

value is the indispensable instrument of planning. Every effort should be made to expedite such a valuation and to place it in the very forefront of the programme. No intelligent scheme of planning can be carried out unless the basic economic fact about the subject matter of planning is known.

#### Rating and Taxation

A reform of our system of local rating is long overdue. It is self-evident that a system which levies imposts of from 10s. to 20s. in the £ on the annual value of houses and other buildings and improvements must restrict the supply and increase the cost. Conversely, as has already been indicated, a system which exempts vacant

land from contribution and eases the burden upon poorly developed land at the expense of that which is well developed frustrates the ultimate object of planning. The case for the rating of site values upon these grounds alone is overwhelming.

It is therefore strongly urged not only that there should be a general valuation of land values, but that it should be made obligatory for at least a portion of the local rates to be levied upon this basis. Alternatively a national tax should be levied on all land values. Whichever course is adopted, the tax or rate should apply to all land according to its site value, so that a uniform benefit is derived from it and an equal pressure exerted to reduce land values to a non-speculative level and

prevent land from being uneconomically withheld from use.

Unless this step is taken the state or the planning authorities may easily be committed to large and wasteful expenditures for which no adequate return will be secured, and which will have the ultimate result of retarding the provision of houses and the extension of useful productive enterprises upon which the economic life of the country depends.

*For the Land Values Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party,*

D. R. GRENFELL, *Chairman.*

R. R. STOKES, *Hon. Secretary.*

October, 1942.

## DR TEMPLE'S ALBERT HALL ADDRESS

LAST MONTH we repeated from certain newspapers their report of that passage in the Archbishop of Canterbury's address at the Albert Hall, London, on 26th September in which he discussed the land question. In this statement Dr Temple was reported to say :

"Our present treatment of land and of the buildings placed upon it strikes me as peculiarly topsy turvy. If a landlord neglects his property and it falls into a bad condition, the rates upon that property are reduced, while if he improves the property and so does a service to society, the rates are increased. But if the rates were levied upon the land itself and not upon the buildings placed upon it, there would always be the inducement to make the property as good as possible in order that the best return might be received from it."

These words do not appear in the report of the speech as published, after the meeting, in the pamphlet *The Church Looks Forward*.<sup>\*</sup> We learned that a pamphlet with the same title, purporting to give the substance of the speeches, had been issued beforehand and was distributed at the meeting. This earlier edition, as we discovered on procuring a copy, contains the statement. The point however was, what Dr Temple actually said? Fearing to have misrepresented him in any way, we sought an explanation and we are obliged to Dr Temple for his letter in which he wrote :

"The reports printed in most papers were taken from a digest of my speech prepared in advance and supplied to the press. This was printed also in the first edition of the pamphlet *The Church Looks Forward*. But I did not read this digest. I followed its outline fairly closely but spoke without direct reference to it. The promoters of the meeting thought that my speech as delivered was more effective and accordingly in reprinting the pamphlet inserted my address as it was actually spoken and recorded by the B.B.C. I found that in speaking in the Albert Hall I had to go rather slower than I had anticipated and it was necessary to omit some sections. I did in fact omit the two paragraphs beginning 'our present treatment of land . . . ' and 'but if rates were levied . . . ' which are the last in

what you quote. But this had been in the digest circulated to the press and I cannot complain of their quoting it from there. Also I should have said it if I had not felt that I was over-running my time in a way that would be unfair to the later speakers . . . It does not misrepresent me in any way."

Apologies are necessary especially to those newspapers which had reporters present for our implied criticism in remarking the fact that they did not print the references to the rating of land values, and we apologize also to the B.B.C. for alleging a similar omission when they broadcast their extracts of the recorded speech.

From the second edition of *The Church Looks Forward* which contains the verbatim report of Dr Temple's address, we print the following passage relating to land and property :

"There are four requisites for life which are given by the bounty of God—air, light, land and water. These exist before man's labour is expended upon them, and upon air and light man can do nothing except spoil them. I suppose if it were possible to make established property rights in air, somebody would have done it before now, and then he would demand of us that we should pay him if we wanted to breathe what he called *his* air. Well, it couldn't be done, so it hasn't been done. But it could be done with land, and it has been done with land; and, as it seems to me, we have been far too tender towards the claims that have been made by the owners of land and of water as compared with the interests of the public, who need that land and water for the ordinary purposes of human life. I am not myself at all persuaded that the solution of this problem is to be found in the nationalization of land; but I am persuaded that we need to find ways of asserting the rights of the public over the interests of the private owners; and we come back here to the great Christian principle, that the right which attaches to ownership is a right of administration, but should never be a right to exclusive use. That is a principle deep and constant in the old Christian tradition about property, but we have so largely forgotten that property is in its own nature and of necessity a social institution and a social fact, that we have ignored the rights of society over against the rights of those to whom it entrusts ownership, and we must restore that balance."

## ALEXANDER HAMILTON

THE DEATH is reported of Alexander Hamilton, pioneer and leader of the Henry George movement in British Columbia, who was born in Carlisle, Scotland, and migrated when little more than a boy. The esteem in which he was held is shown in the long and laudatory obituary notice in the *Victoria Daily Times* of 4th September. His colleague Harry H. Hollins writes "he was of uncompromising loyalty to the cause. Many years ago he was one of the small group who led the campaign for the exemption of improvements from taxation in the City of New Westminster [it is outstanding among the B.C. municipalities which moved in the same direction—EDITOR, *L. & L.*], and New Westminster has never receded from that policy in spite of many organized attempts to overthrow it, and it bears the stamp of wisdom on its face. Not a neglected looking house or building is to be seen. The people do not fear the assessor when they wish to improve their places.

"Alexander Hamilton fought hard for the conservation of natural resources and specially the virgin timber, which has been frightfully decimated as the result of the operations of speculators and the ruthless system of logging (both fostered by the most unwise stumpage tax). This was an injustice that Mr Hamilton constantly opposed; many who never met him knew of him by his letters to the Press."

In April last as President of the Henry George Club of Victoria (of which Mr Hollins is Secretary) he headed a strong protest to the Minister of Lands and Forests against the shameful manner in which timber lands have been alienated—at \$1 an acre for virgin timber now worth in many cases \$1,000 an acre. Pretty soon two-thirds of the wonderful B.C. forest was in private hands. The Government then shut down on it and the Province still retains about a third of the timber. But with regard to oil and other natural resources the Government has again taken the wrong road, selling these resources to private individuals and corporations and promoting their speculative gains.

Alexander Hamilton's own story of the work in British Columbia is which he gave chief credit to John Cunningham Brown, was told in one of the papers presented at the "Centenary" International Conference held in New York, September, 1939. Of Hamilton the *Daily Times* said: "Just another of nature's noblemen who tried to leave the world better than he found it, handing the torch to those who follow."

\* The Industrial Christian Fellowship, 1, The Broadway, S.W.1. Price 6d.