

THE STORY OF "LAND VALUES."

By the Editor.

*"Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead is all her sailors know;
Where lies the land from which she sails away?
Far, far behind is all that they can say."*

A. H. CLOUGH.

I have been asked to tell the story of the birth of LAND VALUES twenty-one years ago. In the main, it is a story of zeal and enthusiasm, which has since been repeated with more or less success in many parts of the field we Single Taxers cultivate.

LAND VALUES was conceived and brought forth in the struggle and determination of the Glasgow Single Taxers to spread the knowledge of the taxation of land values among the Glasgow people and throughout Scotland, and to gain a hearing for the case at the Glasgow City Council. In a very special sense the paper was the child of that first stage in the epoch-making municipal movement in Great Britain for the taxation of land values and the untaxing of the work of men's hands.

As James Busby has well said, the progress of the movement from 1884 to 1894 is (or was) an unknown quantity of which we only get glimpses through the published speeches of Henry George. LAND VALUES has since put on record the main features of the agitation during that decade, nor in this special issue have we forgotten the reader concerned about the early history of the movement. From June, 1894, it has been our endeavour to chronicle the progress made in the wide and ever-widening field of propaganda effort, and in the sphere of practical politics as well.

But I presume it is a more personal statement I am expected to make here. This can be briefly made. There were no very heroic happenings with our public at Glasgow on the 1st June, 1894. There had been a dress rehearsal or two, but when the curtain was rung up on this piece that was destined to have such a good long run there were no front seats at 10s. 6d. each, nor any gallery to respond with encouraging applause. The weaknesses of this first appearance are kindly and mercifully hidden from sight, forgotten and forgiven in the triumph of subsequent performances. I am tempted at this point to tell about some of the comments made when the paper came to hand; I was as bad as any of the critics. We thought of the movement as we looked at this miserable-looking sheet and gladly sought refuge in the humour of the situation.

The idea of the paper was first mooted by James O'Donnell Derrick, a young Glasgow Irishman who had joined the reorganised Scottish League shortly after it was formed in 1890, and who now occupies the position of organising secretary for Scotland of the United Irish League. There were many conversations over the proposal, but no great enthusiasm for it. The poverty of the movement in more ways than one, the want of funds, and the absence of anyone with journalistic training or experience, to say nothing of the necessary leisure to devote to such a project, were the main barriers in the way. But Derrick was insistent. He was a man with a vision. He had made up his mind that the need of the movement was a monthly organ. The idea took complete possession of his mind and he made it

the main topic of all discussion at the rooms or wherever he met anyone interested. In Derrick's eyes there was only one barrier to meet and overcome, and that was a reliable guarantee to the printer that his account would be paid. A special fund for the purpose was accordingly added to the financial obligations of the day.

The names of those who were to finance the great adventure for a year were secured, and no doubt to his agreeable surprise the printer was asked to submit a proof of what he could do for the money. The members of the committee particularly concerned with this undertaking were James O'D. Derrick, Wm. McLennan, Norman McLennan, Thomas Cameron, F. S. Mein, David Cassels, John Cassels, Wm. Cassels, David Cassels, jun., Robert Cassels, Wm. Harrison, Wm. Reid, James Busby, and myself. A sub-committee was appointed to nominate the honorary editorial staff. I was not present at this meeting. I was busy at the time, and I must confess a trifle indifferent. I thought the paper a splendid idea, had gladly subscribed my mite to its estimated cost, and persuaded others to do likewise. But I could not see, with the resources at our command, how it could continue. My attitude, if it could be defined, was to wait a while till we became stronger in men and means.

Wm. Cassels was appointed editor. I had this news first I think from himself two or three days following when he came to me and said he could not after due consideration take this post, and added that, in any case, I was the man for it. In an endeavour to make up for my want of faith, I suppose, I agreed to see to the appearance of the first issue. The sub-committee did not meet to ratify this change in the editorial equipment, but individually as I chanced to meet them (we could only meet in those days in the evenings and at the week-ends) there was no complaint, nothing but goodwill and sympathetic co-operation. When the general committee met after the paper had seen the light of day I do not recollect that the question of the editorship of the paper came up for discussion. In fact I never was formally appointed editor of LAND VALUES. The sub-committee had nominated Wm. Cassels and he had handed the post over to me. Everyone knew this; therefore let us get on with the next item of business.

In my experience the Glasgow group of Single Taxers were never much addicted to formalities, provided they got done what they wanted to see done. In my day at least they had little patience with any stickler for doing things according to the constitution. Perhaps they erred in this sometimes; but if the work in hand was put through, or if the effort had been honest effort, even though it failed, there was never much carping criticism about non-observance of the rules.

At this first Committee meeting after the impossible had taken place, after LAND VALUES (or THE SINGLE TAX as it was called until 1902) had first shown itself, I pleaded successfully for four extra pages. The second number was an eight-page sheet. This was a decided improvement, but it was not until the fifth or sixth number appeared that it dawned upon me that with care and resolution the paper had come to stay. At the end of the first twelve months it had assumed proportions. It had grown in importance, and had brought much additional work to the office. The time had come for someone to be set at liberty to

devote his whole time to the work. The difficulty now was one solely of finance. Derrick and others set to work with fresh enthusiasm in this urgent quest for additional financial support. The net outcome of this was a fund which made provision for some six months' business with a paid editor and secretary. I was urged to leave my then employment and take the risk, and I was warned against doing anything so foolish. It was argued that if I accepted the position the growth of the movement would bring the necessary funds to keep going. How the movement grew and how the funds came is another story. I accepted the position and here I am.

In this brief sketch I cannot fail to recall a critical period in the life of the paper. After the 1900 General Election when a reactionary Government was returned and there seemed no hope for a time of any advance, enthusiasm for all progressive causes waned. The League and the paper slipped into debt. We had to free ourselves from this incubus if we were to continue.

A Bazaar was thought of as a means of raising the money. This was held in the Trades Hall, Glasgow, 20th, 21st, and 22nd March, 1902. It achieved its object. The proceeds set the League free of debt and made it possible at the time to continue the propaganda. In this enterprise we had a host of willing workers whose work and gifts made the Bazaar the success it was. There are too many to mention here. At the time we put their names on record. But I must recall, as all concerned will with pleasure, the splendid service rendered by the convener of the ladies' committee, Mrs. Wm. D. Hamilton. She was simply tireless in the work, and much of the success of the Bazaar was due to her zeal, tact and discretion. The Bazaar saved the paper and enabled the League to keep going free from financial worry for fully three years.

How LAND VALUES came to London in March, 1907, and how it has been conducted since, is a chapter in its history which can be culled from its pages as well as from the official reports of the United Committee. The names of its many gifted contributors, who by special service have enabled the paper to reach the proud position it now holds, are on record. More than anyone, I know and feel deeply what these loyal, untiring friends and colleagues have done, especially in recent years, to sustain the interest of our readers in the paper, and to make it speak in plain language to the enemy at the gate. I have had from the beginning the most sympathetic and loyal band of co-workers anyone occupying a similar position could have desired. Without this I am sure I could not have continued. If there be any glory or honour in the work I gladly pass it along to all who have so nobly helped me to make the paper worthy of the cause it seeks to promote.

I could tell a longer story, with fuller, more interesting and more amusing details. Perhaps I shall some other day. One word to those correspondents who have affectionately singled me out in their appreciations for special praise. I could not print what they say though they will understand that I do not undervalue their personal tributes. On the contrary I have received them with feelings of real joy and satisfaction. In the main I have had a glorious time these twenty-one years. The post of honour and trust which my Glasgow colleagues honoured me with in June, 1894, has brought me many friends, some of whom I value beyond words to say. My reward as editor of LAND VALUES has been great indeed.

J. P.

APPRECIATIONS OF "LAND VALUES"

What it has Done and What it may Do

A. C. Campbell (*Ottawa, Canada*).

Though other places have enacted laws more or less on Single Tax lines, it seems to me that the greatest progress in the movement has been made in Great Britain. As Henry George says: "It does not matter how men vote: it does matter how they think." The enactment of a law may reflect only the opinion of a temporary majority of legislators. But public opinion commands majorities and dictates all laws. In spite of all drawbacks, I believe public opinion in Great Britain to be sounder on Single Tax principles than anywhere else.

This result is due, in the main, I believe, to the Briton's inborn love of freedom and justice. But it is due also in no small degree to the education which has been carried on by the regular publication for 21 years of LAND VALUES. No words would be too strong to express my appreciation of LAND VALUES and the way in which it has been conducted. It is the very heart of the propaganda, and it has energised every part of the organisation.

As I see it, there is only one thing to be avoided, and that is a divergence from the line thus far so successfully followed. As the Single Tax comes into practical politics, all sorts of half-measures will be proposed—this is of the nature of things. Let not the light of LAND VALUES be hid under any such bushel, but let the full light of the gospel of Henry George be shed abroad. Let the people of half-measures work with such light as is given them, but let the light of the whole, pure Single Tax be raised higher and higher as the territory over which it is allowed to shine grows wider and wider.

Laws will come if enlightenment is assured.

George Stenhouse (*Glasgow*).

Congratulations to the LAND VALUES Journal on the 21st anniversary of its inception.

The May issue says that the best birthday present one could offer is the name of a new subscriber. Most of my Maryhill friends are already readers of LAND VALUES, but I am pleased to send three new names, and a donation to its funds.

The Journal has a glorious gospel in proclaiming and explaining the truth, justice, freedom and goodness embraced in LAND VALUES, and my best wishes go with it in the future.

Wm. C. Menzies (*Glasgow*).

For many years I have regarded the "taxation of land values" as a fundamental reform that would have the greatest value in the better housing of the people and which therefore demands the support of all housing reformers.

The unprecedented struggle in which we are at present engaged has for a time obliterated party divisions and grave doubts arise as to whether the time is opportune for land reformers pressing their claims for the new system of taxation. But it is well that your organisation and paper should keep the faith alive until the present period of stress has passed and a time of peace has relieved the political tension and allowed of a political reconstruction.

I trust that before long we may reach such a time when our aspirations will be realised and your efforts consummated in a manner worthy of the cause.