

the censure of all Churchmen, irrespective of party. A great organized body of Christian opinion might have secured the one and abolished the others, yet they remained indifferent and impotent."

"**The Growth of Sydney.**"—In a recent speech, Mr. Fraser, New South Wales Chief Commissioner of Railways, said to a gathering of Engineers that "the total cost of authorized new railway works within Sydney and its suburbs was close on £26,000,000. The amount includes the cost of the underground city railway, the electrification and widening of suburban lines, and the Railway Departments' share of two-thirds of the cost of the bridge being built across Sydney harbour."—*By mail*, 8th October.

The Commissioner, we are told, was able "to show that the expenditure of this huge sum, while it was a necessity, was nevertheless a sound investment for the State."

This news is in keeping with the latest news from Sydney, which appeared in our July issue. The cost of the local government of Sydney is, except for the water rate, taken wholly from the value of the land. The assessor does not chase after the improver, and because of this, as Mr. Fraser rightly concludes, the new railway works, as with all other development, is a sound investment for the State.

From 1710 to 1867 there was appropriated of the common lands of the country, of the villagers, 7,669,439 acres. The result was that the labourer who tilled the soil; who had his bit of ground on which he laboured, and on which his family in a large part subsisted, was driven afield, landless, dispossessed, and a mere labourer existing on wages. His successors through the generations saw a notice, which to-day reads:—"Trespassers will be prosecuted." The biggest trespasser of all was the man who put up the notice.—*Rev. James Barr, M.P., at Larbert, public meeting, 21st September.*

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Included in the passenger complement of the Anchor-Donaldson liner *Letitia*, which sails from the Clyde for Quebec and Montreal to-day, are over 400 Scottish settlers for Canada. A large proportion of these are young women and children, among the former being domestic servants, nurses, machinists, clerkesses and waitresses.—*Glasgow Herald* 1st October.

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E. T. Comerford had a useful letter in the *Hastings Observer*, 25th September, based on the leading article in that month's issue of *Land & Liberty*. We are always glad when subscribers can requisition this journal for any such publicity.

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THE BANKERS' FREE TRADE MANIFESTO

(Published in the Press of 20th October and signed by the leading bankers and outstanding representatives of industry in fifteen European Countries and in the United States.)

We desire, as business men, to draw attention to certain grave and disquieting conditions which, in our judgment, are retarding the return to prosperity.

It is difficult to view without dismay the extent to which tariff barriers, special licences, and prohibitions since the war have been allowed to interfere with international trade and to prevent it from flowing in its natural channels. At no period in recent history has freedom from such restrictions been more needed to enable traders to adapt themselves to new and difficult conditions. And at no period have impediments to trading been more perilously multiplied without a true appreciation of the economic consequences involved.

POST-WAR BARRIERS TO TRADE

The break-up of great political units in Europe dealt a heavy blow to international trade. Across large areas, in which the inhabitants had been allowed to exchange their products freely, a number of new frontiers were erected and jealously guarded by Customs barriers. Old markets disappeared. Racial animosities were permitted to divide communities whose interests were inseparably connected. The situation is not unlike that which would be created if a confederation of States were to dissolve the ties which bind them, and to proceed to penalize and hamper, instead of encouraging each other's trade. Few will doubt that under such conditions the prosperity of such a country would rapidly decline.

To mark and defend these new frontiers in Europe, licences, tariffs and prohibitions were imposed, with results which experience shows already to have been unfortunate for all concerned. One State lost its supplies of cheap food, another its supplies of cheap manufactures. Industries suffered for want of coal, factories for want of raw materials. Behind the Customs barriers new local industries were started, with no real economic foundation, which could only be kept alive in the face of competition by raising the barriers higher still. Railway rates, dictated by political considerations, have made transit and freights difficult and costly. Prices have risen, artificial dearness has been created. Production as a whole has been diminished. Credit has contracted and currencies have depreciated. Too many States, in pursuit of false ideals of national interest, have imperilled their own welfare, and lost sight of the common interests of the world by basing their commercial relations on the economic folly which treats all trading as a form of war.

THE FOLLY OF RESTRICTING IMPORTS.

There can be no recovery in Europe till politicians in all territories, old and new, realize that trade is not war but a process of exchange, that in time of peace our neighbours are our customers, and that their prosperity is a condition of our own well-being. If we check their dealings, their power to pay their debts diminishes, and their power to purchase our goods is reduced. Restricted imports involve restricted exports, and no nation can afford to lose its export trade. Dependent as we all are upon imports and exports, and upon the processes of international exchange, we

cannot view without grave concern a policy which means the impoverishment of Europe.

Happily there are signs that opinion in all countries is awaking at last to the dangers ahead. The League of Nations and the International Chamber of Commerce have been labouring to reduce to a minimum all formalities, prohibitions and restrictions, to remove inequalities of treatment in other matters than tariffs, to facilitate the transport of passengers and goods. In some countries powerful voices are pleading for the suspension of tariffs altogether. Others have suggested the conclusion for long periods of commercial agreements embodying in every case the most-favoured-nation clause. Some States have recognized in recent treaties the necessity of freeing trade from the restrictions which depress it. And experience is slowly teaching others that the breaking-down of the economic barriers between them may prove the surest remedy for the stagnation which exists. On the valuable political results which might flow from such a policy, from the substitution of good-will for ill-will, of co-operation for exclusiveness, we will not dwell. But we wish to place on record our conviction that the establishment of economic freedom is the best hope of restoring the commerce and the credit of the world.

WOMEN AND THE LAND PROBLEM

The Co-operative News, 2nd October, gives space to an interview with Mrs. E. M. Christie, who has been visiting the schools for speakers held in each section of the Women's Co-operative Guild.

Mrs. Christie was asked for her impressions of the schools, and whether she felt they had been of benefit to the women, and answered in part that

"The working man's wife is seeking more and more to understand what part the private ownership of land and private enterprise in production plays in the problems with which she is daily confronted. The time has certainly come for the guild to outline its policy and programme in answer to this call."

Mrs. Christie further declared that the taxation of land values was an important plank in their platform.

In the course of the interview, *The Co-operative News* comments:—"We are accustomed to think of unemployment as an industrial problem only brought about by the bad organizing of the 'captains of industry,' but, as Mrs. Christie pointed out, there are twice as many unemployed as are engaged in agriculture, and we have a decreasing acreage under crops or any kind of cultivation, while we have large tracts of land given over to pleasure—not the pleasure of the people, but the pleasure of the few. Every year more and more land is falling into the hands of the speculator, who does not pay its value in rates and taxes, but is allowed to be free of real rating value because he is withholding the land from the people."

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NOTES AND NEWS

The accounts of the London County Council Housing Committee for the year ending 31st March, 1926, show a deficit on the subsidized housing schemes amounting to £811,765. Of that sum £272,739 had to be made good by a levy on local taxpayers and the balance, £539,027, was borne by the national exchequer.

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Mr. Ashley Mitchell, in his informing address at the Copenhagen Conference, reviewing the housing subsidy policy, showed that the solution of the house famine was to raise wages, and land value taxation was the means. He said the charity now being dispensed by the taxpayer was intended for "the working classes" but as often as not the charity was misplaced. Many of the houses were occupied by people in comparatively easy circumstances.

This destination of the subsidy, making a new set of supplicants, is strikingly confirmed in a report just issued by the Manchester and Salford Property Owners' Association (*Manchester City News*, 23rd October), which says: "The purpose of the subsidy was to make possible the provision of houses for the poor and needy; but this elementary fact is apparently still forgotten or disregarded, and houses are not being put up of the kind for which the poorer workers long. . . . The poorer citizens as sub-tenants are eking out their miserable existence at extortionate rentals, as hangers on in the slums of the city."

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The London County Council Downham Estate, between Bromley and Catford, where 1,200 houses have been built and occupied in the last eighteen months, is not providing the haven of contentment for its tenants that many people expected. Dozens have gone back to the slums and dozens more are waiting to go back when they can find some sort of accommodation. Fares and rents hit some of these people hard. There is a case of a man with a wife and five children who told me he earns considerably under £3 a week. His rent is 16s. 10d. a week, and he has to travel to London to work. This family have proper food at week-ends, but for the remainder of the time their staple diet is bread and margarine, and sometimes not even that. In London their rent was 9s. a week, and they had no fares.—*Observer*, 31st October.

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The following statement is from a return issued by the Ministry of Health, 27th October: Those receiving relief in England and Wales on 1st January, 1926 numbered 1,439,810: men 369,355; women, 509,962; children, 560,403. An increase of 19.5 per cent as compared with the figures of January, 1925. In institutions 326,732 were relieved and 1,113,078 were in receipt of relief in their own homes.

The number of 1,113,078 in receipt of relief in their own homes includes 486,646 persons (including dependants) returned as relieved on account of unemployment—an increase of 160,272 or 49.1 per cent.—*Daily News*, 28th October.

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"Not poverty, but unselfishness, is the true Christian ideal."—*The Bishop of Birmingham*. The reply to this opinion is that unselfishness is not necessarily the alternative to poverty. Both rich and poor can be selfish, or unselfish, as they choose. The true Christian ideal is brotherhood, and how this is to be achieved in a dispensation that brings wealth to the few at the expense of the many is the problem true Christians have to face.