

THE SINGLE TAX.

Devoted to the Cause of Taxing Land Values.

Eighth Year—No. 86.

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THE SINGLE TAX.

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Receipt of a free copy of the *SINGLE TAX* by post is an invitation to become a Subscriber.

Notes and News.

The March issue of the South Australian supplement of *The Single Tax* is wholly devoted to the Annual Report of the Executive of the Single Tax League of South Australia. Many of the events of the year in the movement generally are given, besides the particular progress made in South Australia.

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The report also specially commends the work done in Great Britain, and further says, "We desire to express our admiration of the Glasgow *Single Tax*, and gratitude for the brilliant manner in which it is conducted, a paper which is without a rival in the reform world."

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Of course we appreciate this great compliment from our South Australian co-workers, which we publish at the special request of our Hon. Treasurer. He thinks it will induce the backward subscribers to renew their subscriptions right away, besides inspiring friends everywhere to take the paper regularly.

* * *

The Sub-editor is not so sanguine. He rather thinks that when the backward subscribers reads this great compliment

they will murmur, "distance lends enchantment to the view," and pass on with pleasure to the next page.

The Sub-editor is a pessimist; he "refuses to say its a fine day when it's raining cats and dogs."

* * *

An agent at Wallasey in a prospectus of a sale of freehold land thus enlarges upon the bargain that he is offering:—

"The minerals below the surface of the land, and the air, light, and sky above it are all included in the purchase. The solid weight of the land is estimated to be about ten million tons for every square yard of surface, thus making land cheaper than anything else on earth."

The late George Robins in his wildest flights of imagination probably never beat this, and it has the advantage of being literally true, though in no way peculiar to Wallasey.—From *Truth*.

* * *

The change in the form of *The Single Tax* has given general satisfaction to our readers. Mr. D. C. Thomson writes:—"The *Single Tax* has never looked better. I did enjoy the last number, and pray that the blessing of God may attend your efforts."

* * *

Henry George, Jr., writes, May 27th, New York, U.S.A.:—"Wish I could get over to see you all, but work here holds me. My wife would be delighted to make the trip also. Should like to write you at length, but have many calls for time. Please present my earnest good wishes to Mr. Burt and Mr. Waddell, and to all our friends."

* * *

In sending a dollar subscription to *The Single Tax*, Mr. Thomas Floyd, New York, U.S.A., writes:—"I am very well pleased with the paper which is improving all the time. If we get a few more men like Tom L. Johnson in office, the fight will begin in earnest for the Single Tax cause."

* * *

The Christian Leader in a favourable comment on Mr. T. W. Russell's land for the Irish tenant campaign, says:—"The badge of the movement bears a labourer guiding the plough, with a scarlet band above. We do not know what the "scarlet band" signifies, but "the labourer guiding the plough" is suggestive. The labourer is not to be emancipated, he is still to work Irish land, not for himself but for another."

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Mr. Robert Dodds continues to write to the *Otago Daily Times* (New Zealand), brilliant letters on Taxation of Land Values.

* * *

The Free Age Press, Christchurch, Hants, has just issued, in pamphlet form, Count Tolstoy's reply "To the Synod's Edict of Excommunication," and to letters concerning it. By post, 1½d., or 1/- per dozen.

We have specially devoted a large part of our space in this issue to the reports of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, and have enlarged the paper by four pages for that purpose.

* * *

The Majority report is against the taxation of land values, and asks for more "doles." The Minority report, signed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and the special report, presented by Judge O'Connor, will be hailed as decided victories for our side. They make quite a conference on the question.

* * *

Judge O'Connor's report is so good and closely-reasoned a case for the taxation of land values, and so full of straight Single Tax doctrine that it is now being published in separate pamphlet form by the English Land Restoration League, and by the Scottish Single Tax League. Order early!

* * *

It will be observed that Lord Balfour of Burleigh, with his four colleagues of the Minority report, claim as one of the advantages of the proposal that "*It should go some way towards putting an end to the agitation for unjust and confiscatory measures.*"

* * *

When we looked at that "advantage" for the taxation of land values, set up safe enough in cold type in this official report issued by the British Government, we confess we could do nothing for a time but admire the brilliant imagination of the persons who invented it.

* * *

To establish the taxation of land values as a means of killing the agitation for it is one of those rich and rare proposals that brings humour into the movement. From the Single Tax point of view it looks something like supplying a man with breakfast and arguing that this will destroy his need, or his demand for dinner.

* * *

The 'Trades' Congress resolutions to be submitted at the meetings to be held in Swansea in September include one on "Taxation of Land Values," by the Barge Builders and the National Dock Labourers.

* * *

At the Annual Meeting Land Law Reform Association, held in the National Liberal Club, London, on Tuesday evening, 25th June, the report for the year of the Executive Committee expressed satisfaction at the progress made in connection with the housing question and the taxation of land values, and that this was on the lines advocated by the Association.

* * *

The Chairman, Sir Walter Foster, M.P., in moving the adoption of the report, said—"They had every reason to congratulate themselves on the great awakening that had occurred with regard to these two questions." Mr. F. A. Channing, M.P., in seconding the motion, remarked "that the land monopolist levied blackmail on every industrial effort, and paralysed its power and influence."

* * *

The *Westminster Review* for July contains an article on "Labour Questions and Empire," by Mr. Wm. D. Hamilton, Vice-President of the Scottish Single Tax League. The article is in substance the lecture delivered by Mr. Hamilton to the S.S.T.L. and to about a dozen other associations during the past four months. It is well worth perusal by all concerned.

* * *

An article in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for July states that "there are women in London who spend annually between two and three thousand pounds on clothes, but there are many who not only dress, but look well, on £300 and even less."

It may as well be stated, in case it should be forgotten, that the mass of the women in London and elsewhere have to dress and look well on about a thirtieth part of £300 a year. Millions of them do it on a sixtieth part and less, not from choice, but from necessity born of the present social contract.

* * *

"How can a man," asked Mr. John Morley, in his famous speech in the House of Commons on the Budget proposals, "who, in the familiar phrase, neither toils nor spins, be treated in the same way as the man who earns his income by the skill of his hand and the sweat of his brow?" There is only one way—the Single Tax. The man who has an income which he neither toils nor spins for has it by force and fraud from the men who do the toiling and spinning.

* * *

The Single Tax is our method.

* * *

It is about time the other side were giving us theirs. The toleration of a class in the community who neither toil nor spin, and who, as Thorald Rogers says, "thrive in their sleep" by the labour of others, is the toleration of legalised robbery.

* * *

Mr. H. Ryder Haggard, in one of a series of articles on the land question appearing in the daily papers, says "the cost of the land in Guernsey being so enormous, and its rent so high, the farmers are forced to wring from it all that the intensest cultivation can produce."

* * *

If it is any consolation to the Guernsey farmers, their case is not by any means exceptional. The people of London have to hand over £17,000,000 per annum as ground rent to the owners of the land upon which they live and work. The cultivation—the industry—of the people of London is of the most "intense" nature.

* * *

While here in Glasgow, as in other industrial centres, we have to hustle all the year round to rake in the millions, the ever increasing millions of land values for the men who "neither toil nor spin." It is an "intense" business all round, this working of the land for these favoured gents.

* * *

The Times (London), in a leading article expresses its annoyance at the small Government majority on Mr. McKenna's amendment on the Finance Bill reported in another column, and says—

"If landed property, including the ownership of minerals, is to be treated in a different way from that in which it has been hitherto regarded by British law, the change should be carried out, deliberately and openly, by direct legislation. To impose one-fourth of the coal duty on the royalty-owners, who cannot, like the mine-owners and the miners, recoup themselves by altering contracts entered into for long terms of years, would be unfair from every point of view except that of persons in favour of a social revolution in regard to land."

* * *

No doubt *The Times* has noticed that "the persons in favour of a social revolution in regard to land" have just had an important recruit from its side of the question in the person of Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

* * *

In the course of the debate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that this raised the general question of land tenure, the question of private property in land.

* * *

Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman objected to this view. It was a mere question, he said, of making the mine-owners pay a share of the tax. To allow these men to escape, he argued, was almost a scandal, and certainly an economic scandal.

Just so, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer was right all the same. The scandal, or the issue, does raise the land question. Sir Henry may refuse to look at it and declare his innocence on the subject, but the fact remains that the "drones" know what Mr. McKenna's amendment means.

* * *

N.B.—Please send word to the Secretary of the Scottish Single Tax League if you intend being present at the Henry George Memorial Day Meeting, to be held on Monday, 2nd September. The meeting will probably be held within the grounds of the Glasgow International Exhibition.

* * *

A "Gazette," issued on the 27th June, in reference to the Coronation of the King, "relieves from fulfilling their obligations at the ceremony and in the procession persons who hold lands, manors, &c., in respect of such services at the Coronation."

* * *

The Single Tax will relieve these "persons" of all their obligations as land owners, and at the same time provide a healthy place for them in the industrial "procession."

* * *

Mr. James Archer, Secy. N.-E. Lanark Liberal Association, told a largely attended meeting at Cleland last month that "The financial system of this country would never rest on a just and equitable basis until industry was relieved of its present intolerable burden and taxation levied on the value of land, a value that entirely arose from the presence of the people."

* * *

Mr. Wm. Buchanan, Chairman of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Association of Registrars, held in Glasgow last month, said that "The census brought out in strong colours the terrible congestion of the poorer population in the large towns, but it was not beyond reason to hope that before the census of 1911 they might have cities almost free from this terrible congestion by the quicker transit in electric cars, allowing the population to spread over a much greater area."

* * *

The reason for the contrary belief is the fact that the speculative value of land will keep pace with the extension of the electric cars, and prevent, just as at present, this much-needed and desired exodus of the poor.

* * *

Speaking at an Old-Age Pension Conference, held at Edinburgh, on 2nd June, Mr. A. W. Black, M.P., said:—"The true source of old-age pensions was ground value, which were just the rent that people paid for leave to live upon the land. The State should go to the persons who got it, although they never earned it, and say, 'You will give me so much of this to give back to the people who have paid it.'"

* * *

The *Manchester Guardian* (21/6/1901) devoted three columns and a leading article to the Reports of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation.

* * *

The *Lennox Herald*, in a sweeping, go-ahead land question leader, says "the day has come when the land question must stand in the forefront of the Liberal Programme." It appears to us the question has been there for some time now. The difficulty is with the leaders of the party.

* * *

Mr. T. W. Russell, at the great convention in favour of Irish land purchase held at Belfast last month, discussed the difficulty regarding the position of the labourer, and said "that while he would make no wild, rash promises, the labourer must have a comfortable home, an allowance of land, and a pension for old age." How is the labourer to secure these comforts? It is not in the bond. All that is written there for the labourers is a change of masters.

Mrs. Bury, of Darwen, told the Women's Co-operative Guild last month that "it was their duty to protest against all monopolies, whether in land or drink. Monopolies," she said, "had their birth in selfishness." Founded on tyranny, and supported by cunning and ignorance, she might have added.

* * *

We have received a copy of Max Hirsch's new book, "Democracy versus Socialism," which we hope to have reviewed by Lewis H. Berens in our August issue.

* * *

The current issue of *The Single Tax* is a veritable Royal Commission number, thanks to the indefatigable industry of Lewis H. Berens, who, immediately the reports were issued, at once proceeded to analyse them for the paper. Mr. Berens, amid all his busy life, so well devoted to our movement, and with such rare enthusiasm, never tires, as our readers well know, in making *The Single Tax* both interesting and useful. He is our esteemed colleague and co-worker, and our close personal friend, but he must excuse us for taking this opportunity of sincerely congratulating him and thanking him for this timely and special service.

* * *

We also beg leave to take the liberty of congratulating his Honour Judge O'Connor, and the Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh and his colleagues, for their splendid and inspiring reports. Judge O'Connor's pronouncement is what our American cousins would call a "corker." The minority report looks like the work of an expert or experts, to whom we tender our cordial thanks and respect.

* * *

The Hon. Tom L. Johnson writes from Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., 17/6/01:—"It will be impossible for me to be with you as you suggest in your very welcome letter of the 25th ult. I appreciate your kind words and wish you well in your work."

* * *

If any of our readers desire to know of the splendid fight Tom L. Johnson is carrying on for our cause, and Single Taxers everywhere should know of it, we earnestly advise them to take Louis F. Post's weekly paper, *The Public*, 6/6 per annum, address 1501 Schiller Buildings, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., undoubtedly the most readable and most instructive paper on political and politico-economic subjects in existence.

HENRY GEORGE MEMORIAL DAY.

The Executive of the Scottish Single Tax League propose to commemorate the birthday of Henry George, as usual, this year by Special Meeting to be held in Glasgow on 2nd September.

In view of the International Exhibition at Glasgow the Executive hope to be favoured with the presence of friends from a distance who may be visiting the Exhibition at that time.

It has been suggested that the meeting should be in the form of a Social Gathering, to be held within the Exhibition Grounds, and the Executive will be glad to hear from all who favour this idea, and who would endeavour to be present.

At the Executive Meeting of the Scottish Single Tax League, held on 25th June, a vote of condolence was passed by those present to their colleague, Richard Whyte, in the great loss he has just sustained by the death of his wife. Mrs. Whyte passed away on 7th June, at their home, 59 Bain Street, Glasgow, after a long and painful illness, borne with rare courage. She was a genuine loyal reformer, in full sympathy at all times with her husband in all his work and enthusiasm in the Single Tax movement. We sincerely join in this message of sympathy to our friend, whom we hope to see soon again in active participation in all our efforts.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL TAXATION.

REPORT BY HIS HONOUR JUDGE O'CONNOR, K.C.

(SLIGHTLY ABRIDGED).*

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

With much regret I find myself unable to subscribe the Report of the great majority of the Commissioners, and venture only with diffidence and reluctance to state the grounds upon which I am constrained to differ from the conclusions of gentlemen so much more qualified than myself to deal with the subject referred to us. That Report, however, seems to me to be for the most part taken up with matters which, however interesting and important in themselves, are quite outside the Terms of Reference, and to deal only in a very slight manner with that which should be our principal concern, viz., the equity of the existing system of taxation for local purposes in respect of real and personal property.

This result is probably due to the fact that the terms of reference admit of very varied constructions; and, indeed, after more than four years' consideration of them, there is scarcely an approach to an agreement among the majority of the members of the Commission as to what may be their exact significance.

We are directed "To inquire into the present system under which taxation is raised for local purposes, and report whether all kinds of real and personal property contribute equitably to such taxation; and if not, what alterations in the law are desirable in order to secure that result."

I interpret these words to mean that we are to report with a view to the alteration of the law, if such alteration is found desirable after an inquiry into the contributions made by all kinds of real and of personal property under the present system of taxation for local purposes.

In order to do this it will clearly be necessary—

First to define "local purposes," and also "real" and "personal" property;

Secondly, to ascertain what is the system under which taxation is at present raised for those purposes, and whether under that system all kinds of real and personal property now contribute to that taxation;

Thirdly, to inquire whether the contributions, so far as traceable, are equitably exacted:—and, as involved in this, what is "equitable."

"Local purposes" may, in the words of the main Report, be taken to be purposes for which local public authorities are now authorised to expend money.

Of the so-called local public services in respect of which local authorities are now empowered to levy rates, it will be, of course, admitted that some are rather national than local, and should be provided for from national resources and not at local charge, whilst others, like refuse-removal, gas, and water supply, &c., which any individual would have to secure on his own account if they were not supplied by local authorities, are not properly speaking rate-services, but are what the individual would otherwise have to pay for just as he pays for his food and clothing—quite irrespective of the classification of his property.

The services of a national character and those of a personal character being eliminated, there remain, as matter for local

taxation properly so called, only services of a public character of local convenience or advantage. These all relate to the amenities, improvements and protection of the neighbourhood and enhance the eligibility and the value of the land of the district.

With reference to the terms "real" and "personal," it is manifest that they cannot be taken here in their strictly legal acceptance and as "terms of art," for there are forms of both real and personal property as understood at law which do not admit of being made the subjects of valuation or assessment. The terms movable and immovable probably come nearer to the sense intended; but, in truth, houses or machinery are not absolutely *immobilia*. The only thing that is *immobile* is the earth, and as there is a fundamental and natural difference between the ground and all other objects of ownership I shall consider the land apart from every other form of property.

Essential Difference Land and Property.

Now, between land and every other form of property there is an obvious, abiding and essential difference. Every other form of property is transitory, wasting, and destructible, the temporary production of human industry, obtained by labour out of the material which the land supplies; but the land is not of human production: and as no man made it, so no man can destroy it; "no man, however feloniously inclined, can run away with an acre of it." Man's very body is built up of its substance; he is taken from it, and will return to it; while he lives, he must live and labour upon its surface. Equity and right reason would appear to suggest that the product of human industry should be the absolute property of the person or persons that created it, whether the creation be of food, or habitation, or instrument, or any other thing. But with the land it is different. Equity and right reason here suggest that, as access to the face of the globe is for mankind a necessary condition of existence, and yet land is incapable of creation by human industry, the same rule of absolute and exclusive ownership cannot apply. On this point the law of England is in accord with common sense; and according to that law land is not the subject of absolute property. "No man is, in law, the absolute owner of lands. He can only hold an estate in them," and that estate he holds under the Crown as representative of the community.

Land Belongs to the People.

It is then in accordance at once with reason, equity, and the law, to say that England belongs to the English; that the land of England, with all that is beneath its surface, and all that it produces by the unassisted force of nature, belongs to the people of England. Whatever may at any time be the authorised occupation of its surface, or of any part of it, however turned to account—well or ill, or not at all—however its resources, in whatever hands, may be developed or neglected, it is true to say collectively that the land of England belongs to the people of England.

The Existing Situation.

The facts of the existing situation, however (it is not necessary to consider here how they may have been brought about) furnish an extraordinary contrast with this natural and equitable view. The 32,000,000 of acres of country which stretch from Berwick-on-Tweed to Land's End, and which bears upon their bosom a population of 30,000,000 of human beings, are divided between a comparatively small number of freeholders, collectively forming only a tiny fraction of the inhabitants. These freeholders part with the occupation right of the different portions of the land only on terms, terms which, from generation to generation, and from decade to decade, are continuously advancing, whilst the overwhelming mass of the community, who are born, and live, and labour, and are buried in it, can exist on it only on condition of payment to the freeholders. They could live in any other country on the same or perhaps better terms.

* Our co-workers of the English Land Restoration League will shortly issue full report of Judge O'Connor's most able and exhaustive report in pamphlet form, which will be posted free to any address on receipt of 1½d. in stamps. Apply either to The Secretary, English Land Restoration League, 376-77 Strand, London, W.C.; or to The Secretary, Scottish Single Tax League, 13 Dundas St., Glasgow.

CONDITION OF MAJORITY OF PEOPLE.**Rent-Producing Machines.**

It is plain that if a man does not own any land he must live upon the land of another; and he must, directly or indirectly, pay to him that owns it a premium or rent for permission to be there. This is the condition of the vast majority of the people of England; and every man, woman, or child in the community who has no share in the property in the land is—whether conscious of it or not—as much a rent-producing machine for the benefit of the landowners as the cattle that browse in the fields.

THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES.**Economic Position of Landocracy.**

This fact, of itself, may of course be unobjectionable, for it is clear, firstly, that separate occupation of land, secured under the law, is indispensable for human industry and the development of the resources of the country; and, secondly, that a very large proportion of mankind have not either the inclination or the capacity to deal with it themselves. But the fact itself remains, viz., that the population of England is divided into two classes, one comparatively small, and the other immense, the one composed of the owners of the land, and the other composed of the non-owners of the land. The first, *quid* owners simply, "toil not, neither do they spin," but they receive from the majority of their fellow citizens a quitance amounting to more than a hundred of millions sterling in the year; while the second or industrial class, have to labour not only for their bread, but also to pay for their foothold in the country. It may indeed be said that there are three classes, of which one not being composed of land owners, and not being industrial, are yet provided for by the industrial portion of the community. These are found in the workhouses in receipt of what is called in-door relief. However great may be the social or moral distinction between this class and the owners of interests in the land, from the point of view of political economy, the analogy is obvious.

Land Value: to what due.

The amount which the industrial portion of the community have in this way to pay out of the produce of their labour increases with the increase of their own number. It is only the presence of man that gives value to land. Land at the North Pole has no value, because men are not there; it is of comparatively small value where people are few, as on Salisbury Plain; it is of very high value in the City of London, by reason of the concourse of people who desire to use it. Value is only the measure or token of the amount of human effort which any thing or service can command at any given time and place. It does not signify how that effort may be induced, or what may be the motive of it. The association of beautiful scenery, the proximity of a harbour or market, the accessibility of minerals, agricultural fertility, commercial convenience, or any other attraction may furnish a special inducement to compete for a particular spot, but the bare requirement of ground to stand or sleep on will, with an increasing population of non-owners of land, secure for the owners an increased tribute.

Site Value and Structural Value.

These considerations will be enough to show how essential a difference there is between the two chief kinds of property now liable to be rated, viz., land and buildings, and how reasonable and equitable it is that land or interests in land should be made the subject from which the services in the public interest should be supplied. A little further consideration will show in how different a position any other form of property stands. The increase in valuation, which has been so noticeable during the last 50 years, is due to the increased value of houses as well as to increase in the value of land. But a marked distinction must here be made. It is true that there has been a very much larger amount of

money laid out in houses than was the case before; but this is a matter of expense, of sinking capital in the employment of labour, and in paying for materials. A structure once erected remains a perishable commodity, maintained in condition only by constant expenditure of more material and more labour, but on these conditions houses can be multiplied according to the multiplication of the people, as coats and other created commodities all can. But the land is constant in quantity and limited, and has to do for all, however many. Again, if each of two men resolves to build a house of a certain size and style, but one of them builds his house in an out of the way part of Salisbury Plain, and the other of them builds his house in Cornhill, it is probable that the former, having to transport labour and material, will have to pay more for the erection of his Salisbury Plain structure than the other would spend in London, where conveniences are greater. But the Cornhill house would readily let at a rent many times as great as the other house would command. The difference in rent would represent the difference in site value, and not the difference in structural value. The distinction between site value and structural value represents a difference which is a difference not of degree only, but of kind. The structural value is due to individual action; the site value depends on the action of the community.

The Demands of Equity.

If it is suggested that an individual may do much to develop a site value, the obvious reply is that whatever he so does is included in his individual property as being of his own creation. If he should also be the freeholder this will in no way affect the matter. The improvement which he creates he creates not in his capacity of mere landowner, but in his capacity as an industrial member of the community, and equity requires that he should have the full benefit of it. But the land which he owns is no more of his creation than it is of his neighbour's, though his ownership marks him off from the majority of his fellow citizens as one of the class endowed with the land of the country. If an owner of agricultural land builds a farm-house with its necessary accessories, having, perhaps, reclaimed or drained the land, made or paid for the roads, erected the fences and constructed the ditches, &c, he is, in respect of his having created a farm as a going concern, as much an industrial member of society as the shipbuilder, the tailor, the doctor, or the ploughman, and as such is a benefactor of society. Society may well be satisfied with the service which he thus renders, and leave his buildings and improvements unburdened by taxation. But with regard to the land, on which his intelligence and resources have been exercised, he is debtor to the community at large, as being in privileged and protected ownership and occupation of a portion of that common patrimony which belongs to the community first, and to him only in a secondary and conditional manner.

Again, if upon the banks of the Tyne landowners have for generations allowed to lie useless a low and swampy stretch, until some energetic, enterprising, and intelligent industrial, taking it at a rent, digs out a dock and starts the business of a shipbuilder, organising labour, creating employment, gathering a vast army of workers, and develops a town, and if with every increase of service which he thus renders to his fellows he is constrained to pay to the landowners, who have all the while done nothing, a constantly increasing rent until land, originally worth a pound a year, is now worth a thousand, is it not in accordance with reason and justice that the thousand a year should be rated in the hands of the landlords rather than that the shipbuilder should be further charged? The structural value of the created property is maintained or increased only by constant expenditure by the individual on construction and repair of buildings and machinery. The whole value added by reason of the increase of men upon it attaches to the land and inures to the advantage of those between whom the interests in the land are divided.

Similarly it may be said of every other person who gives his fellow-men useful services, whether professional, clerical, medical, legal, artistic, or literary; by invention, production, or distribution, by land or sea, in public or domestic life, that he benefits the community by his industry, and should be allowed to enjoy the full fruits of it. Those services, whatever they are, if rendered for the personal and peculiar benefit of any individual, should be paid for by him; while the cost of services which are rendered to the community should be defrayed from the common patrimony, national services from the common fund of the nation, and local public services from the common fund of the locality.

True Principle of Taxation.

The above considerations drive me to the conclusion that equity requires that houses and machinery should not be rated for local purposes; but that the cost necessarily incurred in connexion with those services should be defrayed at the expense of the land-interests of the locality.

Its Universal Applicability.

And this principle, being sound, will be applicable to all land, in town and country alike, to whatsoever purpose applied, and whether the particular industry carried on upon it be or be not remunerative in the hands of the industrial occupant. If this principle is adhered to, the cases of special properties such as railways, canals, docks, gasworks, and tramways, will present no difficulties such as beset the existing system. A railway station in a town, or the line which runs across the country, would be assessed according to the value of the land occupied, and no more; and so of all similar undertakings. An acre of agricultural land would be assessed according to its own value as land, quite irrespective of any buildings or other agricultural improvements; an acre of land in Salisbury Plain would pay its petty duty; and the magnificent properties in the crowded cities would pay in proportion to the site value which the presence of the crowds has caused. The difficulty now raised with regard to what is called "unoccupied" land would at once disappear. It would be rated according to its value. But there is, in truth, no such thing as unoccupied land in England. If not let, land is in the hands of the owner, who retains it for his own purposes, just as a tenant might do.

Principle virtually admitted in Report on Urban Rating and Site Values.

The principle embodied in the foregoing remarks appears to be virtually, though not in terms, adopted in the Report on Urban Rating and Site Values which has been signed by a minority of the Commissioners. I should be glad to be allowed to associate myself with that singularly able document, at any rate so far as it goes in the application of the principle. I am, however, unable to discover any logical distinction between different portions of land accordingly as they may happen to be in urban or rural areas, or as they may or may not at the moment be built on. The limitation to urban areas appears to involve an abandonment of principle, and to reduce the proposal to the level of a makeshift compromise, without logical justification. The same objection holds good against the schemes put forward by Mr. Fletcher Moulton and the London County Council.

Points needing consideration.

But assuming the frank and unqualified acceptance of the fundamental principle and its application to every acre of the country, urban or rural, and whether utilised or not, the remaining points to be considered are:—

- (a) whether the principle admits of practical application, that is, whether the valuation of land as distinguished from buildings or other improvements is in practice possible;
- (b) whether the charge of rates can be distributed equitably in proportions corresponding with the different shares in the interest in land; and
- (c) the effect of existing contracts.

Its Practical Application.

(a) With reference to the first point, many witnesses who appeared before the Commission, dwelt with emphasis on the alleged or suggested difficulty of estimating the value of land apart from buildings upon it; but no one of the expert witnesses would say that it was impossible, and none would admit that he could not himself do it if it was necessary. But, in fact, the matter is past the stage of mere argument, for not only is the thing being done every day for private purposes, but it is also done on public account in all three countries under the established practice. The entire system of valuation in Ireland under Acts of Parliament is based upon the separate valuation of land and of buildings. In England, land has to be separately valued in the country for the purposes of the Agricultural Rates Act, which prescribes the procedure for ascertaining, and the Returns which are to show, the division between the rateable value of agricultural land and that of the buildings and other hereditaments. Under numberless private Acts of Parliament the thing has been done for many years in connection with compensation to owners, lessees and occupiers disturbed in their "quiet enjoyment" by promoters. . . . When the matter is considered quietly, apart from personal interest or the prejudice of class or profession, it will be easily seen that there is no real difficulty about it, and that it would be just as practicable to make a map of the whole country, showing the valuation per acre or rood or plot of the surface of the land, as it is to make an Ordnance Survey Map, showing the elevation above the sea of every part of the country. In both there would be plains and slopes and peaks, though the summits of the physical contours would often be the depressions of the valuation contours, and vice versa.

Equitable Distribution of Charge.

(b) As regards the second point, as to the equitable distribution of charge among the different interests in land, it is necessary to keep clearly in mind that the fee simple owners do not personally represent, or at least enjoy, the full property in the land. Many a freeholder can claim as his own but a very small, sometimes, indeed, a merely nominal, property; and equity requires that the burden should only be in proportion to the benefit. From the fee simple of any parcel of land, there may be carved out many other estates and interests, freeholds as well as leaseholds, and interests in the nature of charges on the land, such as tithe rent charge, settlement charges or certain forms of ground rents. These are all really portions of the interest in the land, and as it were, slices out of the cake. They should all contribute in their proportion to make up the assessment in the whole. Or again, a fee-simple holder may let his land for 999 years; his lessee may sub-let with some advance for 99; the first sub-lessee may sub-let again for 60, the second sub-lessee may sub-let for 21, and the tenant for the 21 years' term may sub-let for three years or less to the ultimate occupier. Any one or other of the members of this series may build or effect improvements. There may be mortgages and sub-mortgages. The business of the occupier may be remunerative or not. All these details are matters of no consequence and involve no difficulty. At each step between the occupier and the builder, so much of the rent as represents the value of the structure will be paid without deduction: but, if from the rent which the ultimate occupier pays to his immediate lessor, he is allowed after payment in respect of the house, to deduct the poundage on the valuation of the land—the land alone being rated—he will himself have to pay the poundage on any part of that valuation which may be in excess of the land rent. And this is as it should be; for to that extent, he is enjoying a portion of the value of the land. Further, each of the lessees in turn should be entitled to deduct from the sum which he pays to his lessor, poundage on so much of it as represents the valuation of the land—he himself bearing the burden in respect of the difference between what he pays to his lessor, and what he receives from

his lessee, in respect of the land—the value of the house being separately regarded until it comes to the turn of the builder; who, of course, deducts in respect of the whole sum paid by him. The superior holders then in turn pay each upon what he receives. In this way, the charge in respect of the land will be distributed equitably between those who share the benefit of it.

The Question of Mortgages.

The question of mortgages has been suggested as a difficulty. The difficulty, however, is only imaginary. It is true that, according to legal phraseology, a mortgagee has the legal estate; but in equity and practice the mortgagee is only a secured creditor and has no real ownership of the land until he forecloses. If he foreclosed or became mortgagee in possession, he would, of course, be liable to pay, or accountable for, the rates to the same extent as his mortgagor.

And of Existing Contracts.

(c) The last point which remains to be considered is that relating to existing contracts. As to this it is manifest that equity requires that all existing contracts should be absolutely respected. It may be that many of them will have to run not for years only, but for lives and longer. No matter, for although there would appear to be, according to the view taken in this Report, much that is inequitable in the present arrangements, and much that calls for change in the interests of the public, yet a disregard of contractual relations would be a more serious injury to the public than even the existing system of rating. If it is said that existing contracts will stand in the way of, or delay to a very great extent, the reform suggested, the answer is that the duty cast upon this Commission is not to secure or propose immediate alteration of the law, but rather to indicate the direction in which equity points—not to put forward proposals for immediate and universal application which would be revolutionary, but to show the direction in which reform should be attempted, and the mode in which existing injustice may be removed without shock to the body politic. But yet for the great majority of occupiers a very few years would have completely established a new system. The longest running contracts are also fewest in number, and the alteration once introduced (all contracts made contrary to it after a certain date being declared void) would work gradually and smoothly until it was in time completely effected.

CONCLUSION.

A Solemn, Necessary, and Timely Warning.

In conclusion, I would venture to suggest that a change based on sound principle and carried out by gradual adjustment is not only not revolutionary, but is dictated by prudence. It is difficult to believe that with the diffusion of education, or at least of political information, the great mass of the people of England, will long remain unconscious or heedless of the true economic position. If and when they realise it, they will probably be drawn to exercise that power, which the franchise places in their hands, to secure through the instrumentality of the Commons House of Parliament a readjustment of taxation, relief for industry in every form, and the imposition of the burden where also the benefit rests. But if this were done in consequence of popular agitation, and as the result of vehement party struggle, the hardship to individuals would be sudden and great, and the dislocation of interests detrimental to the community.

The conclusions, therefore, which I have humbly to submit are:—

1. That local public services properly so-called,—and as distinguished from public services on the one hand, and on the other from services rendered to the individual on his own premises,—are alone the proper grounds for local taxation;
2. That land (except land already dedicated to public use), and land only, should be rated for local public services;

3. That all existing contracts should be respected;
4. That the levy should be made from the occupier, with right of deduction, after the Income Tax method, secured to each lessee in respect of the superior interests in the land.

ALL WHICH I HUMBLY SUBMIT TO YOUR MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS CONSIDERATION.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR.

Royal Commission on Local Taxation.

At a Special Meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the English Land Restoration League, held immediately after the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission, the following Resolution was unanimously adopted:—

“That this Committee welcomes the recommendations contained in the ‘Separate Report’ of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, in favour of the separate assessment of site and structure value, and the imposition of a special site value rate, and concurs in the conclusions expressed in the report that this proposal (1) would conduce to placing the urban rating system on a more equitable and thus sounder basis; (2) would be making the ground-owner and others who may, under the leasehold system, acquire an interest in site values; contribute somewhat more to local taxation than they do now, and the contribution would be direct and visible; (3) would do something towards lightening the burdens on building, and thus something towards solving the difficult and urgent housing question; and (4) would tend to rectify inequalities between one district and another district.”

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

LANDLORDS RELIEF ACT.

The following letter on the above question appeared in the *London Daily News* of Monday, June 10th:—

Sir,—I see Sir W. Walrond, at Exeter, on Friday last, in addressing a Tory meeting, said the Government intended to renew the Agricultural Rating Act again. Now, it is constantly reported in the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Chaplin, and other Tory Members, that you cannot name a single case where the rates go into the pocket of the landlords. Now, Sir, every farm that has been re-let during the last five years, the landlord gets the benefit of the Act, because when the applicant, tenant, or surveyor goes over the farm to survey it, he first ascertains what the outgoings are, then deducts the outgoings; the balance left is the rent—consequently less rates, more rent. Now, there are scores of acres near this town let to cow-keepers, butchers, bakers, etc., for accommodation; the landlord discharges all outgoings, and the tenant takes it accordingly; therefore the landlord gets half his rates paid. Such is the case adjoining every town, and, in fact, there are hundreds of acres let for accommodation land under similar conditions. Therefore it is monstrous to say the landlords don't receive any benefit of the Act.

ONE THAT HAS FARMED FOR FORTY YEARS.

Newton Abbot.

We reproduce this letter as it seems to us worthy of more attention than it has received, and because it is a significant sign of the times that even farmers are becoming alive to the real meaning and purport of the Agricultural Relief Act, and are assisting to refute and expose some of the current monstrous misstatements now being coined in large numbers to provide a decent (?) pretence for the renewal of this typical class measure, ostensibly passed in the interests and for the relief of agriculture, but really intended to support land monopoly, and to enrich still further the idle privileged land-holders at the expense of the rest of the community.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL TAXATION.

Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values.

Five members of the Commission, viz. :—Lord Balfour of Burleigh (Chairman of the Commission), Lord Blair Balfour (Lord Justice General of Scotland), Sir Edward Hamilton (Assistant Secretary of the Treasury), Sir George Murray (Secretary to the Postmaster-General), and Mr. James Stuart—“being unable to concur in the conclusions arrived at by their colleagues with regard to the Rating of Land Value in Chapter IX of the Majority Report,” found it necessary to issue a Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values, in which they recommend both the separate assessment and special taxation of site values.

The report is much too long for us to reprint it in full; the following extracts, however, will give our readers some insight into its contents, of the line of reasoning, as of the conclusions to which the logic of facts compelled them—almost reluctantly as it seems to us—to arrive.

INTRODUCTORY.

In their introductory remarks they point out that though there is much local expenditure which is National in character, and, consequently, ought to be defrayed out of National Funds, yet there remains “an enormous and rapidly-increasing expenditure, the greater part of which is devoted to urban improvements, that expression being used in a wide sense,” concerning which they are agreed that, being “properly local in character, it has no claim to assistance from the State.” Then follows this significant and suggestive sentence:—“We also agree that, since it is mainly beneficial to the owners and occupiers of immovable property, the question of obtaining contributions from other sources does not arise.”

After which follows a somewhat close inquiry into Urban Tenures.—Incidence of Present Rates: an exact solution of which they seem to regard as unattainable.—The London County Council’s Scheme as well as Mr. Fletcher Moulton’s Scheme for the Taxation of Land Values; both of which, for various reasons, they “unhesitatingly condemn.” Despite any shortcomings—real and imaginary—of these schemes the report continues—“**But it does not, however, seem to us that the ideas which underlie the movement are entirely unsound;**” an admission which we note and accept with all gratitude and humility.

Rating of Site Values.

Then follows the most important and valuable portion of this report. For after pointing out, in opposition to what they term “the popular view,” that others besides the ground landlord are interested in site values; and that, “*except in the case of uncovered land,*” site values are at present assessed, directly or indirectly, to local taxation: they continue—

“But these propositions, which would receive, we believe, the almost unanimous adhesion of those who have studied the subject, do not, in our opinion, by any means dispose of the question whether urban rating is susceptible of reform. We have still to ask, first, whether site value is, or is not, so exactly similar in character to building value that justice and policy require or admit of exactly similar treatment for both, and, secondly, whether there are not considerations which tell in favour of making the charge which falls upon those who have superior interests in urban hereditaments more direct and visible.

“After prolonged and careful consideration of these questions we agree with the Town Holdings Committee that a system of direct charge upon owners is desirable, at any rate on political and sentimental grounds, however little effect such a change may have upon the real incidence of taxation. But we go further than that Committee in considering that it is also eminently desirable that the charge which now falls indirectly and irregularly on site value should, if possible, be made more direct and visible, as well as more accurately and evenly apportioned. It is, no doubt, a fallacy to suppose that there are huge untapped sources of revenue in connection with urban land, but it is not a fallacy to think that urban site value is a form of property which from its nature is peculiarly fit to bear a direct and special burden in connection with ‘beneficial’ local expenditure.”

An admission which, coming from such high authorities, we gladly welcome, and shall in the future do our utmost to make known and emphasise.

Essence of Site Value Taxation.

The Report then continues:—

“The mistake made hitherto has been to regard the taxation of site value as primarily a question between the parties interested in any one hereditament, or as essentially depending on the rights or wrongs of the dispute between the ground landlord and the string of lessees as to the fairness of their contracts.

“The real question as to the taxation of site value is the question whether there ought not to be a tax on site value where it exists, and in proportion to the amount of it which exists in each place. In other words, site value is in essence *local*, and the effect of taxing site value would be primarily a *local* redistribution of burden, not primarily a redistribution of burden as between the parties interested in each single hereditament, but as between different districts and different hereditaments.

“Suppose three properties, the annual value of which is made up of site value and structural value in the respective proportions indicated by the following diagrams:—

A.	B.	C.
£25 Structure.	£50 Structure.	£75 Structure.
Site. £75	Site. £50	Site. £25

“Each property is of the rateable value of £100, but in A the site is worth £75, in B it is worth £50, in C it is worth £25; structural value constituting the balances of £25, £50, and £75 respectively. The question at issue as between an ordinary rate and a site value rate can now easily be made clear. Suppose £3 has to be raised. Under the present system, as each house is of the same rateable value, £1 will be charged in respect of each, but under a site value rate the result would be different, because A’s site is worth three times as much as C’s, and therefore the charge will be:—

	£	s.	d.
In respect of A,	-	-	1 10 0
„ „ B,	-	-	1 0 0
„ „ C,	-	-	0 10 0
Total,	-	-	3 0 0

“It will be observed that the charge in respect of B remains the same in both cases.

“This illustration shows the manner in which the burden would be redistributed as between different hereditaments and different districts, if a site value rate were substituted for an ordinary rate.

“It is this redistribution of burden between hereditaments and districts which constitutes the essential and peculiar feature (good or bad) of site value taxation. The question of a direct charge on this or that class of owners is a quite different question, which must be argued on different grounds.”

Recommendations concerning same.

After which the Commissioners point out that though they would “be sorry to lend any countenance to the crude and violent theories which some witnesses have put before us on the subject of the taxation of land;” yet, they sagely continue, “a cause which is reasonable in itself ought not to be prejudiced by the excesses of its unreasonable advocates;” and—

A careful consideration of all the particular circumstances of urban local taxation has led us to the conclusion that a moderate rate proportioned to site value ought to be imposed as part of any scheme for the readjustment of the burden of local taxation in urban districts.

Why Site Values should be Taxed.

After pointing out that “the popular argument, the argument which appeals most forcibly to the popular mind in favour of such a tax, is that the owners of urban land have received and continue to receive increases of value which are not due to any exertion or action on their part, but to causes over which they have no control,” they anxiously guard themselves against a possible charge of assenting “to the principle that all gain which could more or less plausibly be described as unearned or automatic should be specially taxed, for the reason, amongst others, that a consistent application of this principle would be impracticable.” Nor

can they admit that "urban land, even if it affords the most striking instance of such gains, is unique in this respect." They, however, go on to defend their, apparently heretical, recommendation, which they feel will not be welcome to their friends, on the following grounds:—

(a) Because Increased by Public Improvements.

"There is, however, another feature about urban site value, which appears to us to be almost, if not quite, peculiar to it: that is, the increase of value due to the expenditure of public authorities on improvements. We admit the extraordinary difficulty of exactly correlating the burden and the benefit of such expenditure over different areas, but we think that the general truth that the benefit of improvements attaches to the site is a powerful argument for making the necessary taxation proportionate to the site value."

(b) Because it would not Hamper Development.

"However this may be, there are, in our opinion, other even weightier considerations in favour of a special rate on site value.

"In the first place, there is a strong argument for rating site values on the ground of public policy, regard being had to the effects of taxation on industry and development. Our present rates indisputably hamper building. Buildings are a necessary of life and a necessary of business of every kind. Now, the tendency of our present rates must be generally to discourage building—to make houses fewer, worse and dearer. As Mr. Fletcher Moulton says: 'A tax upon buildings proportionate to their value necessitates that the rent of buildings should represent a high rate per cent. on their cost. In other words, it drives people to take (and, therefore, drives builders to build) poorer houses. Taxation on the land has no such effect.'

"Consideration of a concrete case will easily show the truth of this proposition. The effect of substituting a site-value rate for an ordinary rate in a town will be, roughly speaking, to decrease the burden in the outskirts and increase it at the centre. Now, an increased burden will certainly not stop building at the centre of a town—it will merely diminish the peculiar advantages of the central position, in other words, it will prevent the site-owner from obtaining so much rent. But a diminution in the burden in the outskirts may very well tempt builders to build, and occupiers to live, in places where before it was not worth their while to go, and, of course, any increase of building on the outskirts tends to reduce the pressure for accommodation all through the town; while the quality of the accommodation also is likely to be improved by the lightening of the burden on building value."

(c) Because of its Effect on Housing Problem.

"While the rating of site value thus concerns the public at large as an administrative reform, it is of special importance in connection with the urgent problem of providing house accommodation for the working classes. Anything which aggravates the appalling evils of overcrowding does not need to be condemned, and it seems clear to us that the present heavy rates on buildings do tend to aggravate those evils, and that the rating of site values would tend to mitigate them. If more of the burden were thrown on sites, the portion left to be borne by buildings would be diminished, and this would weigh with the builder who is hesitating to embark on the erection of new structures."

(d) Because Specially Equitable.

"In the second place, site value differs from structural value, not only in origin, as we have above shown, but also in present character. A structure is a wasting, perishable property which requires repair and renewal, while a site is permanent and, as a rule, increases rather than diminishes in value. Consequently, when the main part of the value of a hereditament can be attributed to the site, that hereditament represents a greater ability to pay than one in which structural value predominates. If this consideration be neglected, there must be a certain inequity, not only as between properties, but as between different districts which contribute to a common charge: for rates are far more burdensome in a district where the site value is low, and the ability to pay small, and where development is therefore liable to be arrested."

(e) Because Present System is Unfair.

"It may thus be argued, and we think with some force, that as between ground owners, the present system is unfair. For instance, suppose that M has a plot of ground in Fulham, and has leased it at a ground-rent of £30 to a builder, who erects on the site premises rented and rated at £180 a year. The rates are 5s. in the £, and, therefore, the amount payable in respect of the premises is £45. Now, if we accept the view held by the majority of the London surveyors, that at the commencement of a building lease, the whole of the rates fall on the ground landlord, then M's ground-rent will have been reduced, by the estimated burden of the rates, from £75 to £30, or by 60 per cent.

"N has a plot of ground in Mayfair, and has leased it at a ground-rent of £400 to a builder, who erects on the site premises rented and rated at £800 a year. The rates, at 5s. in the £, amount to £200. On similar assumptions as to incidence, N's ground-rent in Mayfair will have been reduced from £600 to £400, or by only 33·3 per cent. which is only half the reduction to which the ground owner in Fulham had to submit.

"This is, no doubt, the extreme view of incidence, and we adopt it in this form only as an *argumentum ad hominem*, but the same result follows to a less extent on a more moderate view of incidence.

"Site value and building value being thus of different and even opposite characters in many respects, it appears to us that a system which treats them exactly alike, as our present rating system does, is *prima facie* unfair and unwise.

"At the same time we would not propose, and we find no justification for anything like the spoliation of a particular class. Indeed, while a site value rate would, in our opinion, be a means of securing a somewhat larger contribution from the owners of the swollen site values of the central districts of our cities, it might prove rather advantageous to owners in the outlying districts; for if the rating of site value gives a stimulus to development, as we believe it will, a secondary effect of the reform will be to increase the demand for building sites."

Its Immediate Imposition Demanded.

The Commissioners then give their reasons why in their opinion the present is a specially fitting time for the establishment of the special taxation of Urban Site Values. After again warning off the 'extreme man' by saying that—"We do not forget that almost any change in the incidence of taxation causes some disappointment of legitimate expectations, and we recognise that, since sites have been and are continually bought, sold, and leased for good consideration in the open market, it is out of the question to impose taxation of a confiscatory character;" they continue, "But there is a special circumstance which appears to us to make the present moment especially fitted for the imposition of the proposed rate—a circumstance which, indeed, makes the imposition of such a rate indispensable to avoid justice. Under the proposals which we have severally made, the burden upon ratepayers in connexion with onerous expenditure on national services would be permanently lightened in urban as well as in rural districts. Now, we admit, and indeed contend, that a large part of the present rates falls on the owners of site value in towns. But the more the burden of rates actually falls upon them now, (and some eminent authorities maintain that the entire burden falls on them) the greater will be the ultimate relief which will accrue to them from the increase of State aid. Accordingly, unless the owners of urban ground values are to be relieved at the expense of the taxpayer (a course which probably no one would advocate), it seems most necessary to accompany the increase of subventions in urban districts by the imposition of a site value rate. We have given our reasons for holding that such a rate would tend to fall on the owners of site value, and not on the occupiers; and it follows that by this means, and by this means alone, the benefit from increased subventions will be secured for those for whom it is intended, namely, the occupiers, and especially the heavily burdened occupiers of the poorer districts."

Objections Answered.

The Commissioners then proceed to answer some general objections to their proposal to tax site values. In the first place they consider the general *logi cal* objection that may be raised to the conception of site value itself. They say—"The value of anything is what it will fetch in the market. A building and its site can only come into the market together, so long as the building stands. It may thus be urged that it is improper to assign a value to one of the elements of the composite whole, since neither element can be the subject of a separate transaction, so long as the whole remains in existence. The reply is that indisputably the site would have a value, if clear of buildings, and this conception of site value is a perfectly clear one, and is necessarily used by surveyors in daily business."

They then frankly admit that it may not be an easy task to make a valuation of sites that shall be a satisfactory basis for taxation; and that many respectable authorities contend that a site valuation would not only be enormously expensive, but would involve a serious danger of errors and disputes. To which they practically answer that the same might be said of the existing system; that "the test enjoined by the existing law for the valuation of property is **strictly hypothetical, viz.—the rent at which a property might reasonably be expected to let**; and finally they

(Continued on page 30.)

REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL TAXATION.

A Reactionary Victory—A Progressive Gain.

"To inquire into the present system under which taxation is raised for local purposes, and report whether all kinds of real and personal property contribute equitably to such taxation; and, if not, what alterations in the law are desirable in order to secure that result."

SHORTLY after the passing of the Agricultural Rates Act, perhaps better and more correctly known as the Landlords' Relief Act, a Royal Commission was appointed with the above object, and now, just as this Act is about to expire, its Final Report has been issued. It is divided into a Majority Report, after which comes Separate Recommendations, Special Reservations, and Explanatory Memoranda from five out of the twelve Commissioners who signed same. Then a Separate Report by Sir Edward Hamilton and Sir George Murray; another Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values, signed by these two gentlemen and three of the Commissioners who signed the Majority Report; and, finally, a Report by His Honour Judge O'Connor, K.C.

Of the interpretation Judge O'Connor gave to the instructions, and of his able, masterly, and impartial exposition of the real question at issue, we need here say nothing, since our readers will find a slightly abridged version of his Report in this month's issue. It alone would have justified us in claiming the Report as a distinctly Progressive Gain. The same might be said of the Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values, of which also we need here say but little, as our readers will be able to judge of its value from the copious extracts they will find in another column. We may say, however, that we regard it as an undoubted triumph for our cause, as a reluctant but conscious admission of the inherent truth and equity of the fundamental principles upon which is based the steadily growing demand for the taxation of Land Values; and as such we believe it will be regarded by all who read it.

The Majority Report is, to say the least, a very peculiar document, and we would like to emphasise the fact that if it had been signed only by those who agreed with its most important recommendations, it would have been converted into a Minority Report—and that of the least influential members of the Commission. However, they find an opportunity of applauding the reactionary legislation of the present

Government by speaking of the Agricultural Rating Act as "a measure of justice which had been too long delayed;" and then, without advancing a single argument in its favour, without making any effort to show that it has succeeded in its avowed, if not intended, object, they practically recommend that it should be renewed and made permanent. Finally, in their impartial wisdom, they proclaim that they at least are unable to see any necessity for the separate assessment of Land Values, or for any special taxation thereof; and to proclaim their belief that any such tax would be in effect a new land tax; and that "no new tax on land seems to us required to meet any special expenditure incurred by Local Authorities for its benefit."

In view of the present situation, no one would care to deny that it is very urgent that our agricultural industry should obtain some real and radical measure of relief. It is unnecessary for us here to emphasise the fact that the landlord is the greatest incubus on agriculture, that it is his extortions which have ruined and are ruining our agricultural industry. But we should like any reasoning man to ask himself how any relief of rates can possibly be said to be a relief of agriculture when the position is, as the Honourable Mr. Chaplin, when President of the Board of Agriculture, pointed out in the House of Commons, in 1891, that—"The occupier paid a certain sum for the use of land, and in that sum were included rates as well as rent. **The effect on the owner was that if rates were high he got less rent, and if they were low he got more rent.**" The Agricultural Rating Bill certainly relieves agricultural land, as well as much urban land, from half its rates; thus it certainly tends to increase rents, but cannot be said to benefit agriculture, or to have any effect in improving the condition of our farmers or of our agricultural labourers; to accomplish such results a very different measure is called for.

This question has been repeatedly dealt with in these columns, so we need now say nothing more about it. However, we cannot refrain from here reproducing some of the evidence taken by the Commission on this point, which shows that the Act has not had the effect it was avowedly intended to have; that, in the words of some of the witnesses called, "the land which is least able to bear the burden gets the least relief;" that "it chiefly goes to help the rates where the help is least needed."

Thus Captain Pretzman, M.P., a large landed proprietor, gave evidence as follows with respect to the operation of the Act :—

Q. "Even assuming that that is not the most perfect mode of meeting the hardship which you present to the Commission, would you propose, in the event of no better mode being available, that that mode of relief should be continued?"

A. "In the event of no better mode of any kind being available, I would rather see that mode of relief continued than revert to the old state of things, but I think it is a bad method." (9850).

Q. "Would you propose that the application of that principle should be further extended, and that in the event of its being decided that that is the most convenient way of remedying your grievance, that land should be rated not at one-half, but at a lower proportion still?"

A. "No, I cannot say that I think it is entirely satisfactory, because **the relief is given then to the land which is best able to bear the burden—that gets the most relief; and the land which is least able to bear the burden gets the least relief. That is inseparable from that form of relief, and that is one of the reasons, I suppose, why it was made only temporary.**" (9860).

In answer to a question whether he considered that the Agricultural Rates Act was operating equitably in the sense of relieving where relief is most required, Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P., said :—

"No, what I say is, that unfortunately **on the poor land where the assessment is low**—I know land, for instance, where the assessment is only 5s. an acre, and the rates per acre therefore are very low indeed—**the relief that we get is very small.**" (11,291).

Again, Mr. Sancroft Holmes, a well-known landowner, and representative of the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, said :—

"I cannot say that I think the principle upon which the Agricultural Rating Act was passed last year was altogether wise. **It gives the minimum of help where most is wanted.**" (2839).

"**It chiefly goes to help the rates where the help is least needed.**" (3038).

And the Rev. D. J. Davies, Chairman of the Billericay Board of Guardians, said :—

"**I think it (the Agricultural Rates Act) is very unjust.**" (5699).

"There is accommodation land that I know of which lets at about £4 an acre, and no one can say that such accommodation land deserved to be let off paying any of its rates." (5701).

Surely no further evidence is needed of the inadequacy and injustice of the Agricultural Rating Act, which, while it does nothing to assist agriculture, certainly relieves urban land-holders from bearing their fair share of local taxation, to the direct injury of other ratepayers, as well as of the general taxpayer.

We sincerely regret that pressure on our space prevents us from adequately dealing with the very able Report of Sir Edward Hamilton and Sir George

Murray. They certainly deal with the whole question in the most statesmen-like manner. Their great aim seems to be to devise means by which grants from the National Exchequer should be allocated in such a manner as to secure what may be termed an equalisation of rates throughout the whole country. Their view is worthy of every attention; and we may have opportunity to refer to it on another occasion.

In conclusion, we would again express our opinion that we have every reason to be satisfied with this Report as a whole. It supplies a very treasury of facts and arguments in favour of the taxation of Land Values, and will, moreover, carry same into quarters to which our "heretical" publications would never gain admittance. We rejoice that the glaring shortcomings of the present system are compelling our public men to realise that a system devised to provide Poor Relief in the days of Queen Elizabeth, however patched and varnished, is necessarily far from suitable for the requirements of modern Local Government. Still more do we rejoice at the evidence of the gradual growth of public knowledge as to the nature of our proposals, and the manifest trend of public favour in their direction, as manifested by the special recommendations of those Commissioners whose names will carry most weight for the separate assessment and special taxation of Land Values.

We may add that though we shall continue to do our utmost to oppose the iniquitous Agricultural Rating Act, we should do our best to support the allocation of National Funds to National Purposes, even if their execution be allotted to local bodies, provided only that such allocation is carried out in such a manner as to equalise the burdens between richer and poorer districts, as is proposed by Messrs. Hamilton and Murray, and provided any such alteration is accompanied by an Act which will enable Local Authorities to raise a considerable part of the local burdens by the taxation of Land Values. Thus, and thus alone, can Local Taxation be placed upon a sound and equitable basis, and be made to promote, and not to hinder, all our national industries.

THE feudal system may have been oppressive, but it was founded on a theory of reciprocal justice.—*Thorold Rogers.*

A progress has been made. The human race
Advances palpably in its career;
Old errors fall, and old truths, seeming new,
Shine on the nations with a steadier light,
And point the way from sloughs of ignorance
To the firm ground where they must stand at last.

—*Charles Mackay.*

BAZAAR TO PROMOTE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

To be held under the auspices of The Scottish Single Tax League in Glasgow in the early part of 1902.

PATRONS.

The following gentlemen have already consented to become Patrons:—

	Lord Carrington.
	The Hon. Lord Provost Samuel Chisholm (Glasgow).
	Hon. Tom L. Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.
Mr. Alex. W. Black, M.P.	Mr. A. Dewar, ex-M.P. (Edinburgh).
„ H. Broadhurst, M.P.	
„ T. Burt, M.P.	Coun. Dr. Erskine (Glasgow).
„ Robt. Cameron, M.P.	Baillie Fairlie (Falkirk).
„ John Colville, M.P.	Mr. H. C. Fairlie (Glasgow).
„ J. H. Dalziel, M.P.	Baillie Ferguson „
Sir W. B. Foster, M.P.	„ Fife, „
Mr. George Harwood, M.P.	Coun. Dr. Garey „
„ W. H. Holland, M.P.	Mr. Henry George, Jr. (New York, U.S.A.).
„ William M'Killop, M.P.	
„ D. V. Pirie, M.P.	Baillie A. J. Hunter (Glasgow).
„ Edmund Robertson, M.P.	„ G. Lamb, ex-Mayor (Bootle).
„ Thomas Shaw, M.P.	Coun. Wm. Martin (Glasgow).
„ Arthur W. Soames, M.P.	Mr. J. A. Murray Macdonald (London).
Capt. F. F. Thomas, M.P.	„ Richard McGhee, ex-M.P. (Lurgan).
Mr. Whiteley Thomson, M.P.	„ H. S. Murray (Galashiels).
„ James Tomkinson, M.P.	Ex-Bail. J. D. M'Gregor (Greenock).
„ Chas. Trevelyan, M.P.	„ Mr. H. H. Pain (London).
„ Alex. Ure, M.P.	„ P. S. Peat (Glasgow).
„ J. H. Whitley, M.P.	„ A. D. Provand, ex-M.P. (London).
„ J. Wilson, M.P. (Durham).	
„ Edwin Adam, M.A. (Edinburgh).	
Provost Ballantyne, Peebles.	
Mr. Lewis H. Berens (London).	Coun. A. H. Scott (Manchester).
Mr. A. Billson, ex-M.P. (Liverpool).	Provost Spite (Clydebank).
Baillie Bilsland (Glasgow).	Baillie D. M. Stevenson (Glasgow).
Coun. Thos. Burke (Liverpool).	Coun. H. W. Stewart (Edinburgh).
Mr. W. P. Byles, ex-M.P. (Bradford).	Coun. Thos. Utley (Liverpool).
Mr. Geo. Cadbury (Bournville).	Ex-Pro. Watson (Falkirk).
„ Jas. Campbell, J.P. (Tullichewan).	Coun. J. C. Whiteley (Sheffield).
	„ D. Willox (Glasgow).
	Baillie R. Wilson (Pollokshaws).

PERSONAL AND INTERESTING—(Continued).

The following are among the replies to the letter addressed by the Executive of the League to known representative supporters of the taxation of land values, asking the favour of their names, as supporters, as Patrons of the Bazaar:—

Right Hon. JOHN MORLEY, M.P. (Montrose Burghs), writes:—“I never like giving name to Bazaars outside my own Diocese, so I will beg you to excuse me.”

Sir WALTER B. FOSTER, M.P. (Derby, Ilkeston), writes:—“You may add my name to your list of Patrons of the Bazaar to promote the taxation of land values.”

Captain SINCLAIR, M.P. (Forfarshire), writes:—“I must beg you to excuse me not in the least from want of sympathy, for I do very heartily wish you success, but simply because it is usual—and I think on the whole best—for one who has my work to do to adopt this course.”

Captain F. F. THOMAS, M.P. (Hastings), writes:—“I am entirely in sympathy with the object of your Bazaar, and gladly accede to your request to add my name to your list.”

Mr. E. J. C. MORTON, M.P. (Devonport), writes:—“You know I have the greatest sympathy with your object, but I have a rooted objection to Bazaars, and therefore I cannot let my name appear as a patron.”

Mr. JAMES TOMKINSON, M.P. (Cheshire, Crewe), writes:—“You may include my name in the list of Patrons of the Scottish Single Tax League.”

Mr. A. D. PROVAND, ex-M.P. (Glasgow, Hutchesontown and Blackfriars), writes:—“Put my name down as a Patron, and I will send you some things to sell.”

Mr. GEORGE GREEN, C.C. (Lanarkshire), writes:—“I shall have pleasure in agreeing to become a Patron, and shall hope to do some little to help in making it a success.”

Mr. JAMES STEWART, C.C. (Lanarkshire), writes:—“If my name is of any service it is most willingly at your disposal for your Bazaar.”

Baillie A. J. HUNTER (Glasgow), writes:—“You are quite at liberty to use my name if it will help in any way; wishing you success.”

Councillor THOS. UTLEY (Liverpool), writes:—“I take a deep interest in the subject, and shall be pleased at my name appearing as a Patron.”

Councillor J. C. WHITELEY (Sheffield), writes:—“Believing relief from Land Monopoly to be the only salvation of the people of this and other countries, I shall be pleased to help your movement in any way I can. Trusting the Bazaar will be a great success.”

Mr. WHITLEY THOMSON, M.P. (York, W.R., Skipton), writes:—“Not the slightest objection to your using my name as a Patron of the Bazaar in connection with the Single Tax League.”

Mr. H. S. MURRAY (Galashiels), writes:—“Put my name down as a Patron of the Bazaar. I hope it will be a great success.”

Mr. EDWIN ADAM, M.A. (Liberal Candidate, West Edinburgh), writes:—“You are welcome to the use of my name in connection with the proposed Bazaar. I sincerely trust it may be an outstanding success.”

Baillie FAIRLIE (Falkirk), writes:—“I will be glad to be a Patron of the Bazaar.”

Mr. HENRY GEORGE, Jr. (New York, U.S.A.), writes:—“By all means put me down. I'll send you over something to put upon the table to sell.”

111 CAMPSIE STREET,
SPRINGBURN, June, 1901.

The Editor, “The Single Tax.”

DEAR SIR,

The replies you have received in answer to your request for patronage for your forthcoming Bazaar are very interesting. They disclose all the varied shades of opinion from red-hot, hearty acceptance, passing into various shades of lukewarmness into diametric opposition.

You have replies from men, the asking of whom is merely a formality, as they are devoting their lives to the cause which the Bazaar is seeking to promote.

Then you have the replies of men who, while they do not stand for the Single Tax, stand so firmly and heartily for the Taxation of Land Values that they will not stoop to quarrel about a name or to consider whether their patronage of a Bazaar in aid of the propoganda of the Taxation of Land Values might be misconceived into support of the Single Tax.

Thirdly, you have the academic politician, the budding Statesmen, the politicians on the lookout for a constituency. These are terribly afraid that they might be taken for Single Taxers. They need not be the least afraid on this account; they have only to open their mouths on the question and it will be apparent to the meanest capacity.

Perhaps, however, in future those who stand for the Taxation of Land Values or the Single Tax will have to consider whether their position should be misrepresented by giving their support to men who are with them only on the hustings. Lastly, there is the point-blank refusal expected from men who are entirely opposed to our principles.

Perhaps the most peculiar reply of this type was the one you received from Mr. A. Cameron Corbett, M.P., Unionist Member for Tradeston. He wrote—

“I have just as much sympathy with stealing umbrellas and watches as with the stealing of land, and believe that precisely the same sort of benefit would accrue to the community from the one course as the other.”

Dear me! Isn't that just why The Single Tax League exists, and why they are organising a Bazaar to promote the Taxation of Land Values. It is to prevent land-thieving and to put an end to the benefits the community is presently

receiving in the shape of poverty, misery, millionaires, flabby moralists, pharasaical respectabilities, etc., that Single Taxers and Land Value Taxers are banded together. On that account Mr. Corbett's name should have been among the list of those in sympathy with the Bazaar.

But, of course, we know Mr. Cameron Corbett, M.P., better. By land thieves he does not mean the fellows who own the land. No, no; he means Land Value Taxers and Single Taxers, and the benefits accruing from the Taxation of Land Values he considers would equal the benefits accruing from the watch-snatching and the umbrella-thieving of the petty thieves and artful dodgers produced by a lap-sided civilization.

But he overlooks in this conclusion a multitude of important facts. In the first place, the principle which constitutes an umbrella or a watch private property—*i.e.*, the principle that an object is the property of its creator, cannot apply to land apart from improvements. (Single Taxers are very careful to separate land and improvements).

The umbrella or the watch is a product of human labour, and as such belongs to the producer; but no man made the land; its ownership, therefore, is not morally on a par with the ownership of these things.

But it may be said Government has recognised individual property in land for hundreds of years, and it would be wrong to tax that land. Mr. Corbett might aver it would be *similar* to the taking of an umbrella or a watch from an individual.

This is a lower type of argument, but it is all that is left for our friend; it is mere expediency with a decalogue flavour about it.

If Government in the course of years can make land the private property of a set of individuals, could not Government equally well make the umbrellas and watches produced by one set of individuals the property of another set? As a matter of fact, this is just what Government is constantly doing. For instance, there is Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Bart., M.P., who "favours a 'Single Tax' on all kinds of property, but for the rating of land values (which are already taxed)"—so were incomes, but the Chancellor increased the tax—"he has never heard any argument that was economically sound."

Of course, it is quite natural for Sir John to be a little economically blind. Government constitutes him the owner of certain lands in Pollokshields, and the people who want to live there have got to pay him blackmail—(no, I beg your pardon, *rent*)—that is to say, give him an umbrella, a watch, a set of golf sticks, or anything else that Sir John may have a fancy for. This is the sort of benefit that is accruing to the community through Government-constituted land-stealing. Now Single Taxers think it time this sort of thing—these benefits, as Mr. Corbett would put it—were terminating. We don't blame individuals like Sir John, except in a general way, for their failure to perceive common rights, and we are careful not to call landlords thieves, though they come very close. In the words of Adam Smith, "They reap where they have not sown and gather where they have not scattered." And don't you think it a trifle funny of Mr. Cameron Corbett characterising as thieving our policy for putting an end to all manner of thieving by securing all men equal rights to the use of the earth. What does it mean?

It is an attempt on the part of those who produce nothing, yet get the watches and umbrellas produced by others, to throw dust in the eyes of the awakening people. "Would you rob a poor widow of her only slave?" said the southern planter in reply to abolitionist arguments. "I have just as much sympathy with stealing umbrellas and watches as with the stealing of land" is the modern phrase applied to those who are working for the freeing of men from industrial slavery.

It is gratifying to think that the most of men are in sympathy with your Bazaar, and I feel sure it will be a great success.—Yours,

WM. CASSELS.

District News.

Inverness.

THE Trades Council of Inverness along with other bodies unanimately condemned the new coal and sugar imports, and appealed to Sir Robert Finlay, M.P. for Inverness Burghs, to use his great influence with the House of Commons to have this unjust proposal set aside, and to substitute as a remedy taxation of land values. At the monthly meeting of the Council held on 5th June, Sir Robert's reply, to the effect that he noted the views of the Trades Council and the great interest they took in the matter, was received with laughter.

Bolton.

On Monday evening, June 17, Mr. D. Whitehead, of the Financial Reform Association, Liverpool, delivered an address at the Eagley Liberal Club, Bolton, on "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform!" the watchwords of the F.R.A. The Taxation of Land Values was considered by the gentlemen who took part in the after-discussion as the Reform most needed by Great Britain, and worthy of all possible effort to secure.

Canada.

Mr. A. W. ROEBUCK, Toronto, May 27th, 1901, writes:—A large gathering of Single Taxers and their friends listened to a very instructive address delivered from the pulpit of Zion Church, Toronto, by W. A. Douglas, B.A. The orator took as his subject the constitutions of Moses and William the Conqueror, and very ably contrasted the effects of these two systems upon the civilization of Israel and of England.

Durban, Natal.

The result of the contest at Durban for the seat at the Natal Legislative Assembly, referred to in last month's issue, was made known on 22nd May.

J. G. MAYDON,	...	...	...	1094
H. ANCKETILL,	...	...	...	942
Majority,	...	...	...	152

The campaign culminated in a scene of great animation and excitement at a meeting held in the Town Hall, Durban, to hear the result of the poll. Both candidates addressed the meeting.

In the course of his speech Mr. Ancketill, who was received with great applause, said—"I do not classify this as a defeat. It is a great moral victory. (Applause.) It has shaken the foundation of the present political order in this Colony. I am far more concerned in the question of getting the views that I hold put before the electorate in this election than I am in getting myself in. Six years ago I came to this Colony, and landed here a poor man, and I am still a poor man, and proud of my poverty. (Applause.) From the day I set foot in Natal I made a vow to myself that I would not rest day or night till I had told the people what I knew, and what I thought would be of value for them. In season and out of season I have used my endeavours, by my pen and my voice, to put before them for consideration these views, and it is for them to say they are of value or otherwise. I am more than pleased with the result of this election. I merely want to say, standing in the presence of this large audience to night, that we have inaugurated a new age in Natal politics, and we have obtained a splendid result in the direction of the principles I stand for. I thank one and all for the magnificent way in which you have helped me, and if you wish me to come forward at any other time, I shall always hold myself at your service, and be pleased to represent you. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)"

We join heartily with the *Natal Advertiser* in congratulating Mr. Ancketill on the excellent fight he has made. The Durban electors know something about land values now and will probably hear more in the future.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL TAXATION—

Continued from page 25.

express their opinion that—"We doubt whether a site valuation of London would present any problem more difficult than some questions which have to be answered under the present system, e.g., at what rent the Bank of England, Charing Cross Station, large buildings used for clubs, or warehouses, and, in fact, a large number of structures built and used for special purposes, might reasonably be expected to let from year to year." Moreover, they point out that, "as mentioned in the Majority Report, one of the recognised methods of valuing property at present consists of putting a value first on the site and then on the structure, and adding the two together. In these cases a site valuation would obviously cause no increase of disputes or expense."

How Site Values should be Rated.

The Commissioners then set themselves to the consideration of the above question, their views on which will, we think, be sufficiently indicated by the following suggestive and important extracts:—

"The mode of charging the rate is a rather complicated matter, with regard to which it is not easy to choose between several alternative plans. We have more than once indicated our opinion that the real incidence of a rate depends mainly on the nature of the property in respect of which it is levied, and is but little affected in the long run by being primarily charged on this or that particular person. Thus, we believe that the real ultimate incidence of a site value rate would be upon the owners of site value in any case, even if it were simply charged on occupiers as the present rates are. The ultimate incidence cannot be affected by the mere legal mode of charge, so long as contracts are respected, because, when a new bargain is made, each party will take full account of the way the burden is distributed. Accordingly, we regard the question of the party on whom a rate is to be charged as a question of sentiment and temporary convenience; but within these limits it is of very considerable importance. The present system of concentrating the whole legal charge upon occupiers and leaving them to shift it so far as they may be able, or to contract themselves out of it, if they see fit, has very great advantages. But it has also serious disadvantages, to which we have drawn attention. (1) As regards rates existing when any contract is made, it obscures the shifting and diffusion of the burden which without doubt really take place; and the apparent inequality is made a popular grievance. (2) As regards increase of rates, and especially increase during the currency of any contract, it unduly narrows the reservoir of taxable capacity which can be readily and immediately drawn upon, and thus cause chronic friction.

"On the other hand the danger is obvious that a direct charge of rates upon lessors might lead to extravagance and plunder, since lessors in most cases have no votes as such, and if they had votes would probably have no adequate voting power.

"Balancing these considerations one against the other, we are disposed to recommend that under future contracts the site value rate should be charged partly on owners and partly on occupiers. The rate should be collected in the first place from the person at present liable to pay rates, and no deduction should be permitted from rents fixed under existing contracts; but the share of the rate chargeable on owners should be deducted from all rents hereafter fixed, and all agreements to the contrary should be declared of no effect. Strict respect for existing contracts would not be incompatible with the immediate and universal imposition of the tax. For its primary object, which is the readjustment of burden as between different hereditaments and different districts, would in any case be effected at once."

Necessity of Safeguards.

"We have already expressed the opinion that to confer upon occupiers, even indirectly—in their capacity as voters—the power to impose or increase a rate payable by owners is a measure which ought to be accompanied by stringent safeguards."

Definite Proposals.

"We accordingly propose that the purposes for which the site value rate might be raised should in the first place be defined by Statute. We are conscious of the difficulty of framing an exact definition or an exhaustive catalogue of such purposes; but speaking generally we are of opinion that they should be strictly limited to expenditure tending to increase directly the value of urban land.

"In the next place, although as regards equity of distribution and ultimate incidence, the site value basis is the important matter, and the charge on owner or occupier is a

matter of temporary convenience, we recommend that one half of the site value rate should be deducted from the rents payable to owners under all future contracts, and the remaining moiety should be finally charged upon occupiers.

"Lastly we would suggest, that the rate in the £ of the new impost should be strictly limited by Parliament."

Further Defence of Same.

"The proposal to divide the site value rate half and half between owner and occupier would be consistent with the recommendation of the Town Holdings Committee for the division of rates, except that not all the rates, but only the special site value rate would be thus divided. From the point of view of reasonable conservatism, such a scheme would provide, alongside of the other safeguards, an automatic safeguard against predatory tendencies, because for every penny charged on the owner the occupier would have to pay a penny out of his own pocket. From the reform standpoint, on the other hand, it offers not less attractions, for in reality the substantial reform desired is the imposition of a rate in respect of site value, and with such safeguards it would indisputably be easy to ask Parliament to sanction a higher maximum rate and a greater elasticity in its application. Moreover, there is a good deal of expenditure which undoubtedly increases the value of sites, but yet concerns the owners, as distinct from the occupiers, only remotely. For such expenditure a site value rate on occupiers appears to be theoretically the most equitable mode of charge."

Unoccupied Property.

On this most important question the Commissioners comment as follows:—

"We believe that it will be generally agreed that it would be fairer to the other ratepayers, if some charge were made in respect of empty properties, which, undoubtedly receive some benefit from public expenditure, and take the place of property which would otherwise contribute to such expenditure. But, at the same time, there would be hardship if the full burden of rates were imposed in such cases. We think the equity of the case would be met by continuing the exemption of unoccupied property from the ordinary rates, and by providing that the new site value rate which we have proposed should be charged in respect of all unoccupied, as well as all occupied, property.

"This procedure derives additional support from the fact that the ground rent and other fixed charges continue to be paid whether the property is occupied or not, and it would also guard against a danger to which the Town Holdings Committee drew attention—that taxation of vacant houses "would tend strongly to check the supply of houses,"—since a rate in respect of the site alone would have no such effect. It would be a simple operation to levy the new rate in respect of the value of the site of empty buildings."

Uncovered, or Unoccupied Land.

The Commissioners devote a whole page of their Report to this important question. Though they deem it most complex and surrounded with many difficulties, they do not hesitate to express the opinion that in many cases "the rating of uncovered land on its building value is clearly desirable." They say—

"If we take a strong case, such as that of a plot of land in a neighbourhood well provided with open spaces, and suffering from lack of house accommodation; if we assume that such a plot, being in a favourable situation, would beyond all doubt let at a considerable ground rent, that it is increasing in value because the town is spreading round it, and is being improved by large expenditure which involves heavy rates, and that the owner, reckoning on this increase, declines to allow the land to be utilised; in such a case we apprehend there would be little difference of opinion as to the propriety of imposing a moderate charge proportioned to the true value of the site. But, having said thus much, we are bound to admit that the difficulties of devising a scheme which will meet such cases without involving undesirable results in other cases are very serious."

Recommendation of Housing Commission.

The question first came into prominence when the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes recommended (in a majority report from which some of the most eminent members dissented) that "land available for building in the neighbourhood of our populous centres" should be "rated at, say, 4 per cent. on its selling value."

Objections to Same.

Such a proposal seems, for several reasons, impracticable. First, to charge the whole of the rates on a value thus arrived at would be plainly excessive. The scheme put before us by the London County Council contemplated only the imposition of a special rate of limited amount. Secondly, the

attempt to rate vacant land on its capital value, without any corresponding charge on other property, was anomalous, and as Mr. Goschen observed, certain to lead to evasion by the running up of temporary structures. But perhaps the most important defect of the proposal is the absence of any distinction between land which is actually ripe for building and land which is only ripening.

Revised Proposal Recommended by Commissioners.

These weighty objections would be met by the revised proposal which we are inclined to recommend for adoption, viz., that the new site value rate which we have proposed should be charged in respect of the site value of all uncovered land which is intended to be let, or could be let, with a covenant for immediate building.

Its Advantages.

This proposal has various considerable advantages. In the first place, the charge would be moderate in amount. In the second place, it would avoid the injustice of taxing owners and occupiers of agricultural land upon a capital value which could not be realised in the form of annual income. In the third place, it adheres closely to the definition of value as to the rent at which a property might reasonably be expected to let. It may, indeed, be urged that this definition, even as it stands, ought to cover the rent which a tenant would give for land for building purposes. The courts of law have, however, decided against such a view, on the ground that land must be valued on the hypothesis that it is to be used for the same purpose for which it is at present used, or in its present state *rebus sic stantibus*. What our proposal amounts to is, in effect, the removal of the limitation thus put upon the definition of value.

Preservation of Open Spaces.

It is an important question of policy whether the rating of uncovered land might not unduly discourage the preservation of open spaces. The reply to the objection on this ground is that a space reserved for private occupation is, as a rule, of less public advantage than a space dedicated to the public. The rating of vacant land would facilitate, and ought to be accompanied by, a liberal and far-sighted policy in the direction of acquiring parks and gardens for public use. The present system may help to preserve some open spaces, but it is, at best, a mere accident if those spaces are situate where they are wanted. The reform which we propose would make it easier to get houses where houses are wanted. A provision might be added, empowering the local authority to reduce or remit the charge in any case where that authority considered the retention of the land in its present condition desirable on public grounds, even although it were not formally dedicated to the public.

Land in Important Thoroughfares.

There are, however, other classes of uncovered land; and, first, there are the plots of land which may sometimes be seen in important thoroughfares, lying waste and neglected, destined for no purpose but building, yet withheld from the builder. In such cases, we entertain no doubt, either as to the propriety of imposing a rate on the true site value, or as to the ease with which this object can be effected.

Land on the Outskirts of Towns.

Next, there is a somewhat different class of land—which is, perhaps, the most important in this connexion—the land on the outskirts of towns, which continues in use for agricultural purposes, when it is fully ripe for building.

With regard to such properties, we do not disguise from ourselves that there would be some difficulties in carrying our proposal into effect. There can be no doubt that the task of determining what land could be let for immediate building, and of assigning a value to such land, involves some risk of mistakes. It is impossible to frame a legal

definition of such land which would work automatically, and the decision could only fairly be made on the facts of each case and in the light of both expert and local knowledge.

The burden of proving that land was ripe for building would, of course, fall on the Assessing Authority; and it may be observed that if, in doubtful cases, a mistake were sometimes made, no very great injustice would result, because in such cases the site value would necessarily be small, **perhaps, indeed, not greatly in excess of the accommodation value at which the land ought to be rated under the present law.** By way of further safeguard, in addition to the rights of objection and appeal, it may be suggested (following the precedent of the scheme for betterment charge as settled by the House of Lords) that, if the owner of the land considered the valuation excessive, he should be entitled to require the Local Authority to take over the land at a fixed number of years' purchase of that valuation.

Final Consideration of Proposal.

Further, it is to be remembered, in the first place, that we do not propose to empower the Local Authority to impose the whole of the rates upon the value thus ascertained, but only a special rate of limited amount; **and secondly, that the general scheme for a site value rate is very advantageous for suburban landowners, because the rate would be small in the outskirts of a town, as compared with the present rates.** Thus against the new burden involved in the extension of the site value rate to uncovered land, it seems fair to set the consideration that, if the owner of such land would consent to let it for building, he would generally be able to do so to greater advantage than at present.

Summary of Conclusions.

- (1.) That misconception and exaggeration are specially prevalent on this subject.
- (2.) That, as a rule, others besides the freeholder are interested in site values.
- (3.) That the value of the site as well as of the structure is at present assessed to rates.
- (4.) That, while site value is enhanced automatically by extraneous causes, yet it has no monopoly of such enhancement; but that the outlay of ratepayers' money does increase the value of urban sites to a special, though not easily measurable, extent.
- (5.) That site and structure, which are now combined for rating purposes, differ so essentially in character that they ought to be separately valued.
- (6.) That, when separated from structure, site value is capable of bearing somewhat heavier taxation, and should be made to bear it, subject, however, to strict respect for existing contracts.
- (7.) That the differential treatment should take the form of a special site value rate, payable in part by means of deduction from rent on the Income Tax method, and that thus a part of the burden should visibly fall on those who have interests superior to those of the occupier.
- (8.) That, subject to the conditions which we have specified, the special site value rate should be charged in respect of unoccupied property and uncovered land.

- (9.) That, if proper regard be had to equitable considerations, the amount capable of being raised by a special site value rate will not be large; and that the proceeds of it, whatever the amount may be, should go in relief of local, not Imperial, taxation.
- (10.) That it may be well to apply the scheme on the principle of "local option," and to limit the immediate introduction of it to urban places, having a population in excess of a given number, and of a given density.

Advantages Claimed for Recommendation.

- (1.) It would conduce to placing the urban rating system on a more equitable and thus sounder basis.
- (2.) It would be making the ground-owner, and others who may under the leasehold system acquire an interest in site values, contribute somewhat more to local taxation than they do now, and the contribution would be direct and visible.
- (3.) It should go some way towards putting an end to agitation for unjust and confiscatory measures.
- (4.) It would enable deductions for repairs to be made solely in respect of the buildings.
- (5.) It would do something towards lightening the burdens in respect of building, and thus something towards solving the difficult and urgent housing problem.
- (6.) It would tend to rectify inequalities between one district and another district, and between one ground-owner and another ground-owner.
- (7.) It would, or at least it should, conduce to the removal of some of the widely-spread misconceptions which seem to prevail, not only in political circles, but among economic authorities and responsible statesmen; for, while it would be an admission that there were defects in the urban rating system and an attempt to remedy these defects, it would show that there is no large undeveloped source of taxation available for local purposes, and still less for national purposes.

Why now Specially Equitable and Necessary.

We would point out that, if a moderate proposal to effect these objects is ever to be made, it would be specially opportune to make it at a time when, under the schemes which we are putting forward, the burdens of rates in towns will be appreciably relieved. By making use of this opportunity, it will be possible to introduce a sound and advantageous principle into our local taxation without disappointing legitimate expectations. More especially, since anything that tends to relieve the pressure of local taxation, or to prevent the growth of it, must ultimately, sooner or later, benefit the owners of site values, it seems desirable that any increased provision made by the State in aid of services locally administered shall be accompanied with some make-weight in the shape of an owners' site value rate.

BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.
 J. B. BALFOUR.
 E. W. HAMILTON.
 G. H. MURRAY.
 JAMES STUART.

THE LAND QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

THE discussion on the clause of the Finance Bill imposing a duty of 1/- per ton on exported coal was continued in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 25th June.

Mr. M'KENNA (Monmouth, N.), moved "that one-fourth shall be paid by the landlord or royalty-owner, being the person for the time being in receipt of any royalty or rent in respect of the coal on which the duty is charged." This, he said, would raise the whole question as to the person on whom the duty was to fall. The effect of the tax was to some extent to restrict the sales of coal. But the coal was raised under a system of mining leases by which the lessee was bound to work the coal. He entered into that obligation under a system of unrestricted sales, and if that system were altered by statute, the contract as between lessor and lessee ought to be altered. The ultimate effect of the duty must be to raise the price of coal because it introduced a new element into the cost of production; but if any part of the duty were put upon the royalty-owner, to that extent the cost of production would be reduced.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH failed to see how this proposal could be reconciled with justice to the owners of royalties.

Sir E. GREY said—Why should the royalty-owner escape? (Cheers). The Colonial Secretary had said he did not care whether the duty fell on the foreigner or on the coal-owner. Then why should not some portion fall on the royalty owner? Coal was part of the natural wealth of the country, and the royalty-owner, unlike the man who improved his land, did not contribute anything to that wealth, but, on the contrary, gained by the waste of it.

Mr. J. WILSON (Durham) reminded the House of Mr. Chamberlain's former opinions on this subject. What about those "who toil not, neither do they spin"? (Cheers and laughter). These royalty-owners, without any risk on their part, without employing their brains, without in any way adding to the wealth of the country, received a tax averaging 6d. a ton on coal, amounting, he estimated, to some six millions a year. (Hear, hear). This they received in good times and bad times alike—times when a difference of 2d. or 3d. a ton would compel the closing of a pit. (Hear, hear). This was a question that was coming to the front, and would have to be settled. (Cheers).

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax) held that this proposal was based on justice and on equity, and was one which before long must be adopted in this country. (Cheers).

Mr. COLVILLE hoped this proposal would receive the support of every Radical member, who on the platform must have often spoken in favour of it. (Hear, hear).

Mr. J. K. HARDIE argued that the proposal in the amendment was only a reversion to a principle which had been embodied for more than two centuries in the law of Scotland, although he admitted it had become obsolete there.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) supported the amendment, remarking that the concessions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would involve some loss to the revenue, and he could have wished to see this made up by throwing some portion of the tax on the owners of mining royalties.

Mr. ALLAN (Gateshead) said he went in for taxing all manacles upon industry, and nothing appealed to the business side of his nature more than the fact that what was in the bowels of the earth for the service of the nation at large should, when taken out of the earth, be taxed by the men who claim to own the land. Those men ran no risk—none whatever. They were to be found at Ascot and the Derby, betting on horses with the money taken from the poor workman.

Mr. FENWICK considered the amendment both fair and reasonable. In bad times the landowner got his royalties just as in good times, although the lessee of the minerals might have been working at a loss. The receiver of the royalties was the only person who escaped taxation. He reminded the House that a Royal Commission in 1889 reported almost if not quite unanimously in favour of the taxation of mining royalties, which amounted then to about 4½ millions a year. Their

value at the present day would probably be six millions. But the recommendation of the Commission had been disregarded, not a sixpence being demanded from them—save income tax—for Imperial or local purposes.—(Hear, hear).

Mr. J. WALTON (York, W.R., Barnsley) supported the amendment. He thought if the colliery owners were to be called upon to bear this extra burden by reason of the large profits they had recently made, it was absolutely fair that the royalty owners, out of the increased royalties they had recently received, should also contribute something extra towards the taxation of the country. (Hear, hear).

Mr. THOMAS SHAW said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had missed an excellent opportunity for tapping a new source of revenue. There were three parties in the coal industry—the royalty owner, the lessee, and the working miner. The two last-named were being hardly hit. Why had the Chancellor not laid his hand upon the royalty owner also? (Opposition Cheers). The owner was the one party whose position in any case was absolutely secure. If adversity overtook the industry, the miner was at the point of starvation, whilst the lessee found his capital imperilled and his profits dwindling or possibly converted into a loss. Now, having these three parties convened, why should the right hon. gentleman have taxed the bees and excluded the drones? (Opposition cheers). There was another element of simplicity in the problem. Mining leases were as a rule for very long terms. It would not be too much to put the unexpired period of mining rights generally at twenty-five years. There could, therefore, be no readjustment of terms on the part of the royalty owner by which he could throw the tax on the shoulders of other people. (Hear, hear). Contracts being fixed, the Chancellor had a right to say to the one as much as to the other, "You shall bear a part of this impost." (Opposition cheers). The landowner was taxed on a commodity which yielded food for the people. Here was a chance of taxing the owner of the minerals raised not for consumption at home but for export. (Hear, hear). The amendment was one which ought to be accepted in principle. But the attitude of the Government seemed to be this—tax labour, tax capital, but do not touch the owner of these royalties whom the law has protected; in short, protect the man who is already so well protected, and tax the man whose capital or whose labour is imperilled. (Opposition cheers).

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH thought it rather hard that in the course of debate upon a proposed amendment opportunity should have been taken to introduce a great question of social economics. It was a question of whether the land should be owned by private persons or by the State. (Hear, hear.) He would not address himself to that question—he took the law as it stood. The law at present was that private property in land had for centuries carried with it the right to the minerals under the land. Now what happened? The owner of the minerals, according to English law, let the minerals to others in order that they might be worked. Both sides entered into the bargain with their eyes open, and if the lessee agreed to sink shafts, erect the buildings and machinery, and work the mines for a certain number of years, and at the end of the term, when the minerals were worked out, that all these things should revert to the landlord, was that an arrangement they were to interfere with? Were not the parties on either side free to make their own bargains? ("No," and Ministerial cheers.) At any rate, that was the law, and as he had said it went far beyond the question of whether they should or should not impose a part of this duty on the owners of the royalties. Nothing could be more unfair than the suggestion of the hon. member who last spoke that they were taxing labour—(a voice: So you are)—and were refraining from taxing wealth. Nothing could be more inequitable than to put a tax upon the royalty owners, who did not gain anything from the export of coal. (Hear, hear.)

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said he rose mainly to correct what he believed to be a misapprehension of the right hon. gentleman as to the real argument of his hon. and learned friend (Mr. Shaw). The right hon. gentleman described almost with pathos the fate of the owner of the soil who entered into a contract with capitalists who authorised them to sink shafts and erect the necessary buildings for the purpose of working the coal, and he said: "Do you mean to prevent that being done?" No, his hon. and learned friend had no such intention. What he said was that the owner who had done nothing except assent to this arrangement with the capitalists should bear his share of this tax when it was put on a commodity with which they were all dealing—(Opposi-

tion cheers.) Then the right hon. gentleman fell back on his argument that the tax was paid by the foreigner. But the Opposition disputed his argument—(Opposition cheers.) They believed that to a very great extent, if not to the greatest extent, it would be paid by those at home who were engaged in the trade, from the shipowner, the merchant, and the colliery proprietor down to the workman who got the coal out of the soil. (Hear, hear.) It was almost a scandal, certainly an economic scandal, that the one sole person who had not to contribute to a tax of this sort was the man who did the least in producing the coal, and who therefore might very well bear a share of this burden. (Opposition cheers.)

Mr. MANSFIELD (Lincolnshire, Spalding) asked why the miner, who was hit by the sugar and other taxes, and the capitalist, who was hit by this shilling a ton and the income-tax, should pay income to the country, while the mineral owner, who belonged to the extensive class which toiled not, neither did they spin, was let off absolutely. (Cheers). His own impression was that the mineral owners had expected a tax for many years past. (Cheers). He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would modify his views on this subject, or, if he did not, some other gentleman would take the question in hand and see that the burden and incidence of taxation was put on the shoulders of those best able to bear it, but who had up to the present largely escaped. (Cheers).

The House divided, and the figures were—

For the amendment,	144
Against,	172
Majority,	28

The announcement of the numbers was received with loud Opposition cheers.

Landlordism made Plain!

Referring to the Congested Districts of Mayo, the Special Commissioner of the London *Daily News* writes:—

"I need not say that while these sterile tracts yield little enough to the people who have given them what trifling fertility they possess, they have furnished plenty of rent to the landlords. Until the Plan of Campaign the Dillon estate fetched an annual tribute to its absentee chief of £25,000, and it has just been sold on the basis of a rental of £20,000. The Marquis of Sligo lately asked twenty-one years' rental of some of the poorest of his land, and twenty-one years' purchase of the right of gathering the floating seaweed, which the peasant and fisher folk gather as they stand waist-deep in the chill waters of Clew Bay. Nor need I add that these sums are not, and never have been, obtained from a land. Last year 10,331 labourers and landowners of County Mayo—198 per thousand of the adult male population—were employed in harvest and other labour in England and Scotland, sending back to their families sums which may roughly be said to vary from £7 to £12. . . ."

Of course, the Marquis of Sligo, who gains his livelihood by such means, is an honourable man, and a worthy ornament of the House of Lords. It will be considered in some quarters bad form, to say nothing of "an attack on a particular class," to express the wish that he should have a turn at collecting the seaweed himself. Nevertheless, we have no objection to such a change, provided the tribute be paid to the State.

WHEREVER there is in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on.—*Thomas Jefferson*.

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Scottish Liberal Association and the Taxation of Land Values.

A special meeting of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal Association was held on Thursday, 30th May, in the Merchants' Hall, Glasgow, to receive and consider the report of the Executive Council "on how best to apply the principle of the taxation of land values, which formed the subject of the remit from the last General Council meeting held in Aberdeen." Mr. George Green, C.C., presided.

The recommendations of the Council were as follows:—

- (1) The term land value, or value of land, shall be held to mean that value which attaches to land, as land, irrespective of its use or improvement, and not the value due to the expenditure of capital or labour of the owner or his tenants.
- (2) Such value shall be estimated to be the sum the said land would bring if offered in the open market free of all burdens and restrictions (unless such restrictions as are imposed by public authority).
- (3) Every owner of land shall be bound, when making his annual return to the assessor under the Land Valuation Acts, to make, in addition, a correct return of the extent and value of his land as land, apart from improvement.
- (4) The value so returned, if satisfactory to the assessor, or adjusted according to the procedure under the Land Valuation Acts, shall form a basis of taxation, and have an annual tax imposed upon said value, whether the land is in use or not.
- (5) Any proprietor so assessed, whose land is subject to an annual or periodical payment, shall be entitled to deduct from such annual or periodical payment made by him the proportion of the tax equal to what would be levied upon said annual or periodical payment if it were returned as a separate value.

The CHAIRMAN moved that the recommendations be accepted.

Mr. J. R. YOUNG (North-East Lanark), seconded.

Mr. W. M. R. PRINGLE (Glasgow University), moved that the recommendations be not received.

Mr. THOMAS ROBINSON (Tadeston), seconded.

Councillor BURT (Glasgow), supported the motion.

Mr. CHALMERS (Perth), said it seemed to him that Mr. Pringle's amendment ought to have been passed in Aberdeen, and not at that meeting.

The meeting proceeded to the discussion of the recommendations seriatim, and ultimately adopted them, with the addition to the fifth of the following words—"Provided always that any such burden or restriction shall be charged to the holder of such value."

After some further discussion, the motion was carried by an overwhelming majority, only seven voting for the amendment.

Mr. G. B. WADDELL, C.C. (Glasgow), moved that it be remitted to the Executive Council to prepare for circulation among Liberal Associations in Scotland an explanatory statement, in pamphlet form, on the lines of the report that had been submitted to the meeting.

Mr. LANG TODD (Edinburgh), suggested that the matter should be allowed to go before the General Literature Committee of the Association.

Baillie M'CALLUM (Paisley), was afraid that by agreeing to such a special arrangement as that now asked they would be destroying the object of the Association. They must be prudent in their action. All members of the Association did not think as some of their advanced friends did on this question. While many of them were willing to fall in with their friends, and to accept the principle involved in this question, it should be allowed to ripen by evolution like all other great questions. By giving it undue prominence just now, they would frustrate the very ends that their friends were seeking to secure. (Applause.) He moved that it be left to the Literature Committee.

Mr. JOHN PAUL (Glasgow), said he regarded Baillie M'Callum's speech as an attempt to shelve the question. (Cries of "No, no.") Among the various Associations that he frequently addressed, the cry was for literature on this subject.

Captain SINCLAIR, M.P., supported the view taken by Baillie M'Callum. He had not the same confidence that Mr. Paul had that the official view of a question was always likely to be accepted, and he would urge very strongly that after all this might be a case of more hurry less speed.

Councillor BATTERSBY said that their friends who were supporting this motion were actuated more by zeal than discretion. He proceeded to argue that to give this question undue prominence would result in preventing them from getting along so quickly as they desired. It was perfectly obvious that their single tax friends wanted to make the Scottish Liberal Association an engine pure and simple for the propagation of their own views. He was as strongly in favour of the taxation of land values as any of these gentlemen, but he was not in favour of giving the question undue prominence.

In the course of a rather heated discussion, Mr. WADDELL said he failed to understand the opposition to his motion.

By the time the vote was taken much confusion and heat prevailed, arising chiefly out of the meeting refusing to hear County Councillor Gibb, who had endeavoured several times to say something. A considerable number had by this time left the meeting, while some who remained refused to vote.

The CHAIRMAN announced that Mr. Waddell's motion was lost by 39 votes against 16.

Mr. YOUNG moved that a copy of the recommendations be transmitted to every Liberal member of Parliament. They could, he said, surely do that, if they were ashamed to send them down to the constituencies.

After some further discussion, Mr. Young's motion was agreed to.

* * *

The almost unanimous approval of the report of the executive was generally anticipated in view of the sweeping resolutions passed on the taxation of land values by the Scottish Liberal Association for a number of years past. But the subsequent discussion and vote over Mr. Waddell's motion to publish an explanatory pamphlet on the subject is not so easily explained. The opponents of the motion spoke as if the question was being thrust upon them for the first time, and in a hurry; spoke as if the publication of a pamphlet on the subject meant the disruption of the Liberal Party. The Single Taxers present were asked to be satisfied with the acceptance of the report and to let the matter hang there in the meantime. Strange advice in face of the fact that the executive and not the Single Taxers had brought the resolutions to the meeting.

* * *

The Single Taxers in the Scottish Liberal Association have always been under the impression that they were there as Liberals working as such for the good of the party. But this it seems is a mistake; they are recognised as a "section" of the party only. Within the Association they have always spoken and acted as Liberals, but they can have no objection, in fact it should please them better, to act as Single Taxers, and it may be as well that they should do so in the future. "By giving the subject undue prominence just now," said Baillie M'Callum, "they (the Single Taxers) would frustrate the very ends they were seeking to secure." What the Baillie meant by securing "undue prominence" in the publication of an explanatory pamphlet and how this would "frustrate the very ends" the Single Taxers are trying to secure, seeing that these "very ends"—the taxation of land values—can only come, like all other reforms, through agitation and education, is difficult to say. But the "undue prominence" men in the Liberal Party are not the Single Taxers.

* * *

For example:

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT, M.P., has said, "It is an important question and had I remained in office I should have tried my hand at it." NOT AT A PAMPHLET BUT AT THE IMPOSITION OF THE TAX!

* * *

Lord ROSEBURY has called it "a sound and just principle which will not be allowed to die until it has been carried into effect."

Mr. JOHN MORLEY, M.P., has called it "an intolerable thing that men shall derive enormous increments from the growth of towns. . . . It is impossible to suppose that the system will not be vigorously, powerfully, persistently, and successfully attacked."

Sir EDWARD GREY, M.P., has said, "The party which first masters that question, which first makes it its own, which can show it is really capable of dealing with it and is really prepared to deal with it, and is not going to let itself be hampered by vested interests for exercising its intelligence upon it freely—that party will have a great and solid ground upon which to appeal to the country."

These are only a few of the "undue prominence" men, not Single Taxers, whom we could cite in favour of bringing the question along rapidly, and in view of these statements, and the fact that the electors throughout the country have made the question within recent years their own, quite apart from party politics, the Single Taxers in the Scottish Liberal Association must be astonished at their own moderation. They appear to have been busying themselves with the general well-being of the party when they ought as a "section" to have been looking after their own affairs.

Councillor BATTERSBY (Glasgow), speaking in favour of the amendment, said "it was perfectly obvious that their Single Tax friends wanted to make the Scottish Liberal Association an engine pure and simple for the propagation of their own views." This is the same Mr. Battersby who brought the question, along with the Hutchesontown and Blackfriars Association, in pure Single Tax form to the S.L.A. meetings at Dundee, Greenock, and Aberdeen; the same Mr. Battersby who sends it in the same way to the Glasgow Liberal Council, and the same Mr. Battersby who turns the Glasgow Town Council at times into "an engine pure and simple for the propagation of these same views." Some of the opponents of these views at the Glasgow Town Council have said that this is a wrong and stupid policy, that they were as strongly in favour of the taxation of land values as Mr. Battersby, but (to quote Mr. Battersby's words at the S.L.A.) they "were not in favour of giving the question undue prominence." But Mr. Battersby heeds them not, and continues even now to support Bailie Ferguson whenever he disturbs the Glasgow Town Council with a motion on land values. There is neither consistency nor common sense in Mr. Battersby's position. His assertion that "it was obvious the Single Taxers wish to make the S.L.A. an engine pure and simple for their views," cannot by any known facts be supported; and his further assertion, that he "was as strongly in favour of the taxation of land values as any of the Single Taxers," is, in the face of his bitter opposition to the publication of the pamphlet, just so much claptrap. But we leave Mr. Battersby to the members of the Hutchesontown and Blackfriars Liberal Association. If his attitude on the question suits them, why should we complain.

In reply to Captain Sinclair's statement about his want of confidence in the official view of a question being accepted, we can only say, more's the pity. If this is true, official Liberalism is either out of touch with Liberal principles, or does not know them, and can only follow the cat in any direction it chooses to jump. But that is another story.

If the Single Taxers are a section in the party, let us look at the other sections in the party, and compare their attitude and claims. The Temperance men of the party, more power to them, stand boldly for the "whole hog"—local veto, or local control. The Disestablishment men are also "whole hoggers"—disestablishment and disendowment. Those who stand for Franchise proclaim the "whole hog"—adult suffrage, and carry it boldly at every conference, as well as the abolition of the House of Lords. But the modest Single Taxers ask merely for an instalment of their full claim—the taxation of land values 20/- in the £. They are prepared to take a shilling or a penny in the £ to begin with. They don't even ask for half a loaf; they are quite content with a smaller portion.

The Liberals who stand for "a good big thumping tax to commence with," "the 10/- in the £ men," the men who propose that "half the rates and taxes at least should come from land values," the men who

say boldly they would "put the whole taxation of the country on land values," are not the Single Taxers. They are men like Mr. Walter Menzies (Liberal candidate for South Lanark) and Mr. George McCrae, M.P. Not one of these men call themselves Single Taxers. In the very breath with which they announce their fervid belief in "a heavy tax on land values," not only for revenue, but as a cure for social evils, they would denounce the declared Single Taxer as a confiscator and an extremist.

This affords the Single Taxers considerable amusement, though they really do get far too much credit for bringing the taxation of land values before the S.L.A. The question is brought there, and will continue to be brought there for two reasons—first, because of its ever-growing popularity, due to its inherent soundness and justice; and second, because it can bring enthusiasm and votes to Liberal candidates.

We confess it is difficult to understand the attitude of those who took fright, or who affected fright at Mr. Waddell's motion. But it is a step in the right direction to have the opposition, such as it is, brought out into the open. The public refusal of representative Liberals to push forward the Taxation of Land Values may injure the Liberal Party; we believe it will, but not the question. It is as safe as the rising of tomorrow's sun is certain. As Sir Edward Grey says it is and will remain "a great and solid ground upon which to appeal to the country."

Henry George on Equal Freedom of All.

"All we need do to secure a just distribution of wealth is to do that which all theories agree to be the primary function of government—to secure to each the free use of his own powers, limited only by the equal freedom of all others; to secure to each the full enjoyment of his own earnings, limited only by such contributions as he may be fairly called upon to make for purposes of common benefit. I wish to emphasize this point, for there are those who constantly talk and write as though whoever finds fault with the present distribution of wealth were demanding that the rich should be spoiled for the benefit of the poor, that the idle should be taken care of at the expense of the industrious, and that a false and impossible equality should be created, which, by reducing everyone to the same dead level, would destroy all incentive to excel, and bring progress to a halt. In the reaction from the glaring injustice from present social condition, such wild schemes have been proposed and still find advocates. But, to my way of thinking, they are as impracticable and repugnant as they can seem to the loudest denunciators of 'communism.'"

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A MEMBER OF THE
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THE ABLE-BODIED BEGGAR.

When the Boers have all been banished, and their farms no longer blaze,
 When you've roared your final Rule-Britannia speech,
 Will you kindly pause and ponder on the strange financial ways
 Of a gentleman whose name is partly Beach?
 He's an able-bodied beggar who is very short of cash,
 And in economic fallacy is far gone;
 But we never thought Sir Michael would have ever been so rash
 As to clap a duty on exported carbon.

Fuel Tax; Fool Tax; Tax of a bob a ton;
 Taxes on sugar and income too; it's quite the martial way.
 Each of them come like the morning blues, after the raffle is done,
 So screw your profits and wages down, and Pay! Pay! Pay!

There's a certain Tory caucus that is called the House of Lords,
 They are able-bodied beggars, one and all.
 They have taken all the honours that the game of life affords,
 And they boss and bully this terrestrial ball.

Yet we tax the northern miner, and his Cambrian brother, too:
 The confectioner, the pitman, and the grocer;
 But a tax upon land values is a thing would never do;
 Such a tax would touch the wealthy, don't you know, sir?

Land Tax; Grand Tax; taxing a belted earl;
 Taxing a Cockney millionaire with his hundred pounds a day!
 Never do that for your conscience' sake! What would he have for
 his girl?
 The miner, grocer, and pastrycook must Pay! Pay! Pay!

It's a solemn thought, beloved, but when trade has seen its best,
 That's the time to mind the step, and cry, Beware!
 To the land of empty pockets we are marching four abreast;
 It's a hungry sort of country, when you're there.
 See the markets how they crumple; see the consols how they drop,
 Though the brokers said the war would make 'em race up;
 And if things are rather shoddy in the Parliamentary shop,
 There will soon be plenty chance to clear the place up.

Bad Trade; Sad Trade; Trade of a dismal hue;
 Trade as mean as Chamberlain is coming now, they say;
 Something to worry the brokers all; bother the bankers, too;
 And plague Sir Michael to find the cash to Pay! Pay! Pay!

Now we call to mind a vision of a lovely Should-have-been,
 As predicted for us all in 'Ninety-five;
 'Tis a lovely breach of promise; a mirage, appearing green,
 But at which the caravan does not arrive.
 Better Dwellings; Old-Age Pensions; they are coming, coming still,
 Though the landlords have received a nice donation;
 And a mousetrap sort of measure, called an Education Bill,
 Has arrived to save us all from education.

All Right; Good Night; Hurrah for an empty purse!
 Juggle along together, my boys, as blythe as birds in May!
 Over the moor and into the bog; going from bad to worse,
 And soon you'll have Old What-you-call to Pay! Pay! Pay!

Have you seen that gallant vessel which the nations call Reform?
 Have you heard the way she stood the tempest's shocks?
 In the hands of other leaders she has weathered many a storm,
 But to-day she's high and dry upon the stocks.
 Are the crew upon a pic-nic? Is the captain gone to sleep?
 If they are, I think they'd better take a warning,
 Or we'll chuck the captain overboard, and launch upon the deep,
 And we'll sail away to freedom in the morning!

Sea Men; Free Men; Men of an old renown,
 Manning again the ship Reform to sail a cruise to-day;
 Study the chart of social life! Run the monopolist down!
 For he's the beggar to foot the bill and Pay! Pay! Pay!

J. PHILPOTT.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

THE equal right of all men to the use of land is as clear
 as their equal right to breathe the air—it is a right pro-
 claimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot
 suppose that some men have a right to be in this world and
 others no right.—Henry George.

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