

(v) the hearing before the assessment committee of objections to the annual value of a site appearing in the valuation list and the making of appeals to quarter sessions against the decision of an assessment committee on the hearing of such an objection ;

(vi) the amount of the yearly rate on site values as from April, 1941, to be two shillings in the £ and to be collected by the rating authority ;

(vii) the Council to precept on the rating authorities for the amount of the gross produce of the rate calculated on the total annual site value of each rating area, with power in certain cases to remit amounts uncollected by a rating authority ;

(viii) the proceeds of the rate to be credited to the general county account ;

(ix) the incidence of the rate to be upon the respective owners of the site value (generally by means of deductions from rent), any past or future provision in contracts having the effect of relieving, in whole or in part, any person entitled to receipt of rent from any liability in respect of any site value rate to be void, and the occupier, in normal cases, to pay the rate in the first instance ;

(x) without prejudice to any other remedy the site value rate to be recoverable in a summary manner, or in certain cases, for arrears to be paid by future occupiers and deducted from their rent, and to be made a charge on the land with power to the rating authority of sale and powers similar to those of mortgagees ;

(xi) exemptions from the rate to be limited generally to those *properties* only which are at present exempted otherwise than under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1929, from the payment of ordinary rates ;

(xii) incidental and machinery matters.

The Land Values Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party, which numbers about 30 members of Parliament, has set up a special Drafting Committee, consisting of Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr R. R. Stokes, Mr D. R. Grenfell, Mr A. MacLaren, Mr S. S. Silverman and Mr J. Parker, to formulate a Bill for the Rating of Land Values, to be introduced into the House next session.

This Group has written to a number of local authorities that have adopted resolutions in favour of Land Value Rating calling their attention to the Bill the L.C.C. is promoting and suggesting that they again make representations to Parliament in favour of the policy.

A Land Values Convention in the Houldsworth Hall, Manchester, is being arranged for 26th November. Several members of the Group have seats in Lancashire and neighbouring constituencies.

PROBLEMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Arthur Greenwood, M.P., on Rating

At the annual conference of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, held on 17th June, Mr Arthur Greenwood, P.C., M.P., gave an address on Modern Problems of Local Government. In the course of this he said that there was a real difficulty about the raising of local finance. The system was not a good one and since de-rating came in it had become worse. After mentioning that when he was Minister of Health he had wanted to propose the repeal of de-rating, he continued :—

“ It is unfair to segregate certain classes of people who profit by rate expenditure and relieve them of their fair share of the burden. It is impossible to obscure the fact that the de-rating of certain kinds of hereditaments, in the long run, is bound to place a heavier burden on to the householder. Of that I think you can have no kind of doubt at all, and having regard to the fact that broadly speaking, rates are regressive and fall relatively most heavily on the poor rather than on the rich, there is a limit to the amount by which you can raise the rates.”

As to an alternative source of revenue he deprecated using the profits of trading services in relief of rates, and said we must look elsewhere. “ I do not think myself that the rating of land values would in the long run work out equitably, but I can see a case and I put this suggestion to you. I can see a case for the Government establishing a system of national taxation of land values the proceeds from which should be devoted, in agreed proportions, to local authorities. The developments made by local authorities, inevitably result in the improvement of site values and there is a strong case for any tax on site values being used for the benefit of local authorities. It has this advantage, that the more they develop their own resources and their own towns, the more would the local authorities expect from the yield of this national taxation. I am satisfied, because I went into it in very great detail when I was about to be struck from office, that it would be perfectly practicable for the Treasury to collect a tax of that kind, and I am satisfied also that a formula could be devised. In fact, a rough formula has been devised for the allocation of the yield of such a tax to local authorities. I want to make it clear to you that what I am suggesting is not anything in the nature of a Government grant. It is local authorities' money collected for them by the Government and, therefore, it is not to be measured as part of any Block Grant system whatever.”

As Mr Greenwood did not explain why he thought that the rating of land values might not work out equitably, that statement must remain as a matter of opinion and not of argument. The facts are that wherever in the world the rating of land values has been tried in practice there have been few or no complaints except on the part of a small number of large land owners or land speculators.

It is well to know that one who has had actual experience as the head of that Department of State which is concerned with local government is convinced that land values must be a source of revenue for local purposes, whatever be the machinery for achieving that.

LAND AND FREEDOM. By Fredk. Verinder. 2s. 6d.

LAND VALUE RATING. By F. C. R. Douglas, L.C.C. 2s. 6d.

THE TRUE NATIONAL DIVIDEND. By W. R. Lester, M.A. 3d.

A GREAT INIQUITY. By Leo Tolstoy. 3d.

SOCIAL SCIENCE MANUAL: Guide to PROGRESS AND POVERTY with Questions and Answers. By F. C. R. Douglas. 1s.

LIGHT ON THE LAND QUESTION. A Frank Inquiry into the Land Value Policy. 6d. The Author “A Man in the Street” is a distinguished London journalist.