bring about the conditions which lead to it.

Doles, however grandly they may be dressed up in the name of social security, are not a substitute for justice. Inequality in the distribution of wealth and hindrances to its production are the two primary social evils. Not to palliate the results but to destroy the causes must be the true aim of political endeavour. Let the political parties and the electors give heed to that ere it is too late.

LLOYD GEORGE UNACKNOWLEDGED

THERE WAS significance in the failure of most of the Press obituaries of Lord Lloyd George, who died on March 26, to dwell upon the campaign as a social reformer by which he made his greatest mark on British politics. Most of the writers glossed over the People's Budget of 1909, where they mentioned it at all. They would not allow that the land question played such a notable part in our political history, but following the fashion of the times they turned attention upon the palliative legislation which (to its own undoing) the Liberal Party developed and presented to the Socialists of all brands. They handed bouquets to Lloyd George as the originator of the National Insurance Acts, inferentially praising him for doing what in fact he did —desert the cause of the land for the people. But there were some who made passing reference to that land campaign, which roused the country as it has never been roused before or since. The iniquities of landlordism had been revealed, and with that perception of where the real power lay that held the people in thrall, two General Elections were fought to force the Budget, inept beginning as it was, over the heads of the House of Lords and to pass the Parliament Act which for ever made the House of Commons supreme in our body politic.

Various papers reminded us that the Limehouse speech (and as we read it again how we starve for the statesman who will speak out with the same boldness and truth) provided a synonym for scurrilous invective, the easy reproof and riposte to any righteous indignation. Thus the *Scotsman* spoke of the Lloyd George platform method which "could descend to such excesses as those of Limehouse and Mile End very different from the suavity of manner he had acquired in the House of Commons when (in 1908) he was piloting his Bills as President of the Board of Health. These are amusing apologetics for the vehemence of some of the well-remembered attacks on the House of Have; and the compliment that Lloyd George could be affable—to the Tories—is not out of place, seeing that the measures referred to, coming from the spokesman of a Liberal Government, were the Merchant Shipping Act and the Patents and Designs Act which sowed the seeds of the now luxuriant Protectionist plant.

The memory of Lloyd George was as badly served by Mr. Churchill, who also found discretion in his silence on that Budget Land Campaign and all that it involved. He confined his tribute to Lloyd George's place in domestic politics to "having launched the Liberal and Radical forces in this country into the broad stream of social betterment and social security along which all modern parties now steered"; and Mr. Churchill, doing scant justice to himself, said, "I was his lieutenant in those days and shared in a minor way in the work."

How incomplete and misleading that picture is can be gauged by a reading of the speeches Mr. Churchill did make at that time, not on the national insurance scheme of things but on the land question. With a brilliance of oratory exceeding that of his captain he was the good lieutenant in the campaign which he himself inspired with Cobden's words, "You who shall liberate the land will do more for your country than we have done in the liberation of its commerce." But the curtain which he said at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1907 "had been pulled up upon a piece that was going to have a long run" is now drawn over all that.

HOUSE RENTS — SOME FORGOTTEN ASPECTS

THE ALMOST hopeless muddle in the housing situation is likely to be the priority question in the forthcoming General Election. Absence of skilled labour has been the main excuse. Now that labour will soon be returning from the war it will be the high cost of materials and land that will be seen to be the obstacles to house production. Government departments dilly-dally between one plan and another, between one type of house and another. Good old bricks and mortar are ruled out because of time taken in erection. Steel, aluminium, three-ply, and other materials are being experimented with. If, as a cynic might suggest, we are driven to celluloid and cellophane for dwellings, all these materials come from land, and under present monopoly conditions their cost progressively rises.

Three things enter into the cost of housing:—the price of land, the price of materials, and the heavy taxation of dwellings under our local rating system. A separate aspect, but most important, is the poverty of the people for whom the houses are built.

As to the cost of land, the most recent exposure was in the House of Lords debate when Lord Latham stated that £400 per house (not per acre) has been the average (not exceptional) cost of land for temporary houses to the London County Council. All over the country municipalities find that rising land prices are the initial obstacle to their building programmes. Speculation in land is rampant. The scandal is recognised, but not so the remedy, involving a change in our rating system, by bringing on to the rate books the unused land which is the chief subject of speculation by the owners.

If land for building sites is subject to speculative influences so will be the land from which materials are derived. This is so obvious as not to require labouring. But the third element in the cost of houses to those who dwell in them, is one that is often overlooked as a factor in the problem. This factor is the rates levied on houses. After being practically stationary for some years, local rates all through the country, are now advancing at a speed equalling the rise in land. The provision of houses is itself one cause of the rise in rates.

The long-needed education programme, and the threatened cost of such schemes as the national health plan, all help to enhance the cost of local government. In some of our great cities the rates approach the level of 20s. in the £ with the promise of further additions.

The chief burden of the rates falls upon the lowest range of dwellings. This is a point often overlooked. It is assumed that a city's income must come mainly from the big businesses, factories, warehouses, etc. As a fact, from one-half to two-thirds of municipal revenue is derived from property up to £30 per annum assessable value. It is this class of property that constitutes the housing problem, the replacement and increasing of the houses required by the working classes of the people, the class that bears the heaviest proportion of the cost of local government.

Thus we see the housing problem as a vicious circle, and an ever narrowing one. As the total cost of a house rises, a pre-war £300 house now costing £750, and a £500 now costing £1,000, the rates on the house are proportionately higher, and the ability of the people whose need is greatest is more and more inadequate to pay the combined rents and rates of even the poorest type of dwellings or flats. It has been said, as rents get higher, ceilings get lower. The people are to be offered homes that are so substandard as to be only tolerable for ten years. The authorities evidently count on the maxim that the patience of the poor is the foundation of society.

There is abundant experience from the pre-war peace years if we could learn from it. Beautiful housing estates were planned and built in many parts of the country, but it was found they did not solve the problem of housing the poor, which is a poverty problem. Just before the war the medical officer of Stockton-on-Tees was saying that the death rate was greater in the new housing estate there, than in the slums from which the tenants came.

Manchester is justly proud of its garden city at Wythenshawe, but the city has not recovered from its surprise when