

from sites where this trade can be handled? There may be an example of an unexplored economic law that where natural opportunities are in effect open to all by confiscation of the economic rent as it arises, the whole benefit of social progress goes to the individual producer and no part or very little to the community before population-increase forces production to less desirable sites. More information on Nigerian revaluations would be most useful.

It is noted that the "wage-earning class" is very small, nearly the whole population being "in fact peasant proprietors," and those who work for wages are generally paid above the legal minimum, while those who work in the theoretically bad conditions, under "truck" system, etc., return voluntarily each season from their homes as they have long done (p. 132). Compulsory labour on public works is usual in absence of men looking for employment.

In the Gold Coast Territory "an important feature in organization is the position of certain hereditary priests called Tindanas who are the representatives of the Earth God, and act roughly as Trustees for tribal lands which are owned communally by the tribe" (p. 138). The deplorable activities trained in England are censured as insidious and quite lawless in their corrupting work of ruin: "I was informed that a very large proportion of land theoretically (*sic*) still held under native customary laws is being dealt with by methods approximating to English law." He shows that the ancestral lands of the Gold Coast native are being grabbed by lawyers to pay the costs of endless and objectless boundary disputes. This curse of "litigation" only arises because the communal value—the shadow treasure as Germans say—is not taken by and for the needs of the community as it arises. He proves this once again in the converse (p. 118)—the absence of the curse of litigation is noted in the "near-Henry George" area of Northern Nigeria.

He finally admits that only such laws can save the collapsing and perishing social structure of the Gold Coast peoples, yet doubts if the evil has not now gone too far for remedy. Little England speaking!

Probably indeed the exact ordinances of Moslem Nigeria will not apply in areas boasting centuries of English education and influence: but the ideal is the same. A cadastral valuation-survey with no great or wasteful accuracy in the jungle: a small and rapidly increasing tax on site value of privately owned lands: remission of taxes as this revenue accrues, with special lower rates for holders of tribally owned lands: devolution of at least half the revenue to the local municipal or tribal authorities with responsibility for appropriate services in return (as advised very wisely on p. 131). These steps would soon wipe out any corrupt legal expropriation of the natives, and if there be any real advantage in the English freehold (subject to a 20s. single tax on land values exempting all improvement and production)—well, enough has been alienated to give the systems a fair trial in open competition and with no obstacle for the worse tenure to become the better.

NATURAL LAW IN SOCIAL LIFE

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GLEANINGS FROM THE LIBERAL LAND POLICY

The following items recognize the strength of the sentiment in the country for the Taxation and Rating of Land Values:—

In an informing article on "Our Tangled Transport" in the *Land News* (November), the monthly organ of the Land and Nation League (London), Mr. Comyns Carr, K.C., gives the Rating of Land Values a first place in his proposed remedies. He stresses the point that "wherever a new line of railway or tramway has been opened, a great rise in local land values can be directly traced to it. . . . If these land values (or even part of them) had been taken to pay for the railways and tramways, we could all have free travel to-day."

The ground landlords who have contributed nothing to the rates of London have drawn immense sums out of the wealth which the capital and labour of other men—nay, their mere presence—has contributed to this piece of England. . . . "A perfumed seigneur lounging delicately in the *Cœil de Bouf* hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle and call it rent" was Carlyle's comment on the poor Parisian widow gathering nettles for her children's dinner. We gather what we can on these acres, and our landlords take their toll. We hope the Urban Land Conference will direct London's struggle against this tax.—*The Star* (London), 22nd November.

What is the universal stumbling block now to all extension of work by our municipal bodies? The answer is the burden of rates. And we cannot, as things are now, think of acquiring land, or acquiring power over land, except in terms of heavy expenditure by the ratepayers, most of it going into the pockets of persons who have in no way earned the money.

Our Liberal policy sees this clearly enough: that nothing can be done until funds can be made available for doing it. What then do we propose?

- (1) That we should put a rate on the land in proportion to its best use for the community.
- (2) That we should be entitled to buy the land at the valuation put upon it for rating purposes.
- (3) That wherever public improvements have increased the value of land we should be entitled to put a rate upon the increased value so given to it.

That, then, is the way to get the money.—Sir Francis Acland, *Daily News*, 23rd November.

No. 2 is not the way to get the money; it's the way to collect it for some landlords, or land speculators. Land Value Taxation will reduce the price or value of land; buying land will have the opposite effect. No. 1 will enable the community to get all the land it requires on fair economic terms. It will do likewise for individual enterprise. What more does a Liberal Land Policy require. Why should No. 2 be introduced to question the efficacy of No. 1, as a means to provide the money and make land available.—ED., *Land & Liberty*.

The Star, 26th November, hits the nail on the head nicely, in the following comment:—

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu—not noted as a supporter of the Liberal land programme—has shown that land through which new roads have been cut has enhanced in value to the extent of £900 an acre, of which the community gets nothing. If only one item in the Liberal programme were adopted—that of site values—it would give us at least some of the money needed to