

which I feel sure will do much to alleviate the distress of some of my opponents—perhaps even some of my supporters. I have not followed, I have been in no way influenced, by the example of New Zealand. I propose to reject the New Zealand plan as unsound. Although I must in fairness add that if I thought it sound and applicable to Scotland, I would not look askance at it merely because it chanced to be the offspring of a free British colony. Nor have I followed—this must surely be the greatest relief of all—in the footsteps of Henry George. I am no disciple of his. I have not read one word of his writings, but—what is much more to the purpose—I have heard and read attentively every word of the evidence given before the Select Committee. My sins and errors, therefore—if sins and errors lie at my door—are all done against the light shed by that illuminating body of testimony.”

JOHN WILSON.

#### ENGLAND.

##### CONTINUED EVIDENCES OF PROGRESS—SOCIALISTS AND LAND NATIONALIZATIONISTS ALIKE COMING TO PERCEIVE THAT OUR WAY IS THE ONLY ONE.

Time passes very rapidly, justice and freedom come very slowly, but we cannot doubt that they come very surely, for as Gerald Massey says

“ \* \* \* Truth shall conquer at the last, for round and round we run,

And ever the Right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done.”

On February 12th the British Parliament reassembled and in the King's speech we were given what is to be the policy of the Government during this session of Parliament.

After promising a measure of Licensing Reform and some references to Military matters, the following short but very significant paragraph appears:

Bills will be introduced dealing with the Holding and Valuation of Land in Scotland.

And in the last paragraph of the speech we have the promise of similar Bills for England and Wales.

To some people these promises will appear as somewhat trivial and unimportant matters, having no relation to the great and pressing social problems of the day. To Single Taxers, however, the promise of these proposed Re-valuation Bills is a cheering sign of the times. This will be the first forward step to the emancipation of the people from the tyranny and oppression of landlordism. Legislation of this character will show that we have had good grounds for the hopeful view of things which we have taken since the reigns of Government fell into the hands of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

No man who has heard the Prime Minister speak can doubt his sincerity and it would surely be a sign of weak judgment to question the ability of a man who has shown himself every inch a statesman.

If the Government did not really mean to give us legislation along our lines they would not be likely to take the first necessary steps—the valuation of land apart from improvements. Personally I am hoping that the next news letter to the REVIEW will contain a report of the passing of Valuation Bills for Scotland and also for England and Wales. Scotland of course leads the way, as she well deserves to after so many years of strenuous and well directed agitation.

It is now almost a quarter of a century since Henry George with his wonderful enthusiasm and eloquence raised the question of human rights to life and liberty in Scotland and it is gratifying to note that some of the men who took up the Cross of the New Crusade at that time and who were amongst Mr. George's most intimate friends and faithful co-workers, are still in the forefront of the agitation and working with the same old-time enthusiasm and devotion.

To these men it must be a matter of great satisfaction to find the Solicitor-General for Scotland (Alex. Ure, K. C. M. P.) so far convinced of the justice and practicability of their demands as to take his stand on the platform of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values. Speaking under their auspices on March 7th in the City Hall, Glasgow, the Solicitor-General had an enthusiastic audience of about 8,000 persons cheering a most lucid and telling speech in favor of making Land Values the basis of local taxation. This marks a demand far in excess of anything a Single Taxer could have hoped for a few short months ago.

On Monday the 18th inst., the Executive Committee of the Conference of Rating Authorities of the United Kingdom met at the Westminster Hotel and passed the following resolution:

“That this meeting, representative of over 500 rating authorities of the United Kingdom, desires to express its great satisfaction that in the King's Speech intention is declared of promoting measures dealing with valuation of lands, and urges that bills dealing with the separate valuation of land for England and Scotland be immediately introduced. This meeting further pledges itself to support such measure.”

On February 16th a conference on Public Land Ownership was held in Glasgow under the auspices of the Land Nationalization Society and the Glasgow Trades Council when the Chairman of the Land Nationalization Society declared the first practical step towards public ownership of land to be “the assessment of land at its true selling value for purposes of taxation.” If we can count upon the Land Nationalization Society to support our scheme for taxing land

values so much the better, as land purchase and similar impracticable ideas may be safely left to the oblivion which surely awaits them. The more intelligent of the Socialists are also recognizing our method as the necessary preliminary step, and if, therefore, a Voluntary Union of forces can be looked forward to for securing the taxation of land values, Othello in the shape of the Land Nationalization Society and the Socialist will ultimately find his occupation gone.

F. SKIRROW.

#### BRITAIN THROUGH COLONIAL EYES.

It is possible that the readers of THE REVIEW—and here I proclaim that every Single Taxer should not only read, but out of his house pay for the excellent result of so many brilliant collaborators—may be glad to hear how Britain strikes a Colonial Democrat. To summarize, with more hope and more honor, than with pretty wide reading had been looked for. For instance, one reads that Royal Commissions report on National Physical Degeneracy; one reads in "Rowntree's Poverty," and such books, that in a prosperous small town half the population fail to get a workhouse minimum of food and warmth in infancy, "prime of Life," and old age; but not until one sees the teeming millions of South London, Glasgow, or the smaller centres—Sheffield, Edinburgh, Bristol—does one know how landlordism rob men of strength and stature, women of restraint and beauty, children of gaiety, age of veneration. The poor are small, ugly and mean in appearance; whereas, the well-to-do appear fully the physical equals of Colonials, though in some cases a life of Hindoo routine results in a lack of mental alertness as to new ideas; in fact, talent is not attained by any class any more than in New York. These impressions are no doubt *naïf* to savagery, but lead to the same conclusions that one had come to elsewhere under other conditions—that the nation will perish unless wealth is more fairly distributed to the earner, in no trifling measure; and that the property and sex qualification with which the franchise is afflicted is an obsolete and dangerous exclusion of the bulk of the national talent from consideration of the best methods of safe and sane social-economic reforms. But there is hope. The insanity of "protection" of industries that do not exist, and the grip that landlordism has on Colonial liberalism by the hateful process of "suicide by purchase" makes the position of a Colonial Single Taxer oft-times very painful. The destructive criticism in advance of proposals which are warmly taken up in a small community is as painful as the attitude of "I told you so" when they fail; but honor leaves one no option as to a "tariff" or "buying-off piracy." Here, if

the horror is full, the hope is bright. I have spoken (besides an unforgettable stay in Glasgow) in Yorkshire, Bristol, Cornwall and elsewhere. I have met many men, from Cabinet Ministers to revolutionist socialists, to almost all I have urged the iniquity of landlordism and almost always the eye has flashed and the lip has set. It is hard to say what will follow after the taxation of land values equally with other property in this country; but I am morally sure that Bills to place all local body taxes on site values, and to recast in some measure the existing land tax of 4 in the 1£ (which is now levied on values of 1690 under a series of amending acts up to 1798) will be passed. I hardly suppose that this levy of forty million pounds annually will be made—it is now about one million—but a great and permanent change in the public mind has occurred. Tolstoy and Kropotkin have enormously reinforced among the cultured classes the blow which George has dealt at the land monopoly idol.

But 'Diana' Kali, the goddess of degradation, despair and destruction, is yet very great. Mr. John Burns the President of the Local Government Board said to me: "What was the exact process of getting 'your Land Tax Act through—you know 'such proposals are mooted here?'" I said: "Our Lower House sent up the Bill, and the Upper House of life nominees of past Premiers put it out of shape. Premier John Ballance demanded that enough members to give a majority should be appointed, and for only a seven year term. The Right Hon., the Earl of Onslow, refused to appoint and resigned the Governorship on Ballance threatening to resign *his* position. The new Governor made the large number of new seven-year appointments necessary, Ballance on his part agreeing not to exempt improvements fully at once and making a secret treaty not to increase the tax, from which we have never yet escaped." Burns said, with his slow, wise smile: "I thought it was something of that kind." But the parallel is not exact. The Lords here are exceedingly able men and will never fight on an issue where success is impossible, and the King who signed the great Housing report of 1885 would assuredly welcome any law purporting to carry out the only piece of controversial politics that he has ever set his name to in real propaganda.

I have great hopes for the movement here. The faithful have much belief in Campbell-Bannerman as a man, and the government papers are all for us. The Australasian position is not so good. The New Zealand premier Ward, and the Australian premier Deakin are hostile; there is talk of Laurensen, nearly a good man, going into the New Zealand cabinet. Caruthers is all right in New South Wales, a true Croasdaler in the saddle.

Here Walt. Runciman, Single Taxer, replaces McKenna as Under-secretary to