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WHAT SHOULD BE DONE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

THE COMMITTEE on Land Utilization in Rural Areas (Chairman, Lord Justice Scott) has now reported to the Minister of Works and Planning. Its terms of reference were: "To consider the conditions which should govern building and other constructional development in country areas consistently with the maintenance of agriculture, and in particular the factors affecting the location of industry, having regard to economic operation, part-time and seasonal employment, the well-being of rural communities and the preservation of rural amenities."

It is difficult to say in a few words what is the principle underlying the numerous detailed recommendations, but it appears to be that industry should as far as possible be prevented from locating itself in the country, while at the same time the country should be provided with urban amenities such as electricity, gas, piped water supply, sewerage and other things upon the same terms as these are available to urban dwellers. At the same time agriculture is to be "maintained" in such a state of prosperity as will prevent the drift to the towns and enable the agricultural labourer to pay an economic rent for improved housing accommodation.

The Cost and Who is to Pay?

It is an ambitious programme, but the Committee do not give any indication of what it is likely to cost or who is to pay for it. They show little appreciation of the economic factors involved, and appear to be obsessed with the idea that the most important thing is to prevent builders from acquiring agricultural land, although the largest estimate of the amount of land which might be required for housing is that it is less than one per cent of the area now devoted to agriculture. The Committee say: "Sites for development have been chosen from the point of view of the usual factors affecting location, for instance accessibility of road and rail transport, availability of public utility services and suitability of land for building purposes, and since the development value of a site far exceeds its value as agricultural land—even where it is of the highest agricultural quality—there has been nothing to hinder the developer from taking his choice." On the other hand it ought to be borne in mind that if access to means of transport and public utility services is not regarded the occupier of the houses will be deprived of important elements of comfort or will have to pay an unnecessarily high price for them.

How Development is Stopped

The Committee refer to farming in the neighbourhood of urban centres being poor because agriculture was regarded

as an interim use pending sale for development. "In other cases the land was not farmed at all; the speculative buyers allowing it to lie idle until the market was considered suitable for sale. This is why so much derelict land was to be found on the borders of built-up areas. The threat of the builder over-shadowed and sterilised it." It does not occur to the Committee that the reason why this land remained unused was because it was exempt from rates and taxes so long as that state of affairs continued, and that if it had been rated and taxed at its market value, the price would not have risen so high, the discrepancy between agricultural and building value would have been less marked, and in fact the market value would have sunk to the agricultural level at a moderate distance from the centre of the town. One of the main reasons why straggling urban development has extended so far from the towns is just because our system of local and national taxation has fostered speculative values.

Taxation and Death Duties

The Committee refer to taxation at two points. They say that "rising taxation and the incidence of death duties seriously reduced the ability of many landowners to make necessary improvements or to maintain their farms in good tenable condition." It is to be remembered that agricultural landlords are not the only people who pay taxation, and, although there is an element of truth in this oft-repeated statement, it has usually made a peg upon which to hang an argument in favour of exempting landlords from taxation instead of for readjusting taxation so that it will be economically beneficial.

At another point the Committee say: "There is evidence that in some cases private owners have been deterred from carrying out improvements or restoring rural houses through fear of increases in assessment without the possibility of an equivalent increase in rental." They do not draw the obvious inference that the rates should be based on the value of the land disregarding the value of buildings and other improvements.

Proposals for Valuation

A series of recommendations with regard to valuation and rating are, however, made in an addendum to the report signed by a section of the Committee, viz. the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman (Dr L. Dudley Stamp), Mr H. S. Cooper, F.C.A., Mr A. E. Monks, J.P., and Mr Philip Robinson. They point out that the varied proposals in connection with national planning all involve valuation

of land and other property and that there should be "a standard valuation which can be used for a variety of purposes." They propose that all owners of land should be required to make a declaration under oath of the value of each parcel of land which is held under a separate title or is separately assessed. This valuation should be as at 31st March, 1939. In the case of "non-agricultural holdings the declared value of the whole must be divided by the declarer into (a) site value; (b) the property thereon." In the case of agricultural holdings "the declared value of the whole farm or unit should, if possible, be divided by the declarer at the time of declaration into (a) value of the dwelling with or without curtilage; (b) value of farm and other buildings; (c) value of the land considered as agricultural land; (d) value of development rights, if any, which might be subletted from the total when bases of taxation and rating are being considered."

It is proposed that the "declared values" should be "open to inspection and so known just as rateable values are known to enquirers such as prospective purchasers."

Compensation and "Betterment"

The idea underlying this proposal is that the declared values should be used both for purposes of taxation (after approval by the Valuation Department of the Inland Revenue) and for purposes of compensation. Where the taxation was on the annual value, as for example Schedule A of the Income Tax and local rates, the government would fix the rate of interest to be used in computing the annual value from the capital value.

"Where substantial changes in value have been occasioned since 31st March, 1939, by Government works, e.g., drainage, road-making, replanning, the 'betterment' would be the property of the State and conversely owners of property decreased in value would be entitled to compensation; where the changes have been occasioned by private enterprise there should be a right to revaluation."

Method of Valuation

This is an interesting series of declarations, and important in so far as they show the need of a national valuation which discloses the site value of all land. The method proposed is, however, defective. It is not true that owners of land generally have the competence and knowledge necessary to make a valuation of their land and still less to say what is the site value in all cases. This is implicitly recognized in the proviso that the declared values shall only become a basis of taxation after they have been approved (and no doubt revised where necessary) by the Valuation Department of the Inland

Revenue. Practical experience has demonstrated that no satisfactory valuation can be established upon the basis of landowners' returns alone. For example, the Tax Commissioner of South Australia, reporting upon the first valuation made there, said: "The differences were very great, some lands being returned at ten times as much as others which were of equal value. Certainly no assessment, formed by accepting the returns, could have been maintained. The department has made its own assessment, based upon the values as returned and the other independent sources of information previously indicated." He went on to say that "all future land tax returns can be dispensed with."

Assessing Land Values

It may also be observed that it is far more important, and much easier, to ascertain the land value than the value of the improvements, and it is upon that task that attention should first be concentrated.

The authors of these recommendations say nothing of making a periodical revision of the valuation, but this is essential. The values of 1939 will not remain fixed for all time. Indeed the many changes which have since taken place, and which will yet take place immediately after the war, must in some cases involve profound alterations of the land value.

The committeemen also contemplate that it will be possible to distinguish between changes of value which are due to public acts, such as drainage, road-making and planning, from those which are due to other causes. This is a vain hope. It is possible to say from time to time what is the site value, disregarding buildings and other improvements, but it is not possible to say how much of the site value is due to any particular factor.

These recommendations are also defective in that they do not contemplate that the site value shall be used as a basis of assessment for rates and taxes, and houses and other buildings and improvements correspondingly relieved, a conclusion to which they might easily have come when they noticed that owners were deterred from making improvements because of fears of increased assessment.

In connection with valuation it may be mentioned that the Report recommends that registration of title to land should be made compulsory over the whole of England and Wales. This would be a valuable reform which would ultimately link up with the valuation and ensure that both were complete.

Land Purchase Unnecessary

The report does not propose any scheme of general land purchase by the State. They say: "We are aware that one method of obtaining control [over the development of land] is by the purchase of the land; but we consider it important to emphasize that the changes we recommend are not contingent on the ownership of the land by the State or by public authorities: they are contingent upon adequate powers of control and regulation. A change from private to public ownership would still leave the necessity for the planning and development which we have

recommended. . . . After questioning those witnesses who did urge the necessity of State ownership of land, we are of opinion that the reforms they suggest can be achieved by adequate control of land." That is a statement with which we could agree subject to the proviso that there should be taxation and rating of site values in order that the value of land should be made available for public revenue and rates and taxes upon improvements thereby reduced. After all, the most ardent advocate of land purchase cannot contemplate that the State would do anything in regard to 99 per cent of the land except to leave the existing occupier in possession and collect rent from him. If we collect the proper rent from the owners of land by means of land value taxation, we may then deal with the other one per cent of cases as and when they arise.

Land of My Dreams

Mr Oscar R. Hobson, the City Editor, in the *News Chronicle* of 24th August, puts this appropriate caption to his comments on the Scott Committee's Report on Land Utilization in Rural Areas. "The report," he says, "opens up an alluring prospect of an English countryside of abounding and enduring prosperity, a countryside which preserves every traditional beauty and charm, which has banished the unsightly horrors of 'hoardings, signs and advertisements, but into which withal the modern conveniences of running water and electric light have been introduced—a countryside flowing with milk and honey but also with water and gas and electricity. Yet to me this is in many ways a backward—not a forward-looking document . . ."

Mr Hobson goes on to criticize the economics of the proposals but his criticism although cogent in the matter of the cost of the pictured benefits, lacks the thump with which his dream would end, broken to pieces between the hammer and the anvil of land monopoly. Indeed, if this report did presage any likely legislation of the kind to shower such manna over the countryside it would now and at once and by anticipation add such millions of pounds to the price of land as not only to stop the schemes at their inception but also to hold to ransom the whole future of agriculture, as it is. Mr Hobson awakes from his dream with thoughts that are useful but they are of lesser import: "The Scott Report implies the grant of enormously increased subsidization to British agriculture, without any assurance of a *quid pro quo* in the shape of greater efficiency. Is it conceivable that in our post-war impoverishment, with our foreign investments gone, our foreign markets in jeopardy, and industrial fabric in need of complete renovation, we can afford or shall be content to maintain an unregenerated agriculture of pre-war type and pre-war size on grounds of sheer sentiment?"

After the war, as before it, the sun will still shine, the rain will still fall, the winds will still blow and nature in all its moods and tenses will be as prolific as ever. What matters is whether there shall be equal opportunity to fashion all things out of nature's stores or whether some people shall still have the right

to charge their fellow men a price for standing on and moving about on the face of the earth or delving into its treasures. Under just conditions there will be no lack of "efficiency," which can never be the test or standard of schemes for stealing from some of the people and giving the booty to others, which is what subsidization means.

Taxing Farmers

A letter appeared in *The Times* (22nd August) signed by Lord Lymington, Lord Northbourne, Mr J. E. Hoskyns and Mr H. J. Massingham urging an alteration in the method of taxing farmers. In support they said:

"The farmer is menaced in his primary function, which is that of maintaining soil-fertility, by the application to him of principles and methods of taxation mainly devised to defend the community from the grosser evils of inflation.

"Industrialists are apprehensive lest these methods, admittedly necessary, should gradually bleed away the equally necessary provision for capital maintenance. But the corresponding danger for the farmer is far more directly social in its effects. If he is forced to draw on the reserves of his soil, not in order to feed the people but in order to meet the demands of the Inland Revenue, in disregard of the long-term policy dictated by the accumulated wisdom of experience and by the trained expert, not only will the farmer starve after the war, but we may starve with him."

The proposal of the writers was that the assessment for income tax, and consequently for E.P.T., should be based upon the rent paid, or a multiple of it. This is in fact the way in which Schedule B under which farmers are taxed used to be constructed. It does not follow, however, that the farmer who pays a high rent should pay high taxes.

What is wanted is the kind of assessment which Danish farmers have under their system of land value ratings, in which the value of the buildings and other improvements is disregarded and the value of the land itself is taken as if it were in a normal state of cultivation. In this way the farmer is not discouraged from improving the fertility of the soil, nor is he relieved of taxation if he lets it down.

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THE LIVELY LAND MARKET

THE PRICE of land in Northern Ireland has soared to a record of £150 an acre. Auctioneers find no difficulty in disposing of a 10-acres farm with a comfortable dwelling-house for £6,000. Before the war £2,500 was seldom bid for the same property. Many farms are changing hands, and they are invariably sold at a profit, especially those within 30 miles of Belfast.—*Sunday Dispatch*, 16th August.

The prices which farm land is now fetching are illustrated by the sales reported in the *Isle of Ely Advertiser*, 12th August. Approximately 17½ acres of land on the Needham Bank road, originally forming part of a farm property were sold for £2,200, which is at the rate of £124 an acre. Approximately 9½ acres, which had been let at £16 17s. 6d. a year, were sold for £900, equivalent to £96 per acre. The price of 3½ acres on the main road from Tilney St. Lawrence to Magdalen was £340, equivalent to £97 per acre. And at Walsoken approximately 6 acres (with a row of plum trees and a packing shed) were sold for £870, equivalent to £145 per acre less the value per acre of the plum trees and the packing shed. The previous owner of the land on the Needham Bank road had paid £2,400 for it twelve months ago, but when land speculation takes place, it often happens that buyers and sellers overreach themselves and when prices are rising they do so in waves like the advancing tide.

All these properties are described as agricultural land. As such they are entirely exempt from local rating. But the value of the land is proved in the market and proved also most abundantly is the case for the Taxation of Land Values.

The Times in its advertisements and its estate column discloses much information about the distribution of land and the immense holdings which are possessed by individuals. They show also the extent of the land speculation that is taking place. But why the vendors are selling and how it is that purchasers have so much money freely to spend are questions we leave the economists to answer. It seems that war taxation and subscriptions to war loans have by no means exhausted the resources of some people. One party may be gambling against the other on future events—the possibility of free trade after the war and the stoppage of doles and subsidies, by which the present high price of agricultural land will be punctured; countered by the possibility that the protection and spoon-feeding of agriculture will be continued or even increased, and the fear of monetary inflation which would make the buying of land immediately the "best investment of all." These thoughts are like stakes on the roulette table.

1,563 Acres in Glamorgan. The Cottrell estate of 1,563 acres has been sold for £63,323 including £4,723 for growing timber. It is on the Swansea main road, six miles from Cardiff.

1,672 Acres in the Chilterns. The Brightwell estate, advertised for sale. It includes "beautiful building sites"; 40 Georgian residence in grounds of 40 acres; another residence; a public house,

6 farms and 24 cottages. All the property of one private estate.

1,665 Acres in Sussex. The Coghurst estates between the Downs and the sea. Here also "beautiful building sites," and this private property includes a mansion in grounds of 39 acres; some hoplands (their value raised by the hop quota); several houses; nine dairying and mixed farms; five cottages; market garden land, etc.

1,900 Acres in Aberdeenshire. The Tillyfour estate in the Vale of Alford. Advertised to breeders, farmers and "investors." This includes the well-known Tillyfour stud farm; also five smaller farms and several crofts and houses "the whole in a ring fence." **494 Acres in Rutland.** The "Top Farm" at Thistleton. It is "equally suitable for occupation or investment" and "a valuable and extensive bed of ironstone is believed to underlie the major portion of the property." It was sold for £9,500.

1,300 Acres in Yorkshire. An important portion of the Hazlewood estate "flanking the Great North Road and the main Leeds-York Road." There are 370 acres of woodland and over 800 acres of farmland, comprising seven medium-sized farms. The sale is by direction of the executors of the late C. F. Ryder.

49,500 Acres in Inverness-shire. This forthcoming sale was mentioned and commented upon in our columns last month. The estate was formerly part of the Seafield estates of the Dowager Lady Seafield.

2,562 Acres near Galashiels and Hawick. It includes "frontage to a tributary of the Tweed" and "adjoins a country town." There are three mixed farms and houses and cottages, nearly a mile of river fishing, low ground shooting and a further feature is "a valuable area of feuing and building land."

11,300 Acres on Suffolk-Cambridge Borders. The Great Thurlow estate distant four miles from Haverhill, 10 from Newmarket, 15 from Bury St Edmunds and 20 from Cambridge. Within it are "some of the best covers in the West Suffolk hunt," 70 farms and small-holdings, 260 cottages, 1,000 acres of woodlands and the "greater part of the villages of Gt Thurlow, Little Thurlow, Great Wratting and Withersfield." A feudal England in the twentieth century, of which it may be said "never was so much rent paid by so many to so few." This sale is also by direction of the executors of the late C. F. Ryder.

2,192 Acres in Lincolnshire. This comprises three farms and "nearly all the parish of Stanton-le-Vale."

Rising Prices. At Snape, "one of the best fattening fields in Romney Marsh," have sold 109 acres for £4,300, this is equivalent to £42 per acre. In 1918 (when another war had boosted land prices) Mr Burrows sold Romney Marsh grazings up to £121 per acre. In 1935, the sale of 35 acres there fetched £750. "East Anglian auctions," said *The Times*, show a high percentage of successful results and for the most part rising prices. . . . The buyer of 60 acres at

Filton End, near Wisbech, for £6,500, acquired arable at Leverington at £135 per acre." Another record is the more than £200 an acre paid for some of the land sold at Spalding. And there's a war on. And everybody is being hard pressed to find the cost of it.

The Times, 8th August, reports the prominence given by the whole German press to Hitler's own decree "restricting the sale of agricultural land during the war" and forbidding all changes in the ownership of landed property, unless absolutely necessary for economic reasons. Commenting on the decree the German newspapers explain that its purpose is to prevent those who fear currency depreciation from buying land to safeguard their fortunes. The newspapers state that recently there has been a great increase in the number of such deals.

* * *

Presiding at a luncheon given by his committee on 27th July Mr Claud Dennis, chairman of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee of the City of London Corporation, said that the plan for the rebuilding of the city was being held back pending the introduction of safeguarding legislation. "We do not want a black market in land." Why the Government could not fix basic values for land (as in 1939 for war damage) was beyond his comprehension.

Can we hope that the City will join with the larger authority, the London County Council, in pressing for the rating of site values and a valuation of all land?

RATING AND TAXATION IN THE HOUSING SCENE

By F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., I.C.C., M.P.

One of the "Design for Britain" series of pamphlets published for the Co-operative Permanent Building Society by Messrs J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. and edited by Dr Edwin C. Fairchild. An outstanding contribution to the series enabling the housing reformer to see the important bearing of the land and taxation system upon his problems as well as on all that relates to town planning and post-war construction. The editor says: "Mr Douglas has shown that the rise and fall of land values affects the location of industry and housing and that, as a principal element of the social problem, the price of land cannot be separated from the distribution of home ownership."

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SIR DANIEL HALL ON THE FARMER AND HIS FUTURE

AGRICULTURE, ALTHOUGH almost the oldest, is still the most important of man's activities. In the world as a whole it employs more people than any other industry, and perhaps more than all others put together. It supplies all food-stuffs, except fish, and it supplies a very large part of the raw materials of manufacturing industry, especially for textiles. Moreover it affords a way of life to which the constitution of man is adapted and which has a favourable effect upon mind and body.

The future of agriculture is, therefore, a concern of all of us. It has already been the subject of control and interference by the State, and still more so during the war. Although costs of production have risen prices have risen still further, and it is certain that many farmers are making handsome profits. There will naturally be a demand that the intervention which has caused this should in some form or other be continued.

Many of the economic and scientific problems which arise were discussed by Sir Daniel Hall, formerly director of Rothamstead Experimental Station and scientific adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture whose death we regret to record took place on 5th July, in his last book *Reconstruction and the Land*.* The heyday of British farming was in the sixties of last century. After that prices began to fall. Many farmers were ruined "since their landlords failed to realize in time that the depression was no temporary affair but had to be met by drastic reductions in rent." It may be added that in many cases the landlords tried to maintain their incomes by refraining from repairing and keeping up the buildings and other equipment of the farms, and the effects of this became cumulatively noticeable.

Agriculture gradually readjusted itself to the changed conditions, and its increased prosperity prior to the last war was evidenced by a considerable demand for agricultural estates. "Various speculators in command of money realized that farmers were then making very considerable profits out of the land of which their landlords were either not conscious or were unwilling to take advantage, since rents were not being raised." During that war prices rose sharply, and the price of wheat and oats was kept at a high level until 1921 by the operation of the Corn Production Act, 1917, and the Agriculture Act, 1920. "These high prices meant great profits and they created a keen competition for farms. As landowners were unable to raise rents, many of them took the opportunity to sell, and at the prices then ruling and the prevailing rates of interest they were able to double their former incomes from the land."

After the last war prices fell rapidly and reached a minimum in 1934. The extent of State assistance was much enlarged. Agricultural land and buildings, except the dwelling house of the farmer, were relieved of all local rates. An Agricultural Marketing Act was passed which "gave farmers the power of instituting a monopoly in the production and

trading in any one of the products of the land, a monopoly which could regulate the prices to be paid to the producers and the prices to be charged to consumers." This legislation has been applied to milk, bacon pigs, potatoes and hops. Almost at the same time a system of protective duties was introduced. In addition to these measures for imposing higher prices on consumers, the State has given "grants-in-aid in one form or another for the production of wheat and subsequently of barley and oats, of sugar beet and of fat cattle." Since the outbreak of war there has been superimposed upon all this the general control of food prices exercised by the Ministry of Food.

Let us now see what the factual position was immediately before the war. The number and size of holdings above 5 acres in 1924-25 were as follows:

Size	Number	Per- centage	Area	Per- cent
5-20	134,789	34.4	1,528,568	5.1
20-50	90,192	23.0	3,041,537	10.1
50-150	108,885	27.7	9,536,521	31.8
150-300	42,469	10.8	8,869,108	29.6
Over 300	15,324	3.9	7,007,405	23.3
Total ...	391,659		29,983,139	

Some farmers have more than one holding. The number is not known. Sir Daniel estimates that there were about 150,000 small holders farming under 50 acres mainly dependent on family labour, and about 100,000 to 120,000 larger farmers employing labour. It is estimated that about 25 per cent of holdings are owned by the occupier. The number of workers employed in agriculture fell from 892,411 in 1923 to 697,463 in 1938.

The total rental value of land in England and Wales was estimated at £42,350,000 in 1924 and £36,700,000 in 1931 or an average of 31s. an acre and 25s. respectively. The capital value was estimated at £645,000,000 (or an average of about £24 an acre) and the tenants' capital at £280,000,000.

The value of the agricultural output of Great Britain in 1937-38 was valued at £265,000,000 of which about 70 per cent was derived from livestock and livestock products and 13 per cent from fruit vegetables and glasshouse products. About £65,000,000 of imported foodstuffs was used in livestock production. If this is deducted the net output of agriculture is £200,000,000. Assuming the number of persons employed in agriculture to be 700,000 the gross output per head is £380 and the net output £285.

State assistance to agriculture in the form of subsidies and rating relief is estimated at £41,000,000. In addition to this it is to be remembered that the "annual output could have been purchased in the world's market at £60 millions less than the cost to the consumers." Thus it would appear that the consumers and taxpayers, who of course are broadly the same, are subsidizing agriculture in direct payments, rate relief and enhanced prices to the extent of £100,000,000 a year. Can we afford to go on doing so? And should we in any case continue to do so?

The argument against subsidies is put very cogently by Sir Daniel. "The current policies of subsidies and protection

are not likely to have much effect in improving the technique of British farming nor in modifying its organization. On the contrary they tend to keep in being old methods and indifferent farming. They favour scarcity policies of restricting production to the quantity that can be sold at a high price. In so far as the subsidies are not absorbed in increased rents they give excessive profits to good farmers in order to enable bad farmers to live." And again: "The cost of subsidies, direct or indirect, is excessive, amounting to 20s. to 30s. per acre of cultivated land, more than the total rental. It amounts to an average of more than £100 to all farmers or, since smallholders receive little of the assistance, to upwards of £200 a year to all holdings of above 50 acres."

In the long run a large part of the benefit of subsidies goes to the owner of the land and not to the cultivator. "Tenants are already competing for farms, and the more the farm can earn, either through capital the Government has put in or through subsidized prices, the more rent the tenant will offer. The effect of the subsidy policy is already seen in reports of rent audits at which there were no arrears and of new lettings at higher rates: the press also reports higher prices for the freehold of farming land. Yet to whatever height subsidies may be raised, the tenants will in the end be little better off." To this it may be added that not only will tenants not be better off, but the man who buys land for farming will also be no better off because of the enhanced price which he will have to pay.

Sir Daniel, in common with some other writers on agriculture, leans to the view that the State should purchase all agricultural land. The arguments which he advances in favour of this course are two. One is that capitalists are disinclined to spend money upon equipping farms because of the long delay between expenditure and return and because they do not consider the prospect of profits sufficiently tempting. In Sir Daniel's opinion this is "the sort of long-term investment that the State can undertake if it is the owner of the land, because it stands to recover not only the direct return in income from the improved land but the collateral gains which come with increased production." The other argument is, in the words of the Haversham Committee, 1912, that there should be "some system which will protect the tenant against dispossession, whilst at the same time securing to the occupier all the advantages now enjoyed upon well managed estates. This, in our opinion, can be secured by the acquisition and management of landed estates by the State."

There are other means of giving the occupier security of tenure than by State purchase of all land. It is, for instance, possible to provide that the tenant shall be entitled to a renewal of his lease at a rent fixed by an impartial valuation if the parties fail to agree. State ownership does not in fact guarantee a tenant security of tenure unless the State binds itself not to raise the rent beyond a fair figure or to reduce the rent if the economic

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COMPLACENCY ON THE TAXATION FRONT

circumstances so require. The establishment of security of tenure will go some way at least towards securing that the capital equipment which the land requires is provided. A tenant who is liable to be turned out at any time is naturally disinclined to spend money upon improvements which will not yield a quick return.

It is not clear what Sir Daniel means by "the collateral gains which come with increased production." If this is intended to refer to increase in the land value or economic rent, then there is a very simple means of securing that the gain accrues to the State and that is the taxation of land values.

It should be evident that if the State purchased all the land it would in the vast majority of cases leave the present occupier in possession as tenant of the State. The State in all those cases would not take possession of the land, but would merely receive the rent. If there was a dispute as to whether the rent was equitable or not, there would have to be machinery for settling the question in an impartial fashion. If, therefore, that machinery were set up otherwise, all the practical advantages of security of tenure could be obtained without the financial disadvantages of State purchase. Purchase at the present time is an especially dangerous proposal in view of the increase in land values which has taken place in recent times and which Sir Daniel himself points out.

It is suggested that the basis of purchase should be some number of years' purchase of the annual value as fixed for Schedule A of the income tax. It is extremely doubtful whether this is either an accurate or a uniform valuation. Recent legislation which has enabled the Inland Revenue to substitute the actual rent paid for the value established at the periodical reassessment has probably increased the anomalies. But whether the proposed basis of purchase is fair or not, the transaction is unnecessary for achieving the purpose in view.

The question remains, if agriculture in this country is not to be subsidized, how is it to be saved? The answer perhaps may be found in following the example of Denmark, Holland and Belgium in none of which have agricultural protection or subsidy played any great part. Their agricultural economy has been built up upon a frank recognition that they must adapt themselves to the conditions of the present day. They have accepted imports of cereals from the Western Hemisphere at low prices and have used these as the basis of an intensive animal husbandry together with the growing of perishable products such as vegetables and fruit. There is still a large potential demand for these things. The urban population will in time learn that canned and preserved foods are no substitute for fresh food.

At the same time our system of land tenure and taxation must be revised so as to secure that the value of land goes to the state, that he who improves land is not taxed upon the value of his improvement, and that the occupier has security of tenure at a fair rent which will encourage him to make the most of the land.

44. KARL MARX'S THEORIES OF SURPLUS VALUE AND LAND RENT. By F. C. R. Douglass.

A LEADING article entitled "No Death Duties," in the *Manchester Guardian* of 17th July, has in it a number of reflections which are worthy of comment. Here is the article:

The Isle of Man has refreshing qualities quite apart from its sea breezes. There more than anywhere else in the British Isles (perhaps even in the British Commonwealth) the spirit of the Victorian age lives on. Where else could we find a Legislature solemnly refusing even to inquire into death duties? Where else could we find a sturdy elected representative of the people laying it down that "the foundation of justice was that there was one law for everyone, rich and poor. All graduated taxes like this outraged this principle."

We should have to go back to Hansard of 1894 to find a worthy companion for the honourable member. But in one respect the Isle of Man is unique. Its House of Lords (the Legislative Council) is in favour of an inquiry into death duties; the Commons (the House of Keys) is against it by thirteen votes to five. It is an odd business. The explanation probably lies in the words of Mr Samuel Norris, one of the most respected of the Isle of Man's few Progressives: "In all the history of the Tynwald Court it had been constituted very largely of people who were owners of land and property and came to their seats on that basis."

Thus it is possible for this delightful island to put aside such dangerous things as unemployment insurance (which might affect wages), death duties (which would reduce unearned wealth), and an excess profits tax (which would curb war gains), to keep income tax low even in the war, and to raise the bulk of Government revenue from indirect taxes. There is no nonsense about "the century of the common man" there.

To deplore the maldistribution of wealth has become among publicists almost a formality. By now it must have lost the force of novelty among a public accustomed by the same authorities to consider a government much more as a universal provider than as a safeguard of liberty. Nevertheless, among the people the sense of injustice still smoulders, ready, according to the turn of events and to the quality of public discussion, to help the reformer to strengthen society or the demagogue to destroy it. Hazy thinking when published in newspapers is thus of greater consequence to the average man than he often realizes.

False arguments for a good cause open the way for good arguments against it. If unsound solutions for our troubles are the only solutions the masses are permitted to hear, intellectual integrity itself reduces the best citizens to that state of doubt and hesitation which forms a nucleus for apathy and cynicism. Examples of democracies which at the last, supreme moment have failed to find a reserve of enthusiasm are too close to enable us to be indifferent to this consideration.

Consider how this *Manchester Guardian* article treats the argument that justice is founded on there being one law for everyone, rich and poor and that graduated taxes like death duties outrage this principle.

In a tone of derision-cum-more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger the writer condemns the argument as "Victorian" and without the slightest attempt to examine the principle involved. And he continues with some observations on taxation from which we can only assume that he considers the modern trends approach perfection although one remark, suggesting that death duties are levied only on unearned wealth, might startle some readers. A newspaper suspected of Free Trade leanings would of course be hypersensitive on the subject of Victorianism; but is it not becoming slightly *démodé* to assume that every social arrangement of an age which knew not the gas mask was the work of knaves, fools or hypocrites?

Could some contemporary of Macaulay revisit the earth he would indeed be impressed by the progress which has been made in machines to spread death and propaganda. But the technical and scientific progress he might attribute to individual intelligence and research, working on knowledge acquired by past generations, rather than to the excellence of our social arrangements—for which he might indeed wonder if we had much enthusiasm ourselves. The tendency of modern governments to take from the rich (and not so rich) just because they have it and to distribute *via* the euphemism of social services to the masses who sway elections, and *via* subsidies and other means to powerful interests which influence party machines, might appear to him less like a genuine cure for economic disparity than the modern form of those methods by which some Roman dictators buttressed their power while seeking popularity with the mob. Moreover, if this ghost from the past could insinuate his shadowy form into some private conferences of accountants, lawyers and estate managers it might strike him that a confiscatory tax, however crude in principle might be so complicated and expensive in practice as to impose on society the maintenance of a vast army of non-producers and in the end put a premium on cunning.

To this ignorant Victorian our modern trends of taxation might appear a direct discouragement to those qualities of efficiency, self-reliance and public spirit which he had seen develop in his own time under a different tendency in legislation and which had been accompanied by a remarkable increase of national wealth, power and confidence. He might even suspect that our disappointing achievements in production and inventiveness for war might be traceable not only to the previous encouragement of the monopoly so fatal to efficiency but also to a system of taxation which increasingly levied heavy fines upon successful enterprise.

Few of us to-day are likely to assess Victorian England entirely at a Macaulay valuation, but the appalling results of complacency in kindred spheres must surely warn us against the dangers of complacency towards any social question. The *Manchester Guardian* and other media of progressive thought might serve their readers much better by meeting apparently reactionary arguments on the grounds of

principle instead of in a spirit of derision.

If our professions of liberty are sincere we must of necessity deny the justice of any law which draws a distinction between rich and poor. But instead of using this principle to justify the existing disparity of economic power we must use it to equalize that power at its source. As every man's first and constant necessity, either to produce or live, is access to land this must constitute the source of all economic power. Far from equality between rich and poor at this point, however, one finds that our laws give access to land in exact proportion to wealth. By law and not by nature the rich man is enabled to cut off his fellow countrymen from the use of land, or to levy a toll upon all who produce from

or use land. Money buys a legal privilege to collect wealth.

As the value of land itself—apart from any improvements made by the occupiers—grows with and is created entirely by the presence and activities of the community as a whole the principle of equality requires that this value should be collected for public purposes. Were this done no occupier could hold land without putting it to its best use and none could draw a toll upon the labour of others. Moreover, by applying justice at the source of production the means would be created to apply justice to the secondary stages of exchange. All those other taxes and restrictions which depress industry and discourage thrift—violating the principle of equality at every point—

might be progressively removed as taxation was transferred to the value of land.

Although this proposal has as yet been applied only to a small degree, and in some smaller administrative areas, the results of practice all go to demonstrate the soundness of the principle. It has been discussed, elaborated and advocated by economists and social reformers whose names and works have long achieved permanent fame. It must be known to every economic writer in such a newspaper as the *Manchester Guardian*. The average man might indulge in some interesting speculations were he to realize the importance of this question and its constant omission by publicists from discussions in which he is so deeply concerned.

F. D.

THE LAND REVENUE OF BENGAL

THE BENGAL Land Revenue Commission whose report we reviewed last month issued a questionnaire which was answered by a large number of witnesses. Among these was the Rev Victor J. White of the Australian Baptist Mission at Mymensingh whose evidence was of particular interest. Space does not permit us to reproduce all the 91 questions and answers, but only a summary of some of them.

Answering a series of questions which asked whether the Permanent Settlement had fulfilled the expectation of its makers by benefiting the tenants through the zamindars acting as improving and generous landlords, and whether the annulment of the Permanent Settlement would be a breach of faith, Mr White said:

"In my opinion the Permanent Settlement placed a weapon in the hands of the zamindars for destroying the rights of the people who are tenants as they existed at that time.

"The Permanent Settlement secured the zamindar against increase of contribution for revenue, but did not secure the tenant against enhancement at the will of the zamindar. The zamindar for the most part continued as a rent collector, increasing his gains; but did not fulfil the hopes of those who framed the Permanent Settlement, that is that they would be benefactors of the tenants, improving their land.

"Before the Permanent Settlement, the zamindars were rent collectors and not proprietors of the soil. They date their permanent right in soil from 1793. The Permanent Settlement sold the birth-right of the people, and it is doubtful whether any Act or Government has the right to do so in perpetuity. That a pledge was given cannot be denied, but however we are clear that it was an error, and now self-government has come into force all our weight should be thrown into the argument that there is no point in such self-government if it must be bound by every error as well as by every sound doctrine of its predecessor.

"The Permanent Settlement did not encourage zamindars to extend cultivation by their own initiative, it encouraged them to increase their income from the legitimate labour and pioneering spirit of the peasant class from whom they exacted the regular rent. The pressure set up by increase of population accounts for the extension of

cultivation in areas formerly covered with jungle. Here again it was the enterprise of the tenants who braved the terrors of the jungle to bring it under cultivation. The zamindar does not seem to have spent his own money for effecting such improvements.

"Practically the whole increase in value has been created by the community and it is this unearned increment collected in the form of rent that largely explains the large increase in value, from the time of the Permanent Settlement, viz., 3 crores compared with present valuation which may prove even more than 16 crores as stated. One may quote the statement of Sir Michael O'Dwyer concerning the Punjab which may just as easily be said of Bengal:—

"We took over the Punjab in 1840. It had an area of 80,000,000 acres of which 12,000,000 only were under cultivation. The average value was then 5 shillings per acre. There were no roads, railways and canals. In 1920, as the result of security, railways and canals, 30,000,000 acres are under cultivation and 12,000,000 acres irrigated at an average of £25 per acre. Thus the capital value of land has risen in 70 years of British rule from £8,000,000 to £750,000,000."

"It would be interesting to have a similar statement concerning the increase in land values of Bengal.

"The Permanent Settlement from the point of economic interest was fundamentally unsound and unwarranted. It benefited the landlords at the expense of the tenants, because the unearned increment or portion of it no longer found its way into public revenue, thus whereas 10 per cent was given to the rent collector and 90 per cent went to revenue, now 10 per cent goes to revenue and 90 per cent to private interests."

As a remedy Mr White advocated "the collection of economic rent for the purpose of revenue. This means that the unearned increment created by service both of the public and of the State will be secured for financing the various needs of government." All land whether permanently settled or otherwise should be valued in the same manner and the economic rent paid to the State. No intermediary right created by sub-infeudation should be permitted to prevent the Government from realizing what is due to the revenue from the unimproved

value of the land. If these intermediaries were obliged to pay their share of the tax, they would in course of time be eliminated.

He did not favour compensating the zamindars who, because of increase in values, "have had considerable compensation since the inauguration of the Permanent Settlement."

He pointed out that it was quite fallacious to think of fixing rents in perpetuity either for the zamindar or for the tenant. "Tenants as a whole do not object to the payment of a fair and equitable rent. What they object to is the fact that only a small fraction of their rent goes back in the way of public service, as same is intercepted by the zamindari system. We would be repeating the mistake of those who framed the Permanent Settlement if we contemplated fixing rent for all time." He said that "economic rent should be paid in proportion to the fertility of the land and on account of the value created through public enterprise in the way of communication and other facilities" and the "market value should be taken into consideration." The rent should be based on the value of the land apart from the improvements. "The tenant should not be deprived of the fruit of his own labour by collecting the same in the shape of rates. It is the value which he does not create which should be the legitimate claim of the State."

Subsequently Mr White gave oral evidence and in this he mentioned that land value taxation had been applied in Northern Nigeria, Denmark, and the cities of New South Wales, and explained in some detail the principles which underlay the proposal and the means by which it could be carried out. We must heartily congratulate him upon both his written and spoken evidence.

A Devonshire farmer's wife showed herself willing and accommodating in taking in evacuees at the billeting officer's request. In due course the farmer received a questionnaire followed shortly by an intimation from the local rating authority that *the assessment of the house was being raised*, as it was not being used solely as an agricultural dwelling-house. The consequence naturally is that the occupier refuses to look at evacuees now. This seems a good healthy minor outrage.

—JANTS in the *Spectator*, 31st July, 1942.

DENMARK

News none the less gratifying because it is dated nearly a year ago reaches us relating to Danish colleagues and friends in the *Study Circle*, the journal of the "Ecotechnical School." The first number was published in November, 1941. It has come to us all the way from America, thanks to Mrs Anna George de Mille. In June, 1941, the School held its Summer Conference at the Housman's High School in Odense. The Journal devotes 16 pages to the sessions that were held and reports the work of the numerous classes that were being conducted and were being planned for the winter. The middle pages make a large advertisement, with cuts, of the text books—*Progress and Poverty*, *Protection or Free Trade* and Lange's *Social Economy*, with the Handbook for Teachers and the Lesson Sheets for students. The Journal is illustrated with many photographs where we recognize (as for example sitting in assembly in one of the lecture rooms) J. L. Björner and Mrs Signe Björner, Bue Björner and Mrs Caroline Björner, Jakob E. Lange (whose death in December, 1941, we lately reported) Bent Söndergaard of Esbjerg, Chr. Norlev, Mrs Uffe Grosen,

Viggo Starcke and others. There is a report of an article by F. Folke in the *Roskilde Times* in October, 1941. The outdoor pictures give glimpses of the Odense School buildings and their grounds, lightened by beautiful sunshine. We could wish for more space to do justice to this manifestly successful Conference and the indomitable spirit of our Danish friends who are so ably carrying on their educational work. One notable feature of the Conference, which gets high praise, was the lantern lecture by Chr. Norlev on the subject "Why does Poverty accompany Progress?" which it is hoped to repeat in many parts of the country. Caroline Björner, the organizer of all this wonderful work, and her co-workers—they are building better than they perhaps know.

"T.L.V."

A correspondent now with the forces writes: "Did you know that the Army are continually but unknowingly doing some propaganda for us? Every new recruit, when taught to do an about-turn, is told that his feet must successively form the letters 'T. L. V.'—rather good, I think, since we want an about-turn on the existing system of obtaining revenue."

WELSH LEAGUE FOR THE TAXATION

OF LAND VALUES: Eustace A. Davies, Hon Secretary, 27 Park Place, Cardiff (Telephone 1563). Conference Secretary, I. T. Rees, 2 Southey Street, Cardiff.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE IN CARDIFF

Invitations to a large address list are being issued to a Regional Conference and Social Gathering which will be held in the Reception Room of the Park Hotel, Cardiff, on Saturday, 19th September, beginning at 3 p.m. After-noon tea will be served in the Whitehall Room of the hotel at 5 p.m., the company being the guests of the League. By this announcement, invitation is also given to the reader to come. It is however particularly requested (in view of catering arrangements) that notice of intention to be present be received by Mr I. T. Rees, 2 Southey Street, Cardiff, not later than by the first post 17th September.

The president of the League, Dr D. G. Taylor, M.A., D.Sc., will preside. The opening speakers will be Mr F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., L.C.C., M.P., and Mr A. W. Madsen, B.Sc. Resolution will be moved in the same terms as the resolutions adopted by the London and Birmingham Conference.

The programme has been planned so that most of the time available may be devoted to questions and discussion, in which it is hoped many members of the Conference will take part.

Conference members will receive the memorandum on "Town Planning and Land Values" submitted to the Uthwait Committee by the Land Values Group in Parliament and the Leaflet "Rate Land Values" published by the United Committee. A large assortment of books and pamphlets will be on sale at the literature table.

The Executive of the League met on 28th August to confirm the arrangements as above. They were particularly gratified that Mr Rees, who is himself a member of the Executive and is ex-Secretary of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, has been able to act as Conference Secretary, giving the Executive the advantage of his wide experience in organizational work.

Mr E. Verley Merchant had an article in the *Western Mail*, 1st August, criticizing and

rejecting proposals for the nationalization of the land. Mr C. A. Gardner followed with a letter pointing out that for many people it is not the ownership of land that is objectionable but (as the Malvern report puts it) the power to collect economic rent, to evict; and to forbid the use of natural resources. Mr Merchant was invited to deal with those proposals—that is to say with the Taxation of Land Values as the remedy.

MIDLAND LEAGUE: John Bush, President; C. C. Coleman, Conference Secretary, 20 Cannon Street, Birmingham, 2.

BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE

A successful conference and social gathering, under the auspices of this League was held at the Chamber of Commerce, New Street, on Saturday, 22nd August. Mr John Bush presided and the chief speakers were Mr F. C. R. Douglas, M.P., and Mr Edgar Butler, M.B.E., secretary of the Midland Liberal Federation. Although not all came who had intimated their intention of being present, it was the best attended meeting we have held in this district for a number of years. Among those who wrote sending good wishes were the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Norman Tipstaff, who in his letter wrote: "I hope your discussions will be profitable and your conference successful. Certainly, something has needed doing for a long time to see to it that increased site values due to the activities of the community go to that community and not to any private vested interest."

Rev Leyton Richards and Mr C. E. Clarke of Bewdley among others wrote regretting their inability to be present. After the opening speeches there was an interval for tea, and discussion began after the Chairman had moved a resolution in the following terms, which was carried unanimously:

"That post-war reconstruction necessitates a greater production and fairer distribution of wealth; that the monopoly of land which obstructs production and the tariffs and other restrictions which obstruct exchange must be abolished; that an essential means of securing this is to do away with the taxes which fall upon commodities and labour, and to take for public

revenue the land value which is created by the presence and activities of the whole community, thereby throwing open to labour the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man."

The *Birmingham Gazette* as well as the *Post* and the *Mail* gave useful reports and we quote from them. Mr Douglas said that the pre-war cost of widening London's streets, in order to make them better conform to the requirements of modern traffic was £2,000,000 per mile—an extortionate cost largely due to compensating the owners for land made more valuable by the enterprise of the community. Everything we wanted to do depended in the end, he said, on the utilization of land, and if people were to be happily and profitably employed, it was essential they should have access to the land and its natural resources on just and equitable terms. The policy of the League would throw open to labour and capital land necessary for production, and provide valuable opportunities for employment and greater production of wealth.

Mr Edgar Butler pointed out that post-war reconstruction could not possibly have a fair start unless the rating system was revolutionized, and land values were taxed. The system advocated had already been successfully tried in several Dominions.

The resolution was supported by Councillor George Sawyer, ex-M.P. In the subsequent speaking, Mr W. E. Fox (London), Mr George Musson (Derbyshire), Mr A. W. Madsen (London) and a number from Birmingham took part, including Mrs H. Spencer, Mr Jenkinson and Mr Hall besides others who did not give their names; one of them a young man from New Zealand who made a particularly interesting contribution. Points and questions raised in the discussion were answered by Mr Douglas. In his opening remarks the Chairman paid tribute to the memory of Chapman Wright, whom they had lost last March and who had so well and so long served the League in the Midlands as its secretary. At the conclusion a warm vote of thanks was conveyed to those responsible for organizing the Conference. Besides Birmingham and the places already named the following towns were represented: Bromsgrove, Codnor, Littleover, Malvern, New-castle (Staffs), Oldbury, Smeethwick and West Bromwich. After the Conference a number of the members adjourned to the Queen's

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Hotel having conversations which added much to the value and importance of the afternoon. Gratifying sales of literature were reported as well as enrolment of new members for the League. The *Birmingham News*, 22nd August, gave leading article space to the Rating of Land Values publishing the greater part of the Leaflet that had been circulated with the Conference Papers.

On the 11th August Mr E. E. Sheppard was invited to address the meeting of the Malvern F.O.R., and took for his subject the Taxation of Land Values. These meetings are held at "Rumbow," the home of the Rev John Mellor, Congregational Minister. Mr Mellor presided and there were 16 persons present. Mr Sheppard dealt with the Object of the Taxation of Land Values, gave an illustration of the enhanced value of land caused by the activity of the Birmingham City Council in widening the Bristol Road running to the Lickey Hills, and pointed out that the added value is pocketed by the land-owners who have done nothing towards securing this value—which being a communal value should go to the community, in this case the inhabitants of Birmingham. A lively discussion followed and it was suggested that the subject should be pursued further at a later date.

THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES LTD.,

4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1.
Hon Treasurer, W. R. Lester; Secretary,
A. W. Madsen; Assistant Secretary,
F. C. R. Douglas. (Telephone: Abbey
6665.)

Two new publications are advertised in this issue: *Rating and Taxation in the Housing Scene* by Mr Douglas. The Committee attaches so much importance to this publication that a special reprint of 2,000 copies has been ordered. The other publication is *How the English People Became Landless and How to Regain the Land*. The text of "How the English People Became Landless" appeared in our May issue and the new pamphlet responds to the demand for copies to circulate. The opportunity was taken to supplement the story about the enclosures of common lands by stating "How to Regain the Land," through the Taxation of Land Values. These publications are priced respectively 6d. and 2d. per copy (add 1d. for postage in each case) and per dozen are available at 4s. 6d. and 1s. 6d. post free.

Copies of the Essay Prospectus are now available. Many readers are assisting in its distribution in interested quarters, a service which is greatly appreciated. The W. E. A. are circulating copies and are advertising the competition in their journal. The National Adult School Union are similarly interested. All Co-operative Societies who have education committees will be notified. Hints as to what help readers can give are contained in the following letter which is typical of others sending useful names and addresses and making suggestions: "I have passed the Prospectus to — who is taking three courses on Town Planning in the local W. E. A. Classes and is also in touch with the Christian Action Group. He is getting the Prospectus posted on the notice board of the County Library and I will do the same in the Borough Library. I will try to have it put on the notice board in our Technical College and anywhere else I think likely to be of use. (Advice is given how to approach various people.) Can you spare me a dozen more copies? I have friends in other areas who might be interested and who will understand it better if I write direct to them. The Community People would be interested especially the agricultural groups. One sometimes sees advertisements from them for suggestions for books for group study and discussion. The *Community Broadsheet* contains news and addresses of a number of Committees." It is interesting

that this letter comes from a new reader who was browsing at the local library and found there one of the copies of *Progress and Poverty* which the Henry George Foundation presented to many public libraries in celebration of the centenary in September, 1939. It is thus, often by accident, that most zealous advocates are made.

The leaflet *Rate Land Values* is available for general distribution. It is an 8vo four-page sheet. Price 3s. 6d. per 100 post free.

On 30th August Mr Madsen presided at the "Land Problems" session of the Two-day Conference held by the West African Students Union, Camden Town.

The sincere sympathy of his co-members and of the members also of the English League (of which he is hon treasurer) go to Mr H. G. Chancellor in the great bereavement he has sustained in the death of his wife on 17th August. Their marriage had attained 57 years all but six weeks.

MANCHESTER LEAGUE: Arthur H. Weller, JP., Secretary; Pychley, Ben Leach Road, Offerton, Stockport.

Fine weather favoured the many friends who enjoyed the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Hobson at Park Hall on 25th July. Dr S. Vere Pearson, the League's President, received a cordial welcome from members and friends. Among others present were Mrs Sumner of Whalley and others from as far away as Rochdale and Littleborough. A hearty vote of thanks to the host and hostess brought a most successful and enjoyable garden party to a close.

The Secretary addressed a meeting of the Co-operative Guild at Chapel-on-le-Whitch on 30th July on "Co-operate or Fight."

An interesting discussion followed and all the copies of "Protection or Free Trade" taken to the meeting were sold.

In an article in the *Bolton Standard*, 31st July, Councillor H. Eastwood deals with the need for correct definitions and urges readers to study political economy. He says that people who have studied *Progress and Poverty* with a view to exposing its fallacies have usually been converted.

A meeting of pupils about to leave the Manchester secondary schools was addressed by the Lord Mayor in the Manchester Town Hall on 21st July. The City Treasurer drew attention to the Wythenshawe housing scheme and to the great advantage of the increase of land values in that area being appropriated by the public authority. When questions were invited, Cecil Lees, one of the pupils, asked the Lord Mayor if there was any objection to the land value increases in the rest of the Manchester area being taken for the public. The Treasurer replied that a scheme was under consideration. Cecil Lees is a keen student of *Progress and Poverty* and loses no opportunity to interest his fellow students and teachers in the Georgian philosophy.

Mrs F. G. Sumner has advertised in the *Clitheroe Advertiser* the courses of study conducted by the Henry George School of Social Science. The notice says: "Be up to date; be well informed; be by reasoning an expert in matters relating to the earning of a living." Intending students can start now by taking a 10-lesson course, either privately or in groups, or a postal course from headquarters if preferred. Tuition is free. Applicants for the postal course will be passed on to the offices of the School at 4 Great Smith Street, S.W.1. Mrs Sumner aims to gather a group locally and will steer a class herself. Her Manchester co-workers congratulate her on this good enterprise wishing it the success it deserves.

Mr Albert Brown of Warrington who is president of the local Labour party reports the affiliation of his branch to this League and the result of his recent contacts is that the Altrincham divisional Labour Party has also affiliated. He continues to get new subscribers for *Land & Liberty* and new

readers, also for the books and pamphlets not only by direct sales but also by gifts to libraries, as for example *My Neighbour's Landmark*, which he has presented to the libraries of the three Friends' Meeting Houses which he attends.

YORKSHIRE AND NORTHERN LEAGUE:
F. Skirrow, Secretary, 129 Skipton Road, Kettlewell.

Mr C. H. Smithson recently had an interesting discussion with one of the W.E.A. classes he has been attending in Halifax. On one of the evenings the tutor was unable to attend and give his lecture. At the suggestion of the local secretary and by invitation from the class itself, Mr Smithson filled his place and gave an impromptu lecture on "The Co-relation of the Law of Wages with the Law of Rent." There followed an invitation to give the same lecture to another W.E.A. class with a possible third lecture to another W.E.A. class in September. One immediate result has been an increased sale of *Progress and Poverty* and there is the prospect of forming one or more "Henry George Study Circles," from amongst those students in the coming winter months. The *Condition of Labour* has also been found a good seller. Mr Smithson has obtained a parcel of the Prospectus of the Prize Essay Competition and is making local distribution of them to secretaries of the W.E.A., Adult Schools, Co-operative Guilds, etc.

The Secretary has had letters in several Yorkshire papers. Amongst his colleagues who have collaborated so ably and has been an incomparable "comrade in arms" over the many years is Mr Wm Thomson of Keighley, now lying very seriously ill. Every member of the League will join in a generous-hearted message expressing their sympathy and their gratitude for his companionship and the magnificent service he has rendered to the cause of human freedom.

In his *Theory of the Land Question*, p. 125, George Raymond Geiger, Ph.D., says "the most thorough review of Bible land laws may be found in Frederick Verinder's *My Neighbour's Landmark*."

These are two well recommended books. Geiger's *Theory of the Land Question* is published by the Macmillan Co. (New York) and is among our recent importations, selling at 4s. 6d. or 5s. by post. *My Neighbour's Landmark* is a publication of the Henry George Foundation, price 1s., by post 1s. 3d.

ADDRESSES

The English League for the Taxation of Land Values; Fredk. Verinder, Secretary, 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1; Telephone: Abbey 6665. At same address: The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade; Ashley Mitchell, Hon Treasurer. The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, publishing department. The Henry George School of Social Science.

Potsmouth League for the Taxation of Land Values; H. R. Lee, Hon Secretary, 165 Lawrence Road, Southsea.

Liverpool League for the Taxation of Land Values; Acting Hon Secretary, Mrs Alex Maclean, 6 Darley Drive, Liverpool, 12.

Crosby Henry George Fellowship; C. C. Paton, Hon Secretary, 11 Tudor Road, Liverpool, 23.

Derby League for the Taxation of Land Values; George Musson, 29 Denby Lane, Codnor, Derbyshire.

Henry George Freedom League; Wm. Reid, Secretary, 9 Woodside Crescent, Glasgow, C.3. (Phone: Douglas 5599)

Edinburgh Taxation of Land Values League; W. N. Alexander, Hon. Secretary, 63 Baronscourt Terrace, Edinburgh, 8. (Phone: 75306) Highland League for the Taxation of Land Values; Isaac Mackenzie, Hon Secretary, Queensgate Arcade, Inverness.

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