularly. They point to the Liberals as a party of sham reform because they ignore the unemployed. They present their little scheme of state organisation, and ask the Liberal Party to produce a better, or to produce one of any kind. There is no reply from Liberal headquarters, and so the thought that is stirring within and without the Liberal ranks in favour of something being done is turned every time to the Socialists' account.

As Single Taxers we are more than satisfied with the progress our ideas are making with the rank and file of the Liberal Party, and with the bulk of its representative men. We are satisfied that, outside of our own efforts, events are not slowly making the cause for which we stand the question of the future in British politics. Progress must be made along the line of freedom of trade. The Single Tax is the point of least resistance. It will bring the natural revenues—the values of land—to the people who create them, and strike the shackles of the land speculator from off the shoulders of industry. It will open up in this way the natural opportunities to trade and commerce. Labour will then have its own—access to the land from which alone it can draw its sustenance.

This is the charter of Labour; no more can be demanded, nothing less can satisfy. To make provision for the unemployed is a laudable ambition; all reformers are agreed on this. How can it be done unless through the complete overthrow of land monopoly? The Liberal leaders will require to face this problem, if the Liberal Party is to supplant the party of privilege and promises now in office at St. Stephens. "Admirable orations" are not sufficient to meet the "impossible programmes" of the Socialists, not by a very long way, and they certainly don't make for a solution of the Social Problem.

Some people seem to reckon their rate of progress by the noise they make and the dust that they raise. We do not judge a smith by the noise of his hammer, nor a carpenter by the number of his shavings.

"Did you present your account to the defendant?" inquired a lawyer to a client. "I did, sir." "And what did he say?" "He told me to go to the devil." "And what did you say then?" "Why then I came to you."

SERVE THE CAUSE BY HANDING THE PAPER TO A FRIEND.

Here and There.

The Hammermen's Incorporation of Aberdeen Trades have just purchased 70 acres of ground at Ruthrieston, at the price of £12,500.

The Musselburgh Literary Societies Union have decided by 10 of a majority for Single Tax as against Socialism. Mr. Ferguson opened for the former and Mr. Hogg for the latter.

Professor Wright says it is estimated that the total sewage discharged into the Clyde from Greater Glasgow had a value for manurial purposes of £200,000 per annum.

Everybody says the Single Taxer's Social was a great success. The New Rooms and the 28 majority of the Town Council are also being talked about.

The Liberals are in office at the Glasgow Parliamentary Debating Society. They have resolved to bring in a Land Value Tax at an early date.

The Scottish Conservatives resolved at their recent conference to run municipal elections on political lines. The *Glasgow Herald* hasn't yet condemned the proposal.

Partick has opened a really first-rate recreation ground. The vacant land round about is going up in value, and higher rents are in anticipation for next term.

The Bradford Election is the latest striking example of the necessity for the Second Ballot. It is a positive scandal that any constituency should be open to such misrepresentation.

Mr. John Holburn, M.P., has just finished a successful series of meetings throughout his constituency. He was, at every meeting, on the urgency of Taxing Land Values.

It is proposed to buy for the Glasgow Corporation Cleansing Department 1835 square yards of ground, in the Garscube Road district, at 11/- per square yard.

"Why can't the *Single Tax* come out weekly?" is a question that is being frequently asked. Why? The propaganda is growing all over Britain, and in Glasgow alone there is room for a Radical Weekly on Single Tax lines.

It is the opinion of Professor Jones that the Socialism which supplants the individual will does not exist except in theory. Of course! The whole trouble lies in the attempt to reduce it to practice.

Professor Murray told the Glasgow Central Liberals last month that the backwardness of some Liberals annoyed him greatly.

Mr. J. C. H. Hedderwick, M.P., told the Johnstone Liberals the other night, that "the poor they would have always with them." If that means, in Mr. Hedderwick's opinion, that involuntary poverty—the poverty that comes because of the struggle for employment—he is indeed a backward Liberal.

Sir Wm. Arrol, M.P., says the Agricultural Rating Bill is a good enough measure, and that the Government should now do something for the farmers. It is understood by the way that the Agricultural Rating Bill benefitted the labourers.

Forty-five thousand Single Tax election leaflets were distributed at the Glasgow November election meetings. Four thousand copies of the *Single Tax* were also given for free distribution.

Plans have been lodged for a new Clyde Dock at Old Kilpatrick. 12 acres are wanted, and the daily papers state that the owner of the land in the district is much interested in the undertaking.

Tom L. Johnston, Ohio, U.S.A., has seen the proof sheets of Henry George's new book on the Science of Political Economy, and says it will stamp Mr. George as the greatest master of the science, and make every Single Taxer proud of their teacher.

The entire area of agricultural land included in the jurisdiction of the London County Council is 75,000 acres. The decrease in the land available for cultivation since the County Council was formed is about 900 acres. A monopoly price rests on the land available for building sites.

The total cost of the Glasgow Municipal Elections amounts to £7,763 3s. 10d. The candidates spent £5,433 17s. 3d., the returning officer's expenses being £2,329 6s. 7d. There were 114 candidates for the 75 seats.

The *Glasgow Herald* says that Mr. McDonald, the city engineer, probably knows more about land values than Councillor Ferguson. Probably he does, but, if so, he has kept himself remarkably quiet on the subject. Councillor Ferguson we know, but on what side of land values does Mr. McDonald stand?

The Labour members of the Glasgow Town Council have all proclaimed themselves sound Land Value Taxation men. We hope they won't be drawn off the track by such will-o-the-wisps as future "unearned increment," "betterment," and "worsement."

"The Progressive Review."

BY LEWIS H. BERENS.

Last month we witnessed the birth of a new review, to the appearance of which we looked forward with curiosity and interest. For years past we have heard much about Progressivists, progressive principles, the progressive policy, and the Progressive Party. The term, progressive, is a taking one; and although we have learnt to look behind terms at the facts or ideas they are intended to convey, yet, in our weaker moments, were we prone to imagine that we, as Single Taxers, could claim to rank amongst Progressivists, amongst those who are "powerfully impressed by the need of a genuine policy of drastic reform in the social, economic, and moral conditions of life." But, alas! Our dream has been rudely dispelled. For this journal, whose avowed aim is "to give a coherent form and rational purpose to a progressive policy;" which "sets itself to a free and fearless investigation of the material and moral factors of the Social Question; has, prior to any such published investigation, already formulated its belief in a manner that leaves us, as Single Taxers, without the pale. "In the task of social reconstruction," it tells us, "we shall recognise that the free play of the enlightened self-interest of individuals cannot suffice to secure the common good." And, as a necessary consequence, it concludes that we should look to something apart from and above the individual citizen, to the State—to those who hold the governing power, and who represent or are assumed to represent "the organised intelligence and will of the community"—to "play a larger part in ordering the life of the future," to secure advantages, to attain which the free play of the enlightened self-interest of individuals is confidently assumed to be incompetent.

Now this fundamental belief of this would-be organ of progressive thought, we, as Single Taxers, do not share; still less can we give in our adherence to the inevitable conclusion therefrom. In our opinion the social evils of to day are due to the fact that the enlightened self-interest of individuals has not free play; and that, thanks to the interference of the very body to whom we are directed to look to order more largely our lines in the future, viz.:—the State. In fact, our social and political philosophy is the very opposite of that expounded in the introductory "Progressive Review."

We regret that this should be so. For we too feel "the need of intellectual and practical unification;" we too "believe that the pace and character of popular progress are not set or measured by the blind unconscious efforts of the past, but that they may be indefinitely quickened and improved by imparting a higher conscious purpose to the operations of the social will;" and we too would fain assist political thinkers in formulating that much-needed "unity of principles and of policy which shall give solidarity of structure, singleness of aim, economy of force, consistency of action to this

[present] medley of multifarious effort." This, however, we would respectfully submit is not to be effected, or even promoted, by the tacit assumption that the aim and policy of one out of the many conflicting schools of political thought is the only true one, and entreating, ever so earnestly and eloquently, all to join it; but rather by endeavouring to trace out the causes of the prevailing discord amongst men animated by the same desires and avowedly fighting to attain the same end, and doing what is possible to remove these.

Nor should these causes be far to seek. For in no other department of human thought—save those relating to Man—could such bitter and apparently irreconcilable differences long continue; and that for the simple and obvious reason that points at issue would be referred for settlement to principles accepted by all competent to speak with authority on the subject. On questions of Mechanics, mechanical principles; on questions of Chemistry, the principles of chemistry: in short, on any question relating to the physical arts, the principles of Natural Philosophy would be appealed to to decide, not only as to whether the desired end can be attained by any proposed method, but also the relative merits of differing proposals. And the man who would presume to pronounce judgment, or even express an opinion, on any such question without adequate knowledge of the underlying principles, would only make himself appear ridiculous. In politics, however, all this is wanting. The management of the common affairs of the community; the establishment of laws, regulations and institutions, to determine the economic and social relations of the citizens: in short, the art of legislating or governing, on which the welfare of millions depends, still remains entirely empirical, based on no recognised principles, and determined solely by expediency and compromise. And to this fact is due that on questions of legislation the most conflicting opinions are tenaciously held by men whose main objects and aspirations are identical. To unite these, and at the same time, as our new contemporary expresses it, "to relieve progressive movements from the imputations of blind opportunism, irrational compromise, and Utopian aspirations, under which they labour, and to establish a safer and more scientific basis for social activity." To these ends, the principle on which all legislation should be based must be established, and any and every legislative proposal judged in accordance therewith. Such a principle once established and recognised by all students of the social problem, would tend to weld into one compact whole the now separate and oftentimes opposing elements of the Progressive Party.

Nor should the task of formulating such a principle be a difficult one; for as a matter of fact there are but two alternatives. Society can be established and legislation proceed on the principle of equality or of privilege, of freedom or of coercion: for the principle of equality involves the principle of freedom, as does privilege that of coercion. The claims of some to special privileges may be recognised, and these enforced on the rest of the community; or the claims of all to equal opportunities, to equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, be accepted as the fundamental principle to which all social institutions and legislation should be made to conform.

For earnest men there is no half-way house in which to take refuge; their choice lies between these two principles. The old-fashioned Tory was true to the one; we new-fashioned Radicals intend being true to the other. We have given in our adherence to this law of equal freedom and all that it involves. For we recognise that it is to the non-conformity to this principle—to the securing of privileges and monopolies to some—that existing social evils can be traced, and that, therefore, it is only by obedience to its behests that the present Social Question can be solved. Our mission is, not to assist in patching up existing institutions, but by striking at the very foundation of society as it exists, at the root monopoly, the parent and source of all privileges and monopolies, to prepare the way for the peaceful evolution of that new society towards which we yearn, a society based on the safe and sure foundations

READ THE APPEAL TO LAND REFORMERS ON PAGE 4.