

Changing Parties in England

Mr. P. R. Stubbings, editor of Land & Liberty, London, wrote as follows to Robert Clancy, New York director, regarding recent political developments in England. . . .

THE great land debate in Parliament was an awful flop. The press has lost interest although every now and then a particular land sale is too sensational for them to ignore. But pressure for rating reform is building up quietly and steadily all the time and our campaign is receiving free publicity in the most unlikely quarters. The latest is a report in the London Conservative party's monthly newspaper. They put our case fairly and then offer a few weak, silly objections which, I imagine, will not cut much ice.

So many people and organizations are now interested that even if we folded up our tents I believe the land value rating question would still push its way forward into discussion. However, far from packing up, we are doing whatever we can to help matters forward. I wish I could feel as optimistic about our chances of getting a national tax on land values.

The Liberal News Chronicle and its evening sister, The Star, have packed up. Dickens once was editor. The paper had more than a million circulation, but in these monopolistic days that is not enough. Since it kept quiet about protectionism it deserved its fate but it is a sad business for democracy. However the New Daily is profiting by the collapse. With a second hand plant and total staff of only 74—from editor to messenger boy—they were able to start an evening edition the day The Star failed

to appear. The Chronicle and The Star, incidentally, had a joint staff of considerably more than 300, of whom more than 300 were editorial. The New Daily, after dropping them for a while, is running free ads for Land & Liberty which are proving most fruitful. We are reaching many who otherwise would be beyond our reach.

The Liberal party seems to be growing in members. But it has virtually abandoned free trade and apart from our own friends within it displays no enthusiasm for or understanding of land value taxation. Many of our people—including Stephen Martin—find they can stomach it no longer, and are now in the political wilderness. The Labor party is finished. We have to pin our hopes, it seems to me, on the "liberal element" in the Conservative party—men like the Chancellor who resigned, Peter Thorneycroft—and on the People's League. It, and the New Daily, may be able to support the liberal element against the greedy reactionaries.

At present and for some time to come Britain is without an effective opposition and that is pretty frightening. Mr. S. W. Alexander's City Press continues to expand and perhaps he and his group may have some beneficial effect on society. The Free Trade Union is making rapid headway and I am proud, as are many other Georgists, to belong to it. It is an effective, hardhitting, adventurous, no-nonsense free trade body.