

Henry the VIII's Land Policy—his Form IV.—is then briefly considered by our writer. About one third of the land of England had passed into the hands of religious houses, a portion of the revenue of which was certainly used for some public purpose. That there were abuses, he frankly admits, "no sane critic of monastic institutions will deny." But, as he well says, "the remedy lay in reform, and, where there was irremediable wrong, in the transfer of monastic lands from their original public purpose to some other equally national advantage." Such a remedy, however, was quite beyond the purview of the rapacious aristocracy—which our author would have us believe was a bureaucracy—of the Tudor Court. And so "the immense monastic properties—a public inheritance passed into the hands, not of the nation, but of the Tudor officials and their satellites." He sums up the results on the masses of the people of Henry VIII's Land Policy in the following true words:—"Thrust apart from the Old Brown Mother who had fed them, Englishmen by the thousand roamed the country in search of food. They asked for land, for work, for food. The Tudor officials replied with the chain, the branding-iron, and the gallows. Finally, in 1603, the Elizabethan Poor Law was enacted, and the responsibility for the maintenance of the destitute Englishman was placed, not upon those who had seized his land and caused his poverty, but upon the nation."

The post-Restoration Land Policy was devoted to two purposes; to enfranchise land-holding from the old Feudal Dues, imposing in their stead taxation upon the food, drink, clothing, earnings and industry of the landless masses of the people; and, to Enclosure Acts. To use the words of our writer:—

When the Civil War and the revolution had passed away it was discovered that the Tudor confiscation had not been thoroughly done. The common lands remained the property of the people. This was a state of things that could not possibly be tolerated. The reign of George I. saw the commencement of the enclosure of 'waste' lands—not for the benefit of the nation, but for the private enrichment of those who had 'influence.' . . . The late Mr. Fawcett estimated that up to 1845 no less than 7,000,000 acres was the aggregate of Grab III. To drive the labourer's cow off the common lands and to divert 7,000,000 acres of public property was the feat accomplished by the land enclosure 'commissioners.' Early in the nineteenth century, as a result of this and other causes, the landless labourer was left to face the problem presented by a wage of 7s. a week with the 4 lb. loaf at 2s.

It is amongst such Land Policies that the writer in THE FINANCIAL NEWS ventures to class the Land Policy of 1909, which calls for the filling up of Form IV., and which not only promises to reveal to the nation the capital or selling value of their natural inheritance—their Old Brown Mother—but also to appropriate at least a portion thereof for the joint and common benefit of the Nation as a whole. But such a contention is only likely to deceive and influence those who wish to be deceived. The Land Policy of 1909 is not, as he contends, "to send our Old Brown Mother into captivity," but to redeem her from captivity. It is not true, as he contends, that "under the Government Scheme the Nation's Land will become the permanent endowment of the official class, as a class." To-day it is the permanent endowment of the landed class, as a class. The Government scheme, when carried to its logical conclusion, as it will be, will make it the permanent endowment of the whole nation, to whom, according to equity, reason, and constitutional law it rightfully belongs. When the people come to understand the scheme, they will endorse it, and, as he advised, will emphatically resist any endeavour "to see the Old Brown Mother sent into captivity again."

L. H. B.

## LANDLORDISM IN ULTIMA THULE.

Orkney and Shetland were colonised before the tenth century of our era by Vikings, who brought with them the land system current throughout Scandinavia. Thus the islands were peopled by an amphibious race of Udallers or yeomen, whose mainstay was fishing, eked out by the produce of rent-free holdings. Extensive common lands, termed *Scats*, furnished abundant peat for fuel, besides pasturage for their tiny ponies, and sheep identical with the wild variety still found in Scandinavia. Justice was administered by *Foudes*, or magistrates, elected annually by the Udallers, who also met periodically to try grave offences.

The golden age of Ultima Thule ended when the islands were bestowed on King James III. of Scotland with his bride, the Princess of Denmark; the King of that ilk stipulating that his erstwhile subjects should retain all their own laws and customs inviolate. Regardless of their plighted troth, the Scottish Kings imposed feudalism on Orkney and Shetland, and it was then a hollow sham. The ancient nexus, which linked lord and vassal in bonds of mutual help, had been destroyed by commercialism, which grew stronger after the Reformation. Under its influence the nobles' one thought was to screw as much as possible out of their tenants, and lavish the result on ostentation.

Ultima Thule was handed over to a gang of harpies the worst of whom belonged to a spurious branch of the royal house: Mary Queen of Scots' half-brother, "Lord" Robert Stewart, Abbot of Holyrood, was created Earl of Orkney, and became feudal overlord of the whole archipelago. He brought with him a horde of greedy followers, who were quartered on the unhappy population; Udallers were converted into tenants-at-will; the local measures by which they rated the amount of rent paid in kind were illegally enhanced. If Earl Robert chastised the islanders with whips, his son Patrick, known as the "Scourge of Orkney," employed scorpions. He built splendid residences at Kirkwall and Scalloway with forced labour, confiscated Udal tenures wholesale, and found willing agents in the *Foudes*, whose nomination he usurped. At length the wicked Earl Patrick paid a penalty for his innumerable crimes on the scaffold at Edinburgh; but the evil that he did lived after him. A machinery of oppression was set in motion and is working at the present day. By dint of bogus royal grants, and charters obtained by bribery, the islands fell under the thrall of a knot of lairds, who pursued the policy of confiscation inaugurated by Earls Robert and Patrick. In many cases Udallers were induced to sell their birth-right for a small cash payment, on an undertaking that they should not be disturbed during their life-time; in others recourse was had to downright fraud. For instance, a Udaller of Unst was invited by his laird to supper, plied with whisky, and made to sign a conveyance of his holding from which his daughters were ruthlessly ejected. Commons or *Scats* were appropriated wholesale, sometimes by legal means, often at the laird's own sweet will.

Then came a time when "improving" landlords throughout the north of Scotland considered that sheep would pay them better than crofters. Evictions in Sutherland and Ross-shire deprived Scotland of her sturdiest sons, and converted their farms into sheep-runs, grouse moors, or deer forests. This unpatriotic example was followed by the lairds of Ultima Thule. The fertile island of Fetlar was almost depopulated by its owner; from Burrarfirth in Unst, 29 families were ejected. Every knoll and valley in the island is studded with ruined farmhouses, homes of a vanished race. Great Britain is the poorer by its disappearance.

Shetlanders are intrepid seamen. The race, indeed, exhibits many of the best characteristics of the Celtic and

Scandinavian stocks. The men of Shetland and Orkney are industrious and warm-hearted; nor has Calvinism succeeded in killing their inborn sense of humour. The stranger is made welcome at the humblest croft though it is often as miserable as the Irish cabins of last century. Herring-harvesters have returned to the islands; but the men who should have reaped the harvest of the sea have fled to Canada. The women-folk who remain card and spin the fleece from the little sheep, which they knit into exquisite fabrics, resembling lace rather than woollen goods. Owing to the enclosure of commons and the introduction of black-faced sheep from Scotland, the native variety is giving up the struggle for life. In a decade or two Shetland knitting will be a lost art.

Every visitor to Ultima Thule whose judgment is not warped by class prejudice will admit that security of tenure with agricultural co-operation would convert Shetland into a garden. Some of the crofts are already miracles of successful industry, yielding heavy crops of potatoes and oats to spade cultivation. There are rich valleys lying desolate which would support hundreds of families in comfort. The islanders' most pressing need is land enough to occupy their enforced leisure while the sea is too rough for their little craft, and common rights for their sheep and ponies.

FRANCIS H. SKRINE.

## HERE AND THERE.

He was afraid that if political things went on as at present the land taxes would go on, and Form IV. would go on. The policy of the Conservative Party, he had confidence in saying, would be to repeal these taxes, dismiss the valuers, and tear up every shred of paper connected with Form IV. (Applause).—Mr. R. A. Sanders, M.P., at Bridgwater, October 3rd.

Mr. P. MacNaughton, Edinburgh, speaking at the Town Planning Conference on October 11th, said:—

The ideal was to have as much light and air as possible for the inhabitants of a great city. Before they could obtain those they required to get land cheap, and that difficulty was almost insurmountable.

Mr. MacNaughton should spend an hour in considering what the Taxation of Land Values would do with that difficulty.

In a small pamphlet on "Hints on Filling up the New Forms," Mr. Arthur W. Brackett, F.S.I. (Messrs. William Brackett and Sons), gives the following formula for ascertaining assessable site value:—Let  $g$  equal gross value;  $f$  equal full site value;  $t$  equal total value; and  $a$  equal assessable site value; then  $a = t - (g - f)$ . He adds that "it would apply to most urban properties, but further deductions are allowed for capital expenditure, &c., in certain cases."

Readers who desire to become fully acquainted with the proposals and the exciting and delusive language of the Committee on the Taxation of Land Values should obtain from the secretary, at Broad Sanctuary Chambers, 20, Tothill Street, Westminster, a batch of their pamphlets and leaflets. This precious literature is full of the most grotesque falsehoods in relation to land-owners, and the most specious attempts to enlist the support of tenant-farmers and labourers by unscrupulous misrepresentations.—"A Small Landowner," in THE LAND AGENTS' RECORD.

We cannot see that the policy of the Directors of the Company in developing the passenger traffic in the zone close in to London is justifiable. The public in the Company's residential district near London is not really benefited by the excellent and cheap all-night service of trains provided, since what the public gains by cheap transportation it loses in the extra cost of living caused by the higher rentals which this very cheap all-night service has brought about. And the better and cheaper the railway makes the service the higher the rents will rise, thus benefiting neither the railway nor the public, but only the landlords.—(From the ECONOMIST, October 8th.)

Mr. F. H. Fawkes, replying to a question for the Small Holdings Committee at a meeting of the West Riding County Council on October 12th, said that if they went to a certain place and enquired about the land, the price immediately went up.

Earl de la Warr has written to his tenants intimating that he intends to sell the greater part of his Buckhurst Estate. He gives the tenants the first offer of purchasing the farms. The estate has been in the possession of the Sackville family since the time of William the Conqueror.

The Welsh Committee for the Taxation of Land Values are doing effective work. They have a powerful ally in the SOUTH WALES DAILY NEWS. In the issue of October 11th a clever and racy letter on "Form IV," by W. Beddoe Rees, the honorary secretary of the Committee, appeared.

The Budget had been accepted as any quack medicine would be if it were advertised sufficiently, only it had been advertised under a wrong name. (Laughter.)

It was advertised as a healing remedy, but should have been advertised as a blister. (Laughter and applause).—J. G. Butcher, K.C., M.P., at York.

"It is both obvious and uncontradicted that the nationalisation of the land, the forcible distribution of wealth, coupled with the destruction of the political power of those who have a real and permanent stake in the welfare of the country—these are the ultimate objects of the small but determined and relentless group who have gained such a notable victory in placing the valuation clauses of the Finance Act upon the Statute Book."—THE FIELD, September 17th, 1910.

At a meeting of the North Riding Education Committee, held on October 11th, during the discussion concerning the purchase of land for a school, Mr. E. R. Turton suggested a sporting offer to the owner: he said no doubt the owner, like many others, had received Form 4. In their offer the Committee might arrange to give the gentleman exactly the same amount per acre that he had put down as site value on Form 4. If it was in excess of the sum already recommended, then the Committee must be prepared to pay it; if, on the other hand, Form 4 showed less than that amount, then the ratepayers should have the right of that advantage.

At a recent meeting of the Spalding Rural District Council, when applications were received from Parish Councils for the adoption of the Housing Act, the Rev. W. M. Benson, Vicar of Deeping St. Nicholas, said that in his parish, if cottages could be obtained, they had at least twelve young men who would marry at once. As it was they were leaving for the towns, and a scarcity of labour resulted.

Who were the instigators of these taxes? They were a body called the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, and practically the whole of its income was derived from Mr. Joseph Fels, who was not even a British subject, but an American millionaire who imported naptha soap free of duty into this country. (Laughter and cheers.) It was Mr. Fels's money that had brought these taxes upon the country. Mr. Fels was giving the Committee £5,000 a year for five years, and so far as he could see the Committee had an income not much larger than £7,000 a year.—Mr. E. G. Pretyman, M.P., at York, Oct. 18th.

Mr. Stanley Johnson, the Unionist candidate at Walthamstow, was heckled on October 18th about the taxes on Land Values. He said he objected to them, but would not advocate their repeal.

Heckler: What about the Land Union?

Mr. Johnson: I don't know anything about the Land Union. I am not connected with them. I don't want them in Walthamstow, and I'll see that I don't have them.

It is as well, said the TIMES correspondent, to recognize that a campaign against the Land Taxes would not help Mr. Johnson at the present juncture.—WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.