

which the existing land duties form only a small instalment, and the leading instigators of that policy made no secret of their objects. Yet nothing was done to oppose their unjust proposals until the Budget was introduced, and then it was too late to defeat them. At the time few persons had any idea of the strength of the single taxers in Parliament and in the country at large. They were regarded commonly as an insignificant body, whose scheme of spoliation the British people were too honest to entertain for a moment. Now that it is obvious that they cannot be treated with contempt, and that their misleading statements and arguments are only too well calculated to blind people ignorant of the subject to the real character of their projects, the urgent need of public and widespread opposition to their movement is equally clear.

#### MR. LLOYD GEORGE ON THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

At a public meeting in support of the social work of the Liberal-Christian League, held in the City Temple on October 17th, Mr. Lloyd George said:—

As a league you are primarily concerned with the subject of destitution amongst the masses of the people. That is the topic I propose to dwell upon to-night. I mean to examine it as it ought to be examined, quite frankly and fearlessly, but without any taint of partisan motive. The great unrest amongst the people in all the civilized countries of the world is beginning to attract special attention. Humanity is like the sea—it is never quite free from movement, but there are periods of comparative calm and others of turbulence and violent disturbance. Everything points to the fact that the storm cone has been hoisted and that we are in for a period of tempests. What is the cause of these disturbances? It is idle to seek an explanation in any condition of things which is peculiar to one country. Tariff Reformers account for this discontent by saying it is attributable to our fiscal system, and that once we copy Continental ideas and adopt Protection our troubles will be at an end. On the other hand, I notice that extreme Free Traders seem inclined to ascribe the troubles on the Continent to the excessive dearness of the necessities of life which is the inevitable result of high tariffs. The answer to both is that the causes must be deeper and must be more universal; for the area of disturbance extends from the East to the West. You have it in Portugal, in Germany, in France, in Austria, in Russia, Italy, the United States of America, all of which are highly-protected countries. You have also got it in the north of England, in South Wales, and in Scotland under the Free Trade banner. The only point the Free Trader is entitled to make as against his Protectionist antagonist is that there are no bread riots here and that the troubles abroad are altogether acuter—at least, if you can judge the virulence of a disease by the temperature of the patient. The Free Trader contends that, if his system has not eradicated the disease, it assumes at least a milder form where the patient has been inoculated with the Free Trade vaccine. (Cheers.) Still the fact remains that the disturbances have spread over Protectionist and Free Trade countries alike. We must therefore search out other explanations than fiscal ones.

#### What are the Causes?

Within the last few days there appeared in the WESTMINSTER GAZETTE a very remarkable contribution from an able correspondent in the north of England. I observe in the weekly papers that this article has attracted the attention which it certainly deserves. This very well-informed correspondent explains the unrest amongst the workmen in that part of England by attributing it to the general discontent which the workmen feels with his lot, and by the fact that he is given more and more to reflect upon the contrast between his own hard grey life and that of other more favoured, although not more meritorious, members of society. Now, it is no use getting angry with those who are in this frame of mind, or even with those who, it is supposed, are responsible for creating that impression on their minds. You may depend upon it that, unless there is some real basis for this grievance, it will soon dissolve and evaporate. But if there is, then to ignore and neglect the real source of trouble in the hope that it will soon exhaust itself would be an act of supreme unwisdom. What we have got to do is boldly and courageously to answer the question which our more unfortunate fellow-citizens have a right to ask us. Are you sure that there is no real justification for the discontent amongst the masses? Let us examine it, as far as we possibly can, without passion or partisan bias.

When you come to consider the momentous prospect which seems to be opening out before us there is one fact which is

full of hope, as far as this country is concerned. Both parties admit the salient facts; neither party is satisfied with present conditions; and they are agreed in this, at any rate—that those conditions stand in urgent need of mending. The presence of a mass of remediable poverty is common ground to both parties; there is no recognizable section in this country who now contend that all is well; there is no section of any consequence will contend that the State cannot assist effectively in putting things right.

#### Mr. Chamberlain's Agitation.

I am not a Tariff Reformer (laughter); all the same, I recognize that Mr. Chamberlain's historic agitation has rendered one outstanding service to the cause of the masses. It has helped to call attention to a number of real crying evils festering amongst us, the existence of which the governing classes in this country were ignorant of or overlooked. We had all got into the habit of passing by on the other side. You will only have to look at the five or six main propositions which underlie Mr. Chamberlain's great appeal in order to realize that nothing can quite remain the same once those propositions are thoroughly accepted by a great political party. What is the first proposition? That this is the most powerful Empire under the sun. What is the second? That Great Britain is the heart of this Empire; strong, powerful, rich enough to send even more of its blood to the remotest member of this huge body, for he would tax us even further for the enrichment of the Colonies; and in his view—sincere and genuine—we can bear it. But what is the third proposition? That in the affluent centre of this potent Empire there is a vast multitude of industrious men, women, and children for whom the earning of a comfortable living, and often of a bare subsistence, is difficult and precarious. What is the fourth? That to alter this state of things needs drastic and far-reaching changes. He suggests a complete revolution in our commercial system. What are the fifth and sixth? They are so important, when you come to consider remedies, that I invite your special notice to these propositions. The fifth is that the fact of such a sweeping change, involving losses and injury to the fortune of individuals, ought to be no barrier to its immediate adoption, since the well-being of the majority of the people would thereby be secured. This proposition is so important, inasmuch as every reformer knows full well that the greatest obstacle of all in the path of reform is the existence of so many vested interests whose roots have struck deep into the existing order. There are undoubtedly trades and businesses that have a vested interest in our present commercial system. To alter it must necessarily bring ruin on them, whatever the effect might be on the rest of the country. Mr. Chamberlain ignores them entirely as an item even for consideration, let alone compensation, in his suggested reform. The sixth proposition is that the time has come for seeking a remedy, not in voluntary effort, but in bold and comprehensive action on the part of the State.

If you will only analyse these fundamental principles of the Tariff Reform campaign and turn them over in your minds you cannot but realize the magnitude of the work which has already been accomplished by Mr. Chamberlain's dramatic move. He has committed the party which, by temperament, tradition, and interest, is opposed to great changes—he has committed it to propositions which social reformers of other schools of thought have hitherto in vain sought to convert them to a recognition of, and the consequences of such a conversion no man can now predict. All I can say with confidence is that it opens out a prospect which is full of hope for those who wish well to the wretched and those who walk in despair. But I am not so sure that the knowledge that Mr. Chamberlain's principles could not end with the imposition of a tariff is not the main reason why some of the more prescient Conservatives shrank from joining him in his raging and tearing propaganda. It will tear up a good deal more than its advocates ever dreamt of when they started it. (Cheers.)

#### Poverty Here and Abroad.

After these essential facts have been, to use a legal phrase, admitted on the pleadings of the two great rival parties in the State, there seems to be no need of further evidence. Still, it is just as well to give a few striking facts, in order to drive these admissions home to the conscience of the jury. Although I have observed a good deal of poverty in my walk through life, and although I had read a good deal about poverty, I confess I never quite realized its poignancy until I came to administer the Old Age Pensions Act. I found then what an appalling mass of respectable, independent, proud misery existed amongst

us. Cases, within a few hundred yards of the City Temple, where poor women, old and worn, after honest industrious lives, extending over 70 years, were still working away through the livelong day, starting early, resting late, to earn a wretched pittance, which just saved them from starvation, but never lifted them above privation, earning 6s. and 7s. a week by needlework on the garments of those who in an idle hour will spend more on frivolity than these poor people would earn in three years of toil—paid but 6s. or 7s. a week for endless labour, parting with 3s. 6d. of it for rent, as they were obliged to live somewhere within the ambit of work, the remaining 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. having to provide food and raiment to keep the poor human machine from stopping for ever. These are the tales borne in to me by the stern, matter-of-fact, although, I am pleased to say, sympathetic Government officials who administer the Old Age Pensions Act.

Let us take one other fact. You have read, I have no doubt many of you, Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's wonderful study of "Poverty" in town life. You know with what laborious and arduous care it was compiled; how he investigated the condition of every family in the city of York; how he discovered that the large proportion of the population lived on means which were inadequate to provide them with sufficient food to build up and sustain strength; how he found that the physical condition of something like 80 per cent. of the children in the working class districts was under the average standard; and how in the poorer districts more than half these poor little wretches presented a pathetic spectacle showing the hard conditions against which they were struggling—puny and feeble bodies, insufficiently clad, quite evidently insufficiently fed, bearing every sign of privation and neglect.

Much more could I give you to demonstrate that a large mass of the population in this the richest country in the world are living lives well within the area of poverty and bordering on the frontiers of destitution and despair. As I have already pointed out, this is a condition of things that is by no means confined to this country. On the contrary, the high prices of food, which are the direct result of taxes levied on the necessaries of life, make things much worse in Continental countries. A gentleman who had just returned from France assures me that the great railway strike, which for the time being threatened France with social and industrial disaster, was the outcome of revolt against the sudden and alarming rise which has taken place recently in the prices of food in that country. This was inevitable, owing to the failure of the French harvests and the heavy tax imposed on the import of foreign wheat and breadstuffs. The French papers have actually been discussing a project for fixing the price of food by Act of Parliament. Still, it is enough for us to know that our country, in spite of its enormous wealth, is not free from the grinding poverty and destitution which I have described. And there is this additional fact which we cannot overlook—ours is a hard climate for poverty. In the warm and bright climates of the South, less food, less clothing, less shelter are needed. There the sun is the luxury of the unemployed; one is less sorry for the tattered wretch who slumbers with empty pockets in the balmy shade, than for the careworn peasant who toils for a full, if frugal, meal under the scorching rays of the Southern sun; but fogs and damp and frost are cruel on rags and wretchedness. This is a torturing climate for destitution.

#### The Contrast of Wealth.

Now, that is one side of the picture; let me give you another. We have recently had a great agitation in this country over the filling up of some land forms under the 1909 Budget. All the Press hooters have been sounding in the stillness of the dull season a note of indignation which was perfectly deafening. What has it been all about? I am not going to discuss the merits or demerits of my land taxes; it would not be relevant, and it would hardly be right at such a Conference as this; but it is rather germane to inquire into the nature of the grievance. A certain number of people in this country who are owners of property were asked to supply a few details as to the area, the locality, and the value of those properties, and as to the conditions under which they were let. Many of them have told me that it took them about ten minutes to fill up the form. A number of large landowners complain that, employing their agents and all their clerks and surveyors at full time, they cannot, even in two months, fill up the forms in respect of their property. Their estates are so large that it takes over 60 days to write out the barest outlines of their dimensions and locality. You have only to contrast that with the stories I have told you about the poverty of men and women just as meritorious as these

others whose affluence is so burdensome in order to find some sort of explanation of these tremors of the earth which seem to menace the foundations of society. (Cheers.)

So much for real property; what about property as a whole, real and personal? I have had during the last two years to look into the death duties pretty closely, and I find that out of 420,000 adults that die in the course of a year five-sixths own no property which it is worth any one's while securing a Government certificate for—a few articles of cheap clothing and perhaps a little furniture, which would hardly pay the rent if it were sold by a broker's man. Out of £300,000,000 that passes annually at death about half belongs to something under 2,000 persons. Had the 350,000 who died in poverty led lives of indolence and thriftlessness and extravagance? And had the 2,000, who owned between them nearly £150,000,000, had they pursued a career of industry, toil, and frugality? Everybody knows that that is not the case. It is facts such as these that account for the murmurings in the hearts of Britain, which betoken the presence of some organic disease in her system. (Hear, hear.)

#### The Alleged Thriftlessness of the Workers.

I saw it suggested by one able writer that most of the destitution that prevails was traceable to thriftlessness and waste amongst the wage-earning classes. I do not know whether the gentleman who wrote that article ever tried his hand at keeping a family and saving up on 21s. a week. Mr. Rowntree gives a case of a family where that was attempted; a hard-working, sober husband, with an exceptionally tidy and resourceful little wife; she had to maintain a family of three children. In addition to that she put by something for a rainy day, in the shape of a small weekly insurance premium, a deposit at the clothing club, and a weekly payment in a sick club. The sum she spent on food amounted to less, by 4s. 6d. a week, than was necessary in order to feed her husband, herself, and her children on workhouse fare; and even then she had nothing left for clothing, and whenever any new garments were needed for the family she had generally to trench upon the weekly allowance for food. I do not say that there is not a good deal of misery created owing to bad housekeeping, and that much could not be accomplished if more attention were paid to training women for this all-important task. I am sure it could; but we must take human nature as it is, and demand a standard which the average man and woman can conform to.

#### Waste on Armaments.

But is this the only waste that ought to be looked into? I might indicate to you two or three directions in which social reformers could profitably inquire into the wasteful and extravagant expenditure of our country's resources which tend to depress the standard of living for the rest of the community. Take the money which is spent upon armaments, both in this and in other countries. The civilised countries of the world are spending nearly £500,000,000 a year upon the machinery of war. In addition to that, they are withdrawing from useful and productive labour some of the best brains, some of the most effective and skilled labour in their respective countries. Let us come to our own country. I wish to have no misconception as to what I mean here. As long as other countries spend large sums of money on the weapons of offence they are an undoubted menace to us and to our Empire. We must defend the integrity and independence of these islands and the greatness of our position in the world at all costs. Therefore, whatever is accomplished in the way of reducing armaments ought to be brought about by international understanding, which would leave us secure whilst depriving us as well as all other countries of the power to inflict injury on our neighbours. My concern now is simply to point out the gigantic waste which is involved in this expenditure on preparations for human slaughter. In this country our annual bill for armaments is something like £70,000,000; that is, it is costing us £8 for every household in the United Kingdom. Were this burden removed Great Britain could afford to pay every member of the wage-earning classes an additional 4s. a week, without interfering in the slightest degree with the profits of capital. (Cheers.)

#### Waste in the Land.

I would point out another great source of waste, and that is the way in which the land of this country is administered. I do not believe it is producing half of what it is capable of yielding. One reason for that is that it is held under conditions which do not encourage development; its tenure, which is designed for a totally different purpose, that of securing the maximum of power to the landowner, is so precarious that capital, which

requires security, is not encouraged. The most profitable investment of capital is generally that which looks for its reward years ahead. That class of expenditure is discouraged by a system of annual tenancies, which makes it doubtful whether the man who puts in the labour and risks his capital will reap the full reward of his enterprise. Another source of waste in connection with land is the enormous area of the land of England which is practically given over to sport. In all, you have millions of acres exclusively devoted to game. Much of it, no doubt, fit for nothing else. A good deal of it is well adapted for agriculture and afforestation. In addition to these great preserves in some of the most fertile parts of this country, you will find hundreds of thousands of acres where the crops are injured and their value damaged by game preservation. When you come to the land around the towns, here the grievance is of a different character. You may have a greater waste in parsimony than in prodigality. That is the way the land around our towns is wasted; land which might be giving plenty of air and recreation and renewed health and vigour to the workman is running to waste, as the millions in our cities are crowded into unsightly homes, which would soon fill with gloom the brightest and stoutest heart. Amongst the many contrasts which a rich country like ours presents between the condition of rich and poor there is none more striking than the profligate extravagance with which land by the square mile is thrown away upon stags and pheasants and partridges, as compared with the miserly greed with which it is doled out for the habitations of men, women, and children. You measure the former by the square mile; the latter is given out by the yard, and even by the foot. The greatest asset of a country is a virile and contented population. This you will never get until the land in the neighbourhood of our great towns is measured out on a more generous scale for the homes of our people. They want, as a necessity of life, plenty of light, plenty of air, plenty of garden space, which provides the healthiest and the most productive form of recreation which any man can enjoy. I am not against sport; I only want to extend the area of its enjoyment. A small number of people like to take their sport in the form of destroying something; the vast majority prefer cultivation to destruction. Some like blood; others prefer bloom. The former is considered a more high-class taste; but so few of us can afford to belong to that exalted order—they must be content with such humble pleasures as flower gardens and vegetable patches and fruit bushes can afford them. In the old days, there might have been some excuse for this congestion of housing space; the means of locomotion were so inadequate that men had to crowd together within the smallest compass; but now, with electric trams and a general development of our transport system, there is no excuse for it. A pernicious system which had its excuse in the exigencies of industrial life is now perpetuated through pure greed. The people of this country ought not to allow avarice and selfish niggardliness any longer to stand between them and their highest interests. Every good farmer knows that if he is to produce the best class of cattle and of horses on his holding he must look after their feeding, their shelter, and, in the case of horses, their training. Why should men and women have less thought and attention given to them than cattle? Statesmanship is, after all, farming on a great scale. Mr. Rowntree points out in his great work that one result of our present system of wages and housing is that 50 per cent. of the recruits that come up for service in the Army are rejected as unfit because of their physical inferiority. You apply that throughout every walk of our national life, and you see what an enormous loss is entailed on the nation by its neglect to attend to questions which affect the physical and the mental vitality and efficiency of the race.

#### The Waste of the Idle Rich.

Another source of waste is unemployment. A good deal of attention has been devoted recently to unemployment amongst the working classes, and I am glad of that. Next year we hope to produce a great scheme for insuring these classes against the suffering which follows from lack of work; but absolutely no thought has been given to unemployment amongst the upper classes. This is just as grave as the other, and is a prolific cause of unemployment amongst the workmen. A number of men and women are given the best training that money can afford, their physique is developed, their brains are strengthened and disciplined by the best education, and then, after they have spent the first 20 years—the first third—of their lives in preparing and equipping themselves for work, they devote themselves to a life of idleness. It is a scandalous and stupid

waste of first-class material; and the worst of it is, the system requires that they should choose some of the best men whom wealth can buy to assist them in leading this life of indolence with a degree of luxurious ease. It is a common, but shallow, fallacy that, inasmuch as these rich find employment for and pay good wages to those who personally minister to their comfort, to that extent they are rendering a service to the community. Quite the reverse. They are withdrawing a large number of capable men and women from useful and productive work. I want to make it quite clear, so as to avoid all possibility of misrepresentation, that I am not referring in the least to the men who by their own brains have made the money which enables them to purchase occasional leisure. There is no more hard-worked class of men in the world than this. I refer exclusively to the idle rich. There is a larger number of people of this class in this country than probably in any other country in the world. You will find them in London clubs, or in the country walking about with guns on their shoulders and dogs at their heels; or upon golf courses; or tearing along country roads at perilous speeds; not seeking to recharge exhausted nerve-cells spent in useful labour, but as the serious occupation of their lives. If you want to realise what a serious charge they impose upon the community I will put it in this way. If you take these men, with their families and with their very large body of retainers, you will find that they account for something like two millions of the population of this country. It is exactly as if the great commercial and industrial cities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow were converted into great privileged communities in which no man was expected to engage in any productive or profitable enterprise, where the sole business of one set of citizens was to enjoy themselves and of the rest of the citizens to help them to do so; allowances running up to scores of thousands a year being made to some of the citizens, and running down the scale until the lowest of them received a remittance which was three times as large as that of the average wage in this country. Can you think of anything more wasteful, more burdensome to the community, more unintelligent than a system of that kind? And yet that fairly describes the system under which we live in this country, where a very numerous class of the population, without labour, still live lives of luxurious indulgence, and a great multitude of others live lives of arduous toil without earning sufficient food and raiment or repose. Believe me, there is too large a free list in this country, and it cannot afford it. (Cheers.)

#### A Parallel from the Sudan.

I have recently had to pay some attention to the affairs of the Sudan, in connection with some projects which have been mooted for irrigation and development in that wonderful country. I will tell you what the problem is in that country—you may know it already. Here you have got a great, broad, rich river upon which both the Sudan and Egypt depend for their fertility; there is enough water in it to irrigate and fertilise both countries and every part of both countries; but if, for some reason or other, the water is wasted in the upper regions, the whole land suffers sterility and famine. There is a large area in the Upper Sudan where the water has been absorbed by one tract of country, which, by this process, has been converted into a morass, breeding nothing but pestilence. Properly and fairly husbanded, distributed, and used, there is enough to fertilise the most barren valley and to make the whole wilderness blossom like the rose. Even then there would be some who would do better than others—the land which may have fallen to their lot may have more bounteous qualities, or its cultivators may be better fitted to make effective use of what they have got. Some inequalities would remain; and rightly so. But whilst some would thus have a surplus, all would be blessed with abundance. That represents the problem of civilisation, not merely in this country, but in all lands. Some men get their fair share of wealth in a land and no more—sometimes the streams of wealth overflow to waste over some favoured regions, often producing a morass which poisons the social atmosphere; many have to depend on a little trickling runlet which quickly evaporates with every commercial or industrial drought; sometimes you have masses of men and women whom the flood at its height barely reaches, and you then witness parched specimens of humanity, withered, hardened in misery, living in a desert where even the well of tears has long ago run dry. (Hear, hear.)

#### A National Overhauling.

What is to be done? Once more I agree with Mr. Chamberlain that, whatever is done, the remedy must be a bold one. Our efforts hitherto have been too timid, too nervous, achieving no

great aim. Before we succeed in remedying one evil, fresh ones crop up. We are hopelessly in arrear. The problem has to be considered on a great scale. The time has come for a thorough overhauling of our national and Imperial conditions. That time comes in every enterprise—commercial, national, and religious; and woe be to the generation that lacks the courage to undertake the task. I believe the masses of the people are ready for great things; nay, they are expecting them. Sometimes I have the pleasure of motoring through the Welsh mountains with men who know something of practical science, and I notice there is nothing that grieves them more than to witness a powerful mountain stream, rushing in wild fury down hills and precipices, tearing itself in its frenzied hurry to escape from its bleak surroundings, doing nothing, effecting nothing on its way, occasionally turning a half-rotten mill-wheel, which has long ceased to supply the needs of the valley, grinding no corn to feed the people dwelling on its banks, setting no machinery in motion to light up the gloom of their homes. That is a parable of the feeling that comes over all men who have devoted their energies to accomplishing something in the public life of this country, and especially to attempting something that will improve the condition of the people. It disheartens them to witness some great sweeping burst of popular enthusiasm, rushing along, irresistible, inspiring, majestic, and all spent on some trivial purpose or project, which, even if accomplished, would not advance humanity one furlong along the road that leads towards the dawn. My counsel to the people would be this—let them enlarge the purpose of their politics and, having done so, let them adhere to that purpose with unswerving resolve through all difficulties and discouragements until their redemption is accomplished.

#### MECHANISM OF THE FINANCE ACT.

THE CIVILIAN, the accredited organ of the Civil Service, in the issue of October 1st, gave the following account of the machinery through which the Finance Act will be administered:—

If truth is stranger than fiction one cannot help wondering at the methods of the sensational Press. Perhaps the explanation is, that truth at its strangest may be stranger than fiction at its strangest, but that truth is not at its strangest often enough. Anyhow, it is clear that the sensational Press does not really rely on the proverb. For example, much greater prominence has been given to fiction about Land Values than to the truth about Land Values; but it is impossible to say how much of the fiction has been due to dulness, and how much to obliquity of vision. It seems more generous to saddle ignorance with the responsibility rather than disingenuousness, and in accordance with our principles, we adopt the more generous view. We propose, therefore, to throw light on a matter in which darkness prevails—the machinery by which Part I. of the Finance Act is being operated. The governing authority is the Board (or Commissioners) of Inland Revenue, and they act through their following departments:—The Secretaries' Office (of which the Land Values Department is a branch); the Chief Valuer's Department; the Solicitor's Department; the Department of the Controller of Stamps and Stores; the Department of the Chief Inspector of Taxes; the Estate Duty Office; the Department of the Chief Inspector of Taxes, and the Department of the Accountant and Controller-General. The local Land Valuation Officers are appointed by the Board through their Secretaries' Office, and their duties are limited to the distributing and collecting of Forms of Return. They have nothing to do with the valuation of the land. The valuation of the land is the special concern of the department of the Chief Valuer, whose head office is at Somerset House. The country has been mapped out into divisions, and each division into districts. Each division is in the immediate control of a Superintending Valuer, and each district of a District Valuer. It is the District Valuers who (subject to supervision) estimate the values required by the Act. The procedure in the case of Increment Value Duty is as follows: When an occasion arises for the payment of that duty on the increment value of land, certain documents and particulars relating to the event or transaction must be presented to the Commissioners. Such particulars are received by the Controller of Stamps, either at his chief office (Increment Value Duty Branch) at Somerset House, or at other appointed stamp offices under his control; and where none of these offices is near, the particulars may be lodged at any local stamp office or Money Order Office authorised to transact Inland Revenue business, whence they are forwarded to Somerset House for examination. If in order, the documents are impressed with the "Particulars

Delivered" stamp and returned; and instruments so stamped are duly stamped as regards Increment Value Duty. The particulars are then referred to the Valuer for the district in which the property is situate, who determines the Original Site Value as at the 30th April, 1909 (if this has not already been done), and the Site Value on the occasion under review. An increment of one-tenth of the Original Site Value is allowed free of tax, and duty is charged on any increment above that. The duty is assessed at the Land Values Office, Somerset House, and is payable to the Commissioners through their Accountant and Controller-General. But apart altogether from the valuations immediately necessitated by the presentation of particulars for the purposes of Increment Value Duty, valuations are to be made of the whole of the land in the country, and it is for the purposes of this general valuation that Forms of Return are now being issued by the Land Valuation Officers. The Original Values so determined will form the basis of the assessment, not only of Increment Value Duty but of Undeveloped Land Duty as well. The latter is an annual tax, and will be assessed at the Land Values Office. On each occasion upon which Reversion Duty becomes payable, accounts have to be sent to the Land Values Office. The papers are then referred to the valuers, who determine the two values from which the benefit is ascertained. Duty is then assessed on that benefit, at the Land Values Office. Mineral Rights Duty is upon a somewhat different footing. The values as ascertained by the valuers are not the basis of the charge, and the Forms of Return are served by the Surveyors of Taxes. The Surveyors submit to the Commissioners assessments based on the annual rental value of the minerals as shown in the returns. These assessments are revised at the Land Values Office and signed like all the other assessments by the Commissioners. It may be added that all the officials employed in the administration of Part I. of the Act have made the declaration of secrecy.

#### A NEW PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL TAXATION.

##### MORE INCOME AND HOUSE TAXES.

The autumn general meeting of the Association of Municipal Corporations was held on October 7th at the Hotel Métropole. Mr. A. H. Scott, M.P., presided, and there was a large attendance.

The Chairman read a speech which the President, Mr. Harwood-Banner, M.P., who was unable to be present, had prepared, and in which he said that the question of finance had again engaged much of the time of the Association, and it would continue to do so until the Government were prepared to meet the reasonable requirements of municipalities in regard both to the conditions imposed on them and the contributions made by the Imperial Exchequer towards the expenses incurred by the local authorities in the performance of services which were admittedly national in character. The question of how the proceeds of the Land Value Duties were to be allocated was still engaging the attention of a sub-committee. Owing to the reduction in the whiskey money the Government had agreed that half the proceeds of the Land Value Duties should be applied in the present year to meet the deficiency. It was not, however, proposed by the Government to hand over the half which was retained last year. The Government, too, were now claiming that part at least of the money required for extension of the Old Age Pension Scheme, in consequence of the disappearance next year of the pauper disqualification, should be paid by the taxpayers. Clearly, however, this was not a local matter, and the whole of the cost of extending the scheme should be met from Imperial funds. (Cheers.)

##### LOCAL AND IMPERIAL FINANCE.

Mr. H. Brevitt (Town Clerk of Wolverhampton) proposed a resolution providing that in view of statements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in June last it should be an instruction to the Law Committee to prepare for the consideration and approval of the Council and of the Association a scheme for submission to his Majesty's Government containing among other things definite proposals for the broadening of the basis of taxation for local purposes and for the solution of the problems in relation to local and Imperial finance. He said that as regarded Imperial taxation every contributor paid according to his ability, but in respect of local taxation contributions were made not according to ability, but according to the rateable value of the property occupied. Personal property was not dealt with for local taxation purposes, and the whole of the local taxation, therefore, was borne by the occupiers of property. The annual value of houses in Great Britain which were charged to inhabited