

We should have said that last night's vote was an injustice to the payers of excess profits duty, except that it is by their co-operation that the landlords escape a just burden. Let there be no question as to where that burden will fall. It has been bound afresh on the shoulders of that patient ass, the People. Values created by the energy and enterprise of the community are still to be appropriated by private owners, who, as Joseph Chamberlain said, "Toil not, neither do they spin." Austen Chamberlain has the quality which he last night attributed to the Prime Minister: "He can still learn and does not fear to change his mind." But the lesson of the land values is only beginning. Mr. Lloyd George and the landowners, have much to learn yet—and they cannot make a better beginning than by memorising the Land Song.—"*The Star*" (Lib.), July 15th.

The land problem is at the root of questions which directly affect the national health. It has a most important bearing upon housing. It has to be considered when we talk of overcrowding and of the sickness and death which inevitably accompany overcrowding. Tory members may think they have scored a temporary triumph. There is another and more important aspect of the question. They have in reality issued a challenge. It will be taken up. We trust every Liberal Association in the country will see to it that land reform becomes once more the foremost article of Liberal faith and the essential test for all such as profess and call themselves Liberals.—"*Birmingham Gazette*" (Lib.), July 16th.

The circumstances of the imposition of the duties were unique, and no levy was evermore deliberately enforced and reinforced by direct submission to the nation. Yet after ten years this is the end of it all. Mr. Lloyd George, with God's help, makes a beginning, and then, with the help of other agencies, kicks the whole thing over and returns the £2,000,000 collected in the interval from the class he so unsparingly denounced. It may have been a necessary part of the price of Premiership, but it means the wreckage of any reputation for consistency or principle in the Premier who has paid it. It has no doubt cost him a good deal to make the great surrender. It would have cost him more if he had been present to hear the chuckles of his Unionist colleagues at each new gulf between the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1910 and the Prime Minister of 1920.—"*Yorkshire Observer*" (Lib.), July 16th.

The Land Values Duties have been repealed, and the Prime Minister has reached another well-defined stage in his "Rake's Progress." Squeezed by his new and motley "friends," he has not many more principles to discard. What an anti-climax to the campaigns of 1909 and 1910 which fired the country and brought the House of Lords to its knees. The present Administration is under the heel of the landowners, and it must be apparent even to the most gullible and guileless that there is no hope of land reform from the gang now in power.—"*Edinburgh Evening News*" (Lib.), July 15th.

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## THE "LAND SONG" IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

A dramatic incident occurred in the House of Commons last night while the main division on the Liberal amendment against the dropping of the Land Duties was in progress.

As some Labour and Independent Liberal members went through the Lobby they began to sing the "Land Song," and their voices could be distinctly heard in the Chamber.

Afterwards, Mr. C. White and Mr. Waterson entered the Chamber, both singing the chorus of the famous song which was such a popular feature at election meetings at the time of the Budget in 1909.

When the motion that the clause abolishing the Land Duties stand part of the Bill was afterwards put from the Chair a division was at once challenged. As they left the Chamber Labour members again joined in singing the "Land Song," despite the fact that Mr. Whitley, the Chairman, called them to order. The singing was continued as they proceeded through the division lobby.

The clause was added to the Bill by 190 to 68.—"*Daily News*," July 15th.

To-night the fateful land taxes of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 were buried with musical honours. During the decisive division as the Liberals filed through the lobby a leading number of the party struck up the "Land Song" and it was taken up enthusiastically in chorus by Liberals and Labour men. The tellers could hardly count for laughing, but it was a mockery that had its serious side.

There is some dispute as to whether the English and Scottish members or the Welsh members (mostly Labour men) sang the best, but it was generally agreed that it was well sung. The music was heard in the House and in the lobby, and indeed some of the members continued their singing into the Chamber. Mr. Whitley said, "Order, order," but he was tolerant and allowed them to finish the verse.

It is comic, of course, but it is also tragic. For it reminds one of Mr. Lloyd George's habit of taking up a new thing with furious energy and then dropping it, leaving somebody else to make it live, or more often letting it die. It is tragic, too, because it reminds us that most of that famous victory has been lost in the stress of war, that the veto Bill did indeed become an Act and is now the law of our Constitution, but that no measure has yet been carried through under it to prove its reality except perhaps after much negotiation and compromise the Welsh Disestablishment Act.—"*Manchester Guardian*," July 15th.

The closure division was in progress when there came from the ranks of the Independent Liberals and Labour men passing through the Lobby the sound of the famous "Land Song," which has done duty at thousands of political meetings all over the country. It drew nearer like the Pilgrims' Song in "Tännhauser," and did not even cease when the vanguard of the voters entered the House itself. It was resumed in defiance of the Chair by some of the Members when the final division was taken, and the clause for the abolition of the land duties was carried to the sound of "The land, the land, God gave the land to the people." It was an incident with more than one point to it, for not merely was it apt enough in its protest against the reversal of legislation ratified by direct appeal to the nation, but it was a song which the Prime Minister himself has been known to declare his special favourite among all the popular political ditties.—"*Yorkshire Observer*," July 16th.