

wantonly cast aside by ceasing to be Liberals. They know what is right and refuse to do it. Labour is more concerned with increasing wages of those who are employed and providing unproductive work for those who are not. And the land, the mother of all wealth, the fount and origin of all material, the seed-nursery of the human race, the cradle of freedom, the abundant giver to all who will take her treasures from her, is regarded as of little account in an industrial age. And yet every advance of industry, every new discovery of science, every invention, every social development, every increased activity makes less available the land upon which everything depends. What are we dreaming of, my brothers, pottering about with trifles, squabbling about scraps, frittering away our energy over the distribution of existing wealth, which is only a mite of potential wealth, when the whole source of wealth lies locked away? The land problem is one of the easiest to solve of all problems.

#### Tax the Landlords

Why is industry oppressed by taxation? Because, what industry produces in improvements is taxed and what industry produces in land-value is not. So in towns the people produce wealth and are taxed on every instrument of produce, while the land owner, basking at Lido or rouletting at Nice gets the community to produce his land value for him and sits free of tax during the process. We are a landless people but we are not a landless nation. The land of Scotland is better than that of Denmark or Belgium. But there the land is used. Here it pays the landlord to keep land in his control, with yearly tenancies and insecurity so that the increased value due to higher skill or greater need may flow to him instead of to those who create it. There have been many methods suggested to bring back the land to the people and the people to the land. There is only one that is based upon economic history and the law of universal justice, and that is to tax land on its value, giving to the community that which is created by the community and to the individual that which is created by his own enterprise and energy.

When the Labour Party, which is so fully cognisant of the circumstances of wealth production and the inequalities and injustices that exist in its distribution, will take its courage in its hand and face the problem of the origin of wealth, bringing to the people who labour the opportunity of going direct to that origin, they will need to fear no party and no quack political agents for they will then be able to control by the operation of cause and effect the whole basis and machinery of the material things of life.

Mr. Lloyd George may talk, but the party of Labour must think, and when the time comes act fearlessly.

#### COMMANDER KENWORTHY'S VIEW Liberal Party not Consulted

Radicals have the uneasy feeling that if he (Mr. Lloyd George), and he alone, propounds programmes and leads in politics he may endeavour to march the bulk of a revived Party like mercenaries over into the camp of the Conservatives. And that would be the end of Liberalism. As an example, take the land question. It is apparently suggested that this will be the main plank of the future Liberal programme. But the land policy so far propounded does not commend itself to the Radicals themselves. It satisfies neither the land taxers, nor the land nationalizers, nor the old-fashioned Whigs. And the Party as a whole has not been consulted on the land question.—*Hon. J. M. Kenworthy, M.P., in the OUTLOOK, 10th October.*

#### MR. ANDREW MACLAREN, M.P., ON "THE CRUEL HOAX"

In a letter to the *DAILY NEWS* of 8th October, Mr. Andrew MacLaren, M.P., wrote:—

"Mr. Lloyd George has at last issued his great Land Reform proposals. They are a direct challenge to the fundamental principles of Liberal Land Reform as enunciated at many elections and on a thousand platforms. From beginning to end the whole of his scheme is bureaucratic and reactionary. I have spoken on a hundred Liberal platforms on the principles of Liberal Land Reform, and have advocated, not the purchase of the land, but the taxation and rating of Land Values. Indeed, throughout Scotland it was the boast of Radicals and Liberals that they stood fast to the principle of rating and taxation of Land Values as against proposals of purchase. The scheme he (Mr. Lloyd George) now puts before the public must not go unchallenged by those who wish to save the people of this country from another cruel hoax. Mr. Lloyd George blames the Whigs in the 1909-10 Government for the fiasco which followed his Land Campaign in those years. Who will he blame for the reactionary land policy which he has now launched upon the country?"

Another letter from Mr. MacLaren appeared in the *ABERDEEN PRESS AND JOURNAL* of 15th October, as follows:—

"Mr. Lloyd George has astutely gone into the Highlands of Scotland to launch his famous land campaign. He has in his mind the magnificent work of the old Highland Land League, and knows the pioneer work done since those early days. He hopes to resuscitate himself and the Liberal Party by advocating his new policy. It was with great pleasure I read of the protest that had been raised at the meeting held in Inverness, where a discussion of the new policy took place. Sir Henry Ballantyne and the other delegates did noble work in reminding Lloyd George that the Liberal policy in the past was one of taxation and rating of land values. Since 1911 Mr. Lloyd George has consistently evaded this issue. He comes to the Highlands and asks the Highlanders to sing 'Scots Wha Hae,' and appeals to their Celtic imagination. The time has passed for political poetry. It is not singing the Scottish airs that can stop the draining of the Highlands of its young men and women. The Radical and Labour elements in the Highlands know this.

"If the latest announcement on the land policy is all we may expect from the Liberal Party, then the time has come for Highland Radicals to take stock of their political future. The entire policy, as stated in the 'Rural Land Policy,' is an insult to any student of the Highland land problem. It is the production of a few class-room Fabians and bureaucrats who have no actual experience or inside knowledge of the problem as it has affected the Highlands for the last 200 years.

"May I appeal to the democratic and independent forces of the Highlands to band themselves together in a determined fight for the principles for which Liberalism of the past stood? Let us go back to the direct policy of taxing the monopoly of the landowner and liberating the soil of Scotland for the people of Scotland, and give Mr. Lloyd George and his bureaucratic assistants the direct reply that, as the land belongs to the people, it shall be taken by the people through the weapons of taxation. Our land has been defended by the common blood and suffering of the Highlander, as many a vacant strath only too tragically gives evidence. And who is he, or what is the party that dares come forward now and ask us to submit to enormous burdens of taxation

to raise a fund out of which we shall pay monopoly prices for the land of our birth?

"It is because of this betrayal of the true Radical principles of taxation and rating of land values that many of us now are actively engaged in the Labour Party advocating the direct policy, rather than that which finds expression in the speeches of Mr. Lloyd George."

### UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS Mr. Ashley Mitchell's Outspoken Criticism

Mr. Ashley Mitchell, prospective Liberal and Radical candidate for Penistone, addressing the local Liberal Association on 11th October (MANCHESTER GUARDIAN report) criticized the new book *THE LAND AND A NATION*, published by the Land Inquiry Committee. After remarking that while in the report there was much valuable evidence which amply confirmed the statements that Liberals had made in the past, that attention to the question was needed, he stated that after careful deliberation he had definitely come to the conclusion that the new policy ought not to be accepted by Liberals, and he, for one, definitely declined to be associated with it.

The principle of purchase upon which it was based was quite incompatible with his Liberal principles. At the Liberal Convention in January the party deliberately placed the taxation and rating of land values as its first proposal for dealing with the land question, believing that the site value of the land was the property of the nation, in spite of the fact that it was at present owned by individuals. The new scheme could not be made to link up with that policy.

It was time for a bit of blunt Yorkshire speech on this matter. Either the party stood by what it did at the Convention in January or it did not.

Liberals had worked, in spite of many disappointments, ever hoping that the day would dawn when the nation would realize that their proposal was to lighten the burden of rates and taxes on industry, on wage-earners, and those genuine toilers whose work was seldom recognized because they were called income-tax payers, and instead to gradually begin to take the land value which the people had created.

He had worked for the Liberal Party because he believed that it stood for a policy of encouragement for enterprise, and now they were asked to accept a scheme which offered no relief to overburdened rate and taxpayers, but instead proposed to give those who were in possession of national property a perpetual annuity, and would make State property of farm buildings and improvements. He was not prepared to accept Socialism because it was put forward by Liberals. The greatest burden on the nation's back to-day was the load of officialism, and instead of more of it they wanted less.

It was time that business men realized that their interests were identical with those of the poorer classes; that the old Liberal policy would relieve their burdens at the same time that it would give life and hope to the poorest. Because they made a poor start in 1909 was no reason for abandoning their faith. In his (Mr. Mitchell's) opinion they failed then because they accepted a scheme with many bad features, believing that it could be amended and the lesson to be learnt from that experience was that in future they must accept only the genuine article.

Mr. Lloyd George, speaking in 1909, related in his own graphic manner the case of the Duke of Northumberland, who asked £900 for land rated at 30s., and he then

said: "If it is worth £900 let him pay taxes on it." "Why this different attitude to-day?" asked Mr. Mitchell. A few years ago men were asked if their native land was worth fighting for, and after fighting for it they were now told, by Liberals, forsooth, "the land is yours, but you must pay the people who have it a perpetual pension. Many Liberals had never shaken off the war-time political truce; the other parties did quickly enough, and now they saw proposals put forward which a Liberal conference before the war would have scorned.

"Why are we always trying to find an easy way, following the Baldwin precedent of buying our way out of a duty?" asked Mr. Mitchell. There was only one way—the straight Liberal road,—and in this matter the only way was to break down land monopoly by taxation, make the owners of unused land keen to have it used, give the people a chance to display that individual enterprise and vigour which abounded in this country.

There was no hope for a timid Liberalism. No party deserved a chance which subscribed to the fashionable doctrine that there was no cure for unemployment. Let them go boldly out, standing by their old Radical policy, assert that by real land reform, by setting the people to tackle the temperance problem, giving a fair electoral system, restoring Free Trade, then they did say in that way unemployment could be cured.

### NOT A WORD ABOUT PENAL TAXATION

#### Dr. Black Jones's Protest

Dr. W. Black Jones, writing to the *SOUTH WALES NEWS* of 19th October in criticism of Mr. Lloyd George's latest proposals, contrasts the findings of the Liberal Land Enquiry Committee of 1913 with the omissions of the Enquiry Committee of 1925.

In 1913, to quote Dr. Jones, the Liberal Land Enquiry Committee devoted a whole chapter to the question of rural rating. It states (p. 386) that a large farmer in Carmarthenshire says that "The present rating system sets a premium on slovenliness and idleness, while the diligent and hard-working farmer has to pay for his own labour"; while another farmer (Cornwall) writes that the present system puts a "premium on bad farming."

Further, it is stated that "We have had instances of agricultural land, formerly rated at 20s. or more an acre, turned into plantations, and then rated at 1s. an acre, including the sporting right. In such cases the law has put a premium upon misusing the land, while the man who puts his land to the best use has been correspondingly handicapped."

The present (1925) Land Enquiry Committee discuss the misuse of land for sport in the chapter on Landlordism, but do not make the slightest reference to the rate question.

The Committee of 1913 conclude that the rating system leads to great injustice, and that "the burden of rating is heavy where it ought to be light, and light where it ought to be heavy. The building of cottages, the establishment of small holdings, the better equipment of farms, and all higher and more intensive cultivation are penalized. Encouragement is given to the decaying village, the under-farmed holding, the badly managed estate, and the game preserving landowner. Thus the effect of the whole system upon rural development is one of steady depression." (P. 404.)

These words were true in 1913. The position is far worse to-day, yet the present Committee ignore the whole subject.