

SCOTTISH LIBERAL LAND POLICY

The Scottish Liberal Federation held its Annual Meeting in Greenock, 14th and 15th October, Sir John Anthony presiding. The land question as usual figured prominently in the discussion.

Major Dudgeon on behalf of the Galloway Liberal Association moved: "That this Conference is of opinion that the rural land policy which was adopted for England and Wales by the Liberal Convention in London this year, formed the basis of a practical and desirable rural land policy for Scotland."

Mr. James Scott, prospective Liberal candidate for Kincardine and West Perthshire, moved as an amendment that the conference should reaffirm the opinion that the resolution adopted by the convention of Liberals in Edinburgh on April 24th, 1925, formed the basis of a practical and desirable rural policy for Scotland. Mr. Scott recalled that in February, 1925, the executive of the Scottish Liberal General Council appointed a committee to consider and think out a scheme for Scotland dealing not only with land but with many other questions. They presented their report to the convention in April, 1925, and the part relating to land was unanimously adopted. It had been their land policy for the last few years, and he put it forward without hesitation as in every way superior to the English and Welsh production.

Major Dudgeon withdrew his resolution.

The Liberal Land policy adopted by the Scottish Liberal Federation in 1925 reads:—

"It is a firm Liberal conviction that all men have an equal and inalienable right of access to and use of land.

"As opposed to the method of Land Nationalisation, the essential part of the Liberal solution is by the taxation of the unimproved value of all land, whether used or unused, by a series of gradual annual taxes on the full capital value, and a corresponding reduction of all rates and taxes on improvements of every kind.

"Inasmuch as the source of wealth production lies in the application of labour and capital to land, and as the rate of wages and the possibilities of employment are dependent upon the opportunities of using land without restriction or penalty, so are low wages produced and unemployment intensified by the denial of the fundamental Liberal principle of equal opportunity of access to land.

"The primary answer of the Liberal Party to the problems of unemployment, housing, and poverty is a Radical reform of the Land System on the following lines:—

"(a) The imposition of a substantial tax on all Land Values. As a step towards this object, the Liberal Party stands for a Government valuation of all land, together with the immediate publication of the existing valuations.

"(b) The Liberal Party also stands definitely pledged to the gradual relief of the existing burden of rates and taxes on all improvements, and for a measure giving power to the local authorities to impose a proportion of their rates on Land Values."

HOUSING

"The first step in providing cheaper and better homes for the people is by relieving houses from the burden of rates, which should be levied on the real market or selling value of the land and not on improvements. Only by the breaking of the Land Monopoly which is hindering production, creating monopoly values,

fostering unemployment and developing poverty, can housing problems be solved."

It was further resolved at the Greenock meeting to organize and carry through a campaign in the Scottish constituencies on the Land Policy as given above."

FREE TRADE

The following resolution was adopted:—

"That this Conference of Scottish Liberals reprobrates the protectionist policy of the Government which, embodied in the Safeguarding of Industries Act, has conferred upon the owners of certain privileged industries the power to extort artificially enhanced prices from the general body of consumers. It reaffirms its opposition to every form of Protection, even when disguised as Imperial Preference, and its unaltered belief that freedom to import without fiscal restrictions is not only a primary right, but that it is, broadly considered, in the vital interest of the community as a whole."

ANOTHER COAL RESERVE

The plans that are being made for the development of the new coalfield in East Kent may be paralleled in the future in the county of Lincoln, with the result that another big agricultural area will gradually become industrialized. East Kent and Lincoln are believed to hold the only substantial reserves of coal left in this country, and of the two it is likely that the concealed coalfield in Lincolnshire may prove to be the more important.

Geologists have been theorizing for years as to the extent of the coalfield which is known to exist in Lincolnshire. Professor P. F. Kendall, who is Emeritus Professor of Geology in the University of Leeds, was one of the eminent geologists who made a special study of the problem, and he took the boldest line of them all by assigning to the concealed coalfield an area which is three times as great as that surmised by other experts.

His theory is that the coal measures in this area extend roughly from the Humber to the Wash. Defined more precisely, the area is enclosed in a line which takes in a portion of East Yorkshire, north of the Humber, and afterwards sweeps round by the Lincolnshire Wolds towards the Fens. The line then turns westward to a point a little to the south of Nottingham.

The facts of the boring at Doddington, carried out by the Lincolnshire Boring Syndicate, Ltd., are of considerable interest. At a depth of 2,706 feet a seam of coal was struck, which was identified by Mr. G. B. Wilson, of the Geological Survey Department, as being the "top hard" or Barnsley seam—a continuation of the seam that was struck near Retford at a depth of 2,550 feet when a bore hole was sunk there. From Retford to Doddington is a distance of twelve miles. The seam struck at Doddington is only 156 feet deeper than the seam struck at Retford, and mining experts are of opinion that, assuming the continuity of the seam at the same angle of dip, the coal should be workable under the whole of the county of Lincoln.—*The Observer*, 1st August.

The directors of the Glasgow Night Asylum for the Homeless report that this year 67,411 persons sought shelter in the homes, an increase of 6,856 as compared with 1924-25. One half of the women seeking shelter in the Asylum were hawkers and the other half cleaners; the number dealt with showed a substantial increase. One of the directors, Mr. John A. Roxburgh, LL.D., said the granting of the dole had enabled many people to keep a home for their children.