

# Land and Freedom

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## Comment and Reflection

MR. PHILIP SNOWDEN referred to the Henry George men who had displayed some impatience with his tactics in refraining from introducing into the Budget a provision for the taxation of land values, as "persons of one idea." John Paul, of *Land and Liberty* of London, wittily retorted that even one idea is well above the average.

IT is after all a cheap fling of Mr. Snowden's. It comes too readily to the tongue of those who, unable to meet the implacable argument in support of a great principle, dodge its profounder implications by superficial rejoinders. We are men of one idea and we rejoice in it. Better this than to busy one's self with futile remedies for social ills while ignoring the one fundamental cure, which makes all other proposals seem childish.

IN social and political economy man's relation to the earth is the one idea around which all other ideas—those of Mr. Snowden and Mr. Macdonald and the British Labor party—may be said to revolve. These ideas are all satellites to the main luminary. And it is the "one idea" that demands our first consideration. Mr. Snowden suggests that it be postponed in order that we deal with "slum clearance," which is asking that we postpone consideration of the cause while we deal with its effects. Mr. Snowden's philosophy is as bad as his politics.

A BAD philosophy, we say, because every great philosophy, every great movement of religion or morals, centers around one idea, of which the adherents are preachers and teachers. Being logical they must of necessity be men of one idea. If they lose sight of it then their plight is like that of the British Labor government which is a confusion of many ideas because it persists in ignoring one central principle—and is therefore without any workable principle at all.

MR. SNOWDEN may distrust the driving power of a great principle. That he does so distrust it is proved by his policy of "tinkering." For want of this "one idea" that might set England ablaze and put the Labor party securely in power—not temporarily merely, dependent upon tenuous alliance with the Liberals,—they

face a defeat at the hands of the people disappointed at a futile programme that does nothing to relieve a dreadful situation. Well may we cry out for the return of a Campbell-Bannerman to power, and for "one idea" of real potency in place of the many strange notions of dealing with the situation while ignoring the fundamental remedy for injustice. One idea, indeed! But one idea before which all others fade to a sickly pallor!

GOVERNOR COOPER, of Ohio, has a suggestion to make. It is not a new one. Let him express it. He says: "Ohio has the opportunity of writing an equitable, just and fair taxation law that will bring to light a vast amount of intangibles which are actually paying no taxes at all." These intangibles, of course, are money, notes, mortgages, bonds, etc., and the stated object of taxing them is to relieve industry and real estate.

THE governor is a victim of the delusion that you can get more out of a hogshead by tapping it a number of times. Ohio has already about 100 different kinds of taxes. And how you can relieve industry by taxing its instruments Governor Cooper has not shown. To tax evidences of wealth is double taxation; to tax such evidences is to increase the difficulty of making loans, and to place formidable obstacles in the way of industry. To substitute such taxes for taxes on the value of land would be to relieve the burdens of the land speculator, but the governor cannot mean that, since he speaks of relieving industry, and industry can only be relieved by removing the burdens.

THE energetic Mussolini has brought to the bar a hundred or more of the Mafia organization in Sicily who are accused in press dispatches of murder and robbery and levying "taxes" upon the community. No doubt the word is well chosen and fitly associated with murder and robbery. Whether these "taxes" were levied in accordance with the theory of "ability to pay" or that of "benefits received" is not stated.

MESSENGER to the King: "Your Majesty, a ship loaded with provisions has arrived at the island. It has provisions for your subjects, many of whom are starving."

King: "Stop them from landing. We are already confronted with an unfavorable balance of trade."