

the other fellow to shape his destiny. There can be no state without politics, and he who scorns the service however placed may be a good enough citizen but he lives in a fool's paradise. Natural resources are imprisoned in the dungeons of land monopoly, and while this prevails Art can do little or nothing to elevate the mind; and whatever it does bring to society there is ever the menace of the Huns and Vandals within and without the gates. With Nature free, Art would free itself, and this freedom can only come through politics, or in other words by our taking-part, each and all, in the day-by-day contest for economic justice and fair play.

"Quaint and Amusing."—Commenting on the passage of the Rating Bill through the House of Commons this session "Almack" of THE GUARDIAN, the organ of the Church of England, in its issue of 4th December, makes this observation:—

In a succession of amendments, the House has de-rated machinery, de-rated rural cottages, de-rated farm buildings; and it would probably de-rate anything suggested by the Minister. Only a few stern and courageous men have suggested that, if you de-rate any particular product, you must increase the rate on some other product; and that, in consequence, by appearing to do an act of friendly kindness to one class you may be doing an act of desolation to another. The only man who is entirely happy is Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, who is waging a fierce war with his own party: but, wreathed in the grim smile of the Five Towns, drives the House to de-rate everything; secure in the knowledge that, if this is done, nothing but the site value will be left for rating purposes, and thus his single tax will be secured. It is both quaint and amusing to see the landlords falling into his trap, and his own Labour supporters utterly oblivious of the ultimate result of his energies.

Directing our attention to this amusing item carried by THE GUARDIAN to ten thousand personages, a correspondent writes: "It is reminiscent of what happened in France in the Revolution when the French single taxers opposed the abolition of the tithe, transferring a fund for which the people got something (even if only a type of religious service) to the landowners who would give in return only more oppression."

An address on Free Trade was given by Mr. Harold Storey, at a meeting of the West Yorkshire Liberal School at Huddersfield, on 12th December.

In the discussion which followed, Mr. Ashley Mitchell, prospective Liberal candidate for the Penistone Division, said that the great fight of the future would be over Free Trade, and the Liberal Party, if properly led, would be returned on that issue, but if the party was going to be led by the author of the Safeguarding of Industries Act, Mr. Lloyd George, he had not the same confidence. It would be little better than a screaming farce if the country were asked to put back a man who introduced the Safeguarding of Industries measure, which was undermining the industries of the country. Such a course would make the Liberal Party look very foolish in the eyes of the country.

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A group of companies connected with the steel industry have issued a circular (daily papers, 10th December) disassociating themselves from any protective tariff under the Safeguarding of Industries Act. The concluding words are: "We fear no rivals provided we have the right to purchase our semi-steel in the cheapest markets."

THE ECONOMIC RENT OF LAND

By E. J. McManus

(*Appearing in the CATHOLIC TIMES, 28th November*)

The taking of the economic rent of land by the Government would not deprive anyone of anything he can justly claim. Men make use of the land from which they believe the most wealth can be produced with the least expenditure of labour. When population is small, and all land to which labour can resort is considered equally good, there is no economic rent, land has no value, and the entire produce goes to the producer in proportion to the labour expended. When, however, population so increases as to oblige resort to land considered inferior (*i.e.*, when the supply of the land considered best is less than the demand for it) some producers must resort to inferior land on which, with the same expenditure of labour, less wealth is produced than on the best land.

The produce on the best land over that on the poorest land to which resort is necessary is economic rent; and all land superior to the poorest land in use has a value proportionate to the excess of its produce. The competition for the use of the best lands obliges the surrender of this excess produce (or economic rent), so that the net return to the producers on all lands tends to be the same as on the poorest land in use.

In New York City, at the last valuation, the value of the land was £800,000,000, while the value of the improvements was £500,000,000. The excess produce (or economic rent) does not justly belong to the producers on the superior land, nor to the landlords who appropriate it. As all men have an equal right to the use of land, the producers obliged to resort to the inferior lands are entitled to a share of the excess produce of the superior lands, and the division of it by means of the taxation of land values in governmental and municipal services can constitute no injustice to any individual.

The statement that the people may come more under the power of the "captains of industry" and financiers assumes that the latter would be so impracticable as to pay more for the possession of land than its economic rent, and overlooks the great supply of land which the tax would make available.

A complete examination of the question will enable a person desirous of removing social inequality to discern the necessary relation of the taxation of land values to "the vision of perfect social health." While right sentiments preceded it, was it not understanding, and not mere sentiment, that urged Canon Doriga to say to the Catholic Labour Clubs in Spain that "the single tax on land values is the one means by which humanity may rise from the mire of poverty, regain its God-given rights, and again walk upright and unashamed in the Image of the Most High"?

Read the Pamphlet

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