

orator at a Demonstration held in the City of Hamilton by the Knights of Labour, Trades Union and Labour Unions. Never before had any appeal so struck him as this one did.

He then went through the experience of three months in the ranks of the unemployed, and saw more poverty and destitution than till that time he had thought it possible to exist. Sick of factory life he determined to become a farmer and took up 100 acres of bush land on Manitoulin Island. It was here, that cut off from all communication with the mainland for three months in the year, and 40 miles from the nearest village, he began to see the effect of bad land laws. Obligated to travel over scores of miles of virgin land in the hands of land monopolists to get to his farm he began to realize in his own person the waste of labour and capital which results in being driven hundreds of miles beyond the pale of civilization in order to find work. He had impressed upon him how unproductive is work under such isolated conditions, cut off from the advantage of exchange and association with others, and how the difficulty in getting and exchanging goods under such conditions lessens the return to labour, to the injury of both the individual and society.

Further pondering brought him to the next conclusion that this driving of men to work under adverse conditions was directly due to the action of land monopoly in populous districts, and explained why he had been obliged to travel thousands of miles from his home to find land, while millions of acres lay idle, beside the best market in the world.

Many other questions which had previously perplexed him also found their answer when on returning to the City of Hamilton "Progress and Poverty" came under his notice.

Still in spite of all disadvantages, Mr. Skirrow thoroughly enjoyed the free life of the farm and had only to abandon it because of Mrs. Skirrow's delicate health. His settlement was 40 miles from the nearest doctor, so it was necessary to go elsewhere.

In 1886 he returned with Mrs. Skirrow to the City of Hamilton, and taking up the work of propaganda with a few others organized a Club formed to advocate the Taxation of Land Values. One of the Club's first meetings was addressed by W. A. Douglas, B. A. of Toronto, who is still active in the movement. In 1888 he returned to his native town of Bingley, Yorkshire and there continued for some years his work of reform. Thence he went to the neighboring town of Keighley to fill the post of Liberal Agent, in which capacity he organized meetings addressed by nearly all the leading Single Tax speakers in the country.

In 1903 he resigned this post to become

the Yorkshire Agent of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values with offices at 2 Darley Street, Bradford, which post he has filled ever since with marked success. His work now consists of enlisting the services of Single Tax speakers from all parts and organising meetings for them in the Yorkshire district.

While himself a ready and effective speaker and debator, he considers it his province to bring others forward rather than to put himself into prominence. In this way he believes the best results are to be got, and it is not too much to say there is no one in England more successful in the work.

Being in close touch, and having the confidence of the Liberal party of the district, he is in a position to organize any number of meetings for any number of speakers, and this he does. His appetite for the work is insatiable.

Another phase of Mr. Skirrows activity is in placing before the people the Single Tax as the true alternative to Socialism. Socialism is strong in some parts of Yorkshire, and as Socialists do not appreciate his attentions, many are the hard knocks which in consequence he both gives and takes.

A more earnest, untiring and active worker in the cause is not to be found in all England.

One more word remains to be said. To the support and encouragement he has always received from Mrs. Skirrow he largely attributes the success which has attended his efforts.

PETER BURT.

Ex-Bailie Peter Burt, of Glasgow, Scotland, occupies a prominent and enviable position in the Single Tax movement. He was one of the men who welcomed Henry George when he came on his first visit to Scotland, and he has been in the forefront of the movement ever since.

It was about this time that he stood first as a candidate for the Glasgow Town Council. His first attempt to enter this body was in November, 1886, and it is almost needless to add that he was defeated. Ideas like his had not then got a sufficient hold on the public mind, and it was not until three years later that he managed to secure a seat in the City Council. Many things have happened since then in connection with the Glasgow movement, and in all of these Mr. Burt has taken a prominent and often a leading part. He sat in the Glasgow Town Council from 1889 till 1896, when he retired. He returned again to the Council in 1899, retiring when his term expired in 1902.

He was a vice-president and finally president of the first Scottish Land Restoration League. Later he was for some years vice-president of the present organization and

he was president for eight years—from 1896 till 1904.

Outside of the municipal field Mr. Burt has also been able to render valuable service to the movement. He gave evidence before the Town Holdings Committee of the House of Commons in 1891. He was a witness before the Royal Commission on Local Taxation which reported in 1901. His last appearance before a Parliamentary committee was at the end of last year, when he gave evidence before the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons to consider the Glasgow Corporation Bill. This latter committee has now presented its report, and Mr. Burt has good reasons to be satisfied with it. The main points for which he has contended being embodied in the report.

Mr. Burt has had more to do with legislative proposals for the taxation of land values in Scotland than any one else in the movement, and the bill which the parliamentary committee was appointed to consider was practically his bill. He was, however, not so anxious to see the Glasgow Bill passed, with its arbitrary ten per cent. tax and limitation to towns, as he was to get a Valuation Bill passed.

One of the provisions that Mr. Burt had been instrumental in getting embodied in the Bill was a clause known as the Deduction Clause. One of the peculiarities of the Scotch mode of land tenure is the feuing system. Under this system the person who wants to get possession of the land does not require to pay a capital sum for it. He merely contracts to pay a perpetual rent. That is to say, he accepts a debt which he can never liquidate. The contract, or feu-duty, as it is called, can be sold in the open market, and until recently these feu-duties have been considered first-class securities. How these were to be dealt with under the proposed taxation of land values has been a question that has aroused considerable discussion. The deduction clause aimed at giving some relief to the parties who have feued land by enabling them to deduct a proportion from the parties in receipt of the feu-duties.

When the Bill came before Parliament last session, the Lord Advocate for Scotland—in asking the House to pass the second reading—promised to alter this clause to make it apply to future contracts only. Mr. Burt now has the satisfaction of seeing the Solicitor-General for Scotland declare in favor of including these feu-duties. The report also calls for a separate valuation of land from buildings, and a much more drastic change in the method of taxation than is involved in the 10 per cent. tax of the Glasgow Bill.

All this follows in natural sequence to the work which Mr. Burt carried on in the Glasgow Town Council. At a recent meeting of the Scottish League for the taxation of land values, the secretary referred to Mr. Burt as the statesman of the movement. This

is a happy description and well deserved. On some points he will readily yield the palm to others. He is not an orator of the type of the late Bailie Ferguson, but he has a good platform presence and is accounted a good speaker. It is, however, on the business side of the question that he shines most brilliantly.

He entered the Council in November 1889, and on the 17th February, 1890, he got a committee appointed "to consider the whole question of the incidence of taxation and report." This committee held a number of meetings and heard evidence. The report of the committee was presented to the Council on January 18th, 1891. The report was not adopted but was remitted back to the committee for consideration and report.

By this means the Council managed to shelve the question for some years. About 1894, however, the question began to get a lift again. The late Bailie John Ferguson was elected in November of that year, to be succeeded the next year by Mr. David McLardy, the then president of the Scottish League.

In 1895 Bailie Burt was successful in getting the following motion passed. "That the Police Commissioners* accept the report of the Incidence of Local Taxation Committee presented on January 18th, 1891, and further that the Clerk be instructed to communicate with the various assessing authorities in Scotland requesting their co-operation to petition Parliament in favor of amending the law in accordance with the said report."

On the 23d March, 1896, he got a further motion passed that a committee be appointed to consider the replies received to the request of the Corporation for their co-operation in petitioning Parliament.

On the 5th October of this same year, it was reported that the following public bodies had agreed to co-operate, viz., 7 Town Councils, 8 Police Boards, 1 County Council and 46 Parish Councils. The committee recommended that a petition be drafted to present to Parliament and this was carried by a majority of eight.

Mr. Burt had to retire for business reasons immediately after this, and the active work inside the Council fell to the hands of Bailie Ferguson. He continued, however, to make his influence felt, and when the Council adopted a Bill without the aforementioned Deduction Clause, he criticised the position from the outside and the Council amended their Bill in accordance with his criticism.

This Bill was prepared in 1901, and has twice passed a second reading in Parliament. It has given rise to a great deal of discussion throughout the whole of Great Britain and several Conferences of Rating Bodies have been held in such centres as

* The Glasgow Town Council meets at some of its sittings in the capacity of Police Commissioners.

London, Glasgow and Manchester. Mr. Burt presided at the first of these which was held in Glasgow on October, 1899. At this conference there were delegates from 84 Town Councils, 3 County Councils and 87 Parish Councils. This conference was prompted by the Scottish League, and the Glasgow Town Council assisted in its promotion. By this means 116 Rating Bodies were brought into touch.

Following this a conference of Rating Bodies was held in London on 21st October, 1902. At this conference a committee was appointed and a second conference was held in London on 9th of December, 1903, and a third in Manchester on November, 1905.

With these latter conferences Mr. Burt had not an official part as he was then out of the Glasgow Town Council. They were, however, the result of the line of action that he mapped out. He used the Glasgow municipal field for propaganda purposes, and when the occasion arose, he sought the co-operation of similar bodies throughout Great Britain. By this means the question received a great advance. The propaganda has now been carried into the parliamentary field, and the proposal has had a place allotted to it in the latest king's speech. In leading up to this Mr. Burt played a prominent part of which he ought to feel proud.

ARTHUR WITHY.

Mr. Arthur Withy, whose father was the founder of the Hartlepool shipbuilding firm known as Furness, Withy & Co., was born at West Hartlepool, in 1870, and so is old enough to have a very considerable knowledge of men and things, yet not old enough to have lost enthusiasm. He was educated first at Ashville College, Harrogate, and afterwards at Auckland Grammar School and University, his family having gone to New Zealand in 1884. He was destined for a legal career, but an inclination to journalism and his enthusiasm for the Single Tax proved too strong for him, and the bar at the Antipodes therefore lost a recruit. For two years he edited an advanced Liberal monthly on Single Tax lines; but, feeling a strong inclination to try his luck in the Mother Country, he returned to England in time to do a little work for Liberalism in the General Elections of 1892, and in September of the same year he joined the staff of the "Portsmouth Evening News and Hampshire Telegraph." In 1895 Mr. Withy stood as Liberal candidate for the Southern Division of Herefordshire—a quite forlorn hope, as the candidate only arrived in the constituency ten days before the election and had to fight a gentleman who had held the seat for 30 years; but he succeeded in polling 2,828 votes. In the following year Mr. Withy returned to New Zealand to direct the fortunes of a weekly paper of advanced Radical views, but was unsuccessful in an attempt to secure a seat in the

House of Representatives. Mr. Withy fought the contest on Single Tax lines and was awarded the high testimonial of being described by the *New Zealand Herald*, the leading Conservative paper in the colony, as "one of the worst of the cranks, faddists and assorted idiots" then turning the country upside down. In 1897 he returned to England and to the "Portsmouth Evening News." On the eve of the General Election of 1900 Mr. Withy went to Hartlepool to assist Sir Christopher Furness in the contest, and took a large part in securing the sweeping victory which resulted in a walk-over for Sir Christopher at the last General Election. After a year's work as political secretary to Sir Christopher, Mr. Withy became lecturer to the Northern Liberal Federation, embracing Northumberland, Durham, Mid-Cumberland, North Westmoreland, the Richmond Division of Yorkshire and Middleborough. The result of his five years' work was made manifest by the many victories gained throughout the Federation area at the elections of 1906. The work done, however, funds fell off, and Mr. Withy was obliged to seek fresh fields and pastures new. Happily he has found work to his mind as lecturer to the Huddersfield and Colon Valley Liberal Association; and at the municipal elections at the beginning of November last and at the by-election towards the close of the same month his work in exposing the fallacies of State Socialism and expounding the taxation of land values as the one alternative policy undoubtedly contributed largely to the success of the Liberal party. The seat was securely held at the by elections, and at the municipal elections the Liberals gained four seats—every candidate being returned, while the Socialists lost one seat and gained one, only one of their 8 candidates being successful. For some fourteen years past Mr. Withy has been a constant contributor (for the most part anonymously) to the *Westminster Review*, besides writing largely for *Land Values* and the daily and weekly Press.

The writer who does the editorial work on the *Evening World*, whoever he is, knows some things and knows them well, and tells them in forcible language. Commenting upon a recent address of Mr. Wilson, the Secretary of Agriculture, in which the latter explaining why wages are higher in the United States, said that one American farm hand produces more rice than 400 Chinamen. Wages in China are from 10 to 12 cents a day. The *Evening World* editor wants to know why the American farmhand should not receive \$40 a day instead of \$1.50.

Tom Johnson would have street cars "free as air." It is a question of elements. In New York they are free only as the water in the stock permits.—*N. Y. World*.