

LAND & LIBERTY

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THE new session of Parliament commenced on 26th October. Among the items included in the legislative programme announced in the King's Speech are the state purchase of coal deposits, or as it is called "the unification of royalties under national control," amendment of the financial provisions relating to slum clearance and abatement of overcrowding, provision for the improvement of rural housing, a measure for assisting the production and increasing the consumption of milk, and a bill for reorganising the white fish industry.

The preliminary measure relating to the purchase of coal mines which provided for registration of proprietary interests in unworked coal was passed last session. The further bill now announced will no doubt contain the provisions by which £66,000,000 are to be distributed to the landlords in the most immoral and indefensible transaction any British Government has ever contemplated.

The other measures will no doubt be found to be a combination of subsidies, mainly passing to the benefit of landlords, and restrictions on production, euphemistically called marketing schemes or reorganization, devised to raise prices. The inevitable result will be to diminish real wages, which are already attacked by the serious increase in food prices which has taken place.

Agriculture and Taxation

Sir Edward Ruggles-Brise, M.P., Chairman of the Agricultural Committee in the House of Commons, speaking at Braintree (*East Anglian Daily Times*, 23rd October) said that the State had abandoned its old policy towards agriculture, which might be described as the "Devil take the hindmost," but the balance was

heavily weighted against agriculture, in spite of some efforts to redress matters. The position of agriculture to-day was most unsatisfactory, because it was wholly uneconomic; it was out-taxed. The gap between the cost of production and what the farmer received for his produce must be filled if the agricultural industry was to be put on an even keel.

One would like to know in what respect agriculture is "out-taxed." Agricultural land is de-rated. Farmers pay no heavier income-tax than anyone else, and frequently less, because they can, if they please and find that it pays them, have their incomes assessed upon the assumption that they are no more than the assessed annual value of the land. If farmers pay an undue share of taxation it can only be as a result of indirect taxation through customs and excise duties.

If there is a gap between cost of production and price, it can be lessened in two ways. One is to raise prices, which results in raising the cost of living all round and diminishing the consumption of food. That is the

method which the Government is adopting without apparently satisfying the farmers and certainly without satisfying any one else.

The other method is to reduce rent and to abolish the indirect taxes which fall upon the farmer and the farm labourer. The only means of doing so is to impose rates and taxes on the value of land. If farmers concerned themselves with farming as an industry they might more readily see this. Unfortunately, they are inclined to identify the interests of farming with the interests of landownership, which is a very different thing.

The Costly Green Belt

How land values have risen was testified by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir George Broadbridge, at a City luncheon, as reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, 7th October. The Lord Mayor said he had to hurry away to inaugurate a section of the Green Belt, a piece of land of four acres which had been purchased by the public at the price of £160,000. About fifty years ago, he said, the Corporation had acquired for open spaces an area of approximately the same extent in the neighbourhood (Purley) for £10,000.

Was Sir George thinking of this as an indication of the country's prosperity or was he less proud of the fact that here are values growing all the time which were never produced by the proprietor but are stolen from the community, so that in fact he was hurrying off to celebrate one more case of the daylight robbery that is going on? What is true about Purley is true about the whole circumference of London and gives point to what must and shall be done: the appropriation of this public value of land to public uses and the removal of all fiscal burdens from houses and the people's work and wages. Sir George's illustration will be a first class argument on any Land Value Taxation platform.

From £20,000 to £400,000 in Birmingham

A parallel case is that of the Mason College, to which the *Birmingham Mail* of 21st September devotes a leading article. There is a marble figure of Sir Josiah Mason in Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. He was the noble benefactor who in the 1870's provided a site for the College at a cost of £20,000. The paper speaks of "the spirit of change which stirs in the restless heart of Birmingham" so that Mason College has to give place to shops and offices, but it goes "with a nice little bag of money in its always needful hands." The site is being sold for £400,000. The question is who or what has increased the value of the land that in this space of time it is worth twenty times as much? The picture of the College departing with its nice little bag of money

would usefully illustrate any story of bandits at large—but then, this is under the law and if there is any censure, it is not the bandit we must blame but the democracy which has not yet brought its Parliament to a better sense of morality and justice in these matters.

The Assessor and the Church

The Edinburgh Presbytery of the Church of Scotland has had to give up its usual meeting place in the Tolbooth Church following the proposal by the City Assessor to assess that church on the annual rateable value of £750 on the ground that the meetings of the Presbytery are not exclusively for public religious worship.

"I did not think we would have a refugee Presbytery meeting in this hall," said the Rev Principal W. A. Curtis (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 6th October). A special committee which is dealing with the matter made a report and considered that a legal decision must be obtained.

Our comic rating system here supplies a rather Gilbertian touch, driving one of the largest receivers of rent from their home.

Municipal Expenditure

In an article on this subject the *Daily Herald* (20th October) refers to the fact that the local authorities collect £171,000,000 a year in rates and in addition receive £127,000,000 in Government grants. This, it is said, works out at 1s. 8d. per head per week for rates and 1s. 1d. for Exchequer grants, a total of 2s. 9d.

The *Daily Herald* argues that the ratepayers receive the most sterling value for this money, and that no other agency than that of local government could provide them so economically with the services they receive. This argument may be freely granted, but it would be wrong to regard the burden of municipal expenditure as negligible. At 2s. 9d. per head it amounts to 11s. a week for a family of four, or rather more than £28 a year. This is a considerable sum for the ordinary family.

It must also be remembered that wise public administration which increases the desirability of any locality as a place to live in leads inevitably to an increase in the rents charged by the owners of land for the privilege of living there. The more cogently the *Daily Herald* argues for the value of municipal services to the public in reply to those who complain of high rates, the more strongly does it lay the foundation for an argument in favour of changing the rating system so that the land values created by municipal expenditure may pay for it.

Although the *Daily Herald* by its silence implies that nothing need be said against the present system of local taxation, it is satisfactory to note that the election addresses of a number of candidates for election devote attention to the question of rating land values.

De-rating Condemned

An article in the *Municipal Journal* (22nd October) by a "Special Correspondent" deals with a number of questions of reform of the rating system. The author expressly excludes consideration of drastic reforms, such as the rating of land values. It is noteworthy, however, that he launches a strong attack against de-rating on the ground that it is "definitely unjust to

those outside those provisions," that the losses to the local authorities have not been compensated by the Exchequer Grants, and that relief was given to "many concerns that never needed the relief." To which we might also add that the benefit of reduction of rates went in the end to the landlord and not to the manufacturer or agriculturalist.

These views are, we believe, shared by many local authorities who have now had some seven years' experience of de-rating. Disillusionment with this experiment may pave the way to some searching thought about the problem and to the realization that a clear distinction must be drawn between the value of land and the value of the improvements and that the effect of rates imposed upon these two subjects is entirely dissimilar. The exemption of improvements from rating will encourage their provision provided that rates are imposed on the value of land, thus ensuring that land is made available for productive purposes on reasonable terms. Further discussion on these lines in municipal circles would be useful.

See How it Grows

I pass on a particularly good example of the increase in land value in London. I have the figures from a very well-known surveyor. A century ago the Eyre Estate at St. John's Wood was bought for £70,000. It has recently been valued and the figure is close upon £3,000,000.—Leaderette in *Worcester Evening News*, 22nd September.

Rent Restriction and House Building

The *Daily Herald*, 16th October, said that what is to happen when rent restricted houses are decontrolled is rapidly becoming a burning issue throughout the whole of this country. A special report prepared in Birmingham discloses startling figures about the type of house in which the majority of the workers live. For property rated at £4 to £5, the rent is roughly £10 14s. a year for a controlled house and £15 14s. for a decontrolled one. Where rates are £12 the rents are £20 4s. controlled and £29 2s. decontrolled. Tenants live side by side with these glaring and indefensible differences for practically the same type of house.

A Committee appointed by the Government to advise whether and upon what conditions the legislation should be prolonged is expected to report shortly. Forecasts of its report anticipate that proposals will be made for decontrol of more of the houses at present protected. Indignant protests will certainly be made on behalf of such tenants as lose their present privileges. It is none the less evident that the system must sooner or later be brought to an end. It is inherently unfair that some persons should enjoy the special benefit of this legislation while others in no better circumstances have to pay normal rents. It is also unfair that landlords who had undeveloped land which has now been built upon should get what they choose, while those whose land already had houses on it below the prescribed value should be prevented from getting what the land is worth.

The only way to end the house famine and scarcity rents is to multiply the production of houses. That seems a commonsense remark and it is for commonsense legislation to get rid of the obstacles. Price rings

that make costs high are all based on the monopoly control of natural resources, further protected by tariffs in building materials; house sites are only obtainable after land gamblers are satisfied; and when the house is complete the rate and tax burden falls on the occupier. Also the housing problem is a wages problem. Cheapen land and houses will be built. Throw open to use the land that is withheld for fancy prices and wages will rise. Remove the burdens of protective tariffs and indirect taxation. Free men will occupy better and larger houses at lower rents. Someone wrote us lately that we "over simplify" the solution of the social problem; but it is a land question all the time and the charge against taxing land values that it is "too simple" is surely the least wicked that its opponents can produce.

Civic Spirit at Newport, Mon.

The *Western Mail*, 15th September, reports that the Parliamentary Committee of the Newport Council had a letter from Sir Clifford Cory agreeing to sell to the Council a piece of land of approximately 36½ perches (less than one-quarter of an acre) near the Salutation Hotel in Commercial Road for £3,000. The Committee recommended that no action be taken in the matter; it was a unanimous decision. Councillor Davies said that the sum demanded was preposterous; when one remembered the talk about the desire to serve the town and the community and about civic spirit, it was astounding that £3,000 was asked for such a piece of land which was derelict and an eyesore, of which people should be ashamed to be owners.

The price demanded is equivalent to £13,340 per acre, but preposterous or not as it may be, and eyesore as the site may be, these protests are quite beside the mark. If the site were a beauty spot and if the price were a half or a tenth as much, would that give the owner any greater title to the value? What Newport and all our towns lack is the elementary civic virtue of a rating system which by collecting the value or rent of land for the common good would put the vacant lot industry out of business.

The Untaxed Prospective Value

According to *The Times* of 9th September, bidding for 1,400 acres at Farningham, with three miles of frontage to the London and Folkestone main road, ceased at £115,000.

Mr Alfred J. Burrows (Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley), who, with Messrs. Debenham, Tewson and Chinnocks (Cheapside), are the agents, made a formal withdrawal at £130,000 and disposed of a minor lot. The land has great prospective value.

The figure placed on the land by the vendors is more than £130,000. It is monstrous to think that this land, so valuable, is assessed at nothing whatever (except as it may have an odd building upon it) and that speculators favoured by Derating Acts are able thus to hold up development—they "withdraw" the land, how apposite that term is—for a higher monopoly price. But if the real value of the land was on the assessment roll and owners had to pay rates and taxes whether land was used or not, there would be no more playing with loaded dice to the infinite hurt of the community.

Easy Money

"It used to be slum clearance that provided a rich harvest for landowners. Now it's National Defence.

"At Cranfield (Beds.) the Government has had to pay £17,500 for 380 acres. At Tern Hill (Salop.) nearly £33,000 for 400 acres. At Linton-on-Ouse (Yorks.) £43,000 is demanded for 400 acres. And most of this land, being classed as agricultural, has not paid a penny in local rates for the last seven years.

"We leave the comment to you. Ours would set this page on fire."—*John Bull*, 25th September.

THE RATES AND LAND VALUES

Letter signed by Mr George Lansbury, M.P., Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P., Mr R. R. Stokes, Mr Andrew MacLaren, M.P., and Mr Leonard Woolf

(Appearing in the "*Manchester Guardian*," 1st November.)

We do not see why the Municipal Reformers here should do all the talking about rates. May we put our views before your readers? [Local Rates]

First, we consider that the present rates should be abolished. They penalize the household, cripple enterprise, and encourage the speculator. What is more, they are unnecessary. The expenditure of public moneys on social services actually creates a fund ample to meet the cost of these services. This fund always appears in the market value of the land. It is created by the community and should be enjoyed by the community. Existing machinery could be used for its collection by imposing a rate on the market value of land, not including the value of buildings, works, tillage, and other improvements. This should be progressively increased until it replaced existing rates.

See the difference. The present rates fall entirely on the use to which the property is put. If the site is in use and fully developed the rates are at a maximum, however bad business may be. If the buildings are empty or the site idle the rates will be nil, however great a value social activity has given to the site. Thus before the London County Council acquired certain land in Lambeth for housing the land and such buildings as were on it were together valued for the rates at £199. Such was the true value of the site that the council paid £30,700 for it. Again, since the war the L.C.C. has purchased land for educational purposes at a price of £67,635, the total value of which for rating purposes was nil.

Every year the local authorities pay large prices to speculators for land needed by the public on which little or nothing has been paid in rates. Let such sites be rated at their market values instead of the fictitious value based on usage and a huge fund will become available to relieve the present ratepayers. Then all rates could be removed from houses, offices, shops, factories, etc., and the community need only take from each individual what the community creates, the value of the land which he is holding.

Since the rates would be levied on the value of sites whether in use or not, it would be unprofitable to keep land idle and buildings empty. Inflated rents would drop, owing to competition for tenants, and the enormous price of "agricultural" land in the heart of our boroughs would fall until there was a user.

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THE COMING SLUMP

THE RAPID decline in the market price of stocks and shares during the past month, most severe on the New York Stock Exchange but considerable also in London, has aroused anxious enquiry as to whether this marks the beginning of another period of industrial depression. One school of thought regards this movement as the result of wicked speculation by operators on the stock exchanges. If it were merely that, there need be no great anxiety for the future of industry and of employment, except in so far as the fall in share prices might tend to discourage the investment of capital in new industries, and cause a slackening of trade expansion. Apart from this the effects would mainly be felt by speculators themselves, but the structure of industry would be unimpaired.

This view may have an element of truth in it; but there is reason to think that it is very far from being the whole story. Any rise in prices, whether of shares or of commodities, is readily blamed upon speculators, and in like manner a decline of prices is ascribed to prior speculation. But speculators are usually only the instrument which makes apparent the play of deeper forces.

The price of the shares of industrial companies is ultimately determined by the revenues, or rather the anticipated revenues, of those companies. A sudden and considerable decline in the price of such shares is therefore mainly due to a revision of opinion as to what the revenues of industry are likely to be. If that change of opinion is based upon mere guess-work, then the movement is purely a speculative one. If it is based upon information as to the actual condition of industry, then its character is entirely different.

The statistical data available are hardly sufficient to enable a conclusive judgment to be made, but there are indications for the United States that production is slackening if not actually receding. For this country the statistical information is still more inadequate, and it would be rash to hazard an opinion. The trade of the world is, however, so interwoven that a serious decline in the United States would have repercussions upon trade here.

Classical economic theory had no means of explaining industrial crises, because it proceeded upon the assumption that the primary means of production were always fully employed. The explanations which have been grafted on to the classical theory have endeavoured to explain the disemployment of labour and land by means of defects in the monetary system. It may well

be that in the post-War world, violent fluctuations in the quantity of currency have played some part in aggravating the trouble, but these certainly played no great part in most pre-War depressions. The explanation must be sought elsewhere.

It is commonly said that productive resources become disemployed, because the returns of industry become insufficient to remunerate them. Or in other words, industry comes to a halt because profits sink to zero or less. It is seldom suggested that industry may also be brought to a halt because one of the factors of production demands too much remuneration. This is where the analysis of Henry George throws so much light upon the problem. He not only shows that this is sufficient to cause an industrial crisis; he also shows that under the existing organisation of society this must be a recurring cause.

The explanation is simple. The original means of production, to use a happy phrase of Professor Hayeck, are land and labour. Improvements in the arts of production mean that labour can be more usefully employed. In order that this labour shall be employed it is necessary that more use be made of land, for without land there can be no production. The owner of land is therefore able to demand a higher price for allowing labour to use land. As production continues to expand the owner of land sees before him the prospect of higher and higher rents. The price or rent which he charges tends to be based not upon the immediate abilities of industry, but upon its expected future product. The price demanded thus becomes too high, and because of the inability of labour to pay it, or because labour is unwilling to suffer a reduction of wages in order to pay what is demanded for it, land is withheld from use and both land and labour are disemployed. They continue to be disemployed until either the price of land sinks to a level which enables labour to take up what land it requires, or until improvements in technical efficiency enable labour to pay the rent demanded.

(Here incidentally is made evident the reason why existing statistical information is insufficient to enable a proper appraisal to be made of the economic situation. No comprehensive and adequate data are available regarding the movement of rents and land prices.)

Here also is made apparent the reason why currency manipulation cannot cure a depression and may rather aggravate it. The injection of more currency into circulation has the immediate effect of raising commodity prices. To that extent it may be thought that it affords the means for producers to pay the price demanded for land with more money but with less real wealth. But the injection of any large amount of new money into circulation produces an automatic distrust of the stability of commodity prices, and an immediate tendency upon the part of those who have money to invest to employ it in purchasing land and the price of this also rises.

Much the same result follows from the other commonly advocated remedy for industrial depression—a programme of public works. The result indeed is exactly the same if the public works are financed by some inflationary process, because the effects of currency inflation cannot be kept to one channel. If they are

financed by diverting the resources which would ordinarily be used for industrial purposes, then they add nothing to the total of employment, and they weaken the structure of industry and delay the epoch of recovery.

The fundamental remedy therefore is to prevent the holding of land out of use, and the simple and effective means of so doing is to impose a sufficient degree of land value taxation to make the holding of land out of use unprofitable and impossible.

No attempt to follow such a policy is made either here

or in the United States. Apprehension for the immediate future is heightened by the fact that in both countries the declared objective of the Governments is to raise commodity prices, and so far as that has been achieved it has probably been reflected in a rise in land prices. In any case the recovery of industry from its lowest point is already sufficient to have stimulated land speculation. In this then we can look for the primary cause of the trouble of which the stock market collapse is the symptom.

F. C. R. D.

WOMEN LIBERALS

AT THE Annual Meeting in Margate on 13th October, the Women's National Liberal Federation unanimously adopted a resolution declaring :—

"This Council of the Women's Liberal Federation re-affirms the Party's declaration that legislation should be introduced to secure that the benefit of *publicly created land values should not accrue to private interests which have nothing to do with their creation* but should be applied for the benefit of the community as a whole ; and urges that, as the building of houses and their improvement give useful employment and increase the national wealth, the present short-sighted system of *penalizing such work by an increase in rates should be abandoned and the resulting loss to revenue be recouped by the taxation of land values.*"

The resolution, submitted by the Cardiff and District W.L.A., was moved by Miss Alison Garland, seconded by Lady Horsley and supported by Miss M. E. Marshall, Cardiff W.L.F., and by Mr Atholl Robertson, ex-M.P. for Finchley.

SCOTTISH LIBERALS

RESOLUTIONS to be forwarded for the Liberal Party Conference at Dunoon were passed as follows at a meeting of the Haddington Liberal Association held in Edinburgh, 3rd October, Mr J. S. Peters presiding. The resolutions were moved by Capt A. R. McDougal of Blythe :—

"This conference deplores the Government's agricultural policy of subsidies, quotas, and restrictive scarcity-mongering, tyrannical marketing boards, which harass both producer and consumer, do not increase production, and which ultimately will merely result in higher rents and prices of land, and in grave injury and danger to tenant farmers, who will be compelled to rent or buy their farms at artificially inflated prices.

"It further declares that the proper method of meeting low prices is by reduced rents, land law reform, and by improving the purchasing power of the consumer. Instead of production being restricted to present rate of under-consumption, consumption should be increased to equal a still higher rate of production.

"That this conference urges that the derating of houses and improvements and the rating and taxing of land values in lieu, should be put in the forefront of the Liberal programme and made a vital issue now and at the next General Election."

The third of these resolutions was adopted by the Conference of the Liberal Federation at Dunoon, where it met on 15th and 16th October.

Resolution from the West Edinburgh Association was adopted approving of up-to-date statements of Liberal policy on agriculture, and smallholdings being prepared

giving practical effect to the declarations by the Federation and authorized the Committee appointed by the Executive in September, 1937, to frame such statements as soon as might be and present them to the Executive.

THE TAXING OF CROFTERS' HOUSES

The Secretary of State for Scotland was criticized by Mr James Scott, S.S.C., Edinburgh, when submitting a resolution from the West Edinburgh Association, which recorded sympathy with the smallholders' protest against their dwelling-houses being entered in the Valuation Rolls, and being separately rated upon, and which urged the Government to introduce or give time for legislation forthwith to nullify the effect of the Court of Session judgment which held that a dwelling-house on a holding was not an agricultural subject in terms of the Acts.

Addressing a Liberal week-end school at Colwyn Bay on 23rd October, Mr Milner Gray, chairman of the Liberal Party Organization, outlined six points of policy which a Liberal Government would undertake. These were (1) proportional representation ; (2) recovery of world trade ; (3) stabilization of exchanges ; (4) liberty of movement of capital ; (5) freedom of migration, and (6) at home we oppose class privilege and the exploitation of the mass of consumers for the benefit of special producers. We would deal with land monopoly to secure the rating and taxation of land values, the only thing this Government said must not be taxed.

* * *

MR MURDO MACDONALD, B.Sc., teacher at Evanton Public School, Ross-shire, has passed away at the early age of thirty-three years. He was a promising young man and only became a member of the Highland League for the Taxation of Land Values about two years ago. Mr MacDonald was a native of Stornoway, a fluent Gaelic speaker and, in his short life, a progressive Radical of the Scottish Liberal Federation.

THE THEORY OF THE LAND QUESTION

By Prof. George Raymond Geiger.

This work, which is one of the most important and valuable contributions to the literature on the land question, recently reviewed in *Land & Liberty*, and from which extracts have been printed, was published by the Macmillan Co. for \$2. By arrangement with the publishers, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has bought a supply on very special terms. We are happy to recommend the more readily this outstanding work, placing it in the hands of students at the privileged price of

Four Shillings Post Paid.

THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION
94 PETTY FRANCE, LONDON, S.W.1

OBJECT LESSONS

Exorbitant Prices for Land are adding enormously to Municipal Debts. Why should Land Values created by the Community be Appropriated by Private Interests?

London's Green Belt

Bushey.—The Council agreed to make contribution of approximately £3,846 toward the purchase of land at Aldenham in the Watford and Barnet Rural areas. The vendor is Lord Aldenham; the area is approximately 92½ acres and the price is £34,875, plus approximately £800 for solicitors' fees, etc.—*West Herts Post*, 16th September.

Bush Hill.—The Bush Hill Park Golf Club has sold to the Middlesex County Council 107 acres and mansion for the sum of £70,000; and the club, receiving this money, has an optional lease of the course for twenty-one years at a rent of £700.—*Tottenham and Edmonton Herald*, 23rd April.

Harrow.—Warren House estate, Stanmore, the residence of Sir John and Lady Fitzgerald, is to be bought by Harrow Council, in conjunction with the Middlesex C.C.—*Evening News*, 28th July.

The estate consists of 111 acres and the agreed price is £60,000. The two Councils have also decided to acquire the adjoining Grove Field of 16 acres for £8,500 and the Grove Estate of 63 acres for £23,000.

Richmond.—A Richmond purchase is 65 acres on the Thames side, owned by the Buckmaster Estates and at present leased by the Ham River Grit Co. The price being paid is £25,000, or £388 per acre.—*Surrey Comet*, 16th July.

Housing Sites

Bristol.—The Housing Committee has recommended that £600 be paid for 1½ acres on the Barrow Hill Road, Shirehampton.—*Bristol Evening Post*, 23rd September. Local residents will be able to say what contribution the "owners" of this land have been making for the upkeep of the city services, without which the land would have no value at all.

Burnley.—The General Purposes Committee recommend the purchase of 48½ acres in the Chiltern Avenue area at £210 per acre, exclusive of any buildings the owner desires to demolish. About one-half of this land (note the price paid) is at present unsuitable for building owing to further coal to be worked there, "but it is understood that the portion subject to mining settlement can be used at a later date." Another purchase is that of approximately 1½ acres near Plane Tree Inn at £220 per acre, plus £22 tenants' compensation and solicitor's and surveyor's costs.—*Northern Daily Telegraph*, 19th October.

Coventry.—The real value of tax-exempt and unrated "agricultural land" near urban centres is shown in the price paid, at auction, by Coventry Borough for 22 acres in the Longford district. The price was £6,400, or £292 per acre.—*Midland Daily Telegraph*, 28th September.

Epsom.—A letter was read at the Housing Committee of the Epsom and Ewell U.D.C. from Messrs. Atkinson and Marler offering 10 acres of land in Ruxley Lane for £8,000 or near offer. The Committee considered the price was too high for their purposes and were unable to entertain the offer.—*Surrey County Herald*, 16th July.

Housing Sites

Hexham.—A purchase by the Rural District Council, one-half of an acre at Ovington, cost £250 and in addition the Council bears the expense of fencing the open boundaries.—*Newcastle Journal*, 30th September.

Manchester.—The Housing Committee proposed to pay £48,471, or at the rate of £7,623 per acre for the site at Hulme covering about 6 and one-third acres. Intention was to build 240 flats, which for land alone would cost £200. The proposal was discussed at the City Council meeting on 6th October and was rejected by the casting vote of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Joseph Toole.—*Manchester Guardian*, 1st and 7th October.

The owners still have their "vacant site," worth £48,000, there or thereabouts; its value due wholly to the presence and activities of the community, but the owners contribute not a penny in local taxation in respect of it.

Newport, Isle of Wight.—The Council is buying 7½ acres of the Field House estate and has got power to borrow £2,915 for the purpose. There was another piece of land for the purchase of which the Ministry refused borrowing powers. The price (not stated) of these two and one-eighth acres was too high. The owners are Winchester College and it might be necessary now to resort to compulsory purchase.—*Isle of Wight County Press*, 16th October.

Seaton in Devon.—The Urban Council is asking power to borrow £5,000 for acquiring 60 acres of land, which will cost them £4,850. The vendors are the Seaton Manor Estate and the land at present includes allotments, cricket field, tennis courts, football field, and land with frontages to Harepath Road and Salwell Lane.—*Western Morning News*, 21st October.

What about the present rateable value of this bit of England's land?

Ulverston in Lancashire.—The Rural District Council wanted approximately 2½ acres. They had been offered the site for £500 but, not satisfied, they took the matter to arbitration and in the result they had to pay £610, or £226 per acre.—*N. Western Daily Mail*, 17th September.

York.—The Council wished to acquire 13 acres from the Water Lane Estate, Clifton. The owner's demand was £12,292. The arbiter awarded £2,515.—*Yorkshire Post*, 28th September.

Schools and Playgrounds

Dursley.—The Gloucester County Council has had to pay £1,150 for slightly less than 6½ acres. The vendor was Major Clifford.—*Gloucester Citizen*, 27th September.

Not necessary to repeat that "agricultural land" for which the owner is paid something like £200 an acre, is entirely exempt from local taxation. On these terms, landowners take from, but add nothing to the public purse; only on these terms can education begin and children play.

Rhyl.—The Flintshire County Council wanted 14 acres for extending the Rhyl County School. The price named by the owner (figure not quoted) was considered to be prohibitive. It was decided to seek compulsory powers of purchase.—*Liverpool Post*, 23rd September.

Schools and Playgrounds

West Moseley.—The Surrey County Council had to get compulsory powers to buy for school purposes an area of approximately $3\frac{3}{4}$ acres fronting to High Street, Priory Lane and Ray Road, West Moseley. The matter being taken to arbitration, the decision was the "award" of £2,800 to the landholders who had claimed £4,169. The County Council had also to pay £120 towards costs.—*Estates Gazette*, 28th August.

Burial Grounds

Kidlington, Oxford.—The Parish Council tried to obtain land adjacent to the churchyard from the owner, Count A. Zamoyski.—*Oxford Mail*, 14th September.

The Count had offered a quarter of an acre on the west and three-quarters of an acre on the north side for £500, plus £30 for redeeming a tithe rent of £1. A 5 ft. stone wall would have to be erected and the existing wall moved so as to surround the existing churchyard; one-third of the acre of land would have to be raised and levelled and legal costs would be borne by the purchaser. It was decided to abandon the project to buy from the Count and to enter into negotiations for a site of two acres in Langford Lane at £165 (also a "monopoly price" for a rural district, especially as it is land entirely free from local taxation) subject to the land being found suitable, which would depend on the results of digging eight holes to test the subsoil.

Wetherby in Yorks.—"After protracted negotiations" the Parish Council was offered $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres at Hallfield belonging to the Günther Trustees and now used for allotments. The owners wanted £630 and the Council would have had to build at their own cost a 10 ft. wall on one side; also it was stated that the drainage costs would be about £400. Members said that the price demanded was far too high and the complete cost would be absolutely prohibitive. It was agreed to treat with the owners for a lower price and that the Council should not be put to the expense of the 10 ft. wall.

Open Spaces

Cardiff.—After "protracted negotiations," Cardiff City Council has agreed to give £105,000 for over 200 acres of the Heath Estate, owned by the Godfrey Clark family. The purchase includes the old Heath House and farm.—*Western Mail*, 16th September.

Query: What has been the rateable assessment of this £105,000 property or its value for income tax purposes? Cardiff presses for the Rating of Land Values, but continues to be "stung" in this way.

Coulsdon.—In a case of compulsory purchase of land in occupation of the Coulsdon Court Golf Club and used as a private golf club, the owners demanded £75,365. The arbiter awarded £54,735. This is for $146\frac{1}{2}$ acres, equivalent to £373 per acre and added to the price are 415 guineas costs, arbiter's fees, and the cost of erecting fences. Interest on the purchase money has to be paid as from 23rd July. Although it is now a public open space golf-playing will continue. The evidence given by the vendors' expert witnesses provides material for a text book on the Taxation of Land Values. It is remarkable how conversant the surveyor is with site value ("here is one of the finest building estates near London" said Mr C. G. Eve, past president of the Surveyors' Institution) when it is for landlord appropriation and not for public taxation.

Open Spaces

Eccles.—The Council approved the joint purchase with the Swinton and Pendlebury Council of the 100-acre golf course occupied by the Worsley Club at a price of £20,000. One Councillor said "they were not paying £200 per acre for the land; they were getting the land virtually for nothing" for the club was leasing it and paying a rent "£700 a year for the first ten years and £750 a year for the remaining sixty years. Otherwise it was an open space "which the club was as keenly interested in preserving as the two Councils were and it could have got considerably more money if the land had been sold for building."—*Manchester Guardian*, 2nd March.

The argument that the land has virtually cost nothing is too clever. The fact is that the club has got £20,000 of public money out of which they are paying the rent, which the Councils and the public ought to have as public revenue in any case, and without compensation, if the principle and policy of land value taxation were in force. The Councillor's contention is the familiar equivocation of the land-nationalization-by-purchase apologists.

Lytham St. Anne's.—Another golf club purchase and preservation as an open space, with golf playing to continue, is that of the Royal Exchange links of 140 acres for £20,000. The vendor of the land was Mr Harry Clifton.—*West Lancashire Evening Gazette*, 4th June.

Sites for Public Buildings

Chertsey.—The owners have demanded £1,000 for a plot of land (area not stated) in Stepnates Road. This was too much for the Council who offered £300 and they are seeking compulsory powers of purchase.—*Surrey Advertiser*, 26th June.

Guildford.—For the Firs site of approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres in London Road the Guildford Town Council has had to pay £12,265, at the rate of £3,678 per acre. The owners, who were the Surrey Public House Trust, had demanded £23,525 and in evidence it was stated that they had bought the site in 1921 for £6,250. Here again was convincing argument for Land Value Taxation from the mouths of expert witnesses, Sir Edwin Saville, another past president of the Surveyors' Institution, submitting that "improvements in Upper High Street must make the area a very important shopping centre; when the road was widened the whole aspect of things would be altered." But who makes these improvements? The landowners?

Wolverhampton C.C.—From moneys derived from the sale of other land, the Council is paying £400 for one acre of land.—*Northants Evening Telegraph*, 6th May.

Someone gets £400 for a piece of ground who never made it valuable and who pays not a penny in rates so long as it is vacant.

For the War Office

Chorley, Lancashire.—Here were a little over 57 acres of agricultural land wanted for purposes of the defence of the realm, part of the land acquired by the War Office at Euxton and Whittle-le-Woods. The owners demanded £29,044 for the 57 acres and the arbiter awarded £7,089, with £216 added for fees and charges.—*Estates Gazette*, 4th September. The only rateable value here has been a couple of houses rented at no more than £70 a year, which are assessed at a good deal less than that. Land purchase and armaments go together and the landowners are getting a tribute out of the millions being spent.

TAXATION OF LAND VALUES—PROS AND CONS

From a Conservative Party Document

PRO.

(1) Land, limited in quantity, the natural dwelling place, storehouse and workshop of labour, the source of all wealth, owing its value to the presence, needs, activities and expenditure of the community that lives upon it, stands in an economic category by itself, and has a value of its own—a value which is a peculiarly fit subject for, and a uniquely just basis of, taxation.

(2) There is practically a monopoly in land-owning in this country, and taxation of land values will have the result of giving the people easier access to the land, which is a crying national need.

(3) Taxation of land values lowers urban ground rents, so that building is encouraged. One of the great causes of the housing shortage is the heavy rents and values charged. Urban rents would be lowered because the space is strictly constant.

(4) Speculation in land is discouraged, especially where the tax is general and not municipal, as often in America.

(5) Where the tax is general, no congestion or overgrowth of cities takes place.

(6) Loans for building would be easier to get and not so necessary when rents were reduced.

(7) Land taxes would force landlords to give up some of their country estates, which would then come under cultivation.

(8) It cannot be denied that the taxation of land on its true capital value, by making it unprofitable to hold land idle or partially idle, would ensure that land would come into use for building or any other industrial purpose for which it is best suited when and as it is wanted; this would multiply openings for the employment of labour. The freeing of buildings from taxation would remove burdens that discourage industries already established.

(9) It is quite possible to estimate the value of land; it is done for other purposes quite successfully.

(10) Taxation always of necessity confines itself to gains. The State cannot attend to losses.

(11) Since owners draw enormous profits from the numbers and industry of their fellow-citizens, they should contribute to their burdens.

(12) The ethical principle of the single tax is to tax properties to which the justification of private property does not attach. Its ultimate aim would be a tax-free society. It recognizes only the right dependent on the individual's producing something.

(Some) There is no need to make taxation of land values the sole tax, *i.e.*, every supporter is not a single taxer.

(13) It would solve the principal difficulties on financial grounds that attend land nationalization.

(14) In the Dominions and in America it has worked very well.

(15) The land question is at the root of all others.

(16) Land nationalization will only rivet the burden of State interference with industry more firmly. The Single Tax limits the State to the role of tax-collector and sets every one free to work.

CON.

(1) (Some) Because land differs from every other kind of property (which cannot be denied), it does not follow that the community is justified in cancelling property in land, or (which amounts to very nearly the same thing) in imposing a special tax upon it. (Some) Land is not in a special economic category, for all commodities owe their value to the presence and needs for the community.

(2) There is no land monopoly in England, and rents generally are low. There are many freeholders and what is wanted is not easier access to land, but easier access to capital.

(3) It is doubtful whether it does lower rent. At any rate, it would discourage building, since unearned increment in land values is an incentive to building, for buildings that are expected to depreciate through obsolescence are often put on land that is rising in value in the expectation that the rise in the value of the land will compensate for the depreciation of the building.

(4) Where the tax has been instituted, *e.g.*, in Vancouver, land speculation has been furious.

(5) If the tax is as successful as its supporters say it will be, the net result will be a vast increase of city areas—a very bad thing for the community.

(6) Land taxes dry up loans for building, since these depend on ground values.

(7) Agricultural land offers the greatest facilities for shifting the tax on to others' shoulders. The prospect of unearned increment is a great incentive to pioneering and farming.

(8) A successful land tax means the development of Capitalism. It is unjust to go on taxing land for its supposed value when no one wants it and then tax it again for its unearned increment when it is wanted. Current taxation should come out of current income.

(9) The only value land has is its selling value, which cannot be found out beforehand. Land valuation in the past has been mainly farcical, and land taxation taxes on the basis of speculation.

(10) If unearned increment is taxed, unearned decrement, *i.e.*, loss due to external causes, should be made good.

(11) Such taxes, not coming out of income or revenue, violate the principle of taxing capacity to pay.

(12) It is vicious because it gives relative or complete freedom to personal property. Monopolies are just as possible in other things. Stockholding also produces nothing but an income.

(13) Its confiscatory nature is unjust, because the continuance of an institution, *e.g.*, land owning, should furnish an obligation to give protection or compensation to those who in the past have come under it. Any retrospective character it has is also unjust.

(14) It has failed to exercise any appreciable influence on development, and where it has been applied by instalments each instalment has been more difficult to introduce and has had less effect than the previous.

(15) Nothing is done to solve the problem of society, of which the land question is a very small part.

(16) Land nationalization with compensation is simpler, juster and more effective.

CONSERVATIVES AND LAND VALUE TAXATION

Answer to the Contentions

The foregoing statement which emanates from the Conservative Party Organization appears to have been prepared for the private benefit of members of that party, but deserves a wider circulation.

The *Pros* are on the whole well stated. In items (4) and (14) there is a suggestion that taxation of land values is in operation in America. If by this is meant the United States, the assertion is not correct. With certain exceptions (notably Pittsburgh and Scranton in Pennsylvania) taxation affecting land in that country falls on the value of land and on the value of improvements at the same rate.

In item (10) there is an implication that taxation of land values is to be levied on gains or increments of land value. The tax should, of course, be levied on the whole value. The valuation should be revised periodically, and the tax would be on the actual value, whether that increased or decreased in any particular case. The question of gains or losses does not arise in pure land value taxation.

WHY LAND IS DIFFERENT

The *Cons* deserve more extended consideration.

The first alternative in (1) is formally correct. It is not merely because land is different from the products of labour that it demands special treatment, but because of the nature of that difference as stated in *Pro* (1).

The second alternative in (1) suppresses the vital distinction between land and other things stated in *Pro* (1) by attempting to throw the emphasis on a mere verbal similarity—namely that land and commodities possess the common characteristic of having value.

NO LAND MONOPOLY?

That there is no land monopoly in England and rents are generally low (2) is an assertion without any basis of fact. The items reported in the newspapers day after day of the difficulties of local authorities in endeavouring to acquire land and the embittered protests of tenants over the high rents they are obliged to pay are sufficient refutation. It is true that there are many freeholders, though not so many in relation to total population. The important fact suppressed is that very many freeholders own small plots of land of low value with a house of much greater value than the land. These freeholders are suffering by the present system of taxing and rating houses and other improvements and would benefit by land value taxation. What is also suppressed is the fact that the bulk of the land in area and value is owned by a relatively small proportion of the freeholders. It is the interests of this minority that the opponents of land value taxation are really out to protect.

The taxation of land values as *Pro* (6) shows would not only give easier access to land, but also easier access to capital.

HIGH RENTS AND LAND SPECULATION

As to (3), the reasons why the taxation of land values will lower rent are well enough stated in the *Pros*: it would prevent speculation and bring unused land into use. The remainder of this objection is a typical example of confused thinking—and to confuse thought is the only way to prevent the progress of land value taxation. If the objection means that the present system encourages people to erect buildings which have a high rate of obsolescence instead of buildings which have a low rate of obsolescence, that does not seem to

be an argument in its favour. The fact is, however, that the country is encumbered with buildings which have long ago become obsolete—the most outstanding example of which are the slums of our great cities. The existing system encourages the retention of these buildings and discourages the erection of modern and up-to-date ones.

The insinuation in (4) is that land value taxation encourages land speculation. For that to be true, it would have to encourage increase in land values. The implication of points (3), (6) and (13) is that land value taxation will reduce land values. It is interesting to observe, however, that no express statement is made in these *Cons* that taxation of land values will reduce land values. Perhaps this is because many supporters of the Conservative Party would think that a good thing. It may be freely admitted that if the rate of taxation is low and if land values are increasing rapidly, the tax may not stop land speculation completely, but it will evidently discourage it.

The next objection (5) is another example of confused reasoning. What is meant by an "increase of city areas"? Presumably one or both of two things: that more houses will be built, or that each house will have a greater area of land surrounding it. Either of these results will be a very good thing for the community.

CAN THE TAX BE "SHIFTED"

If the contention (6) were true that land value taxation would dry up loans for building, then one would like to know how loans are obtained at present for building on leased land, where the ground does not form part of the security. By reducing the price of land and removing taxation from buildings, land value taxation would certainly encourage building, and this is virtually admitted in the previous objection.

No explanation is given of the assertion (7) that a tax on the value of agricultural land would be shifted. The reasons why a tax on land values is not shifted are so well known that it is hardly necessary to repeat them. If the opponents really thought this they would not denounce the tax as confiscatory (Section 13). The prospect of unearned increment is not an incentive to using land, but an incentive to speculation, *i.e.*, to holding land for a rise in value.

CAPITAL AND EMPLOYMENT

The objection that land value taxation means the development of capitalism (8) comes strangely from the Tory Party. However, we must avoid ambiguities. The word "capitalism" is popularly used for anything that exploits labour. The great exploiter of labour, directly and indirectly, is the private appropriation of land value, and in this sense land value taxation attacks capitalism. On the other hand, the taxation of land values will encourage the production of wealth (including capital) and this will be to the advantage of labour in opening up opportunities of employment and reducing the price of commodities (including capital).

The second part of this objection (quite unrelated to the first part) says that it is unjust to tax land when no one wants it, but if no one wants a piece of land it can have no value and would pay no land value tax.

ASSESSING THE VALUE

The next objection (9) states that the only value land has is its selling value. This is not so, for its primary value is rental value. Selling value represents the

value of the income or rent which is anticipated from the land in the future. In addition, it is suggested that land cannot be valued. It would be interesting to know what the valuers, surveyors, estate agents and others whose profession it is to do so think of this objection. The inherent fallacy of this objection is revealed in the next sentence. To say that land valuation in the past has been mainly farcical implies that there *are* standards by which the accuracy of the valuation can be tested.

STANDARDS OF TAXATION

The argument (10) that if gains are taxed losses should be compensated has no relationship to land value taxation, which is a proposal not to tax increases in value, but to tax the whole value. If the value increases the assessment will be increased at the next valuation, if the value goes down the assessment will be reduced.

Then it is alleged that land value taxation violates the principle of taxing capacity to pay, because the tax would not come out of income or revenue (11). The tax would not come out of revenue where valuable land was being held idle, but one of the objects of land value taxation is to bring such land into use, and when that is accomplished the tax will come out of revenue. A still more serious flaw in the argument is the tacit assumption that ability to pay is the only or the true criterion of justice in taxation, land value taxation is based on the principle of benefit received from the public.

It is true that if all revenue were raised by land value taxation, personal property would be completely exempt (12). This is no argument against it, but one of its merits. Every attempt to impose direct taxation on personal property breaks down and leads to the grossest inequalities. Indirect taxation of personal property by tariffs or sales taxes inevitably involves that the greater share of taxation is born by the poorer sections of the population.

MONOPOLIES AND COMPENSATION

The objector then wanders off to the unrelated point that monopolies are just as possible in other things as in land. It is a pity he gives no examples. There are three great classes of monopolies: land, patents for inventions, and state-created monopolies such as those enjoyed by suppliers of gas, water, electricity, railways and tramways. Most monopolies consist in these or in a combination of them, assisted in some cases by protective tariffs. Patent rights are in a class by themselves, for their duration is strictly limited and they are intended (whether they do, is not so certain) to encourage and reward inventors. Public utility monopolies are in the nature of land monopoly because they depend in the end upon the power granted by the State to use the streets or other strips of land for running pipe lines, rails, or wires.

The objector then diverges on to a third unrelated thought, that stockholding produces nothing but income. Holders of stocks are in effect part owners of the assets represented by the stocks or shares. Those assets may consist of land and of machinery and plant, patent rights or other monopoly rights. In so far as the assets consist of land values, they will in effect be taxed at source.

Next we come to the "vested rights" argument (13). The continuance (? existence) of an institution, it is said, should furnish an obligation to give protection or compensation to those who in the past have come under it (? profited by it). Observe that it is not said that the existence of an institution involves that it should continue for ever. That would be too much for any-

one to stomach. But it is said that an unjust institution cannot be abolished without those who profited by it being compensated. If this were so, and the compensation were a full equivalent, then the evil would in effect still continue. It is the attempt to carry out this idea which causes revolutions. An attempt is made to strengthen this argument by suggesting that the taxation of land values is retrospective. This is not so; it does not attempt to set right the wrongs of the past, but merely to prevent them from being perpetuated in the future.

THE LAND VALUE POLICY

The statement that land value taxation has failed to influence development (14) is unsupported by reference to any definite place. There is abundant evidence in official reports from countries where some measure of that reform has been put into operation that the results are beneficial. It is also said that each instalment has been more difficult to introduce than the previous one. Again, no case is cited in support.

Then in the endeavour to bolster up the idea that land value taxation is a small and insignificant reform it is said that it does nothing to solve the problem of society, of which the land question is a very small part (15). This sweeping assertion disregards the fact that everything we consume comes from the land which is the basis of all production and of all wealth. It disregards the obtrusive fact of high land values and high rents, and of valuable land held out of use. For this country we have no adequate statistical data, but it may be pertinent to recall the investigations of the Government statistician of Australia which showed that almost one-third of the value of privately owned property of all kinds in that country consisted of land values, and which showed also that the more wealthy people were the more important was land value as an element in their wealth. (See September, 1936, LAND & LIBERTY, p. 144.)

OBJECTIONS TO LAND PURCHASE

Lastly is the suggestion that land nationalization is simpler, juster and more effective (16). Land nationalization is no simpler, because to be done properly it would necessitate a valuation. It would, in fact, be more complicated, for it would raise the question of nationalization of the buildings and improvements on the land, for the land could hardly be purchased without purchasing these also. That problem does not arise in land value taxation, which necessitates only the valuation of the land itself and not of the improvements. The question of justice has already been alluded to in dealing with compensation, the plea for which is in effect a plea for land nationalization. If there is an injustice to be remedied, then land purchase perpetuates it. It follows from this that land value taxation is more effective, because it begins to deal with the problem now, instead of postponing its solution as nationalization does. Each instalment of tax is a positive achievement in restoring to the community the value it has created, which land purchase does not do, for it mortgages the land value to the bondholders. Moreover, land value taxation has a direct effect in securing the better use and development of land, while land purchase in itself merely postpones that problem.

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HIGHER WAGES AND SHORTER HOURS

By Mr A. MacLaren, M.P.
In Broadcast Debate

(Reprinted from the STAFFORDSHIRE EVENING SENTINEL,
22nd October.)

"HIGHER WAGES and shorter hours" was the subject of debate in the Midland Parliament, when the fourth session of this well-known broadcasting feature was opened in the Midland and Regional programmes last night (21st October).

Mr Andrew MacLaren, M.P. for the Burslem and Tunstall Division, was one of the speakers for the Labour and trade union side, and in the course of his speech he said:—

Production is the mother of wage. Science has performed the miracle once again of the loaves and the fishes, but this time they are not distributed among the multitude! Our duty is to ascertain what are the impediments which check the flow of wealth into wages.

It seems to me that the first obstacle to higher wages which must be removed is unemployment; so long as there are unemployed men competing for work in the labour market, the tendency will be for wages to remain at subsistence level. But even as things are, "wages" are not what they seem. It is necessary to ascertain how much of the money received represents buying power in the hands of the recipient.

RATES AND TAXES

If we combine the rates and taxes for 1913, they work out at £5 10s. 3d. per head of the population, whereas in 1937-38 the combined figures will be over £21 15s. 3d. per head of the population.

These vast and increasing sums, levied as they mostly are upon industry and the products of industry, must be paid before one penny can be counted as wages. Startling as these figures are as an evidence of an increasing burden, my main point of criticism is not their immensity but the basis upon which they are levied, for their effect is to decrease the purchasing power of the people and increase the cost of living.

Another element which is increasing and encroaching upon the income of the worker is rent. To deal with this problem the Government would have to take strong action against land speculators in and around cities.

The nominal increases in wages which have recently taken place have been more than offset by an almost disastrous increase in the cost of living. With the present ruling prices one really wonders how a housewife can make ends meet.

APPLICATION OF SCIENCE

Let me meet a fallacy which is commonly held—that if prices per commodity drop, wages will suffer. One need only site the motor industry as a disproof of this; the price per car has dropped but the money wages of the workers in the motor industry have increased. The whole meaning and objective of applying science to production is to increase volume and lower costs per unit.

The Luddites smashed machinery, thinking they saw in it the enemy to their employment; many modern capitalists seem also to be imitating them by checking the full powers of scientific production in order to keep up prices. Millions of tons of coffee thrown into the sea by the Brazilian coffee controllers; wheat used as fuel for locomotives and millions of acres of cotton ploughed under in the United States; and at home oranges thrown back into the River Mersey, and fish thrown

back into the sea—here we have the malicious destruction of wealth, which, if continued, will make it impossible for any worker's wage to keep pace with the price level. This process is aided and abetted by the speeches of responsible statesmen who talk vaguely about "raising the price level."

"TAX LAND VALUES"

As a first step to increasing wages the problem of unemployment would have to be seriously tackled, for there need be no unemployed man or woman in this country. Rates on houses and taxation, wherever it is a burden on industry, should be removed and an equivalent amount levied on those values in land created by the community. The Government should take powers to deal with all forms of price-rigging and wealth-destruction. These proposals may seem drastic but they are immediately necessary.

Pious sentiments and paternal concessions are no substitute for justice. Consider the cost to the State of low wages, undernourishment, disease, stultified mental and spiritual development, and economic discontent are the outcome of the unjust distribution of wealth. And, what is more important, we know that this economic misery is due, not to the niggardliness of Nature or to the inability of man to satisfy his needs, but to man-made laws for which you and I are responsible.

LAND VALUES (RATING) BILL

Among the Members of Parliament who were successful in the ballot for Private Bills in the House of Commons was Mr Andrew MacLaren, M.P. for Burslem, who has given notice that he will introduce a Bill for the Rating of Land Values. The Bill "to enable local authorities to levy rates upon land values and to exempt buildings from rates" was presented in the House of Commons on 29th October. It is supported by Colonel Wedgwood, Mr Barr, Mr McGhee and Mrs Hardie; to be read a second time upon Friday, 26th November, and to be printed.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FIRST

THIS LITTLE BOOK* contains a proposal for limiting the income from investment for the purpose of adding to the earnings of labour. Space does not permit us to examine at this moment what the economic results of such measures would be. We would draw attention, however, to the final chapter of this work in which the author emphasizes the great importance of the land question in the problem of social justice. He says:

"In the term land it is intended to include things which exist by the bounty of nature and cannot be produced by the labour of man. It is contended that from the point of view of social justice the monopolization of land by individuals to the exclusion of others cannot be justified. The bounty of nature must in common fairness belong to the whole community. Every member of that community should have equal rights to it. That one member should have to pay rent to another for the use of land is, therefore, wrong in principle. If rent is to be paid for land, and it is difficult in our modern society to see how this can be avoided, that rent should be paid to the community. In practice this would mean its being paid to the State as the trustee of the whole community."

This is an admirable statement of a fundamental principle.

*SOCIAL JUSTICE FIRST. By C. V. Brayne, Retired Land Commissioner of Ceylon. Allen & Unwin. 3s. 6d.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

RECENT LAND REFORMS IN SPAIN

BY A DECREE of 7th October, 1936, the Spanish Government enacted that all rural estates, of whatever size, which belonged to persons or their spouses or to companies which had participated directly or indirectly in the insurrection against the Republic, should be expropriated by the State without compensation.

The use of these lands is given to the labourers and inhabitants of the district or of adjoining districts in perpetuity. It is a matter for the majority to decide whether the land is to be cultivated collectively or individually. The amount of land which may be held by any individual is not to exceed 30 hectares (one hectare is slightly less than 2½ acres) of ordinary agricultural land, 8 hectares of orchard, or 4 hectares of irrigated land.

Continued possession of the land is conditional upon reasonable use being made of it, and that the holders pay a rent to the State for it. In order to help the holders at the beginning the Government has given them a moratorium from payment of rent till September, 1938, and will if necessary afford them credits for buying supplies.

At the same time the Government has abolished the restrictions upon dealings in wheat and wheat flour and restored a free market in these commodities.

Mr C. Villalobos Domínguez, from whose article in *España Republicana* (4th September) we take this information, says that as almost all the landowners, whether large or small, declared themselves enemies of the Republic, nearly all the land in the country districts has passed into the hands of the Government.

One result of the reform has been that the harvest in the regions subject to the Republican Government has been more abundant than ever before. This is the result of individual effort under conditions of security of tenure.

No information is available as to how the rents will be assessed or whether steps will be taken to distinguish between the cultivators' improvements and the value of the land itself.

Baldomero Argente

In July last the Secretary of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade made representation to the Spanish Government through the Spanish Embassy in Paris in favour of Senor Baldomero Argente, a Vice-President of the Union, and resident in Madrid. The request was that this eminent social philosopher be permitted to leave Madrid and dwell under conditions of greater safety whereby he could devote himself in needful tranquility to the writing of what is likely to be one of the greatest contributions to economic literature. Letter has been received, dated 5th October, from the Spanish Embassy conveying the reply of the Spanish Government to the effect that the Government is not warranted in granting the petition considering that the Ex-Minister, Senor Argente, is under sufficient guarantee within its territory.

ERRATA

IN THE October issue, page 149, first column, line 35, for Sir Edward Baker read *Professor Ernest A. Baker*; page 153, second column, line 16, for improved read *unimproved*. In the September issue, page 136, first column, line 39, for so . . . read *sc . . .* Judge Archer in his observations in Court about high rents was obviously about to say "It is perfectly scandalous."

NEW ZEALAND

A Judicial Pronouncement on Wages

IN A DECISION on rates of wages on 8th September (*New Zealand Herald* report) by the Wages Arbitration Court, over which Mr Justice O'Regan presided, these statements appear:—

"The Court disclaims the extravagant functions ascribed to it by certain speakers during the hearing, such as that 'the Court is called upon to measure out to the producers the portion of the national income which is considered to be their due.'"

"The obvious reply is, first, that all recipients of the national income are not within the jurisdiction of the Court, and, secondly, that the rates of wages in all occupations are not determined by the Court, but by the price of land, a fact which was well understood by Edward Gibbon Wakefield when he proposed, as an essential feature of his scheme of colonization, that a fictitious price should be placed on land 'to ensure a plentiful labour supply by preventing labourers from becoming landowners too soon.' It is not generally realized that the Wakefield plan, instead of being of historic interest merely is actually in full operation in this country to-day.

"Here we have a country more than six times the area of Denmark, having a population of only 15 people to the square mile, in which there is an artificial dearth of land for settlement and in which the fundamental industry of agriculture is, relatively speaking, languishing. In spite of its wealth of statistical information and the use made of same at the hearing, it is a matter for comment that the Year Book does not disclose the number of farmers in this country. We have Professor Tocker's evidence, however, that 'the proportion of the people who are farming has decreased considerably in the last 30 years.' This state of affairs may be contrasted with that obtaining in Denmark, where half the population is engaged in agriculture.

THE NEED FOR FARMERS

"Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Professor Tocker agrees that we need more farmers. The urban population has its part to play in the national development, but it is clear that the centres are growing increasingly 'top-heavy,' as it were, in that they are not buttressed by an adequate rural population. The result is that there is undue competition for employment in the secondary industries, and hence the tendency of wages to decline. Like all natural laws the law of supply and demand is altogether beneficent, but operating under unnatural conditions it is blamed for evils which can be corrected only by removing the cause. That is a matter exclusively within the jurisdiction of Parliament. Labour advocates accordingly would do well to realize that this Court cannot claim functions peculiarly within the province of Parliament. Confronted with an unhealthy social situation, the Court can at best endeavour to palliate the effects of evils which it is powerless to remove."

The judgment affected various classes of workers and wages fixed were: skilled 2s. 9d. an hour; semi-skilled 2s. 5d. to 2s. 7½d. an hour; unskilled 2s. 4d. an hour.

The other arbiters were Mr W. Cecil Prime, employers' member, and Mr A. L. Monteith, employees' member. It was explained that the pronouncement was the decision of a majority, Mr Prime dissenting.

NEW SOUTH WALES

AN ARTICLE in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 1st July on "Local Government: Favoured Land Owners," gave the information that there had been certain recent amendments of the law with regard to Land Value Rating which made inroads on the system that has been in operation in the State since 1905 whereby the local rates are levied on the value of land apart from improvements (with the exception, however, of the rates levied for water and sewerage services which have continued on the basis of the annual value of land and improvements taken together). The article referred especially to the amending Act of 1934 (?) providing that any person in a municipality with an area of five acres or over which he uses for grazing, or growing crops of any kind, can demand that his rate bill be reduced to a sum which, without going into details, may be set down at half rates.

We consulted Alderman J. R. Firth, the Mayor of Strathfield, on this matter and he writes:—

"While the statement is quite accurate you have to remember that what really has happened, while certain types of property have been exempt from rates, the effect has been that the balance of the land values have paid a higher rate to compensate for the said exemptions.

"Also, it is quite a mistake to imagine that representatives of the Local Government have acquiesced for these exemptions, etc.—quite the contrary.

"For instance, at the recent Local Government Conference, a resolution was carried unanimously, asking that the Rate Exemptions Act 1931 be repealed and this Resolution has been carried practically unanimously every year since the Act was passed. They also carried a Resolution that Water, Sewerage and Drainage Rating, under the Sydney and Newcastle and Hunter River Sewerage Boards, should be on the unimproved capital value, instead of the assessed annual value. Also a Resolution giving power to Councils to rate flats on the annual value instead of the unimproved capital value was defeated.

"You will also be glad to know, I am sure, at this Conference I was elected Metropolitan Vice-President. Of course, I have been on the Executive for some five or six years, but on this occasion was elected Metropolitan Vice-President.

"One mistake, I think, the Single Taxers have made in connection with Local Government in this State and that is, having secured rating on Unimproved Land Values, they have not continued to elect a sufficient number of Single Taxers to the Local Councils.

"Generally I would say that the State Valuation Department is functioning well, but where the Shires make their own valuations the position is, of course, most unsatisfactory.

"I do not think there has been serious retrogression, as far as the whole of the rating position is concerned, but there has been a certain amount of retrogression caused in the first instance by Mr. Lang in 1931, apparently making a deal with the Roman Catholics and exempting all of their schools and colleges and also in 1934 the cutting in half of the rating on Farm Lands. This is one of those silly schemes which pretend to help farmers, but, of course, do the opposite. It was, of course, put forward by land monopolists, but agreed to by very ill-informed Members of Parliament."

Congratulating Alderman Firth on his position in the Association of the Municipalities, we can be sure that his influence will count for very much in promoting the reform to which he has already rendered most valuable service.

UNITED STATES

SOME IDEA of how the Henry George School is extending is shown in the list of classes published in the September-October issue of *Land and Freedom*, New York.

Starting in October are six new classes in Boston, twelve classes in Pittsburgh, three classes in New York (besides those conducted, some three a day, at headquarters at 211 West 79th Street), six in Cincinnati, five in Chicago and seventeen classes fixed or to be announced in the neighbourhood of New York. Arrangements for the whole country make certain that by 1st November 200 classes will be in operation. The correspondence division has an enrolment of 700 students.

HOLLAND

New Edition of "Progress and Poverty"

Gratifying news is given in the latest report on the work of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York (published in *Land and Freedom*, September-October) that a new translation of *Progress and Poverty* into Dutch is now actually in print. The translator is Councillor H. Kolthek, a Vice-President of the International Union. The report says that at the International Conference in London last year, Mr Hennessy had been impressed by two representatives from Holland who told him of their ambition to start classes in their country, but their great handicap was that the original translation of the book had passed out of print. They sought financial aid for a new translation which would be available at a low price. On his return to America, Mr Hennessy persuaded the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation to interest themselves in this project, and the new edition has been made possible by the generosity of Mrs Anna George de Mille and others with the help of the Henry George School of Social Science and a substantial donation from the Treasury of the Foundation.

CANADA

We welcome the reappearance of the *Square Deal*, the Journal of the Single Tax Association of Canada, 71 Bloor Street, Toronto. It is being published quarterly (yearly rate of subscription 50 cents, say 2s.), and on the editorial board are Mr Alan C. Thompson, Mr Ernest J. Farmer, Miss Dorothy E. Coate, Mr A. C. Campbell and Mr Herbert T. Owens. The *Square Deal* was started in 1903. Financial circumstances had prevented publication during recent years and our colleagues are to be congratulated on the "better strength" which now gives them again this most serviceable medium for promoting their work. The September-October issue has a number of interesting articles among which we note particularly that by Dr A. S. Thompson on "The Cause and Cure of Social Disorders." Report is also given of the Study Groups in connection with the H. G. School of Social Science.

* * *

A. Wyatt Tilby on "Canada in Transition" in the *Glasgow Herald*, 12th October:

Most of the unoccupied land in Canada and the United States is fenced, and held by absentee owners waiting for a rise that never comes. These "suitcase boys," as they call them south of the international boundary, are not a national asset, except in so far as they have to pay land taxes for hope deferred. But the real estate boomster, whose prospectus always blossomed like the rose, now plies a discredited trade—even on a continent of optimists it is possible to lie once too often.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES, LTD., 94 Petty France, London, S.W.1. A. W. Madsen, Secretary; F. C. R. Douglas, Assistant Secretary; W. R. Lester and C. E. Crompton, Hon. Treasurers. (Telephone: Whitehall 6008. Telegrams: "Eulav, Sowest, London.")

Resulting from the Conference of Irish Municipalities which Mr Douglas attended in September the question of Land Value Rating has been taken up vigorously by the Irish Labour Party in its weekly journal *Labour News*, where a series of articles written by Mr Douglas is appearing. Copies of the Paper presented at the Conference, in handy pamphlet form, are now available and may be had post free by any one applying to us. The *Irish Builder and Engineer* of 18th September devoted a long and friendly leading article to the Conference and the Rating of Land Values.

The Debate on a Bill for a National Tax on Land Values was well attended at the Muswell Hill "Parliament" on 26th October. The Bill was in charge of Mr Douglas "the Member for Finchley" and the second reading was carried by 23 votes to 18.

Study Circles under auspices of the H.G. School are being conducted twice weekly in these rooms by Mr Madsen: on Tuesdays and Fridays, beginning at 7 p.m. prompt. The text books are respectively *Protection or Free Trade* and *Progress and Poverty*. There is no fee and enrolment is by joining any evening with the understanding, however, that new members should read the books to the point at which the study has arrived.

For meetings held or to be held in various centres, speakers have been supplied on request with particular information and references taken from the files of *Land & Liberty*. For example, the record of the Co-operative movement and party on the question, for a meeting addressed by Mr K. E. Abbott in Bristol; the controversies on land nationalization by purchase, for Dr Woodman in Cambridge; material relating to the *Theory and Practice of Socialism* (Mr Strachey's book) for a Left Book Club meeting to be addressed by Mr E. Davies in Penarth; and as much as possible about Sir John Simon's declarations on land values for a meeting on 18th November in Torquay addressed by Mr Chas. E. Berry who will speak at the South Devon Literary and Debating Society, Queens Hotel, on "What is the Best and Fairest System of Raising Revenue by Taxation?" In Harrow an active co-worker is Mr Cosmo Rowe who addressed the Women's Section of the Labour Party in July and August and is asked to give two more talks to them on the Single Tax.

For use at the November municipal elections the Committee printed a further supply of the leaflet *Who Should Pay?* and is indebted to volunteers in various places who have seen to an effective distribution of this and also of the *Memorandum on Methods of Local Taxation*. Candidates have also had supplies of the *Notes for Speakers* and the pamphlet *Cities Held to Ransom*.

Last month we referred to the facilities given (by means of a special donation) to post *Land & Liberty* to recommended names. Many friends have readily supplied lists and so many people are now named to get this free postage, with probably more to come, that the donation is more than exhausted. May we pass the hint to some other subscriber or subscribers who wishes to help in this way to increase the circulation of the Journal?

ENGLISH LEAGUE: Frederick Verinder, General Secretary, First Floor, 94 Petty France, Westminster, London, S.W.1. (Phone: Whitehall 3831.)

MEETINGS IN NOVEMBER

Wed., 3rd.—Methodist Church, Ravensdale Road, Stamford Hill: Fredk. Verinder, "The Bible and the Land Question." 8 p.m.

Thurs., 4th.—Castelnau Women's Co-operative Guild, New Church Hall, Stillingfleet Road, Barnes: A. C. Blackburn, "Real Free Trade." 3 p.m.

Tues., 9th.—Hornsey League of Young Liberals, Liberal Offices, 133, Tottenham Lane, Hornsey: Fredk. Verinder, "The First Great Reform." 8.15 p.m.

Wed., 10th.—Purley, Caterham and District Women's Liberal Association, Purley Men's Club, Whytecliffe Road, Purley: Fredk. Verinder, "Women's Interest in the Land Question." 3.30 p.m.

Wed., 17th.—Balham and Tooting Labour Party (Women's Section), Labour Centre, 12 Balham Park Road: A. C. Blackburn, "Rating of Land Values." 3 p.m.

North Hackney Labour Party (Women's Section), 12 Southwood Road, Clapton: Fredk. Verinder, "Who ought to pay the Rates?" 3 p.m.

Thurs., 18th.—King's Langley Women's Co-operative Guild, Langley Hall, Waterside: A. C. Blackburn, "Rating Reform." 3 p.m.

Thurs., 18th.—North Tottenham Women's Liberal Association, 10 Bruce Grove. Fredk. Verinder, "Tottenham's Interest in London's Land Values." 3 p.m.

Shooter's Hill Residents' Association, Shrewsbury House, Shooter's Hill, S.E.18: F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., F.R.A.S., L.C.C., "Rating of Land Values." 8 p.m.

Tues., 23rd.—Watford Central Women's Co-operative Guild, Co-operative Hall, St. Alban's Road: A. C. Blackburn: "Rating Reform." 7.45 p.m.

Thurs., 25th.—S.W. Bethnal Green Labour Party (Women's Section): Fredk. Verinder, "Rating of Land Values."

The General Secretary's letter on the Borough Council Elections, printed in the October issue of *LAND AND LIBERTY*, had a very good press. Cuttings have reached the Office from many London and provincial papers, and many applications have been received for copies of the League's pamphlet on the Injustice of our Rating System and other literature on the subject. The pamphlet has also had a good sale at the meetings held during the past month.

HENRY GEORGE FREEDOM LEAGUE: Wm. Reid, Secretary, 9 Woodside Crescent, Glasgow, C.3. (Telephone: Douglas 5599.)

Tuesday, 2nd November, is polling day for the Municipality of Glasgow. We are hoping to make an effective distribution of literature. Four Liberals have entered the contest. It is unusual for politics to be mentioned in Glasgow's Municipal Elections. The political parties are active all right and they might as well admit that. Three of the Liberal candidates happen to be members of our League and all of them have Rating of Land Values as the first item in their programmes. The other parties seem to be concentrating on the amount of rates and not on the manner by which they are collected, though there will doubtless be advocates of the rating of land values among the Labour candidates. Labour programmes seem to blow hot and cold on that question.

Among local Labour speakers and workers there are notable exceptions. William Harrison, Otto Ommer and some others never appear to overlook the importance of the land question. Mr Ommer, we note, has been very busy in the latest Labour campaign.

Some of our newspaper correspondents, notably Mr John Cameron Coatbridge, have been criticizing recent Labour programmes on account of proposals to compensate land owners. Mr A. J. Mace has had letters in *Western Leader*, *Evening News* and *Western News*. Discussion began by Mrs A. McGrouther in *Bulletin* has been followed by letter from D. M., Newcastle. Letter signed "A. M." appeared in Glasgow *Evening Citizen* of 6th October and the Secretary had a longish letter in *Weekly Herald* of 16th October. Other letters have appeared from friends of the movement, such as that of "Tiller Toiler" in Glasgow *Evening News*. John Cameron had letter in *Forward* and Coatbridge weekly papers.

The Scottish Liberal Federation Autumn Conference held at Dunoon on 14th, 15th and 16th October passed the following resolution proposed by Captain A. R. McDougal. "That this Conference urges that the Derating of Houses and Improvements and the Rating and Taxing of Land Values in lieu should be put in the forefront of the Liberal programme and made a vital issue now and at next General Election."

WELSH LEAGUE: Eustace Davies, Hon. Secretary, 27 Park Place, Cardiff. (Telephone: 1563.)

Meetings held last month included: 6th October, Merthyr Tydfil Toc H., C. A. Gardner; 8th October, Penarth Toc H., E. A. Davies; 11th October, Ebbw Vale Toc H., E. A. Davies; 14th October, Canton Women's Co-operative Guild, Meth. Jones; 20th October, Heath Women's Co-operative Guild, Capt. F. Saw; 24th October, Tonypandy Athletic Workmen's Institute, Capt. F. Saw; 28th October, Cathays Women's Co-operative Guild, C. A. Gardner.

On 10th November a meeting will be held at The King's Head, Newport, Mon., at 9.30 p.m., on "The Rating of Land Values," under the auspices of the Incorporated Accountants' Association of South Wales and Monmouthshire and Mr F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., L.C.C., of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values will be the speaker.

On 12th November, Prof W. J. Roberts will speak on "Land-owners and Land Users," at the Maes-yr-Haf Educational Settlement, Treallaw, at 7 p.m.

Any friends interested will be welcome at both these meetings. The Executive Committee met at Cardiff on Saturday, 16th October, under the chairmanship of Captain Saw. Mr C. A. Gardner gave his personal impressions of the Matlock Bath Conference. Such impressions were wholly favourable. He found the Conference both enjoyable and stimulating. In accordance with the decision of this Executive Meeting the Cardiff Municipal candidates have been asked what is their attitude towards the

Rating of Land Values. Resolution passed at the Welsh National Conference of Rating Authorities in September, 1935. At the time of going to press a number of replies, mostly favourable, are to hand. A full report will have to be held over until the December issue of *Land & Liberty*.

At the Executive Committee Meeting the special circularization to organizations and individuals (about 1,200 in all) referred to in last month's notes was mentioned and it was decided to place on record in the Minutes an expression of our best thanks to Mr Madsen, Mr Wayles and other members of the staff of the United Committee for the excellent services rendered.

YORKSHIRE AND NORTHERN LEAGUE : F. Skirrow, Secretary, Tanfield Buildings, 129 Skipton Road, Keighley.

Meetings have been addressed as follows :—F. Smith : Elswick W.C.G. and Ashington W.C.G.; Wm. Thomson : Keighley I.L.P.; P. V. Olver : Leeds Toc H.; Ashley Mitchell : Hull Rotary Club; The Secretary : Middleton Labour Party, Darnall and Brightside W.C.G., Sheffield W.C.G.

Mr Howard Binns has made a very encouraging start with the Henry George School Class he is conducting weekly in Huddersfield.

The Economic Class (H.G.S.S.S.) conducted by Mr C. H. Smithson at 12 Waterhouse Street, Halifax, commences on 5th November at 7.30 p.m.; the second meeting will be on 19th November. Arrangements are being made for Mr Smithson to take classes also at Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge. At a Liberal meeting in Halifax on 27th October, Mr Smithson spoke from the platform for ten minutes on the principles of Henry George and effectively advertised the School and its study classes.

Letters to the Press have appeared in *The Yorkshire Observer* (6); *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* (5); *Halifax Courier and Guardian* (2); *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* (2). The contributors were E. A. Lassen (2); C. H. Smithson (2); "Free Lance" (3); Wm. Thomson (1); J. W. Booth (2); G. Froggart (1); P. V. Olver (1); the Secretary (3). E. A. Lassen has had two very good articles in the *Telegraph and Argus*.

MANCHESTER LEAGUE : Arthur H. Weller, J.P., Secretary, 69 Piccadilly, Manchester, 1. (Phone : Cen. 5527.)

Meetings addressed during the past month include : Alexandra Park Gate (two meetings), D. J. J. Owen, E. F. MacClafferty, Mr Kitchen and A. H. Weller; Salford Toc H., E. M. Ginders; Clayton Men's Co-operative Guild, A. H. Weller; Friends' Unemployed Centre, Manchester, E. F. MacClafferty; Union Chapel Brotherhood, Manchester, A. H. Weller; Burnley Rotary Club, A. H. Weller; Bury Left Book Club, A. H. Weller; Chester Women's Guild, A. H. Weller; Hindsford Women's Guild, Mrs Catterall; Altrincham Rotary Club, A. H. Weller; Timperley Men's Guild, A. H. Weller; Astley Women's Guild, A. H. Weller; Middleton Rotary Club, A. H. Weller.

The Bishop of Hulme was present at the Middleton Rotary Club meeting addressed by the Secretary, and he took exception to the speaker's statement that landowners rendered no service for the ground-rents and royalties they enjoyed. In his reply, the Secretary said a man might be a useful member of society as well as being a landowner, he might even be a Bishop. But in his capacity as an appropriator of the economic rent of land he rendered no service at all in return for what he took from the community. The landowner was not a greater sinner than other men, but it was our duty to see that the rent of land is diverted into the public purse.

In his presidential address to the Manchester Bankers' Institute, Sir R. Noton Barclay said "A widespread feeling prevails that the time has arrived when the whole basis of assessment for local government taxation should be thoroughly investigated with a view to its revision. There are those who would substitute for the present system a local taxation of land values for raising local government revenue. One thing is certain, that the present basis of local taxation is far from satisfactory and calls for full enquiry."

The following question has been submitted to all the candidates in the Manchester municipal elections : "Will you, if elected, use your vote and influence in support of the rating of land values in relief of the rates on industry and homes?"

The first meeting of the H.G.S.S.S. Class was held in the League's Office on 20th October, and although the attendance was small, the number of students is likely to increase at the next meeting. Mr Catterall's Class on Mondays at 11 Hazel Grove, Weaste, is going well, and the first meeting at Mr MacClafferty's house, 22 Johnson Street, Queen's Road, Manchester, had to be postponed from 13th October to 27th October.

LIVERPOOL LEAGUE : F. R. Jones, Hon. Secretary, 23 Rocklands Avenue, Bebington, Cheshire. (Meeting Room : 21 Harrington Street, Castle Street, Liverpool.)

On 31st October Mr O. B. Sweeney addressed the Birkenhead Branch of the National Secular Society on "Natural Law and Trade." As all our speakers are now doing, Mr Sweeney laid most emphasis on the classes of the Henry George School of Social Science and the importance to everyone of taking this remarkable

course which alone can give the equipment to judge on social questions.

The classes in the League room, in Birkenhead and in Waterloo are proceeding with keenness on the part of the students, and every effort is being made to start new classes in other districts.

PORTSMOUTH LEAGUE : A. H. Stoakes, Hon. Secretary, 110 Baffins Road, Portsmouth.

Local activities will be confined to the Class in connection with the Henry George School of Social Science which we are having weekly, commencing Tuesday, 5th October. Attendance has so far been maintained and a gratifying feature of the meetings is the very keen discussion resulting from the questions. The preparation of answers to questions appears to be admirably adapted to elicit interest and the diagrams in the printed list of questions are very acceptable in elucidation of the "pons asinorum"—the Law of Rent. We hope to interest some younger people, who will take the place of the six or seven promising converts and workers whom we have had the misfortune to lose during the last two years or so.

BRISTOL LEAGUE : Harold H. Williams, Hon. Secretary, "Rhossilly," 18 Grittleton Road, Horfield, Bristol, 7.

Our League meetings at the Queen's Café, Tramway Centre, are progressing satisfactorily.

Our President, Mr E. J. Brierly, is speaking on the current events of the week appearing in the national and local papers, explaining very skilfully their effect upon Land Values; also readings are taken from the books of Henry George, by permission of the Chairman, after which questions and discussion is invited, but must be strictly confined to the subject dealt with the same evening.

The President addressed a well-attended meeting at the Folk House on Friday, 22nd October, at 7.30 p.m., after which many interesting questions were dealt with.

One of the successful meetings addressed during the month was that at which our member, Mr K. E. Abbott, spoke to the Co-operators at Compton Bishop.

DERBYSHIRE LAND VALUES LEAGUE : G. Musson, Hon. Secretary, 24 Denby Lane, Codnor.

A Committee meeting was held on 15th October at which arrangements were made for the formal opening on 22nd October of the second year of our H.G.S.S.S. class. This latter meeting was duly held but—probably owing to the very inclement weather and the proximity of the local (Ripley) fair—was very moderately attended. May we appeal to all our friends in this district to make our classes widely known, as we can now handle two or three classes quite easily. We continue to get a fair amount of publicity in the *Heanor and Ripley Gazette*, which has quite a large circulation in the Ilkeston and Belper Parliamentary Divisions.

We regret to announce the sudden death of Mr A. Roberts, a young man of twenty-one who was a member of our 1936 and 1937 class. Quiet and unassuming, he was well known in Codnor and was one of the leaders of the Young People's class at the local Methodist chapel. He was injured in the stomach whilst playing football on Saturday, 23rd October, and died suddenly on Monday, the 25th.

NORTH WALES

Mr A. Williams Price, Wrexham, writes :—

Various districts, towns, villages, roads, etc., in the northern end of "The Marches of Wales" (wherein I tramp about with Land Tracts) have been the objects of some biting criticism recently in the local, and the national, press : and the criticism is true, being based on conditions as they really exist. The Chairman of the Transport Commissioners, speaking at Chester, and referring to one group of villages, said "A man who drives for pleasure in this district will go to Hades for a pastime!" A well-known journalist and broadcaster (Mr S. P. B. Mais, in *The Passing Show*, 14th August) in an article entitled "The Seven Wonders of Wales," refers to one village as being "incredibly ugly," to another as being "foul," etc., and he was greatly impressed by the miles and miles of massive park wall bordering the different roads along which he travelled.

The "park walls" furnish the key, the answer to the question as to the cause of the economic ills now afflicting Wales : Unemployment, Poverty, Slums, Overcrowding, narrow crooked streets, towns and villages with houses crammed, packed, and festered together in unsightly masses. The cause of our ills is land monopoly, land enclosure, and this is of comparatively recent date : It is not due to the activities of William the Norman and his hordes of "interventionists" in 1066; most of the seizures of communal and state lands and minerals in this portion of "The Marches of Wales," came about after the arrival of William the Dutchman in 1688, and the process was going on in the 1850's. Those who collared the land were, mainly, M.P.s, courtiers, and members of the legal profession; and they did their work most thoroughly; the finishing touches to the scheme for rendering the people homeless and landless

were applied by a few of the early "manufacturers"; having made their money out of the labour (and the lives) of the child slaves of the Industrial Revolution, they settled down, as old county families, claiming descent from the daughters of Queen Boadicea.

The time of struggle between Dictatorship and Democracy draws nearer; if the mass of voters be warned that they are fighting for their land they may rally; if they are expected to study half a dozen vague and diffuse programmes they—well, many of them will not trouble to vote. Why should they?

If the leaders of Democracy cannot lead, if they know not what is needed, 'tis useless to expect any enthusiasm and active faith among the rank and file.

"Have we not seen . . .
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose,
In barren, solitary, pomp repose?
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling long-frequented village fall?"

Oliver Goldsmith.

WHAT SOME SAY

AN ENERGETIC H.G. SCHOOL MAN.—A correspondent in a Yorkshire town working there during the week and going to his home town at the week-end writes: "I have started an H.G.S.S.S. class here and would like to have another, but that would be difficult. I have three nights per week night school, one night for the present class and the remaining night (Friday) I pay wages out to the night shift at my place of work. This leaves only Saturdays and Sundays and since I generally go home for the week-end my time is pretty well filled in. I might try to take a class at home for Sunday afternoons and in case I could not take it on any occasion my brother would be able to fill the gap. One of my weekly night classes is at the local Technical College, tuition in Economics, conducted by an M.A. Although we have had only two classes thus far, he has endeavoured to teach us that land is wealth and that such capital goods as tramcars and business premises are not 'consumed' in production. We have had some lively discussions and there is every prospect of much further argument when we get to the Malthusian doctrine, which he has already mentioned briefly as a 'beautiful' theory." Our correspondent, whom we hope others will emulate, *that they may enrol as instructors for the H.G.S.S.S. classes and study circles*, is effectively doing double work as teacher of his own students and as alumnus under that eminent M.A.

FROM AN ISLE OF MAN CORRESPONDENT:—

"I am a sincere supporter of your campaign for the proper utilization of the land of this country in the interests of the people. The present system of legalized piracy whereby the whole community is held up to ransom for the benefit of a handful of parasites is disgraceful. There is scarcely a radical movement of the day in which I have not dabbled in the hope of seeing some way out of our present muddle. But being, false modesty apart, an ignorant person, the multitude of counsel rather tends to bewilder me. I am not quite clear as to your attitude towards Marxism, but that does not matter; enough that any move towards restoring the land of England to communal control, or at least to such control as would enable the community to enjoy the benefits of the one in land values brought about by public development, would be a tremendous advance in the right direction.

I have only just returned from London after spending a few days there with friends, and the working-class family with whom I stayed were paying 30s. a week rent for a five-roomed house standing on land which a few years ago was practically derelict and valueless. That sort of thing makes me see red; it means that these people are being robbed. But what can I do?

When I am working I haven't time or energy to study; when I am idle (which is too often) I haven't the money. I imagine the whole working-class is more or less in this dilemma, which makes me understand why the administration of public affairs is an affair for the leisured classes, and not for the likes of us. Perhaps that is why this country is in such a mess; working-class Government might be no better, but it could hardly be worse.

I should like you to continue sending me your leaflets and literature. I enclose P.O. for 2s. 6d. (subscription for LAND & LIBERTY, starting with last month's issue) plus cost of *Progress* and *Poverty* and a number of pamphlets.

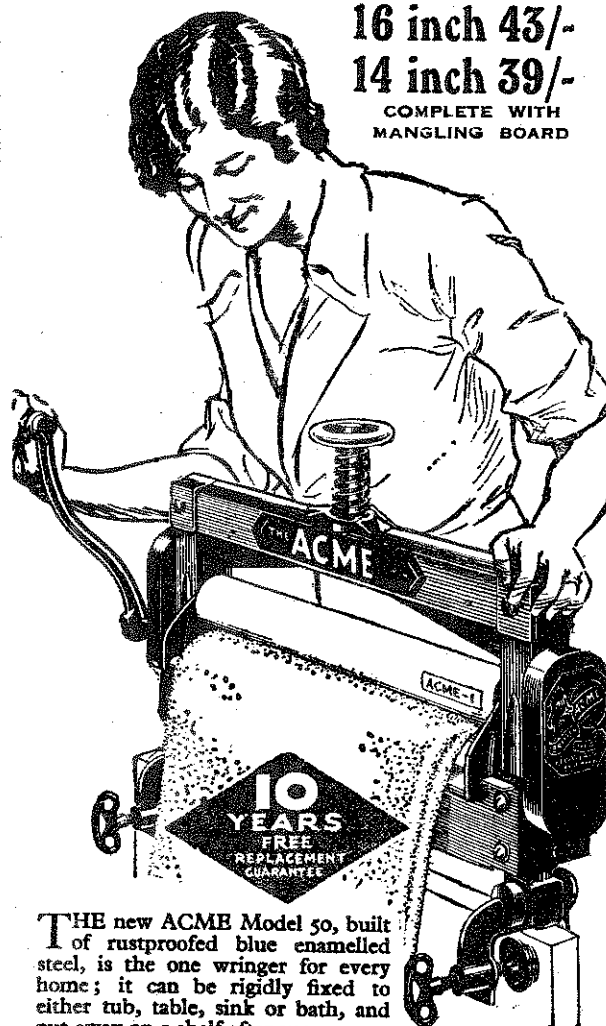
I'm afraid this is the best I can do at present. Only a flea-bite, but you will understand that beggars can't be choosers. I wish I could do more to help you get a smack at the infamous landlord system; anyhow, I wish you luck, and hope to hear from you again."

CHIEF LIBRARIAN, WELLINGTON, N.Z.—I have to thank you for the generous gift of books and pamphlets which you have made to this library. The publications will be placed in a prominent position on the library shelves, where they will be easily available to Members, who will find them of considerable use and interest.

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Furthermore, the ACME saves purposeless labour. It prevents splashing and does not break buttons or fasteners. Choose an ACME; it carries a ten years free replacement guarantee and will last a lifetime.

FREE CHOICE OF FIXTURES—to fix the ACME on either tub, table, sink or bath.

Packed with the wringer are the standard tub and table clamps which have made the ACME famous as a portable wringer.

Should these standard clamps be unsuitable, you have free choice from seven alternative fixtures, any one of which your Retailer will supply free of charge in exchange for the unused standard clamps.

**ENTIRELY BRITISH MADE BY
ACME WRINGERS LTD.
DAVID STREET, GLASGOW, S.E.**