

it was asserted at a meeting of the Royal Statistical Society in London that the present birth-rate was only just sufficient to maintain a stationary population.

A northern correspondent is concerned "to know where the landowners come in here in that their hopes of higher land prices are based on the expectation of the growth of population." At first glance it does seem as if the landlords were up against it, as if nature, or natural law, was in league with the confiscating disciples of Henry George. But there is, fortunately or unfortunately, no cause for alarm. The assurance is given in *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, Book IV., Chap. 3, where, eliminating increase of population, the author shows that the effect of improvement in methods of production is to increase rent. And that being so it follows, incidentally, that there is nothing in the idea of some publicists and Labour leaders that emigration, even on a big scale, is calculated to ease the condition of labour at home.

**Rent in the Absence of Population.**—In an illuminating passage Henry George says:

"All I wish to make clear is that, without any increase in population, the progress of invention constantly tends to give a larger and larger proportion of the produce to the owners of land, and a smaller and smaller proportion to labour and capital. And as we can assign no limits to the progress of invention, neither can we assign any limits to the increase of rent, short of the whole produce. For, if labour-saving inventions went on until perfection was attained, and the necessity of labour in the production of wealth was entirely done away with, then everything that the earth could yield could be obtained without labour, and the margin of cultivation would be extended to zero. Wages would be nothing, while rent would be everything. For the owners of land being enabled without labour to obtain all the wealth that could be procured from Nature, there would be no use for either labour or capital, and no possible way in which either could compel any share of the wealth produced. And no matter how small population might be, if anybody but the landowners continued to exist, it would be at the whim or by the mercy of the landowners—they would be maintained either for the amusement of the landowners, or, as paupers, by their country."

**Private Enterprise and the Slums.**—In a leading article on Housing (*THE STAR*, 5th December) incidentally remarks that in the County of the City of London there were at the last census 246,000 persons occupying two-room tenements. A case is instanced where in the Southwark district a workman had to pay £5 10s. "key-money," and the father and mother with five of a family had to sleep in one room. *THE STAR* goes on:

"We know that private enterprise never did deal with the slums and never can, simply because the clearance of the site is so expensive a process, and when new houses with decent conditions are placed on the area it is impossible for private enterprise to obtain sufficient return on its capital outlay." And leaves it there—where most political partizans leave it with a kick at some "utterly useless and hopeless" remedy advanced by the opposition. The high value of the site is not in the way of private enterprise clearing the slums, because where sites are cheap enough houses are in demand but are not erected; and public enterprise is busy enough putting houses together on some sites that will be slums in a few short years. The true site value of any location is in the natural order of things, and rightly understood cannot of itself be an obstacle to common sense and happiness. It is the deeper cut that is wanted; *THE STAR* must try again and

without prejudice. The bogey of private enterprise and its limitations is about played out. There is a "scoop" for the popular newspaper that first discovers the "nigger in the wood pile" and has the courage to say where exactly he is to be located.

**The Real Question.**—The Rev. Isaac Harthill, Chiswick, who speaks for very many, writes to the *DAILY NEWS*, 26th November, wanting to know "In what way can Liberals combat Socialism without voting Conservative?" The immature State management designs of the so-called New Liberalism hurts and hinders the Liberal Party. It but serves to promote thought on the more belligerent Socialist demand for a fuller application of the medicine. In essence it is a cry that betokens a sad want of faith in the power and capacity of the worker under free conditions to work out his own salvation; or regarded from another angle there is the suspicion that the giant labour has to be kept in chains in case once on his feet he makes short work of his political mentors and their ephemeral Party alignments. Nor is there any hope in voting Conservative for there lies Protection with its plunder and State control of industry. There is only one way out, as far as we can see, and that is to put forward a radical measure of land reform that will stand together with free trade and free industry—free from the exactions of monopoly. If there be another method, more in harmony with Liberal ideas, of getting at the root cause of industrial unrest it is for the Liberals to put it forward. Liberalism and Socialism are words that connote many things, and some inferences. The real question is what is to be done, not in the future, but here and now to "combat" the well recognized evils of unemployment, housing and the prevailing poverty-stricken condition of the people?

**Mines and Royalties.**—Mr. E. Shinwell, who was Minister of Mines in the Labour Government, speaking at a conference of Trades Union Co-operative Societies and kindred bodies, at Wigan, on Saturday, advocated the purchase of mines and royalties at the market value, which he placed at about £240,000,000. He thought that this would be accepted by the owners, and he suggested that where a disagreement arose the cases could come before a Valuation Commission appointed for the purpose.

A resolution in favour of nationalization of the mines was carried by the conference.—*DAILY NEWS*, 1st December.

Mr. Arthur Henderson, Home Secretary in the Labour Government, might consider this case and let us have the benefit of his opinion. The Lloyd George "Coal and Power" ramp also marks royalties out for purchase; but if the Labour Party are for the taxation of land values surely it is understood that mining royalties are included in this intention. Perhaps Mr. Shinwell, like the Liberal leader, merely speaks for himself on the point. He certainly does not speak for Mr. Robert Smillie, who has forgotten more about the coal industry than the ex-Labour Minister for Mines ever learned.

**"They Think We Don't Ken!"**—Sir Godfrey Collins, M.P., Chief Liberal Whip, declared at the National Liberal Club, 19th November, for the Rating and Taxation of Land Values to deal effectively with housing and unemployment. Speaking at Dundee by-election, 8th December, Sir John Simon urged it would be a national contribution towards the rapid solution of the housing principle to adopt and put into force the taxation of ground values. It looks all right, as it appeared in the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*. But the same paper reported Mr. E. D. Simon, candidate, to the effect that "all increases in the value of land