

LAND & LIBERTY

MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

Forty-ninth Year—No. 574.

4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1.

March, 1942. 2d.

IMPLEMENTING THE ATLANTIC CHARTER—MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

ON 23RD FEBRUARY an agreement between the United States and this country was entered into at Washington dealing with the "Principles applying to Mutual Aid in the Prosecution of the War against Aggression." It provides for the supply by either party to the other of such defence articles, services or information as may be in their power. At the end of the present emergency the British Government is to return to the United States such defence articles transferred by them as have not been used up and as are determined by the President to be useful for the defence of our ally. The final determination of the benefits to be provided to the United States by the Government of this country in return for aid furnished to us under the Act of Congress of 11th March, 1941 (the Lease-Lend Act) is deferred "until the extent of the defence aid is known and until the progress of events makes clearer the final terms and conditions and benefits which will be in the mutual interests of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and will promote the establishment and maintenance of world peace."

It is declared that in the final determination "the terms and conditions thereof shall be such as not to burden commerce between the two countries, but to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them and the betterment of world-wide economic relations. To that end, they shall include provision for agreed action by the United States of America and the United Kingdom, open to participation by all other countries of like mind, directed to the expansion, by appropriate international and domestic measures, of production, employment, and the exchange and consumption of goods, which are the material foundations of the liberty and welfare of all peoples; to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers; and, in general, to the attainment of all the economic objectives set forth in the Joint Declaration [the Atlantic Charter] made on the 12th August, 1941, by the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom."

This is a declaration of profound importance. It carries a stage further the pledge in the Atlantic Charter that the two countries would "endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access on equal terms, to the trade and raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." The Atlantic Charter was approved by the Russian Government and by the Inter-allied Conference. It is to be hoped that they will also approve and adhere to this more specific declaration.

When the conclusion of this agreement was announced in the House of Commons on 24th February, by Mr Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the following interchange of questions and answers took place:—

Sir P. HANNON: Will the right hon Gentleman tell the House precisely what he means by the elimination of discriminatory treatment? Has Imperial preference been done away with altogether?

Mr ATTLEE: So far as the reduction of the United States tariffs and the elimination of Imperial preference arrangements are concerned, no commitments were undertaken by either party in advance of the discussions. We have undertaken to pursue jointly with the United States the general objective defined in the Charter.

Sir P. HANNON: Would the right hon Gentleman say whether the representatives

of the Dominions were taken into consultation before this Agreement was made?

Mr ATTLEE: Yes, Sir.

The voice of the protectionist was not slow in making itself heard, though Sir Patrick Hannon was discreet enough to use the phrase "Imperial preference" rather than protection. However, Imperial preference is merely a variety of protectionism, it arises out of the same order of ideas, and can only be defended on the same grounds. Those who seek to perpetuate tariffs do in fact seek to perpetuate economic friction, armaments and war itself. Even if the establishment of freedom of trade meant some sacrifice, it would be worth while in so far as it promoted peace. But it means no sacrifice; it means greater prosperity for the people of every country. Let us hope that the governments of the United States and of this country will steadfastly and courageously pursue the policy outlined in the Atlantic Charter and in the Mutual Aid Agreement.

ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE ON THE LAND QUESTION

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that Dr Temple is to be appointed Archbishop of Canterbury gives added importance to his opinions on the land question. The findings of the Malvern Conference no doubt owe much to him, but his own views have been expressed in popular form in his little book *Christianity and the Social Order* published in the Penguin series. There he writes:

"The fundamental source of all wealth is land. All wealth is a product of human labour expended upon God's gifts; and those gifts are bestowed in the land, what it contains and what it nourishes. Most truly the Malvern Conference declared that 'we must recover reverence for the earth and its resources, treating it no longer as a reservoir of potential wealth to be exploited, but as a storehouse of divine bounty on which we utterly depend.' The land legislation of the Old Testament rests on the principle that the land in a special sense belongs to God. This principle appears on our own Common Law in the doctrine that only the King has full Dominion over land; only its Use is granted to landlords."

"The primary necessities of life, bountifully supplied by nature, are Air, Sunshine, Land and Water. No one claims to own the first two, or to exclude others from them except on condition of paying a fee. The old principle that justifiable property is a right of administration and not a right to exclusive use should certainly be applied to the other two."

"Land is not a mere 'material re-

source.' The phrase 'mother earth' stands for a deep truth about the relationship between man and nature; and this is most fully developed where a man owns land which he works himself and works land which he owns. But he must own it in the sense mentioned—not as a possessor of so much material resources, but as a steward and trustee for the community. Land not beneficially used should involve liability to fine, or in extreme case, to forfeiture. But if the necessary safeguards are established the best results are to be expected from an encouragement of Occupying-Ownership."

"Occupiers who are not owners must have security of tenure at fair rents, with right to make improvements and with compensation on leaving."

"But a great deal of what is amiss alike in rural and in urban areas could be remedied by the taxation of the value of sites as distinct from the buildings erected upon them. In this field, that inversion of the natural order, which is characteristic of our whole modern life, is especially important. If house property is improved (a social service) the rates are raised and the improvement is penalized; if it is allowed to deteriorate (a social injury) the rateable value is reduced and the offending landlord is relieved. Taxation of the value of sites, as distinct from the buildings erected on them, would encourage the full utilization of the land. . . Land Values, therefore, should be taxed and rated; houses might well be de-rated."