

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. Will land value taxation effect any alteration in the distribution of existing wealth?

Not directly. The object of land value taxation is to alter the distribution of wealth as it is produced from day to day, by diverting land value into the public treasury and raising wages. Much of what is commonly called wealth is merely the saleable value of the right to draw incomes in the future. Land value taxation by making the distribution of income more equitable would automatically make the distribution of wealth more equitable.

2. What chance is there of benefits accruing to the workers through land value taxation while capitalists have it in their power to buy up all land and hold it idle while paying the tax?

The reason why people hold valuable land idle to-day is because they have no taxes and rates to pay on it, and get an untaxed profit when they sell it at a higher price. Under land value taxation they would pay the value of the land to the community while they held land idle and could get no profit by selling it. People would only hold land for use, not for speculation.

3. Is it not foreign competition which tends to fix the standard of living of the British worker, and will not this prevent him from getting the benefit of reforms operating in Britain?

The wages of the British worker is the proportion he gets of what he produces. Land value taxation will increase that proportion by throwing unused land into use. The more he can obtain by exchanging his wages for the produce of a German, a Japanese or other producer the better off he will be.

4. Assuming that land value taxation will cheapen commodities, does it not follow that wages will fall because employers will receive lower prices for their products?

Land value taxation will cheapen commodities by reducing the taxation imposed upon them or upon the means of producing them. It will also increase the production of commodities by bringing unused valuable land into use. Neither of these things will reduce wages, but will raise wages.

5. How can the private appropriation of land values be responsible for the workers' poverty in view of the fact that the landed gentry are themselves impoverished through taxation and death duties?

Poverty is a relative term, and we need not accept the landowner's estimate of their poverty at its face value. It is only a small body of landlords that raises this cry. What of the urban landlords and the royalty owners? But even if they are poor, are they entitled to hold land out of use and prevent other employing themselves?

6. Is not the monopoly of money by the banks really the main cause of business difficulties with consequent distress to the persons employed?

This contention involves the curious contradiction that the banks impoverish their customers, upon whose trade they depend. The truth is that we are suffering from a shortage of wealth and a bad distribution of it. Those who have plenty of wealth are always able to get plenty of money. (On this whole question see Mr Lester's *Poverty and Plenty*.)

7. Does not the increasing use of machine power cause a corresponding increase in unemployment?

The use of machinery enables labour to produce more

wealth with the same amount of effort. Other things being equal, machinery will, therefore, give labour more wealth or more leisure. But neither labour nor machines can produce wealth out of nothing. Land is still as essential as it was before machines were introduced. Hence so long as land is monopolized a great part of the benefit of the introduction of machinery will go to those who own the land. What other explanation is there of the steady increase of land values even while population remains almost stationary?

IDLE LAND MEANS IDLE MEN

A Liberal Party Declaration

(Leaflet published by the Women's National Liberal Federation, 42 Parliament Street, S.W.1.)

The Liberal Party would Tax Land Values and so grapple with Unemployment and Housing. Liberalism does mean Equality of Opportunity and Social Justice.

Unemployment.—Instead of merely looking at and sighing over the monthly unemployment returns, Liberals would make an effort to grapple with the greatest problem that ever faced us as a nation.

The longer Unemployment goes on, the more we are inclined to regard it as something inevitable.

Unemployment is not inevitable, if only the Liberals secured a majority to tackle the land question.

Land monopoly is not the only one that exists, but it is by far the greatest of monopolies—it is perpetual—and is the mother of all other forms of monopoly.

The First Step in getting rid of this perpetual monopoly is by means of a Tax on Land or Site Values. All land whether used or not.

This tax taking its place as the source of public revenue of taxes and rates now levied on houses, shops, factories and all forms of improvements.

Each would pay according to the land value he enjoys.

Idle land in the hands of Speculators and under-used land would be taxed on its annual value.

Idle men would at once secure employment putting idle land to its best possible use.

Speculators could not afford to pay a tax on land values and keep their land idle.

Liberals would and could grapple with the problem of unemployment by breaking the land monopoly.

Housing.—There is no room to live!! The land monopoly has perpetually impeded both private and public enterprise by withholding land from use and letting it, yard by yard, at exorbitant prices.

There is room for all our people on the land.

The present conditions are the outcome of blindness, bad management and neglect, under the shelter of land monopoly.

There is no confiscation of the efforts of men's hands and brains in these Liberal proposals. We demand that our towns have freedom to use the land they need and to secure the values they alone create.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CAN BE SECURED THROUGH THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

Employment, National Development, Factories, Shops, Houses, Roads, Drainage, Afforestation, Water Supplies, Coal and other minerals, Agriculture—ALL DEMAND THE USE OF LAND.

A Tax on Land Values would enable the Nation to get at and on the Land.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I bequeath (free of duty) to the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Limited, the sum of £.....