

temporaneous record of it is found in the ordinary sources of history. That Budget is the thin end of a great wedge. Its aim and effect is by means of taxation to take the value of land for public revenues. Not because land value is private property and therefore ought to contribute to public uses along with other private property, which is the American idea, but because land value is public property and therefore ought to go to public uses, which was Henry George's idea.

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So far, this Budget is radical and revolutionary with reference to public revenues, but that is not all. It is radical and revolutionary with reference also to private rights. At the core it is a vigorous practical expression of the popular shibboleth regarding it, that "God made the land for the people." By taxing land values because they are public property, this Budget opens the way for taxing them more and more heavily, and labor less and less so, until approximately all ground rent will go to society as a social income. At the same time, desirable land out of use and producing no ground rent, and land only partly in use and producing less than full ground rent, will, by the development of that Budget, be forced into its best use, thereby at once adding to the social income from ground rent, and, through the consequent multiplication of opportunities for labor, increasing individual incomes for useful work.

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For this accomplishment Mr. Asquith seems to us to be entitled to more credit and gratitude than he has been getting. As responsible head of the Ministry, with a cabinet partly radical and partly whig to hold together in order that anything at all could be done, his political task might have been easier in the direction of reaction than of progress. At any rate, it was not easy to marshal the conflicting groups in a solid mass behind the progressive program, nor a happy experience to bear meanwhile in silence with the misunderstandings of those whose purposes he was trying to bring to realization. It was necessary, however, that he should patiently endure this experience. Thus and thus alone, perhaps, could the whigs in his political following be whipped into line. The whig Liberals of his cabinet had to be made to understand that Mr. Asquith's keynote speech of last December must be redeemed or their own political careers would end. And Mr. Asquith was both patient and true. He appears now to wear worthily the mantle of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman whose policies

he and the other, progressive members of the Ministry are carrying out. Every pledge of his keynote speech is in process of redemption in good faith and efficiently. His tactics thus far are justified by the outcome, and the outcome inspires confidence in his good faith and good sense for the future.

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### The Land Question in Australia.

An idea of the progressive character of the Labor victory at the Commonwealth elections in Australia (p. 368) may be got from the campaign literature of the Labor party, some of which is now at hand. In the March 16 issue of "The Worker," of Sydney, official organ of the trade unions and labor organizations, and a vigorous adversary of the Fusion which the Labor party defeated, we find this pronounced declaration against tariff taxes on necessaries:

Who should pay? Competent authorities admit that the Commonwealth Government will have a deficiency during the first year of the new Parliament. The Fusion refuses to tax the great land monopolists of Australia. Sir Phillip Fysh, M.H.R. (Tas.)—one of the most respectable of the Fusionists—made the following statement in the Federal Parliament when the need of additional revenue was pointed out: "There are £3,000,000 worth of piece goods imported annually as yet untouched" (by duties). One of the first acts of the Fusion Government would be to impose heavy revenue duties upon tea, kerosene and cotton piece goods which are now admitted free. Such taxes will increase the load on the worker's back. The Labor party proposes on the other hand to raise any necessary revenue from direct taxation upon those best able to bear it, as for instance, the land monopolists, and the absentee wealth owners. In the same publication and same issue, a still more direct attack upon land monopoly is made. Here it is:

Land for the people! Stalwart Australians, Sons of the Soil, are you prepared to tramp for ever seeking land? If not, support the Labor candidates. Dear land means cheap people. Do you want to become cheaper? If not, support the Labor candidates. Land is the chief tool of industry. Land monopoly makes slaves of the landless. Do you wish that monopoly to increase? If not, vote for the Labor candidates. Land monopoly has driven thousands from the Old World. Do you wish to see similar conditions perpetuated here? If not, vote for the Labor candidates. All the land monopolists support the Fusion. Can you vote with them? The Labor party is pledged to burst up the big estates. It keeps its promises.

Land monopoly, the keystone problem in the arch of the whole social problem, is getting to be better understood by men who abhor the present plundering social order, which associates leisure with wealth and work with poverty. They begin

to understand it in Australia, and the radicals of all parties put the Labor party with its program of the land for the people into power. They begin to understand it in Great Britain, and the Labor party, the Irish democrats, and the radical Liberals co-operate to pass a Budget calculated to secure the land for the people. We are beginning to understand it here, and the time may not be far away when democratic voters of all parties will ask in deadly political earnest, why the mines, the city sites, the agricultural soils, the railroad ways, the water power, the forests, and all other kinds of land in this Republic, are monopolized by some of its citizens while the rest are trespassers in the country of their birth.

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### Socialists in Office.

Mr. Seidel, the Socialist mayor of Milwaukee (pp. 386, 392), together with his party associates in the board of aldermen, are showing a better appreciation of the essentials for good government than professed "good government" movements have ever shown. The idea of non-partisanship or bi-partisanship has prevailed in those movements, with the effect of destroying party responsibility, and, instead of putting an end to graft, of merely shifting it to "better people" in subtler ways and enveloping it in an odor of respectability. But the Milwaukee Socialists do not dispense with party responsibility. They make it responsible. Nor do they treat public office as a party spoil. The offices that determine policies, they fill with none but trusted partisans; those that are charged with the details of execution, they try to fill with experts regardless of party affiliation or social class, of nativity or present place of abode. This is the true principle of public service.

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### Frances Margaret Milne.

When Mrs. Milne died, a long and useful educational service as librarian of the public library at San Luis Obispo, California, came to an end, and the voice of a singer whose poems exalted humanity was silenced. She died at San Luis Obispo, on the 21st. A sympathetic review of her life and work has been announced to appear in the San Francisco Star of the 30th, which is on its eastward way as we write. It was through the Star, that moral oasis in the desert of San Francisco journalism, that most of her verses were published first. One of Henry George's earliest disciples, she was his personal friend while he lived

and a gentle teacher of his message to the close of her own life. We reprint in our department of Related Things this week her appreciative lines on the death of William T. Croasdale, who saw the same vision that lighted her pathway, and followed it as faithfully. What she wrote of him might be written of herself, except that he died at the maturity of his powers whereas she came to those years of life at which it may be said she had finished her course.

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### The Lorimer Scandal.

Senator Lorimer attributes the charges of bribery in connection with his election as United States Senator to a conspiracy to destroy the new bank and trust company which he is about establishing in Chicago. This is probably no very wild guess. There are financial combines in Chicago which "make no bones" of getting outsiders out of their way without much compunction as to the use of means. John R. Walsh (p. 85) in his prison cell probably knows this now. It is common talk at any rate that it was not for his crime—for such crimes as his are common enough, we are told, in banking circles—but because he was somehow in the way, that bank examiners "happened" to be obtrusive at an inopportune moment for Mr. Walsh. Senator Lorimer may also have got in the way with his two new financial institutions, and it is well to bear this in mind. But of course, the real question in his case as in Walsh's, is not why criminality is exposed, if criminality exists, but whether it does exist. Though Senator Lorimer is accused of what might, though true, have been kept secret if he had stayed out of the banking business and been graciously serviceable all round; yet, inasmuch as he is accused, the merit and not the motive of the accusation is the question before the house. If the accusation is false, let us hope it will react on those making it. If it is true, let us hope it will grow beyond the peradventure of factional compromises and mutual suppressions. When Frank Comerford, amazed at the corruption he found in the Illinois legislature, spoke his mind, the rascals expelled him (vol. vii, pp. 705, 713), and upon his reelection they kept him out of his seat (vol. viii, p. 9). In all of which they had the sympathy of that class of "good people" in whom Lincoln Steffens thinks he has found "some good." Now that one of the legislative rascals has told a story of corruption, it may be—whether the story is true or not—that crimination and recrimination will yield better results. For it is clear enough,