

### "OUR POLICY."

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacred to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—*Henry George.*

### THE TRIUMPH OF LAND VALUATION.

The advocates of the Taxation of Land Values are passing through a stage of gratifying progress. The valuation schedules for England, issued by the Inland Revenue Department, have turned all England into a debating society on Land Values. The landlord party, organised and unorganised, have set up a universal howl of execration; their agitation finds daily and weekly expression in the newspapers and magazines of every complexion. The great Tory papers took up the case as a breeze to fill their empty sails. They devoted, and are still devoting, columns and pages to protests from alarmed owners of land and property. Men who had never voted for any widening of the bonds of freedom, nor ever dreamed of doing so, have poured out their partisan reflections on the folly and wickedness of this latest liberal advance on the liberties of an unsuspecting and law-abiding people.

"The Land Tax Muddle" of the newspapers has successfully competed, as Mr. Lloyd George put it, for quite a month with the latest and most sensational case at the police court. Surely we never dreamed that any printed document on Land Values could have evoked such an "uprising," such a marvellous demonstration of passion, and an enquiry into the question such as we have for a generation endeavoured to bring before the public. The press, the platform, the church, and the market place, have all been engaged, and as we write are still engaged, by property owners, authorities, politicians, and philanthropists, in the endeavour to find out and explain why the Government want to ascertain the value of the land, and what they intend to do with the information when it is obtained.

It used to be said by sagacious looking people that the question of taxing land values was an idle dream, a visionary abstract idea that would never come to pass, and that it was only discussed in a serious manner by a small coterie of Henry George's followers. Well, those days are over now. The coterie has broadened out; the field of its operations has extended in all directions. In every town, in every village, in every hamlet, and in every rural district throughout the length and breadth of the land, the question of Land Valuation and the Taxation of Land Values is being debated with unsurpassed zeal and enthusiasm. Somerset House has done well in this their first educational effort. They have issued a few innocent-looking valuation forms, but no pamphlet on the question the United Committee, or the kindred leagues, could have issued was ever likely to have caused such an awakening into the full and true meaning of their policy and practical proposals.

Ever since the Budget of 1909 was brought to light by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, our hopes for the future have been high. We recognised that the Liberal party had wisely taken the first step towards the emancipa-

tion of the country from the greatest tyranny and superstition—the tyranny and superstition of landlordism—that has ever afflicted civilized communities. Before the Budget, the Liberal party were daily and hourly losing ground, and their vigilant opponents, the Tariff Reformers, were rapidly and jubilantly forcing their way into political power. The Budget changed all this; as the *Times* graphically described it, the change of opinion in the country was like "the curious sense of change comparable only to the turn of the tide upon an estuary when the moored boats swing slowly round." Before the Budget, the Tariff Reformers were ringing the bells; after the Budget, they were wringing their hands, and they have been wringing them ever since.

The Hyde Park Demonstration in favour of the Land Clauses of the Budget, and the similar demonstrations held in different parts of the country, revealed to the politicians, and to all who cared to consider these signs of the times, the deep and abiding interest the people had in the land question and its solution. The Prime Minister said "that he had had a shrewd suspicion that when the Budget saw the light of day it would drive all other political topics out of the field, but he was free to confess that he had no conception of the kind and character of the reception which awaited it." The Land Clauses of the Budget proposing to effect a Valuation of the Land, brought the Liberal party again into the confidence and affection of the people, and the result of the General Election can be regarded, as it has been acknowledged to be, a striking vindication in favour of Land Values Taxation. The Budget stirred into action and enthusiasm a powerful and influential section of the electorate, who were led to the conviction that in addition to maintaining the policy of free imports, the Government had committed the Liberal party once and for all to a radical land reform policy.

We are for free imports, or for our free trade policy, as it is named by its votaries; but we contend that this negative policy alone is no reply to the protectionists. It has to be admitted that notwithstanding this free trade policy, poverty is rampant throughout the land; overcrowding, with all its attendant evils, is tormenting every municipal and rural area and baffling every ameliorative scheme of redress. The unemployed are enduring or cursing, as the case may be, a political system they do not understand, while the passionate cry of their political exploiters, the tariff reformers, is heard at every street corner. All this, notwithstanding sixty years of free trade! No, the free traders, so called, have no reply to the protectionists. The only reply is the radical alteration in our systems of land tenure and taxation, as advocated and expounded by Henry George and his followers. Some Liberals and Free Traders, even now, do not appear to care to come into their kingdom this way. But if the Liberal party had listened to them, well, instead of being in power, the party would have been in opposition, talking no doubt about the difficulties of bringing the average English elector up to our high water mark, and filling in the programme of the party with all kinds of spurious socialism.

All this undeserved poverty in Great Britain to-day, and the pain and misery arising from it, has got to be faced.

This is the command of an enlightened electorate, and it is to the everlasting credit of the party of progress in our politics, that it has so courageously, and so intelligently, set out in this search for the underlying economic causes of social and industrial evils.

The Liberal party was never more wisely directed than it is to-day. Time, energy, and money are being devoted by organised labour, and by well-intentioned men and women, in all kinds of organisations to benefit the worker; but the Liberal party in their Land Values crusade have set out to do more for the worker than all these combinations. It is going to free the land from the deadly grip of monopoly, and until that is achieved all other proposals are vain. It is in the nature of things, in the constitution of society itself, that all progress registers itself in higher land values; rent rises and wages fall. Every advance that is made but provides another reason to the owner of land why he should keep it out of the market. Every boom in trade, every increase in prosperity, means higher land values, and lower wages. This is the lesson that the accredited leaders of labour will not learn; but there it is—a set of stubborn facts that will not be put down by mere noise and shouting.

How can we deal with this economic tendency? How can it be met and successfully combated? There is only one cure, and that is to recognise it and deal with it, in the light of its own teaching. Trades Unionism may organise labour, but it can only do so on the restricted opportunities afforded to labour by land monopoly. The more efficient labour becomes, just so we are told can labour resist and overcome its enemies. But dull trade and unemployment are constantly outside the door of the best labour organisation, and the question being asked by an awakened community is, why do these unwelcome visitors accompany all efforts of organised labour to better itself?

This is the question. It has sat on the doorstep of every trades union all through the years of their existence; it has dogged their footsteps whenever they journeyed either on a peaceful or a warlike mission; it has prevented them doing justice to each other, or to the community of which they are part; and it has been a standing menace to their moving on with the times to the higher and nobler vantage ground which education in all its wider and encouraging features has brought to the craftsman of our time. It is an awkward question, and many people, including so-called representative labour leaders, endeavour to forget it, or walk all round it. Some people feed it with statistics; others throw stones at it. At times it is taken into a special conference of its own, where its effects are opened up and the various parts sent for special examination to sub-committees of well-intentioned busybodies, experts, and pamphleteers, gifted with much zeal and little knowledge of underlying principles. In due course this fraternity report that dull trade and unemployment will require some "drastic" treatment, such as—the appointment of a labour bureau, a "sweating" board, a minimum wage, with a labour colony or two thrown in to take care of the "debris"—the unemployable.

It is all very properly and regularly carried out, this examination into dull trade and unemployment; but this by-play around the question could not go on for ever. It is up for final settlement at last, for land monopoly has emerged as the cause of all the trouble. The public mind is not slowly discovering the true meaning and the evil consequences of making one of the agents in the production of wealth the uncontrolled property of a particular class, and therein lies the hope of the future. Landlordism is strong and powerful, but we must attack and overthrow it if we would abolish dull trade and unemployment; if we would raise the condition of the people.

The Taxation of Land Values is the only genuine labour policy, and in making so bravely for this the Liberal party is now doing more for labour and social progress than has ever been attempted in the history of the country. The triumph of Land Valuation is complete. The demand now being made upon the landowners for the information they may possess, in order that the valuation of the land may be carried out, appears to have staggered a great many of them. But they will get over this shock, and yet come to realise and acknowledge the far-reaching effects for good of the policy they now so unsparingly denounce.

A progressive people, with an expanding industry, and healthy municipal ideals, must ultimately meet and grapple with whatever privileged institution stands in their way, and land monopoly must give place to the needs of the community. It stands condemned as the greatest obstacle to freer trade, better employment and higher wages. No question of trade or social advancement can be firmly settled until this baneful monopoly is overthrown. The people, after years of striving, have at last seen the glorious dawn of economic freedom. The politicians have learned now that Land Values Taxation can be expounded with success on the public platform, and that the people of the country have a listening ear for our policy and practical proposals. It has taken twenty long years for this gospel of economic, industrial and municipal freedom to usurp the place of the mere political changes, which formerly made up the creed of the two main political parties in the State; but the Taxation of Land Values has put courage and hope into an awakened democracy and the day of triumph is at hand.

J. P.

## SELLING OUT!

### MR. WALTER LONG'S INTERESTING LETTER TO HIS TENANTS.

To us Mr. Walter Long has ever been one of the most attractive figures in the political arena. To minds such as his the use and profit of the earth were manifestly intended, not for all, but for the few who claim its control as their peculiar property and heirloom. The interests of these specially-favoured individuals are held by such minds to be the true interests of the nation as a whole. Hence their innocent but real belief in the policy of Protection, *alias* Tariff Reform, which, whatever its effects on the industries and the industrial masses of the nation, would at least have the