

50 YEARS AGO

"THE STANDARD", FEBRUARY 15, 1906

SINGLE TAX v. SOCIALISM

Mr. W. E. Johnson, M.H.R., speaking at the annual meeting of the Darlington League, said: "Associating Single Tax with Socialism was rather unfortunate. Many do not grasp the essential difference between them. One is based upon freedom, the other upon restriction. The object of Socialism is the destruction of individual liberty, and the control of all industry by the State. Single Taxers believe that it is not the part of the Government to interfere with industrial enterprise. Services of public utility such as posts, telegraphs and railways may be carried on by the State as they are natural monopolies. Socialists desire the State to enter upon all kinds of enterprises. It is the business of the State to preserve life and property and to maintain order. Socialists say that poverty is due to competition. We say that it is due to the absence of natural conditions. We wish to revert to the natural order of things, and then the evils supposed to arise through competition will disappear. Our object is to encourage enterprise by removing the obstacles in the way of access to nature. Increased production at present does but little good, as great wealth is in the hands of a few, while others are in a state of destitution. Socialists are not seized of the causes of the evils, but seek to cure the evils of restriction by further restriction. Their proposals cannot work out as they anticipate. Everyone wants a greater share of the wealth produced. Equal distribution of wealth would be as unjust as unequal, because the producing capacities of men are not equal. The utmost we can do is to give all an equal chance. A beneficent Providence has provided enough to supply all, but if some are given the power to fence off nature's storehouse, it means that the bulk of humanity is condemned to hardship and poverty."