

LAND & LIBERTY

MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

Thirty-ninth Year.—Nos. 456-457.

MAY-JUNE, 1932.

2d. By post, 2s. per annum.

Published by The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Ltd.

York Mansion, 94 Petty France, London, S.W.1.

Telegrams: "Eulav, Sowest, London."

Telephone: Victoria 4308.9

THE CRISIS AND THE TARIFFS

The Case for Free Trade in its Fullness

MANIFESTO BY THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES

In the belief that the abiding cause of poverty and unemployment is the private appropriation of the rent of land and the withholding of land from use at monopoly prices; that the ever-increasing load of taxation falling upon industry has widened the gulf between rich and poor; that the value of land apart from buildings and other improvements belongs to the community and should be taken as public revenue in place of the taxation now burdening labour and capital;

The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, speaking for a well-recognized public opinion, registers its emphatic protest against the action of the Government in suspending the Land Valuation, and postponing the Land Value Tax provided for in last year's Finance Act. The Government is obstructing the operation of the Statute Law which when passed was rightly acclaimed as "the beginning of a great social reform which will some day liberate the land for the people and abolish once and for all the tyranny under which the people in this country have suffered."

It is alleged that the country cannot afford the £1,500,000 already approved by Parliament for assessing the public values of land so that just taxation may be levied thereon; yet the costs of Customs collection alone now exceed £6,000,000 a year. The excuse that the Land Valuation has been suspended on grounds of economy is false and flagrantly dishonest. The truth is that the Government is the ready and obedient servant of the landed interests.

In its Manifesto at the General Election, October, 1931, the United Committee declared:

"The dominating issue is Free Trade or Protection. Long years of unemployment and hard times, and the failure of statesmen and politicians to remove the root cause of the trouble, have given the Tariff advocate his chance. He is making the most of it.

"In the event of the Tory Party winning the Election, neither the Prime Minister nor his associates from other parties will be asked to consider the niceties of any particular Tariff or the question

whether Tariffs may be wise or not. They will be presented with the full Tory programme, and be required to act upon it or leave the Government." It has come to pass.

Mr Chamberlain's Budget is designed to lower the standard of living and entrench special privilege by shifting taxation from the wealthier to the poorer classes. It re-imposes the Tea tax. It ratifies the food taxes included in the General Tariff of February last. It is accompanied by new and heavy impositions of Customs duties under cover of the Import Duties Act. It upholds and develops the system of preferences for the fostering of a spurious and sordid Imperialism. The Budget resolutions have strengthened the powers of the new dictatorship, the Tariff Advisory Committee, extending them to the Free List so that taxes may be imposed on commodities and foodstuffs of any description imported from foreign countries. In a night, Parliament has virtually parted with its control in fiscal matters.

The United Committee denounces the fraud and folly of the Tariffs now being inflicted on the country. A permanent system of Protection is in the making that will close markets at home and abroad, add to prices and ruin innumerable industries. This policy, resulting in the plunder of the consumer, is advanced in the delusion that trade restriction can remedy industrial depression; it is based on the preposterous notion that imports into any country are an injury to the State; it breathes the sentiments of fear and jealousy that embitter international relations and lead inevitably to war.

The Wheat Quota with its £6,000,000 a year subsidy payable to farmers is an undisguised Bread tax. It is a rent-raising Measure. The Minister for Agriculture, Sir John Gilmour, has admitted in so many words in the House of Commons (6th April, 1932) that the benefit of the Quota scheme is destined to go where every similar subsidy has gone, into the pockets of the landlord.

The United Committee pledges itself to work resolutely for the instant and total repeal of the Import Duties Act and all other Tariff and subsidy

legislation; for Free Trade in its fullness—the freedom of production and the freedom of exchange—as the only way to the just distribution of wealth and opportunity. To this end the Committee calls for the support of all progressive citizens in its campaign to liberate natural resources from the bondage of monopoly, to sweep away all tariffs and to secure the public revenue by taxation and rating on the value of land that is everywhere created by the presence and activity of the community.
