

## THE MOVEMENT : WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR IT

### Corresponding Secretaries

Our readers will have noticed that month by month we give a summary of the very effective propaganda that is being carried on by means of "letters to the editor" and special articles inserted in the newspapers. The record of this important work has encouraged us to aim at more and closer association with active and willing-to-be-active friends of the movement, who are perhaps isolated in their own districts or have not the chance to co-operate with others in those centres where Leagues and Henry George Clubs are established. To this end, we sent an invitation by letter to some few of our readers with whom we have been in personal touch, asking them to become local "Corresponding Secretaries" of the United Committee. This was by way of experiment to test possibilities. There has been a gratifying and almost surprising response, giving us an immediate roll-call of more than fifty active supporters who have expressed themselves as willing to do what they can to spread the light in their neighbourhood and keep in touch with the United Committee. We are encouraged by this success to extend the invitation now to other readers of LAND & LIBERTY who may wish to be associated with our office in the same practical way; and we take this opportunity to explain briefly some of the services our volunteers could perform.

### Political Candidates

Arrangements should be made for questions on the Taxation of Land Values to be asked on every occasion at political or municipal election meetings. We can supply leaflets with specimens of questions to be asked by yourself or others. The important thing is to have the questions put. There is large public support in every town and district for the Taxation of Land Values, and politicians should be compelled to recognize its importance—no better way of bringing that home to them than by questions at their public meetings.

Get in touch with each of the candidates at the coming election and invite all to address a meeting to explain their views to the electors on the Taxation of Land Values. The important thing is to get all the candidates *on the same platform* and it should be possible to arrange such a meeting through the local Labour or Liberal Party or with the aid of some friendly man with local influence, the Trades Council, or a trade union. Such meetings have already been held at Penistone, Keighley and Manchester with admirable results and most useful publicity in the Press.

### Help "Land & Liberty"

There is no reader of LAND & LIBERTY who could not succeed with little effort in extending its circulation. Bring the paper before the notice of your friends and canvass for orders; let them have a sample copy to read; remind them about the paper after they have had a chance to read it and secure their subscription. Last month we made the offer to every post paid subscriber to supply extra copies for 2d. each, so that for 6d. a month or 6s. a year, you could have three additional copies of the paper (post free) for distribution among possible new readers. One of these copies could very well be placed in your local public library, a service to the movement that would count for much. LAND & LIBERTY was formerly placed in hundreds of public libraries up and down the country, but owing to financial circumstances we were most reluctantly obliged to withdraw this special postage. We simply could not afford it. With your assistance LAND & LIBERTY can be restored to the library tables and there help your own efforts in your district.

### Circulate Pamphlets and Leaflets

What applies to LAND & LIBERTY applies also to our explanatory literature. We want to hear from you what you can do in the way of distributing leaflets and finding readers for pamphlets, so that we can communicate with you at once when anything new is published or when we are reprinting what may have been out of stock. Leaflets are to be had at the cost of postage; and we would gladly arrange to send pamphlets on sale or return, thus limiting your risk to the cost of carriage.

### Booksellers and Henry George's Works

Make it your business to call on booksellers, especially those who deal in books on social and economic questions, to ascertain whether Henry George's works are on sale. Do this not only in your own neighbourhood, but in any place where you may be on holiday or a visit. If the bookseller does not stock PROGRESS AND POVERTY, PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE, SOCIAL PROBLEMS, or THE PERPLEXED PHILOSOPHER, interview him on the matter and explain that these books should be recommended to his customers. Write to us at the same time, giving us the name and address of the bookseller, and we will take up the matter with the London publishers. This has already been done by some of our Corresponding Secretaries, with fruitful results.

### Start a Study Circle

By this means, too, very useful work has been accomplished and can be accomplished. Get your friends to agree to meet and bring other friends with them, say, once a week or even once a month. Probably the best method is to arrange to read a chapter out of one of the standard works on our question and then to discuss it. PROGRESS AND POVERTY, SOCIAL PROBLEMS, and PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE are specially suitable for such work, as each chapter in them deals with one phase of our great reform.

### Organize Meetings

This seems a big order, but if a favourable opportunity be waited on, it is easier than it appears. You, no doubt, belong to some society, guild, union, institute or association. Well, make use of these organizations. Suggest at the annual meeting or at a committee meeting that a lecture or a paper on the land question or the labour question or the fiscal question would be welcome. If your proposal be accepted, then see to it yourself that a man qualified to deal with the question on our lines is available, that one or other of our leaflets is distributed and that a fair assortment of our literature is on sale. If you are within reasonable distance of any of our Leagues (see addresses of Secretaries every month in LAND & LIBERTY), make a request for a speaker and arrange hospitality for him. It should not be difficult to get some friends to join in subscribing the necessary travelling expenses.

### Write to your local Paper

As we have already explained, much useful and telling work is being done by letters to the newspapers. Why not join in? Some phase or other of our question is constantly cropping up and being discussed in the correspondence columns of the daily and weekly newspapers. Send in your views as moderately and as convincingly as possible. If you think it necessary or advisable, write anonymously. Moreover, whenever possible refer to some book or pamphlet bearing on the question and state where it can be obtained. The value of this work cannot be over-estimated.

### A Plea for Co-operation

There are of course countless other means by which good work can be done. Our main object in organizing corresponding secretaries is to have the closest possible co-operation with those who are willing to be active "where the field is vast and the labourers few." We invite you

to become a corresponding secretary. We do not ask you to take on any permanent exacting undertaking. We do not ask you to form any local League or Committee. We merely seek to be in touch with you. We want to know what you are doing; to send you regularly copies of any new piece of literature and to have your help and to offer ours for the good of the movement. Up and down the country there are isolated individuals who hold to our ideas, but only once in a while (in some cases a long while) do we hear from them or they from us. We ought to have such friends on our list for mutual help and for more frequent interchange of opinion.

Give this invitation your early consideration and let us hear from you. J. P.

## NATURAL VERSUS PREDATORY TAXATION

By W. R. LESTER, M.A.

It is impossible to mistake the attitude of the average man towards Government. It is one in which hostility very decidedly prevails, and it should be interesting to inquire why this is so; in view of the fact that organized Government of some kind is essential to civilized society, and must, therefore, be a natural phenomenon.

Man is pre-eminently the sociable animal. Completely isolated from his fellows (were such a thing possible), he becomes the veriest savage. Association is vital to his very existence, and association implies some kind of Government. Government, the agent of organized society, having vital functions to perform, ought surely to be regarded with favour. So why this antagonism? Why this feeling that the interests of private citizens are at variance with the interests of whatever Government they happen to possess? The answer must be that Government as we know it to-day does not perform its legitimate functions, or exceeds them in harmful ways.

The question then arises: What is the first duty of Government? It is to safeguard the rights of all. Put in other words, the primary duty of Government is to see that no man or class acquire mastery over others, either by force or fraud; that no man is able to exact service from others except by returning to them service of equal value. But it is our common experience that not only do the Governments of every civilized State fail in this duty, but they actually make laws which rob vast numbers of their rights by depriving them of the power to command service for service, the true test of civilized society. We believe that this invasion of the rights of private citizens is sufficient to account for the hostility to government as such. It results in conflict and suspicion where harmony and respect would otherwise rule.

It can be said with some conviction that the State forms no exception to Nature's law that organisms are called into being only where nourishment exists for their support. To obtain this nourishment, the State must be provided with revenue. By all who believe in the harmony of natural law, it will be accepted as axiomatic that sources of revenue somewhere exist. When found, these sources should reveal themselves as wonderfully and beautifully fitted to meet the needs of the State, and should be capable of defraying its legitimate expenses to the last penny without encroaching on the earnings of any private person. To doubt the existence of such a fund is to challenge the whole scheme of creation, for under the natural order, no need is created without provision of means for satisfying it, and that without depriving others of their sustenance. Nature has made the provision; it remains for us to disclose it.

"Accuse not Nature! She hath done her part.  
Do thou but thine!"

But this truth our rulers do not recognize, and, declining to seek out our natural, self-sufficing revenue, we allow the State to lay violent hands on the earnings of individual

producers. In thus failing to distinguish between private and public property, it fails also in its primary duty to safeguard the individual in the fruit of his labour, and we suffer the inevitable consequences. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." So when we look around to-day, we see the harvest in universal revolt against taxation. Here, surely, is evidence of the wrongness of our present system, for a necessary desirable thing should find its expression in harmony and not in revolt. Every tax now levied is regarded by the payers as a grievance. Every taxpayer feels in his bones that something is being taken from him which is properly his own, and he despises the State that does this thing. We thus witness the ridiculous spectacle of every taxed person or industry protesting against the burdens heaped upon them, and demanding that they be shifted to some other class. The payers of income tax, super tax, excess profits tax, corporation tax on limited companies, death duties, entertainments tax, beer duty, sugar duty, and a host of others, one and all join the chorus, declaring that they and their industries are strangled or on the high road to bankruptcy, and protesting that taxation has become a danger to the nation and a direct cause of unemployment. We are not surprised; for every one of these taxes is immoral and unprincipled. They violate the natural law that a man is entitled to what he earns in the service of his fellows. Not even the State can with impunity violate this law. But it acts as if it thought otherwise. For instead of taking the fund specially designed to meet communal wants, the State empowers landlords to seize on it for their private purposes, and then, in its effort to make good its loss, robs the private producer of the fruit of his labours. This inversion of the natural order has its aftermath in pain, trouble and friction, both for the individual and organized society. The result is inevitable whenever an organism attempts to subsist on food intended for some other of quite a different kind. The pangs of indigestion ensue, expressed in this case by the suffering both of the State and the individual; the sources of revenue dry up, causing bad trade, unemployment and general discontent.

Our rulers are victims of the very serious delusion that the State is entitled to tax what it likes. Having got on the wrong track, they think that by continuing on it and adding indefinitely to the number of things or industries taxed, they can also indefinitely increase the revenue. But the reality is that when producers are taxed, they have to add the tax to the prices of what they sell or else go out of business. This results in reduced sales of the articles in question, and therefore lessened ability of the producers to purchase other articles. If we tax hats, the price of hats rises, and bootmakers can buy fewer of them, thus reducing the income of the hatter who, in his turn, can buy fewer boots. The incomes of both bootmakers and hatters are thus reduced, though hats alone are taxed. So it goes on all round; the source from which the tax collector attempts to draw his revenue automatically drying up on his approach. The plan is self-destructive, and the more this Donnybrook Fair style of taxation is applied, the more glaringly its failure is revealed. All of which is no mere theory, for the process is proceeding under our very eyes. Every authority in the world of commerce tells us that taxation has reached or passed its limit, having already reduced production, bad trade and unemployment. Surely no instrument constructed on sound lines would thus break down just when most wanted. The inference is that the instrument is fundamentally wrong in design.

Contrast this conflict of interests and final collapse with the natural taxation we advocate. Here the State takes not a penny that any man earns. It simply meets its own needs by drawing on the fund which is due to the presence and work of society as a whole. It takes the communal fund for communal use, so that the interests of the individual completely harmonize with those of the State. The whole social machine runs sweetly and with ease because the cause of present strife is eliminated. The State performs