

A glance at the rent-rolls of some of the greater landlords will be enough to convince any sceptic that here is an enormous source of public revenue, created by the public itself. Few are likely to think with the labourer who was working on the estate of a certain Duke for nineteen shillings a week, and who, when asked if he should not have more, replied that the Duke was a poor man with only £50,000 a year.

The War Cabinet may not wholly be composed of men who are interested in such a fundamental reform but, with the great land campaigner as Prime Minister and Mr. Henderson as his henchman we may imagine that Mr. Barnes will have no trouble in persuading them of the urgency of this reform.

F. D.

### THE I.L.P. AND HENRY GEORGE

It seems to be very difficult for members of the I.L.P. to get rid of the suspicion that Henry George was an unsound though specious thinker, and his taxation of land values a piece of quackery. This suspicious bias is intensified by the idea fixed in many of their minds that there are too many comfortable capitalistic men in favour of it, and consequently there must be a screw loose somewhere, though where exactly they can't find out.

As rats fight shy of a tempting bit of cheese lest it may allure them to a trap or poison, so in spite of all the tempting prospects held out in Henry George's epoch-making, "Progress and Poverty," though to many he makes it clear as day that the taxation of land values would mean "a new-created earth," still, the I.L.P. looks at it with a shake of the head.

Possibly, then, though they fight shy of mill-owners, potters, and naphtha soap millionaires, they may be more ready to listen to a landed proprietor.

Now I am a landowner, as truly so as the Duke of Sutherland and the Earl of Breadalbane, and like them the land I possess has been robbed from the original inhabitants. Whether these were cleared out with violence and cruelty I am not aware; in all probability they were. Possibly the present Duke of Sutherland has no knowledge of the horrors of the Sutherland Clearances. He would be a brave man in Sutherland who would dare tell him of them.

Their estates are in Scotland, mine is in South Africa, and consists of possibly a square mile of veldt. But in other respects my position has been entirely like others. Mine has been the high privilege of saying to any innocent wayfarer "What are ye daein' there? Awa' back the road ye cam'," and mine too the high ducal privilege of saying to a squatting Kaffir "Pay me five shillings, or I'll put a match to your dirty wattle and daub hut, and burn it over your head."

Comparing my position with that of Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, drawing his £75,000 a year from the slums and tenement barracks of Greenock and Port-Glasgow, I have simply been waiting on his good luck, and looking forward to the hour when the discovery of a diamond mine or a rich gold reef would bring a horde of my fellow men and a city of hotels, gambling clubs, drinking saloons, swindlers and demi mondes would fill my pockets with unearned gold.

All at once, as by a wave of Prospero's wand, the cloud-capped towers of the South African vision have crumbled, and are like to leave hardly a wrack behind. Who is the wizard whose potent word has accomplished the work and loosened the knees of the land-owning Titan? It is Henry George. His spirit in double portion has descended on the legislators of South Africa, and smiting on the snout the monster of privately owned land, they have said to him "You pretentious Mumbo Jumbo, you have deceived us long enough; your divine right of private possession of land is a fraud and an iniquity; give back one third of your

square mile to the poor Kaffir from whom it has been stolen; let him live in peace in his wattle and daub hut, and as regards the rest tell us what it is worth and pay tax on its real value."

It is needless to say that the charm of being a landowner in South Africa and finding oneself ranked with the Dukes of Argyle and Sutherland and Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart are now gone, and the only course left is to appeal humbly to the Transvaal Government to take our land on the most generous terms they can offer.

Seeing then, that the taxation of land values has had such a magical effect in South Africa, and, in sailors' parlance, has put a red-hot iron to the landowner's tail, would it not be well worth trying it in Scotland?

The South African landowners are now compelled to give back without compensation to the poor Kaffirs the land of which they were robbed a century ago, and this demand—monstrous in the eyes of lawyers and landowners in Scotland—is to me, a South African landowner, the source of special joy to my heart and relief to my conscience. And surely, if it is a joy to me to give back their land to the poor Kaffirs and Hottentots, it will be a much greater joy to Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, the Duke of Argyle and all the noble patriotic landowners and lawyers of Scotland to give back to their poor fellow Scotsmen the land of which they have been robbed.

Speaking then from my experience as a landowner, I would say "Try Henry George's healing nostrum, not only for the sake of the disinherited poor but for the sake of the landowners themselves."

LANDOWNER. in *Forward* (Glasgow), December 23rd, 1916.

### A MOSLEM SINGLE TAXER

THE ORIGIN OF THE ISLAMIC STATE. By P. Kauri Hitti. Published by the University of Columbia, New York City. Price \$4 net, paper.

This is a translation from the Arabic of *Al-Baladhuri's* *FUTUH AL BALDAN*, to which Irving refers in his life of Mahomet. *Futuh al Baldan* itself is a synopsis of a much larger work, the record of one of the earliest historians known to the Moslems. At first, the book is difficult reading, but after a time, as the reader begins to visualize the growing state, to see the light it casts upon the ways, ideals and customs of an original people feeling its independent way to the foundations of a civilization, to be interested in the changing picture of an evolution of a race, one feels grateful to Professor Hitti for his work.

To single taxers it may come as a surprise that one of the Moslem patriarchs was the earliest discoverer of the truth that social inequalities are due primarily to land monopolization and the taxation of the products of human industry and skill. With this in mind, Ali-ibn-abi-Salib decreed that things produced should not in justice be taxed, but that land values "should be assessed according to the nearness and distance of the land from the markets and the drinking places in the river."

CHAS. J. FINGER. in the *PUBLIC*, December 22nd, 1916

The tendency toward social liberty is most evident, and manifests itself on every hand. The leaders of the people make it their slogan, the labouring masses repeat the cry, scientific and socialistic publications voice the same movement, our journals are full of it. The underfed workman does not ask for a tonic, but for better economic conditions which shall prevent malnutrition.

When we speak of the redemption of the working man, it is always understood that beneath the most apparent form of suffering there exists that other wound from which the soul of the man who is subjected to any form of slavery must suffer. It is at this deeper wrong that we aim when we say that the workman must be redeemed through liberty.—*THE MONTESSORI METHOD*, by Dr. Maria Montessori.