

A prominent real estate dealer, who has just retired as Chairman of the Scranton Board of Assessors, writes:

"The Pittsburgh plan has worked very satisfactorily in Scranton, particularly with the backbone of the community, the owners of homes. It is also appreciated by apartment house owners and by business men who had faith enough in Scranton to invest great sums of money in buildings that are adornments of the town.

"It works displeasure to the builders of 'tax-payers,' the construction of which, however, our zoning ordinance adopted by the last administration, has effectively banned for the future.

"It has operated most equitably in the taxing of coal lands. The coal companies, who are permanently removing from under this city its basic wealth, have, by the operation of the Pittsburgh plan, to leave here a larger portion of that wealth than they would under the old method."

—P. R. WILLIAMS

"**T**HE value of land rises as population grows and national necessities increase, not in proportion to the application of capital and labor, but through the development of the community itself. You have a form of value, therefore, which is conveniently called 'site value,' entirely independent of buildings and improvements and of other things which non-owners and occupiers have done to increase its value—a source of value created by the community, which the community is entitled to appropriate itself . . . In almost every aspect of our social and industrial problem you are brought back sooner or later, to that fundamental fact."—MR. H. H. ASQUITH (now Lord Oxford).

"**U**NDER our present system improvements are penalized. If a shopkeeper extends his premises, or a farmer increases the value of his farm by erecting improved buildings or draining the land, the rates are immediately increased. That is a tax on private enterprise with which I do NOT agree. Private enterprise of a character not subversive of the public good I would encourage. It little becomes the wealthy landlords who oppose the shifting of the burden of rates from houses, factories, shops and machinery on to the value of the land to criticise the speech I made at Newport. Why? I recently attached my name to a Bill for the taking of rates off machinery. Is that an attack on private enterprise?"—MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

"**T**HE burden of municipal taxation should be so shifted as to put the weight of taxation upon the unearned rise in value of the land itself, rather than upon the improvements."—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

"**T**HE taxation of land values is really no interference with security—it only means that that which does gain by the rates should contribute to the rates."—A. J. BALFOUR.

England

CAMPAIGNING IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

IN the fitful light of a flickering oil-lamp we faced an audience of agricultural workers in the Dorset village of Sixpenny Handley on a recent Saturday night. Application had been made for the use of the village school-room, but the Vicar, a Liberal we were told, refused to permit its use for so revolutionary a purpose as a meeting of the Commonwealth Land Party. There being no other place available it seemed the opponents of Justice might succeed in preventing our message reaching the villagers, when one more courageous than his fellows, because more independent economically, offered us the use of a barn he was using for the preparation and storage of pig's meat.

The barn was originally the Liberal Hall of the village, and even now bears upon its inner walls some of the posters issued by that political party way back before the Great War. There were no seats in the hall, for it had long ceased to be used as a place of meeting, but a resourceful farmer loaded a lorry with sawn planks and boxes to rest them upon, and willing helpers soon arranged these across the room. The pigs' meat, in sacks, was stacked along one wall, affording softer seats for those of our audience who had no objection to the decided odour which floated around, lingering like the scents of Araby—yet most unlike!

Promptly at the appointed hour, the villagers streamed in, and soon the hall was comfortably filled. Our Chairman, a local farmer-owner who in facing cheerfully the social ostracism that is the certain fate of any bold enough to challenge the existing order on the English countryside, opened the proceedings, and made quite clear to the rural workers present the root cause of their economic bondage. Without qualification or reservation, he expounded the full C. L. P. policy and urged them to support the demand we make for the immediate restoration of the land without any compensation. Such a bold advocacy from one known to them all as a farmer-owner made a deep impression, and prepared the way for the keen and appreciative attention given to ourselves. Questions followed, and these showed how well our hearers had grasped the message. The meeting lasted about two hours, and seldom have we seen a more attentive audience.

We could not help but recall to mind the retort made by that sturdy old Radical, Thomas Spence, who, in 1793 published his weekly paper entitled, "Pigs' Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude," in answer to Edmund Burke's sneer at the people as a "swinish multitude," The purpose of the publication was, in Spence's words, "To promote among the laboring part of mankind proper ideas of their situation, of their importance, their rights." Of course, Spence was imprisoned; but on getting out he resumed publication—but that is another story which,

with the Editor's permission, we may be permitted to tell in a later article.

Before leaving the quaintly-named village, it may interest American readers to learn the following story, vouched for as true.

A kindly motorist proceeding along the Blanford-Salisbury road overtook quite close to the village a laborer carrying a heavy load. He offered the man a lift, but this was declined, the laborer remarking: "I am only going to Sixpenny Handley."

"Sixpenny Handley!" said the motorist. "Woolworth's country seat, I suppose."

Next day, Sunday, we found ourselves facing a large audience of men assembled in the very respectable and Tory city of Salisbury where, under the shadow of its Cathedral which thousands of visitors from America yearly go to see and admire, slums as horrible, and poverty as degrading, as any to be found in industrial town exists. The gathering was a Brotherhood meeting at which "propaganda and politics" are forbidden, to quote the letter of the Secretary in asking us to speak there. Our subject, their choice, was "Our Daily Bread." We asked, and were allowed, to read the lesson—choosing the first twelve verses of the fifth chapter of Nehemiah. During the reading some faint cheers were heard. As our address proceeded, the applause grew louder until the men let themselves go as they would do at a foot-ball match, for instance. Rarely have we seen a more enthusiastic audience; some declaring it was like a religious revival meeting. Questions followed—a very unusual thing at such gatherings—and among those sent up came one from the secretary himself, who asked how we would propose to bring about the restoration of the land. We passed the question to the Chairman, who promptly ruled that we were at liberty to answer it. We did so, setting forth the C. L. P. demand, and this was received with loud and prolonged applause. So keenly interested were the men present that they all went home to cold tea, the meeting having continued some forty minutes beyond the usual hour.

The same evening we experienced yet another change. This time we had to address a public meeting at Bemerton, a suburb of Salisbury, held in the Labor Hall and organized by the local Party. This, we know, would be specially interesting, for there had been strong opposition to the C. L. P. policy put up by certain of the official Labor leaders in the division. These felt themselves bound to support the accepted Land Policy of their headquarters, and fought our C. L. P. colleagues at Salisbury for more than a year past. So keen had been the hostility to our proposal—merely because it is "not in the policy of the Party"—that the Chairman of the Divisional organization had excused himself from taking the chair at the meeting, as was his right, on the ground that he wished to be in the body of the hall to oppose our plan.

"Public Property vs. Private Property" was the subject announced. The difference between these two forms of property was stressed, the claim to "own" any part of the gifts of Nature as private property was denied, while at the same time the claim of the State or taxing authority to take from the laborer any part of the product of his labor was shown to be a violation of the real right of private property, since it involved a denial of the right of the laborer to the whole of his reward. The Labor "Land Policy" was examined and contrasted with that of the C. L. P.; then came questions. The first to rise was the chairman of the Party, in substance this is what he said: "Comrade Chairman, I have a confession to make. I hope no one will think me a coward, but after what we have heard tonight I must admit that I have been in the wrong. As you know, I have opposed the speaker's policy, but I now realize my mistake. The Labor Policy is no good, and we must tell headquarters so. I suggest we send a resolution endorsing the Commonwealth Land Policy. One question I would like to ask the speaker is this: What sort of candidate are we to send to Parliament to do this thing?"

After the cheers had ceased we replied: "No one could accuse our friend of cowardice, for it requires a deal of moral courage for one who has taken a prominent part in opposing a certain course to rise in the presence of those who had followed his lead and admit so unreservedly that he has been mistaken. Such a one possessed in a marked degree the two essential qualities of courage and honesty requisite in candidates who should go to parliament to carry through our just proposal."

Another Sunday evening found us in the midst of an industrial area. This time, Hanley, an important town in the borough of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, was selected.

The evening was fine, and some five counter-attractions offered within easy reach of the hall. About five hundred miners, iron-workers, potters and such-like were present and after full opportunity for questions and opposition, passed without a single dissentient vote the following resolution which was submitted for the express purpose of testing the matter in open meeting:

"This meeting declares that all men have an equal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: that no man can live without land, and, therefore, all men are entitled to the free and equal use of the earth. To ensure this right of equal use, it is further declared that the first duty of government is to collect from all holders of land the full annual rent of their holding, and to apply this Common Land Rent Fund in payment of all necessary public services, thus abolishing all rates and taxes. This meeting further resolves constantly to work for the immediate restoration of our land."

Upon a later Sunday night the same resolution was submitted to an open public meeting at Battersea, a London Borough, and carried in a similar manner by an audience of quite another type.

Guilford, the County Town of Surrey, afforded another opportunity to test the feeling of the rank and file of the Labor Party. The Trades Council and Labor Party invited us to speak at their usual Sunday night public meeting. Here the first question was: "Can you make the Labor Party adopt your policy?" "No, but you can," we replied amid cheers. Questions were many and good and the opinion was freely expressed that the Labor Land policy was no good.

Another test we make is in presenting our full demand to audiences in our London parks on fine Sundays. Here meetings go on all day, and no chance of putting it before the people is lost by C. L. P. speakers. The proceedings at such meetings are less formal than at indoor meetings, but our speakers find them the more interesting on that account. One never knows who may be present. In Hyde Park, for instance, we have been not a little amused to recognize among our crowd some well known Liberal or other member of the House of Lords, himself a Land Lord; few of those standing around him ever suspecting his identity. It is our invariable practice to invite those who think they do not approve the C. L. P. policy to take the platform and tell the audience why. Very rarely is this invitation accepted; but we do get many opportunities for clearing away supposed difficulties when replying to our questions.

At these gatherings we are subject to interruption from certain opponents who, knowing they have no answer, seek to create diversion and draw away the crowd. This mistaken tactic invariably fails, for it offends the sense of fair play.

Dull-witted, illiterate, intolerant and grossly offensive, these Communists repeat stock phrases, parrot-like, without understanding what they mean. Tact on the speaker's part, combined with the good sense of the crowd, serves to cause these interrupters to beat a retreat; they feel that they are beaten, but do not know how or why.

It is only when some equally stupid Fascists are present that any danger of conflict arises, but even then judicious handling by the speaker usually ends in these, too, retiring, dimly wondering what has happened. Where trouble occurs it is too often fomented by opponents of free speech who hope by such means to provide the authorities with a pretext for abolishing such gatherings.

Another test of public opinion was made at Farnham in the heart of rural Surrey, but within three miles of Aldershot, the greatest military centre in Britain. Some keen supporters in this district had urged the holding of a conference to which all labor organizations should be invited to send their delegates for the purpose of discussing the C. L. P. proposal. We had our doubts, feeling sure the official element would boycott the Conference; but it was decided to make the experiment. At least it would show the rank and file of the Labor Party how scared their leaders are lest we should sweep the board.

Over two hundred invitations were sent out, with the result that we had foreseen; only eight delegates were appointed—in one case the decision to appoint being carried by the casting vote of the chairman of the Committee. But the reading of the invitation, and the resolution proposed for discussion, brought the question before the notice of the various organizations and led to a number of members attending out of curiosity to see what it was their officials were afraid of. These discussions served once more to emphasize the split in the British Labor Party, over the land, while at the same time a further advertisement for the C. L. P. plan was secured.

At the Conference itself the following motion was submitted as a basis for discussion: "This Conference declares that the land belongs by equal and inalienable right to all, and that its private usurpation is an infringement of the common right than 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 on an appointed date the land, with-all its natural resources appertaining thereto, shall be deemed to have been restored to the people, and that its economic rent shall be collected into a common Land-Rent Fund from which the cost of all public services shall be met, thus making possible the entire abolition of the present intolerable burdens of rates and taxes, freeing the industry, enterprise and necessities of the people from the blight of unjust taxation which now operates to raise the cost of living and, by restricting production, adds to the unemployment caused by the withholding from use of the one and only source of all productive employment, the land."

Although official Labor lacks the courage to face a comparison of the respective policies of that party and the C. L. P., the Conference was a success, for the discussion was keen and the questions all to the point. Full and excellent reports of the proceedings were published in the two local newspapers and in each case the C. L. P. demand was clearly stated, thus bringing it to the notice of many thousands of people who could not be reached by any other means.

This will illustrate the mentality of the average politician; the following was moved by the present writer before the Farnham Wranglers' Debating Society recently: "That all productive employment is just the use of natural resources (land) for the satisfaction of human needs, therefore the claim of some to 'own' as their private property any part of those natural resources operates as the first cause of unemployment."

Our opponent was a well-known local Liberal who began by admitting that the statement in the motion was a "self evident truth to which he could answer Yes and No"! Having thus looked the motion squarely in the face he promptly hurried by on the other side of the road and talked about the Liberal Land Policy and anything and

everything but the motion before the meeting. It was a confession of utter inability to deny the truth. A Tory speaker followed, saying he was a printer, and was "not concerned with land". On its being pointed out to him that the type, ink, paper, machines, forms, sticks, galleys and all that he used as a printer were just so much land plus human labor, he seemed surprised—but voted against the motion. Another Liberal said he had nothing to do with any moral issue involved, so he too voted against.

We were not sorry, for we have no use for those whose politics are divorced from the Moral Law.

In connection with all these meetings a mild publicity is obtained by means of posters, handbills, and notices in the Local Press. The full demand of the C. L. P. is set out every time, so that hundreds of thousands of people are coming to know of it, and are being unconsciously prepared to vote for it when the opportunity is afforded.

But for the slavish notion of "loyalty to party", it would not be possible for the Labor or Liberal land policies to get a vote.

At a recent Conference called by the Land Nationalization Society, and addressed by two Labor ex-Cabinet Ministers, Phillip Snowden and Noel Buxton, delegate after delegate rose and denounced the proposal to compensate Land Lords, and called for the adoption of the C. L. P. policy. In spite of this, the "purchase" resolution was carried by the tame vote of delegates too timid to oppose the platform. That in passing, however, and as a direct result of the increasing discussion which the C. L. P. are provoking.

The future is full of hope. The injustice of Land Monopoly is doomed, and it will go without compensation, just as did the lesser crime of chattel-slavery before the awakened conscience of the common people.

The task of the C. L. P. in all lands is to awaken that conscience, and there is no better way to that end than by talking—in season and out of season.

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

EDITORIAL NOTE

In connection with Mr. Peace's report of these inspiring meetings it is interesting to note that the *Aldershot Gazette* and *Guildford Times* gave a two column report and the *Alton Mail* an account of almost five columns, closely printed, of the speeches, including the questions and answers.

"THE first and paramount consideration in taxation should be equality of burden, and only by taking the rental value of the land in taxes can such equality be secured."—TOM L. JOHNSON, late Mayor of Cleveland.

"THE value that attaches to land by reason of its location was produced by the people; it belongs to the people; and if the people are wise to their own best interests, they will take it by taxation."—PROFESSOR EARL BARNES, University of Pennsylvania.

Australia

ONE of the most memorable events of the past year, from a Single Tax point of view, was the celebration in Sydney of the 87th anniversary of the birth of Henry George, which was generally acknowledged to have been the best commemoration for some years. It was noteworthy for three very interesting addresses. The newly elected President of the Free Trade and Land Value League, Mr. C. R. Swan, compared the study of George's philosophy after local politics to escaping from a musty prison and standing on a mountain top with glorious views in all directions. Henry George, he said, took his readers on to intellectual heights where the way of justice could be plainly seen. It was true that, compared with the full realization of George's principles, but little had yet been achieved, but all great movements and truths moved slowly—the truth was germinating and would ultimately prevail. When visiting Henry George's grave in New York two years ago he noticed the words by Francis Bacon "There is no pleasure comparable to standing upon the vantage ground of truth," which were a fitting prelude to such a visit, as George's whole life had been a fight for truth. He strongly recommended all who took an interest in economic problems to read "Progress and Poverty," which was one of the most remarkable books of any age. "The philosophy of George was simple, was just, was human, and above all was eminently practicable. It co-ordinated with man's vital needs and synchronized with the laws of nature. This was all powerfully and eloquently expounded by Henry George, and we could pay him no greater tribute, or serve humanity better, than by dedicating ourselves to his noble philosophy."

Mr. Walter Finch, the recently appointed assistant secretary to the League, said that Henry George saw not merely a star but the divine heavenly ray when he wrote—"Nothing short of making land common property can permanently relieve poverty and check the tendency of wages to the starvation point." Of course as George had pointed out, the method was, to tax the value of land into the public treasury, and not disturb individuals in their *possession* of land. Although the war was not responsible for the present lamentable state of things, poverty having accompanied progress long before August, 1914, millions of precious lives would have been saved, unutterable anguish, mental and physical, had the land owner not been allowed to evade his original responsibility of conducting wars at his own expense, and doing the fighting himself. "Of all creation," said the speaker, "man is the only creature that is so backward as to be content to starve in a land of plenty, to thirst in the presence of living streams, and to perish of neglect in a world so amply endowed with all the heart can wish for."

After briefly dealing with some of the proposed cures for the social chaos, he concluded by saying that Henry George's whole life was an inspiration for us to continue