

these powers at human command, there are millions who are imperfectly nourished, millions who are badly housed; recurrent periods of unemployment blight the lives of multitudes. "All this we seem unable to prevent. The contrast between achievement and futility is glaring; and it is a challenge. What response shall we make?" There, Dr Mess breaks off. He leaves the question unanswered, or rather he appeals to others to undertake a research, long and painstaking, with team work among the biologists, the anthropologists, the psychologists, the economists, the sociologists, and those who have knowledge of "a number of social sciences"; and long-range and short-range inquiries; better provision in the universities, and more chairs, and more lectureships, and more post-graduate studentships—to arrive at "some scientific knowledge of the nature

and functioning of society" and to "a considerable measure of control of social forces." Lo! the poor student and the generations that must wait upon those oracles for the answer to the Sphinx's riddle. It may only be found by roaming the universe; and only then by chance, for after all these investigators know not what they seek.

Another "Don't Overdo It"

A correspondent complimented Dr Mess upon his opening statement, suggested that it said as well though not in the same words what was contained in the opening passages of *Progress and Poverty*, and would not the scientific approach in that book to the solution of the riddle be helpful as a guide? The reply was courteous but non-committal. Even so, the temptation to admonish was too great. "As you

know, I think that some of Henry George's disciples overstress one factor in complicated social situations." Well, if there is the "one factor" it is the private appropriation of the rent of land, which becomes more and more serious the more complex and developed human society becomes. It is the "one factor"—this factor of the value and the price of land in relation to the whole make-up of the production and the distribution of wealth, and of all that is being spoken to-day in the name of reconstruction—which so many not only under-stress but also utterly ignore. This is so notorious that the zeal of the Henry George disciple who tenaciously holds up what others may regard as a tiresome "King Charles's Head" deserves the reward of the gods for his courage and his good sense.

LAND VALUES IN THE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

To the Editor, *Land & Liberty*

SIR,—Many thanks for sending me literature answering very fully the question "What happened to Lloyd George's plans for land valuation and taxation. If the plans failed what caused the failure?"

Helped by your useful marking of certain chapters and pages I have read and made a note of the following:—

(i) Sir Edgar Harper's Conference paper of 1929 on "The Lloyd George Finance Act, 1910: Its Errors and How to Correct Them," explaining the cumbrous system of five different land values and the four duties or taxes.

(ii) The brief statement in the historical chapter of *Land Value Rating* by F. C. R. Douglas, L.C.C. (pages 9 and 10).

(iii) The very useful chapter VI on "Some Inadequate Remedies" (seven named and examined) in *Land and Freedom* (pages 53-60) by Frederick Verinder.

(iv) The brief history in *Light on the Land Question*, especially pages 18-20.

After reading the above-named chapters and the three numbers of *Land & Liberty* (May, 1928, February, 1929, and October, 1939), these thoughts occur to me:—

(1) Here is a great national reform which was thoroughly discussed more than 30 years ago and which reached the Statute Book because of the mass of educated opinion enlisted in its support. Surely that support can be re-assembled to give the taxation of land values its place in the reconstruction of Britain after the war.

(2) The hundreds of facts in your book *Why Rents and Rates are High* constitute a record of extortions which should arouse all reformers to action.

(3) The Liberal Party and the Labour Party are presumably still committed to this reform, cf. the "Forewords" by Sir Archibald Sinclair and Mr Attlee in book named above. What about the Conservative Party? The war has made so many conservative-minded people see the need for a juster social order that it would not be unreasonable to expect them to agree (in the interests of the community) to putting a stop to the worst abuses in our land system. It is a hopeful sign that amongst the leaders of industry (manufacturers, traders and business men generally) there has been a revolution in ideas as to what is needed in the post-war world; and, that being so, their minds should be

open to conviction on the land problem. . . .

(4) Mr. Churchill's views should carry great weight, and it cannot be supposed that he has abandoned the opinions he expressed in 1907-9 (see the speech in Drury Lane Theatre, London, 20th April, 1907; and speech in King's Theatre, Edinburgh, on 17th July, 1909).

(5) It seems to me that every country which seeks to bring about for its citizens a better system of social security will greatly lessen the benefits of its schemes if it does not stop the perpetual exactions of landowners. The most glaring example of how landowners exacted unfair and unearned tribute from the community is the case of Germany in the 20 years between the two wars, as recorded in Part I of *Why the German Republic Fell* (pages 1-22).

(6) Will not the rebuilding of our bombed cities force the Central Government and the local authorities to take up the land question? "Profiteering" or making extra profit out of conditions created by the war is now considered an anti-social offence; so why should landowners be allowed to profiteer? . . .

I am not a speaker or organizer, only a student or observer and very occasionally a writer. I will, however, press this matter on the attention of the political associations or clubs in Oxford and also on the people who are running the "Nine Point Declaration" which is being backed by the "Forward March" movement.

Yours etc., H. J. BROOKE.

5A Crick Road, Oxford.

[A policy for immediate action has been submitted to Mr Justice Uthwatt's Committee by the Land Values Group of Members of Parliament in its Memorandum entitled "Town Planning and Land Values." This we have since sent to our correspondent explaining that the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values has made the Memorandum a publication of its own and given it very wide and effective circulation especially in municipal circles. Readers are asked to make what use they can of this informing document, and without cost can obtain supplies from our office for the purpose.

—EDITOR, *L. & L.*]

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Because of increase in freight and other charges, prices of the following importations have had to be revised.

6d. BACK TO THE LAND. The Essay by Dr Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath. New Edition published by the Henry George Foundation, Australia.

2s. PROGRESS AND POVERTY, by Henry George. Abridgement by Prof H. Gunnison Brown. Published by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York.

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6s. 6d. THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM, by Gaston Haxo. A Study in Fundamental Economics adapted from George's "Progress and Poverty." Published by Land and Freedom, New York.

13s. 6d. THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF TAX REFORM, by Prof H. Gunnison Brown. Published by Lucas Bros., Columbia, Mo.

14s. REBEL, PRIEST AND PROPHET. Life and Work of the Rev Dr Edward McGlynn, by Stephen Bell. Published by the Devin-Adair Co., New York.

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