

be a fair field and no favor. The influence of land ownership over the lives of the people was little understood and no way was known to correct its evils. The answer came within the memory of men of this generation and it is not surprising that the hoary headed iniquity of all the ages has not yet been overthrown.

With this clear answer, easily understood by all, why rush to socialism to escape the evils of land monopoly? Why rely on trade unionism with its arbitrary methods and selfish purposes when the right way of securing economic justice to all, even those that it appears to injure, is plainly in view?

Why in the interest of socialism destroy the safeguard which gives the Supreme Court the duty of deciding whether laws conform to the principles of the Constitution?

The government should be the protector of the rights of all. Members of Congress should not be subservient to pressure from those who seek special privileges and who would destroy freedom and equality.

We are most fortunate in having a court that will restrain our misrepresentatives from scrapping the Constitution.

We are most fortunate in knowing how social justice can be secured so that we are not tempted to throw away the civilization that has grown up by centuries of effort and reduce men to the senseless slaves of autocracy and despotism under the pretense of giving them economic freedom.

And we are most fortunate in having a programme of social reform which is easy of accomplishment, and which without any violent shock to existing institutions will secure to every citizen the economic freedom under which the progress of civilization to higher and higher achievement is assured.

Who Owns The Land Owns The Wind

YES, wind power may be had almost everywhere, but by landowners only. The wind-mill must be fixed in land as a base. The landless would be as completely disinherited if every want of man could be realized completely by forces generated by wind as they are now. Man is a land animal. Even his activities on the seas are initiated from the shore and if other men own the shore, he is in the power of those other men. If every form of slavery were abolished, the ownership of land with no exercise of the power of the community over it would still make the struggle for liberty the struggle for life. The men who own the earth are able to sell the wind, the light of the sun, the progress of science, and even the right to labor, to those who are disinherited of their right to the earth, and sell it at their own price.

HERBERT QUICK (*Syndicated*)

The Land Question In British Politics

WORK OF THE COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE
SINCE THE ARMISTICE

THE signing of the Armistice on November 11th, 1918, marked the close of one phase of the Great War, and that by no means the most difficult, as subsequent events have shown. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, a Liberal Government was in power in Great Britain, with Mr. Asquith at its head. Though elected as a Free Trade Government, it had shed its principles in this regard ere it gave place in December 1916 to the first of the two Coalition Governments which succeeded it. This is not the place to relate the story of the back-stairs intrigue which resulted in Lloyd George displacing his chief and succeeding to his position as head of the Government. Suffice it for our purpose to say that before this happened, the Asquith Cabinet, of which Lloyd George was an influential member, had outraged every principle of Liberalism. To it we owe the Paris resolutions and the McKenna duties (so named after Reginald McKenna, the Free Trade Chancellor of the Exchequer, in whose budget they were first imposed,) two admittedly protective measures. The former was to become operative only in certain events, but the latter forthwith. These import duties of 33-1-3rd per cent. have just been removed by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Snowden. The Paris resolutions, as it happened, never became operative. This first breach in the walls of the Free Trade citadel was made, not by Protectionists, but by professed Free Traders!

Mr. Lloyd George was in the saddle until December 1918, when, after passing an Act enfranchising at the age of 18 instead of 21, soldiers and others on service with the Forces, he went to the country under circumstances which rendered it quite impossible for more than 25% of the new electors to record their votes, and sought a fresh lease of power on the fraudulent cries of "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make Germany Pay." It has to be recorded with regret that he found a sufficient number of the electorate so deluded as to give him a majority. These have since paid dearly for their folly, but it is doubtful if they quite realize this yet.

A striking feature of the period 1914-22 was the gyrations of politicians of all parties. No rudderless ship drifting helplessly at the mercy of wind and waves ever shifted her course so frequently, so completely, or with such expedition as these manifested in boxing the political compass. Such principles as the average politician had on board (usually a very light load) were speedily jettisoned to the cry "The War has changed everything." Of course, the War could *not* affect fundamental principles,

but it was the acid test which only those passed whose political faith was surely founded upon these.

In the midst of all this confusion the Commonwealth League (now the Commonwealth Land Party) was founded at London in March, 1919. This was not the outcome of a sudden impulse, but the result of many consultations extending over more than two years. The War had caused a revolution in thought and outlook among the people, and a group of Radicals, followers of Henry George, with whom the present writer was privileged to be associated, formed the opinion that the time had come to cease begging for a "Small tax on land values" and to demand the immediate application in full of the principle for which George lived and died. It was hoped that our then colleagues of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values would see this too. Six of our group were members of its Executive, and these repeatedly urged that body to undertake a campaign for a new presentation of the case, but without success. Lest finance should prove an obstacle, a substantial guarantee of fresh income for at least two years was offered, but it became clear that nothing would move the Executive. It was then decided to essay the task apart from existing Leagues, and so the Commonwealth League was founded, not in any spirit of antagonism to older Leagues, but to undertake the work these did not see their way to take in hand. This is the answer to those who talk about "splitting the movement."

Should the C. L. go into the political field as a new Party, or throw its lot with Labor? The Tories were easily ruled out. Both Liberals and Labor were without a Land Policy. The Liberals, however, were discredited on account of their handling of the question before the War. Labor had no "past." Some members of the C. L. had joined the Labor Party, others, with the present writer, chose to remain unattached. It was decided to work with Labor. This of course, while in no way limiting the freedom of the C. L., threw open to our speakers the whole of the Labor platforms. The demand for their services soon taxed the League's resources to the full. On every hand we met the readiest co-operation from the rank and file workers in the Party. A list of Labor speakers was compiled, and over 3,000 free copies of the *Commonweal* were mailed weekly to these for use in their speeches. Shoals of letters came to hand testifying to the value of the paper as a speaker's handbook on land. By making use of the Labor organization we were able to cover the whole country, and to enlist the services of hundreds of active Labor men and women, sowing seed that is now fast ripening unto harvest—a harvest that will be garnered only when the C. L. P. puts up its own candidates. In the five and a half years since the C. L. commenced its work, over 4,700 meetings have been addressed, and 750,000 copies of C. L. publications circulated. The C. L. has raised and spent upon propaganda in the same period £7,200. The meetings cover England, Scotland

and Wales, and more than two million people have heard with approval the spoken word. These particulars relate only to those meetings of which we have personal knowledge. Many others have been, and are still being held, of which we receive no official advice. At none of these meetings was our demand opposed. The foregoing relates to the direct appeal to the general public.

By way of special conferences the C. L. reached a different class of audience, the active men and women who supply the driving force to the Labor Party. At the Annual Conference of the National Labor Party, held at Scarborough, June, 1920, when over 1,100 delegates were in attendance, this being the largest gathering yet held, a resolution embodying the full C. L. demand was unanimously adopted. This was excellent propaganda, but as Conferences have a way of passing resolutions—and then forgetting all about them—steps were promptly taken by the C. L. to see that this did not happen in this case. A number of District Conferences were called for the purpose of explaining the exact nature of the demand that the delegates to the Annual Conference had endorsed. Invitations were sent to 2,700 Labor organizations, with the request that they should appoint their delegates to attend, and vote upon the following resolutions:

UNEMPLOYMENT

This Conference declares that the land belongs by equal and inalienable right to all, and that its private usurpation is an infringement of common right that can no longer be tolerated.

In view of the fact that millions are destined to misery unless the economic system based on land monopoly be transformed, this Conference demands that the common right shall be forthwith asserted and that as from an Appointed Day the Land, with all the natural resources pertaining thereto, shall be deemed to have been restored to the people and that its economic rent shall be collected by and for the people.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

That this Conference calls upon the Executive of the Labor Party to bring to the forefront of Labor policy the following resolution which was unanimously adopted at the Annual Conference of the Party held at Scarborough, June, 1920:—

"This Conference is of opinion that the present system of placing on the localities a large proportion of the cost of meeting our national responsibilities in the matter of education, maintenance of the poor, aged, and infirm, unemployed relief, asylums, infectious hospitals, etc.; and the many optional powers given to Local Authorities, is unjust and oppressive, and further results in many of these urgent obligations being inadequately met, or altogether evaded, to the great detriment of the community. This Conference, therefore, demands that these charges shall be placed on a national fund raised by calling upon all holders of the national property, the land, and the resources of nature resident therein, to pay the economic rent thereof to a common fund through the National Exchequer, and that for administrative purposes the money so raised should be allocated to the Local Authorities in proportion

to the requirements of their districts as determined by population and other essential factors."

As the resolutions were printed upon the invitation, a discussion took place upon them in each of the organizations before the delegate was chosen. In most cases the invitation was accepted, but where by reason of distance or other difficulty no delegate was elected, the organization mostly passed the resolutions and forwarded same to National Headquarters. Many letters approving were received at the offices of the C. L., but not a single one against. Seven of these district conferences were held. Both resolutions were adopted unanimously in the case of six, while at the Norwich Conference a Land Purchase motion moved by the local Labor M. P. could only command five votes, all from the branch that had submitted the motion. This is the one solitary instance of opposition throughout the whole of our campaign. At every meeting the fullest opportunity is always given for questions and discussion. The educational value of such work is beyond computation.

By this time the officials at Labor headquarters were awakening to the C. L. activities. Resolutions were pouring in on them, and they resented being told what they should do. They were quick to see that if they were to retain their hold of the Party machine they must sidetrack the C. L. In this they found ready help from the step-by-steppers of the United Committee. These got busy at headquarters and were instrumental in substituting taxation of land values, thus providing the reactionaries with a defeatist programme. At the Independent Labor Party Annual Conference, April 1923, the C. L. demand was submitted by Bradford, Hanley, Ipswich, Norwich, Cardiff, Chopwell and Swindon branches, after endorsement by seven of the nine Divisional Conferences which cover Great Britain. The resolution was opposed by a step-by-stepper from the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, assisted by an estate agent from Manchester. The motion for rejection was heavily defeated, and the resolution was referred to the Executive on the plea of want of time for adequate discussion. As a result, the Executive has now formulated its Land Policy. "*Taxation of Land Values to provide a fund with which to buy the land.*" We do not know if that step-by-stepper is satisfied with this result, but it is certain that the Land Lords are.

In June 1923, the full demand of the C. L. was submitted to the Annual Conference of the National Labor Party by Gloucester, Hampstead, Birmingham, Wandsworth, Northampton, and North St. Pancras Branches, and by the Electrical Trades Union. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, then Leader of the Opposition, was sent for to plead with the Conference not to vote upon so grave a matter, but to refer it to the Executive. This was done. Result—Labor now has a Land Policy. It is the same as that of the I. L. P. With the adoption of this Policy the association of the C. L. with the Labor Party came to an end.

Our speakers were constantly being asked what they would advise their hearers to do to get the demand put through. The reply was: If already a member of the Labor Party, agitate inside; if not, but prepared to join, then do so with the fixed determination to get the C. L. demand adopted by the Party. In view of the vicious "tax and buy" policy foisted upon the Party by its controllers, we can no longer tender such advice. Our work in that connection is done. But the end is not yet. Whereas in 1919 neither of the Parties had a Land Policy, today all three have one. Few political meetings now take place at which there is not some mention of land. Liberals and Laborites vie with each other in offering taxation of land values. We have heard them quarrelling as to which Party promised this first. Even Tory speakers declare that they are not prepared to defend the present land system. Much nonsense is, of course, being talked, but even that is better than the conspiracy of silence that has obtained for so long. Out of this discussion is coming a wider understanding, and new adherents to our cause are daily being won. Were the Commonwealth League to close down now it would have more than justified its existence in the accomplishment of the work but briefly recorded above.

But there will be no closing down. A fresh chapter opened with the gathering in London on August 28th, 1923, at which the decision was taken to enter the political field as a separate and distinct Party.

As to the Commonwealth Land Party, plans for action have been made, and these will be put into effect in due course. The *Commonweal* is steadily gaining ground, and finds many readers behind doors now closed to our speakers in consequence of the change. In spite of the falling off in the demand from Labor organizations for C. L. P. speakers, we have to record 174 meetings during the last twelve months.

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

Joseph Pulitzer Was Right

MR. ARTHUR BRISBANE, dispenser of canned commonplaces for the moron readers of the *New York Evening Journal*, quotes Joseph Pulitzer as saying to him: "If you ever get any money you will find that your opinions will change." Quite true. Mr. Brisbane has money, and his once radical views have been modified to suit that owner of many millions, William Randolph Hearst. This is the same Mr. Brisbane who once expressed the wish "that God so deal with me if I ever forsake the cause of the poor and oppressed." However, he is consistent. His God is money, and he is getting it in large chunks. That is why his opinions have changed.

WE do not object when clergymen urge Love as a solution of the Labor problem, but wish they would just mention Thinking and Courage to Act.