

### "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.*

### AN IDLE TIME IN POLITICS.

Men and movements in politics seem half asleep. Nothing stirs in legislation. Preparation for the future goes on in obscure places. The principles of last year's Budget have fallen out of political discussion, although its administration grows in the hands of the officials. By the withdrawal of this living and attractive issue from open debate everything has been relaxed. Old policies are revived, old attitudes are resumed. Men and things will never be quite the same after last year, but they will try to be. Ministers make casual and easy speeches which indicate the direction of their thoughts. Mr. Haldane spoke the other day at a Free Trade meeting. He admitted that Tariff Reform was popular. He discussed the reasons for this—the hope of gain by interested parties, the desire for a united Empire. He offered no alternative to satisfy the former craving; for the latter he suggested that "there was the great question of Imperial defence, which gave a common purpose and a common ground on which the Empire could weld itself together. There was also the matter of the extension of their educational system by the co-ordination of the Universities of the Empire. It was by these things that the unifying process could most surely go on, and while it was going on they could leave trade to take care of itself."

This conservative attitude with regard to trade, casually expressed here, is now inveterate and almost unbroken in the Liberal Party. The importance attached to Imperial defence and education indicates the effort and tendency to deal with superficial things. However we interpret Mr. Haldane's speech, it is still clear that there are few Liberals who regard the problem of trade as one which demands serious and radical treatment of a new kind. Taking things as they are in Great Britain and her Colonies, "leaving trade to take care of itself" means leaving trade at the mercy and disposal of landowners, who have been given every cue and motive to subvert it. It is true that protective countries lessen the volume of their trade by the restrictive impositions on the process of exchange, but it is also true that "Free Trade" Britain diminishes the volume of her trade by the blighting restrictions which she allows to fall on production, from which all trade springs. No country suffers more in this respect. Production is in the hands of the landowners. The Dukes of Sutherland and Newcastle are in Canada, extending and perfecting there the system of landlordism which they have worked so fully in Britain. There is no security or prosperity for trade with this fatal activity.

Trade is inseparable from men and women engaged in work. A fisher gets a footing on a hard rock in the Hebrides, or in Sutherlandshire. He wins fifty barrels of fish to send to the Baltic ports. Something comes back in payment. A farmer gets land enough to raise some beef, mutton, wool and hides. He sends these to the cities, and gets something in return. That is trade. But the Duke of Sutherland, under the Government's sanction, comes along and plucks up this whole fruitful growth by the roots. The producers are evicted or squeezed out by rent. The land falls back to a wild state. In this matter no country's trade has been scourged and destroyed like that of Britain. In no country is landlordism more alert, more firm and vicious in its grip. Having been perfected at home, it is transmitted strong and full-grown to the Colonies. Even where land is so abundant, and where industry should be so free it is overtaken and held up by landlordism. There is no rest for the sole of the producer's or trader's feet. He is driven from the land of the Dukes in Scotland, England and Ireland, and is set down by the Canadian trains on the land of the same Dukes in Canada.

This is the only question which will bind the Empire together in substantial unity. How are the different parts to defend them selves against this land system, this common malignant enemy, which is incessant in its attacks on the interests of the Empire, on the lives of nations and individuals? No question appeals to the hard pressed producers and traders at home more than this, none appeals more to the fugitive settlers in the Colonies. What a misplaced and irrelevant zeal is that which assumes the existence of enemies where there may be none, and ignores their presence where they are! If we are infatuated enough not to regard the things which concern us most, and to work ourselves up to a quarrel disastrous to everyone, we shall have a war. It is all doubtful and all foolish, but we are asked to talk about Imperial defence and unite ourselves to bring about this savage, unsatisfying result.

Nor is the extension of education calculated to bring salvation or unity. We have well-educated men at home and in the Colonies, and here there has been a huge Imperial waste. Thousands of men have been turned out of our schools and colleges into the jaws of a merciless land system which denies them the right and scope to apply their knowledge and skill. If they stay at home, they deteriorate in unemployment; if they go abroad, they live under rude and isolated conditions in which their educational equipment is largely useless.

Mr. Lloyd George has also been indulging in this casual and easy way of speech. It was a little thing, but it shows how far we are at the mercy of loose and floating theories about the cause of certain social evils. Speaking at a dinner to a philanthropic friend, who had provided his native village with an institute furnished with things to attract and interest the young, Mr. Lloyd George said that "if the man who started in a village and afterwards attained riches, did for

his village what the guest of that evening had done, there would be no need to talk so much about policies for taking the people back to the land." The misconception here is serious. We have all kinds of philanthropy at work in this country, but, although it may seem strange to benevolent people, men are going out from the midst of these attractions to outlandish backwoods, two or three days' journey from any institute or library. They have gone from this country to the number of three hundred thousand in the first six months of this year. Thousands of them have gone knowing that they will have to face hardship, to spend lonely days and more lonely nights, separate from friends whom they love passionately. They are going for land, for the freedom which land alone gives. This fundamental and essential form of freedom is becoming more and more rare in Britain.

Give us this indispensable freedom. We shall win every thing else that is necessary. We shall defend our Empire by making ourselves the indispensable friends of our neighbours; we shall educate ourselves in far better ways than we dream of at present, co-operating not only with our Colonies but with more varied nationalities; we shall build ourselves institutes and take pleasure in them. Our politicians are too apt to set about building from the roof downwards. It cannot be done. It is a ludicrous and foolish business. About the manner of building up a sound and enduring state there was never more absurd or superficial proposals made than these we have discussed. The valuation of land is the first step towards raising a new social and national structure. Let our statesmen attend to this policy, let them consider what it means with reference to trade and production, with reference to the lives of the people, for whom once more it will open the way to the use of land. For those who are not statesmen or politicians, it is possible to assist in discouraging such misleading talk. No work is more called for by considerations of business, of national prosperity, or of compassion for human suffering. While our valuation is proceeding, while our Ministers are making loose speeches, business is being disorganised, human hearts are being torn by the cruel and inexorable operation of landlordism. Every conceivable motive urges us to press immediately towards this one object of breaking the power of land monopoly utterly. To raise as prominently as possible the subject of valuation, to press insistently for its accomplishment, for the early rating and taxation of land values, to possess once again the minds of the people with this great message of hope and salvation—this is work in which everyone can help.

J. O.

## DENMARK.

### THE PEOPLE AND THE MOVEMENT.

To approaching visitors a country begins to show itself on the roads that lead to it. Its inhabitants come and go on these roads, and from them strangers gain the first living impressions of the country itself. No improvement in the means of travel is likely to remove this pleasant feature. On the morning of June 10th, Joseph Fels, C. J. Cawood, and John Orr joined the train for Copenhagen at Hamburg. They found seats in a compartment the other occupants of which were a Finnish gentleman, a Danish gentleman, and two Danish ladies. They spoke about things in the belief that the other passengers did not understand English. They were soon undeceived. The ladies had spent many years in America, the gentlemen had often been in England. The Danes discussed politics freely—their own and those of the world; the Finn became silent as soon as the conversation touched the politics of Finland. There was the difference between the people who had gained freedom and the people who had lost freedom. The Danes had heard of Henry George, had read some of his works. Before the train had left German territory and boarded the ferry-boat which carries it across the sound or belt which separates Germany from Denmark, the visitors from England had learned much about the modern history and character of the Danish people.

The sea journey from Warnemünde to Gjedser takes two hours. Denmark is largely a land of low-lying islands. Outside of Jutland its beauties are the beauties of woods and gently rolling country frequently broken up by water. At Copenhagen there were five members of the Henry George League to meet their guests—Miss Wennerberg, Mr. Jakob Lange, Mr. S. Berthelsen, Dr. Villads Christensen and Mr. Folke-Rasmussen. The first three had come long distances. The welcome was cordial, and from the first there was not a moment's stiffness. Both parties had too much to say and hear to allow any frigidity to interrupt the exchange of views and feelings. All fell at once to a discussion of the programme for the visit, and of the position of the Single Tax movement in Denmark. Those of the Danish friends who could wait stayed at the hotel to a late hour.

Before describing the general conditions in Denmark or the incidents of the visit, some account may be given of the origin and progress of the movement for the Taxation of Land Values in Denmark. For both tasks our knowledge is inadequate, and if we err on any point we shall ask our friends to pardon us, and those of them who are better informed to correct us.

Jakob E. Lange, now lecturer on Botany at the Agricultural School, Dalum, was studying botany and gardening at Kew, England, in 1884. He read a newspaper report of Henry George's speech in St. James' Hall, on January 9th of that year. He was so much interested in the speech that he followed George to Scotland, where the latter had gone in the course of his campaign, and overtook him in Galashiels. He heard George speak there and at Newcastle, and had some conversation with him. Returning to Denmark shortly after this, he translated "Progress and Poverty" into Danish, and had it published. The circulation of the book has been wide. "The Condition of Labour" has also been translated. With all the enthusiasm which is so common a mark of Single Taxers in different countries, Mr. Lange lectured and wrote on the subject. Dalum is a few miles from Odense, Hans Andersen's native town, near the centre of Denmark, and in the midst of an almost purely agricultural district. Mr. Lange's work, therefore, was very largely carried on among the students of the high schools and the rural population in general. Fighting single-handed for a long time, the results of the work were often discouraging, but the progress now achieved is a reward for those early struggles.

Among those who accepted the views thus taught was Mr. S. Berthelsen, solicitor, Høng, a little place on the west side of Zealand, the large island on which Copenhagen is situated. This again is the centre of a farming district. Mr. Berthelsen entered into the campaign with the remarkable energy which he still displays. In connection with the movement, he started the magazine *RET (JUSTICE)*, of which there are 4,000 copies published each month. The magazine circulates chiefly among the Husmaend, or small farmers. Indeed, the movement in Denmark has taken a direction opposite to that which it has followed in Britain, where the towns have been most favourable. The Taxation of Land Values is advocated very widely among the small farmers as a substitute for their present systems of ownership and taxation. It is received with extraordinary intelligence and favour. This work is very largely due to Mr. Berthelsen.