

increment to the reduction of taxation, and the multiplication of public benefits. The occupier is to become a State tenant, but on a tenancy that, while it secures to the State the full value of the land from year to year, and provides for its *bona fide* use, yet assures the tenant a perfect security of tenure and of the fruits of his labour, as if the land belonged to him.

The occupation of large tracts by a single person (except for temporary use in places where it is not yet wanted for other people) will be done away with, and the land eventually made so accessible to all that every person, even the humblest, shall have the opportunity, if he wishes it, of acquiring, within accessible distance of a market, enough land to make himself a home, and for the exercise of his own personal labour.

OUR PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSALS.

Our principle is that the legitimate use of the land is as an instrument of production, not as a means of extortion, and its possession to be permitted to secure to its possessor the fruits of his own labour, not the fruits of other people's.

Our aim is to break down the barrier that keeps the two factors of production, land and labour (the matter and force of industry), apart, and throw open to full productive use the resources of the country, to abolish the accursed monopoly that lives upon industry as the tick lives upon the sheep, sucking its juices and hindering its growth, and thrives, not by doing a hand's turn, or contributing a penny's worth for the good of society, but by getting possession of the means of existence, and making people pay for the permission to live; to appropriate the unearned increment of the future to the State, taking its vast and constantly accumulating wealth

from those who do not create it, and giving it those who do, by applying it to the reduction of taxation and the multiplication of public benefits ; above all, though unfortunately not before all, to give the labourer access to the land, and consequently the *choice* between working for himself and working, for another, instead of, as at present, between hired employment and starvation.

This last, which should be first, we are obliged to postpone, because, till the labourer begins to recognise his rights, and to demand their recognition by the State, it is useless for others to move on his behalf. He must be his own deliverer. Others may point out the way for him to go, his must be the force to break down the barriers of vested interest and class prejudice that bar the way.

For the present we propose four simple measures only ; not one of them representing any new or revolutionary principle, but giving principles already recognised and acted on a more extended application ; not one of them seeking to confiscate the wealth of anyone, no matter how improperly that wealth may have been acquired ; not one of them interfering with the course of industry, but on the contrary all together opening out a thousand fresh channels for it to flow in.

These four proposals are :—

1. That no more public land be alienated on any consideration.
2. That the State be empowered to retake possession of any particular land which may be required in the public interest, giving fair compensation for the land taken, and letting this land out in lots of limited size at a rent subject to periodical revision at stated intervals, and the rent raised as the value of the land (apart from its improvements) rises, or lowered if it should chance to fall, and to give the occupier the assurance of undisturbed possession so long as he fulfils the simple and reasonable conditions of his tenure (unless it should be re-

quired for a railway or some such very special purpose) with recognition of his right to the value of his improvements (if the land *should* be taken from him) at the time of the taking.

3. That it is the surface of the land only that is let for productive purposes ; all mineral rights being reserved.

4. That the absorption by the State of the unearned increment on lands which it does not retake in possession be commenced by taxation on the unimproved value of the land, beginning with a moderate percentage, and gradually increasing.

This is all we propose for the present. For the future we will be guided by circumstances.

In regard to the first proposal—"That no more public land be alienated," the State already exercises its power of reserve, often over large areas, as in the case of mineral lands. We propose to apply it to all cases.

In regard to the third—"The reservation of mineral rights," the practice of reserving rights in letting land is so common that nothing further need be said about it.

In the case of minerals being discovered, the State could either let by tender the right of working them, compensating the occupier for loss and disturbance, or could leave them to be worked by the occupier at a fixed royalty, or on such terms as might seem best.

In regard to the fourth—"The taxation on unimproved value," it has been objected that it is a class tax. Well, there are many class taxes levied for different reasons, generally good and sufficient ; there is (or was) the carriage tax, levied as a tax on luxuries ; there is the auctioneers' license fee, levied as an indirect way of taxing the transfer of stock at public sales. There is the chemists' license fee, a way (in part) of securing that the making up of prescriptions and the dispensing of drugs be confined to properly qualified persons ; so also we propose a tax on the unimproved value of land as a

step towards the gradual abolition of the system of blackmailing industry, and towards the restoration to the State of what it should never have parted with.

In regard to the second (kept till the last, because it requires most comment), the power of the State to retake land wanted in the public interest, and the re-letting of it on the conditions sketched out; the State already has the power to take land for railway purposes. But as there is nothing specially sacred in the nature of a railway to make it an exception to all other works of public utility, as it is simply a concern of great public importance, and that is all the justification there is for taking the land required for it, then if we can show (as I think I may fairly claim to have shown) that the breaking up of land monopoly, and the throwing open to use of the national resources is a matter of more consequence than all the railways in the world, there seems no conceivable reason why the State should not take the land for this purpose too.

As to the circumstances under which the land shall be taken, the manner in which compensation shall be determined and rent re-valued and so on, all these are questions of detail to be well thought out, and freely and thoroughly discussed, but the discussion of which would be for many reasons out of place in a preliminary address like this. One thing only must be insisted on; that the taking, the re-valuing, the letting, the recovery of rent, and every process connected with the disposal of the land, shall be entirely removed from the control of party politics and personal influence, and be made strict processes of the law, guided by definite rules, and administered by properly appointed and independent courts, just as the valuation of property, the granting of mineral leases, and the recovery of rates and taxes are now.

“But,” we are told, “you forget the land hunger. Man naturally craves for the absolute ownership of the soil he tills,

and without it loses half the stimulus to exertion. He wants to sit under his own vine and fig-tree."

Here are three statements rolled into one. Take the last first.

"He wants to sit under his own vine and fig-tree."

True; and the result of your system of absolute ownership is that 99 men out of 100 can get no vine or fig-tree to sit under, and the hundredth finds that the vine and fig-tree under which he sits are not his but his landlord's, who charges him heavily for the privilege, and this even though he has planted the tree himself, and watered it with the sweat of his toil.

Year by year, all over the civilised world, the ownership of the land is passing out of the hands of the occupier. One man rears the fruit, another stretches forth his hand and takes it.

The very institution which you defend, as securing to the producer the full value of his produce, is the institution that compels him to part with it.

How comes this?

Because the unearned increment, though certain, is deferred, and falls, therefore, to him who can afford to wait, and who accordingly lies in wait.

Sooner or later the day comes when a mortgage has to be redeemed, or death brings the property into the market, and then the man of large and independent means, who does not mind getting a low rate of interest for a while in consideration of large profits hereafter, easily out-bids the working owner, who has to earn his living, and must have quick returns.

Thus it is that not only is the rich non-occupying owner fast superseding the poorer working owner, but the large non-occupying owners are also eating up the small ones, and the tendency of the times is for the whole land of the country to pass gradually into the hands of a few enormously rich people.

We have not got into this second stage yet out here, but we

are well on into the first. And so inevitably and steadily land is coming to belong, not to him who has the best right to it, not to him who wants it most, not to him who will put it to the most productive use, or even to any use at all, but to him who can afford to give most for it for the mere purpose of squeezing other people.

You offer the name, but you cannot confer the reality. We withhold the name, but guarantee the reality.

For what is the land hunger?

It is the natural craving for a permanent home, and for the fruits of our labour; and we guarantee both these; you do not.

The natural desire of a man is for a dwelling that he can regard as his home for so long as he chooses to dwell in it; for a piece of land which he can cultivate and build upon and improve as his interest or fancy may dictate, without the fear of a notice to quit, and the certainty that when he quits of his own accord he can realise the full value of his improvements at the time of his retiring.

If you say further that all these things shall be his own, you are conferring no further privilege. You are only summing up the privileges already enumerated in a compact, sweet-sounding phrase.

That he shall possess his home so long as he chooses to dwell in it, his land so long as he chooses to till it, this is the land hunger. But to want to own the land without using it, to leave it and yet retain the ownership for the mere purpose of preventing other people from using it, except on payment, this is not the land hunger at all.

Directly a man has lost the desire to dwell in his home and till his land, and wants to go elsewhere and live on the rent, he has lost the land hunger, and retains only the ordinary desire to make money.

Therefore, when under these circumstances we require him

to give up the land, securing to him the value of his improvements, we violate no craving of his nature; we only take from him what he has ceased to value, the land; and allow him the one thing he continues to value, his money, to invest elsewhere.

Further, it is the nature and not the extent of the occupancy that satisfies the land hunger. A home and land enough to afford employment are all that is wanted for the purpose.

The Irishman's poor cabin is as much his home to him, as the Duke's palace is to him; and an acre or two satisfies the craving to be working for one's-self as thoroughly as 1,000 acres would. Therefore so long as we leave a man land enough to provide him full employment, much more when we leave him enough to employ many hired servants, we may take, at a valuation, the broad acres on which he merely runs his flocks without jarring any legitimate feeling.

CONCLUSION.

Now let us note the results of our plan to each of the parties concerned.

1. In regard to the dispossessed landlord.

So much land is taken from him, so much money of equal value is returned to him. He is certainly no worse off than before. He is really much better off.

Formerly his income ceased every time the land was vacant between one tenancy and another, and disappeared altogether every time a tenant bolted or broke. Now it is guaranteed to him with absolute regularity.

Formerly he was constantly liable to demands from his