

Progress and Poverty, Protection or Free Trade, and Light on the Land Question with booksellers in Portsmouth. It is gratifying to report that, as a result of his canvass, altogether 24 shops have given trial orders for the books, and all of them are displaying the window cards in a conspicuous place. The Essay Competition showcard is regarded as a particularly effective "talking point" to secure customers for *Progress and Poverty*. Newsagents

have also been supplied with Essay Competition prospectuses and leaflets and the most enterprising among them have distributed these advertisements with their house-to-house delivery of daily papers.

The Rev. Mervyn J. Stewart was in Portsmouth on 10th and 12th February. There was no time to organize a meeting for him but several members of the League were happy to have entertaining conversations with their visitor.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

(Press Service of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1.)

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF LAND IN CANADA

By A. C. Campbell

(In the "Square Deal," Toronto.)

In most countries the rights of the people in the land have been lost sight of. By legal hocus pocus of one kind or another a form of private ownership has been set up which is supposed to do away with the people's rights and to make the land the exclusive property of individuals. In Britain, for instance, this system came into existence mainly through two movements which can be more or less distinctly traced in history. When England was conquered by the Normans the chief of the invaders assumed ownership of all the territory which he held by power of the sword, and parcelled it out to his favourites. But even under that system there were great areas retained for general occupancy, the so-called public lands. The second movement soon set in, and these public lands were "enclosed." As title to "enclosed" land became just as secure as that to lands originally deeded, a very complete job was made; the people have practically no rights in the land of their own country. Thus the problem there is to restore those rights. This is the work in which the Single-taxers of that country are now engaged. The same problem, in effect, faces the people of every civilized country, Canada included.

In Canada the problem is so modified that it takes on a special aspect and calls for special treatment. The problem of land restoration faces us as it faces the people of other countries. Probably no people have suffered more than Canadians by that terrible form of crowd madness commonly called a land boom; and in Canadian cities, as in others, privilege and poverty co-exist.

But, while we have the question of restoration of rights, we have also, more than in most countries, the question of conservation of rights. A glance at the map will show that almost immeasurable areas remain still in public ownership. Of course, some will say that these great territories are unusable and valueless. But that is exactly what was said of all Canada at the time the country came into possession of the British. There are privileges of vast though now unknown value in that hitherto-neglected territory, and the proof of it is seen in the feverish activity of exploiters of all kinds who are now carrying on prospecting work there, and in the talk of billion dollar mines, water powers and forests that is heard on every side. All these prospective riches are still in the hands of the public.

Even in cases where the public rights are assumed to have been given away, there is a secure tenure which only needs to be asserted. Here, for instance, is a statement from a pamphlet issued by the Dominion Government only two years ago: "Ninety-two per cent of the forest land is owned by the people of Canada through the Dominion or provincial Governments, and only eight per cent is privately owned." Of course, rights of licensees rest upon the most valuable of the

forests, but the fact remains that the title is still in the Crown—that is to say, the land is publicly owned. The same is true, though in less degree probably, of our natural resources in the form of waterfalls. The public demand for continued public ownership in these resources is very strong throughout Canada.

It would be very interesting to consider how completely the maintenance of public ownership in new lands has been a feature of Dominion policy for many years. Except in the case of farm lands, the usual course has been to grant a lease. Mines, forests, water powers, grazing lands—these have all been leased, not deeded. It is true in many cases the terms of the lease are such that the right retained by the public seems very slight. But, if the people determinedly maintain such right as is still theirs, much can yet be saved.

Within the last few weeks the rights of the Crown in a vast territory have been transferred from the Dominion to the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. This is a transfer only from public to public; not a suggestion of private right exists now that did not exist before the transfer.

This seems a fitting occasion for a careful reconsideration of this whole problem of maintenance of public rights in the land.

This is not a case for taxation methods as such. The system of lease is sufficient if properly applied. But leases must be upon the same principle as that upon which the Single Tax is based—the principle that the value created by the public shall go to the public and not to individuals.

Applying this principle, leases can be made for as long a period as may be desired, but the rental must be the value. And, in justice to both parties, reassessment of rental must be frequent enough to take all the value and take nothing else. The lessee has his natural rights no less than the public, and it would not be right to take from him, on the plea of rental, any of the results of his labour and enterprise. That which he pays must be rent, not rackrent.

The movement for the restoration by taxation of public rights in land that has been alienated must go on. But Canadians have a special opportunity, and therefore a special duty, to attend to this great work of conservation of public rights in lands still in public ownership.

DENMARK

The two Land Values Bills that were before Parliament last year, as described in *Land & Liberty* of January, 1930, have been re-introduced in amended form.

The Bill for the Local Taxation of Land Values extends the provisions of the Act of March, 1926, which required the local authorities to convert the then existing rates on fixed property into (a) a rate on land values, and (b) a rate on improvements. Under that Act, a certain amount of improvement value was entirely exempted, 3,000 crowns (£167) for every property, and a further exemption of 1,000 crowns (£56) of the value of every dwelling a tenement may contain