

The Secretary sent number 4: "Questions for Candidates," to every Parliamentary candidate in the Highlands. Replies were received from some of the candidates in the affirmative, and others put the Taxation of Land Values in their election addresses. With Ian Macpherson, who in pre-war days rendered a good deal of lip service to Land Reform it was "Hush."

The League distributed 5,000 of "Hush" leaflets at various meetings, and questions were asked the candidates on every opportunity, generally the Land Question was well to the front.

In the course of the Inverness-shire contest the Highland Tory laird, Lochiel, sent a letter in support of the National Liberal candidate, Sir M. Macdonald from which we quote:—

"Your opponent (Mr. A. M. Livingstone, Independent Liberal), seems to think that because you have qualified your views and stated that you are only in favour of Taxation of Land Values in the larger cities you have thereby bought me off. That is equivalent to saying that I only disapprove of theft when I am the person to be robbed. In any case Taxation of Land Values would not affect me personally, because, as you know, our Highland land bereft of improvements, trees, game, deer and stock is absolutely worthless."

Lochiel seems to have a good understanding of the question. How would he suit the Land Union lecture department, as one to explain to their supporters that where there was no land value the tax would not be applied? It would be reassuring to some landlords, especially if Lochiel were to develop the point, and show how improvements would be exempt.

BELFAST

Mr. A. W. Metcalfe at the Rotary Club

The IRISH NEWS of 8th November reports:—

The weekly luncheon of the Belfast Rotary Club took place in the Carlton Restaurant, Donegall Place, yesterday, Mr. Jas. Dalzell (President) occupying the chair. A hearty welcome was extended to visitors, both local and from across the water.

Mr. A. W. Metcalfe, speaking on "A Remedy for Unemployment," said his one idea was that all men had a right in the land of the country wherein they dwelt, and that all the social ills, including unemployment, came from abrogation or weakening of that right. Briefly the argument was that all the land and that all the natural features attached to it belonged to the nation. They jointly gave it value, and without the people the land would have no value. Therefore, the value of unimproved land was the first and best subject of taxation, and rating, not being the creation of the individual, but of the community. On the other hand, individuals needed private possession of land to encourage them to develop cultivation, dwellings and industry on it. The results of their industry should not be taken or taxed for public purposes unless, as in time of war, the full annual value of the land had first been drawn upon. So that in normal times the single tax on the value of all land should meet the public needs, both national and local, leaving present owners in possession. That was the policy which he was out to advocate: and at that point he should like to appeal to them as business men, by giving the names of some of those who in past ages and at present supported that view. The speaker went on to quote opinions of men in different periods of the world's history on the question, and in conclusion said they would find that if the principle were put into practice it would become too costly to keep land idle, and there would be more employment.

HENRY GEORGE AND PATRICK EDWARD DOVE

In a lecture on "The Land and the People," at Paisley, on the evening of Thursday, 18th December, 1884, Henry George made the following observations on Dove's work. (The quotation is from the report in the NORTH BRITISH DAILY MAIL of the following day.):—

"Mr. Henry George, in the course of his lecture, said that he had been accused of bringing over to this country a Yankee invention. (Laughter.) When he first came to this side of the Atlantic, as he was leaving, a gentleman put into his hand a book he had never seen before, on the THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESS, which was published about the year 1850. He found stated therein the very same principles which he had been advocating, and consequently made some inquiries, which resulted in his discovering the author. He was a Scotchman, who in the future would be better known than he is now—Patrick Dove. (Cheers.) Mr. George

then read over some extracts from the book, remarking that he preferred the author's words to his own, because he was a Scotchman, and because he was occupying a prominent position before he himself was born. His principles were: 'All men are equal in their right to the natural earth; no man can substantiate a right to any specified portion of the earth; the product of each man's labour is his own property, and ought to be absolutely sacred from the forcible or fraudulent interference of other men.' The question to be solved was how, with these conditions, could man equitably allocate the earth. The answer was plain. By making the rent value of the soil a common property to the whole associated community. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) This they affirmed to be the only possible solution of natural property; and they hesitated not to affirm that every country in the world, as its population increased and with it the rent value of the land, would be driven by pauperism to approach more and more to the practical application of this theoretic solution."

Later on Henry George, in his book, A PERPLEXED PHILOSOPHER (1893), in which he collected and examined Herbert Spencer's various utterances on the land question, after referring to the small and slow circulation of the original edition of SOCIAL STATICS, wrote (1, vi.):—

"A similar fate to that which SOCIAL STATICS met in England befell a very similar book, covering much the same ground, THE THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESS by Patrick Edward Dove, published a little before SOCIAL STATICS, but in the same year, and also asserting the equal right to the use of the land. While Dove is not so elaborate as Spencer, he is clearer in distinctly disclaiming the idea of compensation, and in proposing to take ground rent for public purposes by taxation, abolishing all other taxes. His book must have done some good on the minds that it reached, but it passed out of print, and was practically forgotten."

On the point of date, it may be added that Dove's work was published in 1850. The introduction to SOCIAL STATICS was dated December, 1850; but the date of publication as shown on the title page was 1851.

J. D. W.

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