

THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENGLISH LEAGUE

Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, the newly elected President of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, has been Member of Parliament for the Leigh Division of Lancashire since the January, 1910, General Election, winning his seat after a strenuous fight in a three-cornered contest. His victory at that time was a signal triumph to the cause he has ably advocated and defended during his whole public career, for he made it his main appeal to his constituents. Mr. Raffan first became acquainted with the teachings of Henry George in his native village near Aberdeen, when as a youth, twenty years of age, he bought and read the sixpenny edition of *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* published by Mr. J. C. Durant, who later became his closest friend. As a journalist for several Scottish newspapers he found his way into politics and became acquainted with the leading spirits in the single tax movement. He met Henry George himself, and has cherished memories of the kindly advice and inspiration George gave him in several interesting conversations. Mr. Raffan later migrated to Monmouthshire, where his early journalistic training enabled him to build up in that county a printing and publishing business of which he is the managing director. In his new home in Wales he has played an important part in public affairs. He has held office as Chairman of the Abercarn Urban District Council, and Chairman of the Western Valleys Sewerage Board. He is also an ex-Chairman and Alderman of the Monmouthshire County Council. He is a member of the Court of Governors of the South Wales University and of the Council of the Cardiff University College.

But even without all these advantages and experience of local administration, Mr. Raffan would have made his mark in the House of Commons, simply because he is there with the object to promote a great principle and with the ability to state and defend it. His power as a speaker in Parliament and on the platform does not come alone from his gifts as an orator, and with these he is richly endowed; it comes also from the faith that is in him and his devotion and sincerity to all that he proclaims before his fellows. Few who have listened to or read his eloquent attack on landlordism (it was his second important speech in the House) will forget the impression it made; nor was this the only occasion when the friends of the movement have had to acknowledge the good work he has done as a Parliamentary debater. His searching criticism of one of the most spurious of the perennial Unionist Housing Bills was so valuable that a demand was at once made for it in printed form, and

many thousand copies have since been distributed by the United Committee and the associated Leagues.

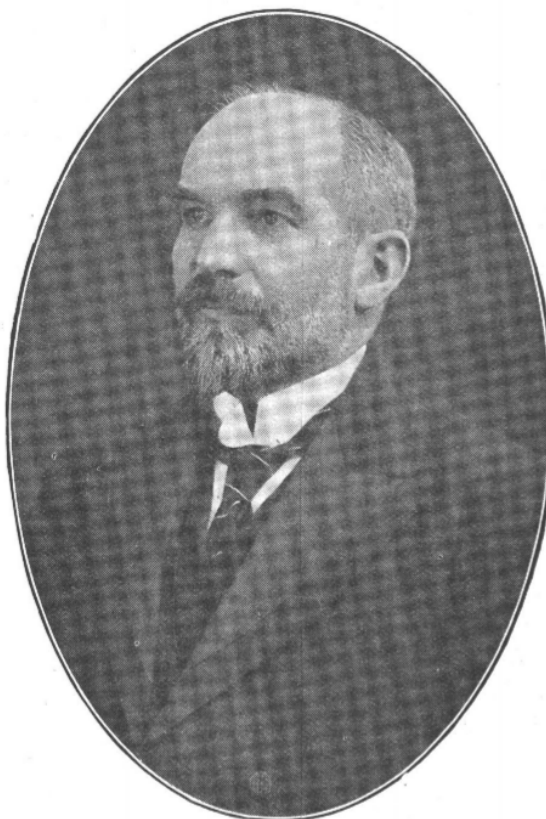
Mr. Raffan's particular duty in Parliament has been to help organise and keep organised the Land Values Group, whose members made him their Honorary Secretary not long after he entered the House. His knowledge of the question and his political insight into the way in which the reform can and should be made a living issue have been abundantly proved by the events of the past five years. During that time the Group has grown in strength and influence. As its Hon. Secretary Mr. Raffan has contributed much to this vantage ground. He can look ahead and anticipate. He has come through the mill of human endeavour in the practical affairs of municipal life. As reformer and teacher he knows the value of the platform, but his experience as an administrator has taught him the

virtue of patience. He knows how to hasten slowly. While others may despair of difficulties to be overcome he can quietly survey the ground and discover something worth doing which can be safely considered and carried. Mr. Raffan has a listening ear for any suggestion which concerns the advancement of the cause the Group stands for, and when occasion arises he can step from his executive duties to the platform for any kind of educational propaganda, where his brilliant advocacy is ever welcome to those who look more particularly to the driving power in the constituencies.

The outlook for the coming year for progressive legislation is difficult to penetrate in this the blackest hour in all history, but the colossal cost of the war must be met one way and another, and the movement for the direct taxation of land values must soon be up and doing. It will perforce require to meet and cope with those who are already

striving with their well-planned schemes to make industry bear the heaviest of the burden. In whatever action the Group, the United Committee, and the various Leagues may be called upon to take in this emergency, we feel assured that the President of the English League will play his part as a man should.

We cannot close this brief and feeble-worded tribute to our tried and trusted colleague without associating with it his charming wife and companion. Mr. Raffan has laboured well in the vineyard, and much of his success we will gladly allow is due to the never-failing help and encouragement of his second self. We cordially wish them very many years happiness and friendship in whatever they may seek to achieve for the public good.



ALDERMAN P. WILSON RAFFAN, M.P.

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