

interest at 10 per cent, and fair compensation for improvements. In 1872 Mr. Williams managed to get a fresh grant of the land with the conditions omitted. Sixteen years later he sold it to Messrs. Goldsborough & Co., Limited, for £25,000. In the first place, what right had the crown to sell land, the crown representing merely existing people, how could they sell the rights of generations to come who must live on the land if they are to live at all. The land does not belong to any state or any crown, it belongs, *in usu fructo*, to all generations of men. In the second place, if a man is granted a monopoly of three acres of land and sells this monopoly power and gains over £24,000 by the operation, what does this gain represent but the robbery of labour, the power to take £24,000 worth out of the produce of others in the shape of food, clothing, and shelter, without giving any equivalent in return? Thus Mr. Williams has, by virtue of the monopoly granted to him, acquired the privilege of having others to work for him. What do we call men who are compelled to work for others without return but slaves? And are we not all slaves, all we who use land on the terms of others.

THE SINGLE TAX *versus* SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.

A debate on the above subject took place in the Peoples' Palace, Watson Street, Glasgow, under the auspices of the Glasgow Democratic Federation, on Sunday, 2nd September, between J. Paul, Secretary, Henry George Institute, and H. Quelch, Editor of *Justice*, the organ of the S.D.F.; the terms of debate being—"The Single Tax or Social Democracy, which will be most beneficial to the people?" The chair was occupied by Mr. William Nairn who introduced the debaters, and stated that it had been agreed that Mr. Paul should open with a twenty minutes' speech, for the Single Tax, to be followed by Mr. Quelch for twenty minutes for Social Democracy, then to allow each a fifteen minutes' speech, then each ten minutes, closing with a five minutes' wind-up on each side.

Mr. PAUL, after complimenting the S.D.F. on the taking of so large a hall for a series of meetings said that they were probably all agreed as to the necessity for social regeneration. There was poverty and this poverty came just as we made progress. Just as we produced wealth so did this poverty increase. Nor was it the idlers who suffered; it was the workers who produced wealth who suffered from the want of it. Social Democracy was merely an ideal, but however much we might desire to wander into communism or into the highest social state it was possible to conceive, his position was that we must have a method of getting there. Before the politician can legislate we must present him with definite and detailed proposals. He did not know to what state we might attain, but people must have liberty even to enable them to say towards what ideal they will make. Land monopoly was the base of social inequality, and the Single Tax was a practical proposal to destroy that base. Wherever it is proposed just now to extend the functions of the State as Social Democrats wish, the question of compensation arises, as witness Keir Hardie's Bill to nationalise the mines, which proposes to buy them out to the tune of £110,000,000. But who ever heard of compensation for taxation? He had read a paragraph in *Justice* that week stating that he would be there to prove that one tax was better than no tax at all. But the Single Tax was not a tax—it was merely a proposal to take for society a value that was created by society as a whole. It would not only yield revenue—it would also destroy speculation in land and compel all land to be put to its best use, and so open all kinds of opportunities to labour. Socialists put against this the counter proposal of a graduated income tax, which they said would fall largely on incomes drawn from sweated labour; but he submitted that it would do the sweated workers no good to take a part of the profits after they had been wrung from them, so we must look to the other factor in production—to land—to see where the surplus goes. Whatever improvements might be made in the more effective organisation of industry, it could only result in enhancing the value of the thing on which all improvements must be made—that is to say, on land.

Mr. QUELCH said that he wanted, in the first place, to draw attention to the terms of the proposition under debate. It was quite out of place for his opponent to say that he might be in favour of anything beyond the application of the Single Tax. Mr. Paul's duty was to show that the Single Tax would be of greater benefit to the people than social democracy. His own duty was to prove the contrary. Social democracy meant the owning and controlling of land and capital by a democratic state, and he asserted that anything short of that, anything that involved slavery on any part of the community, could not solve the social problem. He agreed with all that had been said against land monopoly, but he insisted that as long as we had competition the result of that competition must be poverty. They were not there to discuss methods, but to argue principles. The Single Tax would not touch land monopoly, nor would it free the land. This question could not wait for political methods. Social democrats were no more in favour of buying out landlords than Mr. Paul was. When it came to the expropriation of the various monopolies, the only question for them would be: what was most expeditious; whether it would be cheaper to buy them out or fight them out, for he contended that it was impossible to tax them out. He wanted to know how this taxation was going to touch land monopoly or the social problem. Many landlords had bought their land, paying for it the capitalised rental. Under the Single Tax they could get it quite as easily. Instead of paying its capitalised rental all at once, they could pay the rent every year to the Government. The only person who would benefit by change would be the capitalist. Did they think their house rents would be reduced one penny if land values were taken in taxation, or that the employers would come and say, we have got rid of taxation and we are going to raise your wages. House rents and wages were fixed by competition, and as long as competition remained the tendency of wages would be to fall and of house rents to rise. The man who had most money would get the best portions of land under the Single Tax, and land monopoly would continue to exist. Social democracy would be accomplished by political methods if possible. It was just as easy to get a majority in the House of Commons to vote for social democracy as it was to get a house of landlords to vote for the Single Tax.

Mr. PAUL said that competition had been compared to running a race. Yes, but the landlord does not run, he stands by and watches the race, and then carries off the prize. For every attempt to get ahead by more improved methods raises the value of his land. It is restriction and not competition that is the cause of the trouble. If the millionaire did invest in the best land, what would it matter so long as he paid to the state all the pecuniary advantages that would accrue from it. Can we suppose that the labourer, with free access to the raw material of all wealth, would still go on working for the capitalist on his terms? Capital is in abundance, and capitalists would compete with each other in supplying capital to anyone who had an opportunity to use it. It is quite true that all land is not locked up, but all the most desirable land is locked up. We have been told that social democracy means the controlling of land and capital by a democratic state, but that is putting the end to be gained against the method. When we ask for the method, they bring forward proposals for an income tax and for buying out. Gronlund thinks it would be worth awhile to buy the landlords and capitalists out if they would but go peacefully. Here is a democratic society that says that "interest is iniquitous," yet they are in favour of continuing this iniquity by their proposals. To be consistent they should pull down that banner, and replace it by another bearing the motto "Interest is just, payment guaranteed by the Social Democratic Federation." We are told our new corporation tramways are an illustration of socialism. Well, in the first place, £40,000 was paid the landlords for permission to build the tramway stables, and, in the second place, the city has been made more inviting, and the values of land will rise because of this extension of municipal socialism. If these values were taken for behoof of the whole people you would have every

reason to push forward the extension of industry and the functions of the state. To-day such a course merely rears obstacles, in higher priced land, to further progress.

Mr. QUELCH said that Mr. Paul was presuming on the ignorance of his audience when, after the history of the Factory Acts, he told them that it was not competition but restriction that was the cause of the evil. He affirmed that it was competition that drove women and children into the mines and factories, and made the workers the worst slaves in the world. For wealth was not produced to use, but to compete with the Frenchmen, the Dutchmen, and Switzer. The land would still go to those who paid the best price for it, and how could the starving labourer compete with the like of Mr. Winans. Even desirable land can be had at the present time when you are prepared to pay the price for it, and you are only going to supersede the landlord by the state, and at the same time you are going to relieve the capitalist of all the taxes which he pays at present. Mr. Paul, of course, says that the capitalists are not in favour of the Single Tax, but that is just because "they dunno where they are." Perhaps they don't know whether they are most capitalist or most landlord. They may think that the best thing is to fight these fellows all along the line. If they begin by taking the land values they might not stop there. We have not yet heard how the Single Tax is going to rid us of landlordism. The Social Democrats are in favour of a complete social revolution, but if you like you can call it a mere political proposal. I urge that the Single Tax is not even a step in the right direction. Mr. Paul gives you what he concrete example of the Single Tax—namely, the taking over of the tramways by the Corporation of Glasgow. Well, I say, so far as the Single Tax is concerned, it is only a question as to whether you are going to pay so much to the landlord or to the capitalist.

Other two speeches from Mr. Paul and Mr. Quelch, and a vote of thanks to the chairman, brought the meeting to a close.

Current Literature.

THE SHOPKEEPER.

From "*The Story of My Dictatorship*." (Published by Bliss, Sands & Foster, Craven Street, Strand, London. Price 1s.) Chap. IV.

The next petitioner, from whom I learnt that he was a small shopkeeper in Cheapside, was much agitated, and bore a worried look.

"Sir," he said, in a trembling voice, "I hope you will relax your sternness a little in my case. I am hard lit. I am a hardworking, honest man, and have been all my life. After fighting the battle for life for so many weary years, I have at last succeeded in scraping enough together to buy a small piece of land and build a house on it. What am I to do now?"

"Why, keep it, good sir, and make the best of it."

My answer seemed to electrify the man into life again.

"Then you are not going to take it from me?" he inquired, eagerly.

"Certainly not. I could not if I would. The Constitution would not allow me."

"But I understood that you were to confiscate all the land."

"You mean, perhaps, *nationalise*?"

"Well, is not that the same thing?"

"No, not by a long way. To confiscate means to take away. But the object of the Constitution is not to take the land from the people, but to open it up to them, since without access to it they cannot live—save, of course, by permission, and on the terms of those who can debar them from it."

"And—and—has everybody a right to it now?"

"Yes; everybody has an equal right with yourself to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and therefore to the *means of life*, that is, the land and the elements of Nature."

"Then anybody might come and turn me off the land—out of my home?"

"Oh, no. No one can do that so long as you care to stay. You are only expected to share with the others the advantages that accrue to

Ask all Candidates for Municipal Honours this Question—