

meeting one another. Therefore I propose at an early date to ask the American land-values reformers to consider if they are likely to attend the free-trade conference, and also if they will, either before or after, attend a special meeting of land reformers with the view among many other things of considering the formation of an international organization to promote their cause.

Among Scandinavian friends there is very much interest in the possibility of such a gathering; and at the annual meeting of the Henry George Society of Norway, September last, the executive was ordered to appoint a representative of the League if an international meeting is held.

JOHAN HANSSON.

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## FISCAL QUESTIONS IN CANADA.

Vancouver, B. C., Nov. 23.

Edmonton, Alberta, does not tax improvements on land, nor does Nanaimo, B. C., nor Summerland, B. C. A small municipality just outside Victoria has adopted the same policy. Many small places are administered on this plan or are about to try it.

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Edmonton, however, is the better example because it is the larger place. It has, in the past five or six years, increased from about 5,000 to 25,000 in population. This rapid increase has caused a tremendous rise in the value of land, a tendency that has been assisted by the public ownership of street cars, gas, water, lighting and telephone systems—the latter a general government concern.

The tax on land values is not heavy, in view of the large influx of population, and there is every reason to believe that the growth of the city will continue, for two or more railroads will soon reach Edmonton and more and more land is being brought under cultivation by incoming settlers. Edmonton is the natural distributing point for an immense territory.

Meanwhile, a poll tax of \$2.00 is collected. Many lines of business are licensed, and a floor space tax is laid. Under the latter businesses are classified, and taxed at from 50 cents to \$5.00 per given unit of space occupied. Banks and jewelers are taxed at the maximum rate, while furniture stores, carpenter shops, etc., that necessarily occupy more space in proportion to value, are laid under tribute at varying less rates.

This results of course in business or industry being burdened with taxes in a form somewhat different than is common in the States, but having the same general effects—that is, relieving the land owner and making a livelihood more expensive.

Building, however, is encouraged, and to some slight degree speculation in land is checked. Public ownership of public utilities is the universal rule in Edmonton, and is universally satisfactory. There is little complaint of graft in city affairs. There is much more of what may be called civic spirit than can be observed in cities that continue the old practice of privately owned utilities and the taxation of improvements.

In short, so far as applied, the measures of progressive democracy promote building, good feeling, public honesty.

At Kamloops, a place of 3,000 people, land just beyond the occupied portion of the city is selling at \$800 for a lot of fifty feet frontage. Such condition is but a repetition of the land booms that have brought distress to the people of so many cities in the United States. It is simply preposterous.

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Vancouver is growing with most astonishing rapidity. They claim 100,000 present population, and the effect on land values is startling. Property is selling for more than similarly situated lots in Chicago. Great will be the fall thereof!

The papers of course are all boomers. Lots that are miles from the center of the city are selling at fabulous prices, and very few seem to have the slightest realization of its meaning. The whole crazy performance is of course sustained by the nonsensical taxation maintained in the States, for if we did not tax industry, but taxed land instead, living conditions would be so much easier that men would not remove from the more to the less settled regions.

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One curious matter may be noticed throughout Western Canada. It is that many who have come from the other side of the line, and so obtained, as it were, a reverse view of the tariff, are, for the first time in their lives, able to understand it. If it were not for our silly tariff the whole trade of the prairie provinces of Canada would flow through Minneapolis.

A tariff beggar is a queer specimen anyhow. According to his story he can't make a living unless his neighbors will tax themselves for his support, and because of that very fact he considers himself especially patriotic. Maybe he is right, but for the life of me, I cannot see why his scheme is not an inversion of some of the homeliest virtues. As, for instance, "thou shalt not steal." All that tariffs give to one they must take from others, so where does the country gain? In addition there is friction in the system, or in other words, expense for revenue officers, etc., and so a distinct loss. "Beggars" is too gentle a term. They will yet become acquainted with harsher speech. More truthful, too.

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Appended is an extract from an editorial in a Vancouver paper, the Daily News-Advertiser. It reads like the extreme outer outside—usually called "the limit." Just think that in this Province of British Columbia, not even claiming more than 350,000 people all told, although many times the size of Illinois, able editors are striving to establish the very condition of which the British people at home are struggling to rid themselves, under the leadership of Lloyd George. Possibly some one will say of the editors, "Forgive them, they know not what they do." The extract reads as follows:

"The locking up of money in land is the safest form of investment in any country commercially and constitutionally on a stable footing. . . . Vancouver, in a century's time, should show a crop of landlords more numerous than and as richly endowed as the great estate-owners in the Old Country. And it is

within every man's gift to qualify for a place among the first who by fee simple from sovereign enterprise may create homes for their children and their children's children no less lovely and of no less intrinsic worth than many ancestral English seats."

And of course there will be the correlated beauty spots known as slums. The privileged will be equivalents of the dunderheads that constitute the great majority of the House of Lords. Set over against them will be the peasant laborer, whose vote is won by a sweet smile from "my lady." And this is the appeal made to the so-called free blood of the far West.

British Columbia bids fair to be a back number. The prairie Provinces, however, are awake; for which let all lovers of freedom be devoutly thankful. And the U. S.? Well, a bit of silence is judicious.

JOHN Z. WHITE.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

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Week ending Tuesday, November 30, 1909.

### The British Land Question.

On the 30th the House of Lords adopted Lord Lansdowne's amendment rejecting the Lloyd-George Budget, by a vote of 350 to 75.

Pursuant to his notice (p. 1139) Lord Lansdowne moved on the 22d, in the House of Lords, that in the judgment of that body it "is not justified in giving its consent to this bill until it has been submitted to the judgment of the country." The chamber of the House of Lords was so crowded at the time with Tory peers that they overflowed into the benches reserved for those who support the Commons in this conflict. In support of his motion Lord Lansdowne claimed for the House of Lords coordinate power with the House of Commons on questions of finance. He cited precedents to the effect that although they cannot amend a finance bill, they have full power to discuss and reject. He added, alluding to the land valuation clauses, that the bill has tacked on to it legislation "which the House of Lords has already rejected, and which has been placed in the bill with a view to ousting the Lords from their legitimate opportunity of dealing with these measures, a course, he declared, that "no self-respecting second chamber would tolerate." He closed with the argument that the Lords "have a clear duty, not to decree the final extinction of the bill, but to insist

that before it becomes a law the people shall be allowed an expression of opinion." On this point he renewed his challenge. "The Lords," he said, "have carefully considered the consequences of the rejection of the bill and are ready to face them:" Lord Lansdowne was replied to on the 22d by Lord Chancellor Loreburn (a radical Liberal raised to his present position by Campbell Bannerman), who declared that "no Liberal government can ever accept office again unless provision is made against a repetition of the treatment accorded to Liberal bills in the last four years," a declaration which was understood to mean that the Lords must consent to a limitation of their veto power or the King must agree to create a sufficient number of new Peers to swamp the present permanent Tory majority in the House of Lords. On the point that the bill proposes permanent land legislation under cover of an annual financial budget, the Lord Chancellor said: "There is nothing in the bill foreign to finance with which the House of Commons has the exclusive right to deal. The attempt of the Lords to interfere is the beginning of a system which would lead to Constitutional revolution. What is embodied in the bill is not new either in the United States or Germany, and has been approved not only by the present, but by the late House of Commons."

On the 23d Lord Pentland, a member of the Cabinet, warned the Lords that the House of Commons could not be expected to find expedients for averting the temporary financial chaos resulting from their rejection of the Budget. He further declared that the Government had done forever with the old state of things, and that the Constitution of the House of Lords must be modified. He also reminded the House that a long Constitutional struggle might handicap the country in case of war, and asked the Lords to consider whether the penalty might not be disproportionate to the offense. Earl Russell predicted that the adoption of the Lansdowne resolution would start a revolution that would sooner or later bring a readjustment that would leave the House of Lords powerless. On the other side, Lord Avebury strongly criticised the Budget, declaring that it would frighten capital out of the country, cripple enterprise, and create a feeling of insecurity. The sensational speech of the debate was Lord Rosebery's, delivered on the 24th. While reasserting his opposition to the Budget (pp. 896, 943), he argued against its rejection by the Lords, urging that if allowed to pass "its intolerable impositions and loss of capital and employment" after six months would give the Lords an overwhelming victory. He characterized the present as "the greatest political moment in the lifetime of any man born since 1832." Lord Milner (of Boer war notoriety) supported the Lansdowne