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By FRANCIS NEILSON

AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR, I was often asked to write an account of the amazing change that took place in the tactics of Liberal headquarters to control constituencies. I thought it would be of no particular use if I did so, but now with another great change, the disappearance of the Liberal party and the dominance of the Socialists, it does seem to me that it has some historical value.

When I began my career in politics in 1902, Herbert Gladstone was the head of the federation of Parliament Street (the name by which headquarters was known). Gladstone was wholly unfitted for the position he held. He was dominated by the Whips. Richard Causton and the other junior lords of the Treasury, as they were called, had one idea, it was said, and that was to find constituencies for men who were looking for knighthood. The reason for this was that such people were able to subscribe large amounts to the funds of the party.

I was the first to enter a protest against this policy. I tried to show Herbert Gladstone the advantage of making a direct appeal for funds to the Liberal committees in the separate constituencies. I set to work at once and was successful in several by-elections in demonstrating to headquarters that the man picked by the Liberal voters had a better chance than anybody who could be recommended by the Whips or by headquarters at Parliament Street. It is important for the historian to know this, for to my knowledge no one has told the story of the revolution that took place in the tactics of the party.

My Lectures on "Economic Justice"

DURING THE EARLY YEARS of my campaigns, I was called upon by Nonconformist churches and chapels to deliver anniversary addresses. So general was the demand for my services that I could easily have been occupied in this work every Sunday of the year from 1904 to the outbreak of the First World War. The area in which I was engaged, Sunday after Sunday, was in the Midlands and the Black Country. It was in these districts that several notable by-elections in which I took a principal part returned Liberal members to Parliament.

Indeed, it was something of a shock to headquarters, for many Tory strongholds were overthrown. It may seem strange to the American reader that the usual subject of my addresses was "Economic Justice," as it is set forth in the Bible and the Gospels. This became so popular with the Nonconformists that a well-known Wesleyan divine said I was the first man to take Jesus to the political platform. My audiences during this period were made up chiefly of miners, puddlers (iron-workers), factory men and women, railway men and glass-workers.

The people in the agricultural districts were not neglected. As the candidate for the Newport Division of Shropshire, I was called upon frequently to spend a Sunday in the shires, where I addressed large and small congregations of men and women who still held the Bible as a guide to religious and social conduct. This statement may surprise the people of today, for the change that has taken place within two generations marks a deterioration in spiritual values, which portends dire consequences.

After the great Liberal sweep in 1906, when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was elected with an enormous majority, the organization of headquarters was taken in hand, and my policy was adopted. But it served no purpose, for the Liberal Leaguers of Lord Rosebery's Boer War party became dominant cabinet figures after his death. Asquith, Grey and Haldane became the chiefs of the inner cabinet, who were responsible for the un-Liberal policy of secret diplomacy, which was the chief cause of the First World War. After Asquith became Prime Minister, by-election after by-election was lost, and the enormous majority that had been given to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman dwindled to such an extent that at the first election in 1910, the Liberal party survived only with the support of John Redmond's Irish party.

There is, I think, only one man of that period who survives, who has recently written upon the aims and purposes of the Liberal Leaguers. He is Herbert Samuel, who recently received the Order of Merit. He is now

Viscount Samuel and sits in the House of Lords. This scholar-politician was elected in 1902, but there is no record of his being anything but an ordinary member of Parliament until 1906, and at no time did he figure as a factor in the policies of headquarters. Indeed, I do not remember that he had the slightest political influence in the constituencies.

It would surprise me very much to learn that he knew much about the schemes of the Imperial Council of Defence, when Lord Esher, Admiral Fisher and Winston Churchill prepared for the destruction of the German fleet and the landing of British troops upon continental soil, to destroy the German Empire. Indeed, I have a recent letter from him in which he states quite frankly that he does not agree with the views that I set forth in my autobiography, *My Life in Two Worlds*.¹ One of the chief historians of England today told me a little while ago that Samuel had not moved an inch towards a realization of what had occurred before the First World War began. And after reading Samuel's articles upon Asquith, in an English newspaper, in 1958, I agree with this opinion.

What a story is this for a budding historian. But it would be only a drop in the historical bucket and would interest only those who look back and wonder why the grouping of the powers for war changed the map of Europe and brought the United States into the turmoils of economic and political upheavals. If Campbell-Bannerman had lived, there might have been some hope of a settlement of European problems.

The Consequences of Abandoning Liberal Principles

THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN no Labor party if the policies of domestic reform, as they were announced to the voters by Liberal candidates (strongly supported by the remaining Constitutional Radicals), had had a chance of being carried into effect. The old Liberal doctrine, supported by Campbell-Bannerman, was "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." Only a very small section of the men returned in 1906 were inclined to advocate schemes of nationalization or a slight dose of socialism. When Ramsay MacDonald was elected for Leicester in 1906, he was a member of the Labor Representation Committee. I do not think the Independent Labor Party (of which he was afterwards the head) had been formed at that time.

In the House after the election of 1906, there were ten or a dozen men, members of the Labor Representation Committee, who could not have won their seats without the Radical-Liberal votes in their constituencies. I discussed this matter with Ramsay several times after the First World

¹ Two vols., Appleton, Wisconsin, C. C. Nelson, 1952-53.

War, when he had dropped his socialistic notions and in conversation gave one the impression that he had always been a Radical. These changes in labels were merely expedients to mollify sections of voters in the constituencies, who had been "sentimentalized" by Fabian lecturers. (I use this word, for it was often heard in one form or another when questions arose concerning the necessity for forming the Labor Representation Committee.) I can remember only one man in the House at that time who was an out-and-out rebel, and that was Keir Hardie. He was as honest and straightforward as anyone could wish, and I think it was Hardie who was the moving force in promoting the Labor Representation Committee. To him, reform was so imperative that he considered the wearisome debates in the House upon piecemeal bills a sheer waste of time.

Nevertheless, grievous inroads were made by these impatient Liberal-Labor members and by the sentimental Fabians upon the plans set forth by the party before the election. Bills were introduced as special remedies for licensing, slums, sweat shops and afterwards old-age pensions, national health schemes and labor bureaus. Land, taxation and electoral reform—urgently needed—were crowded out to a great extent by the measures of expediency which occupied long hours of debate.

The next important matter of parliamentary procedure to be dealt with was the bill, included in the Budget of 1909, for the revaluation of some of the land of England and Wales. Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

My reason for dealing with this matter now is that, to my surprise, I learn that economists in the colleges and universities of the United States are putting questions to the editor of this JOURNAL about the progress of the Land Values Movement in England and Wales. They want to know who were the men who led the movement and forced the government to introduce the Land Values Bill. I had thought years ago that few here in academic circles were interested in this question. It is true that books dealing with the matter as one of several electoral problems have appeared in recent years. Professor C. A. Barker's book on *Henry George*² throws some light upon the movement. Another is *Henry George in the British Isles* by Elwood P. Lawrence.³ On the jacket of the latter work I find the following statement, which represents the opinion of the author, as stated in several different places in the book:

² New York, Oxford University Press, 1955.

³ East Lansing, Michigan, The Michigan State University Press, 1957.

George's theory achieved its greatest victory when taxation of land values was incorporated in Lloyd George's Budget of 1909. The victory for British land tax advocates was short lived, for a series of events and emergencies including World War I, delayed land valuation and imposition of the taxes. . . .

It must be clearly understood at this point that none of the men who were Georgists (or, to use the term of the ordinary voter, "land values men") would advocate a *land tax*. In this campaign this point was emphasized and the speakers took care that the audience understand the wide difference between imposing a land tax on area and collecting *land values* for the purpose of remitting taxes upon wealth.

At this distance of fifty years since the bill was introduced, the above statement of Mr. Lawrence might be accepted as one view of what happened to the bill. But for one who was active in the forefront of the movement, it is scarcely a correct one. Since I have been asked by the editor to set down my recollections of the movement in the country and in the House of Commons, I shall take this opportunity of setting forth what I remember about one of the most important campaigns in parliamentary history.

The Land Values Bill

TO BEGIN at the beginning, it is necessary to shift the locale from England and Wales to Scotland, for it was there that the demand for the revaluation of land was a burning question before 1906. At the General Election, ninety per cent of Liberal members elected for Scottish constituencies were in favor of such a measure, and in 1908 one was introduced in the House of Commons by the Secretary for Scotland. After heated debates in the Lords, it was rejected. This was the reason why the question was taken up by the Radicals in England and Wales and became the chief topic of the platforms. As I am the only surviving member who took an active part in this campaign, and was the first to my knowledge to make it one of the most urgent reforms needed, I have no hesitation in saying the swiftness of the progress of it was something electrifying to the government and the Liberal Whips.

From the time the question was taken to the platforms, after the rejection of the Scottish bill by the Lords, to the day the government announced it would introduce a Land Values Bill for England and Wales in the forthcoming budget, scarcely ten months passed. From all sections of the country resolutions poured in to the government, demanding the introduction of a bill in the next budget. So vast were they that the Master

of Elibank, who was chief whip at that time, told me that Downing Street was almost inundated by petitions.

There is an episode connected with this that has not much historical significance, but it might be told here for it is somewhat unique in the story of what occurs behind the scenes to further or hinder reform. It was no candidate or member of Parliament, nor indeed an English citizen, who was to some extent responsible for starting the campaign that forced the government to introduce a land values bill in the budget. That man was Joseph Fels, an American millionaire soap-manufacturer. He was a Henry George man and had subscribed very large sums to the funds for the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. When the Lords rejected the Scottish bill, he was so angry that he went to John Paul, the redoubtable secretary of the United Committee, and told him he would never give him another cent; and that in the future his money would go to Keir Hardie and the Labor people.

I was in London at the time, and Paul got in touch with me and implored me to go to the City and see Fels. I did not like the job, for I had not then met the irate man. However, I took my fate in my hands and went to his office. He stormed and raved for half an hour. The one great expression that he let forth over and over again was, "If the English people are such fools as to be ruled by the House of Lords, they deserve to suffer."

For some time it seemed to me I could make no progress. Then suddenly it occurred to me that we in the movement really did not need his money. "Well, have it your way," I said, when he stopped to catch his breath. "We'll do without your dollars. I'll organize a campaign and appeal to the land values people in the constituencies to provide money for speakers, meeting halls and pamphlets. This has been done already in two or three constituencies."

At this he fell into his chair as if I had struck him with a bar of his soap. He looked at me in amazement and, after a moment or two, he sprang up and said, "The hell you will! I'll see you damned first."

There was nothing more to be said, so I left. Next morning John Paul telephoned to me saying he had just had an interview with Joseph Fels who had given him a large check.

It was then that the phenomenal work began of appealing to the constituencies to send resolutions calling for the Land Values Bill of England and Wales to be introduced in the next budget. The boroughs of London were ready for the attack upon the ground landlords. For many years

Frederick Verinder, the secretary of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, whose headquarters was in the metropolis, had worked indefatigably to educate the people of the East-End constituencies. Verinder was, indeed, before this period the only man in England and Scotland who devoted himself wholly to the cause. His work, *My Neighbour's Landmark*,⁴ slighted by the critics, was read by several of the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic and the English Episcopal churches. The Very Reverend G. W. Kitchin, D.D., Dean of Durham, wrote a preface to it. It was also read by Cosmo Lang, who afterwards became Archbishop of York and was then Archbishop of Canterbury. Other divines of the Non-conformist bodies became interested in it because some of the members of their congregations brought it to their notice.

Early in the autumn of 1908, the demand for speakers in the London district was so great and so insistent that it became necessary to school men who knew the subject in the ways of addressing an audience. The attempt to do this with Liberal and Labor candidates not familiar with the subject made no progress whatever.

The Campaign in the Midlands

I TURNED MY ATTENTION to the Midlands. I had suffered a defeat at a by-election in my constituency that spring and had not yet become a candidate for the Hyde Division of Cheshire. My residence was still in the center of Shropshire, in easy access to the large industrial towns of the Black Country. It is worth remembering that Birmingham and Wolverhampton were the first in England and Wales, outside the London area, to raise the standard for fundamental economic reform.

Chapman Wright, the secretary of the Birmingham League, was one of the most extraordinary Georgists that I ever met. His influence over an open-air crowd won a surprising number of supporters for him among Tories and Liberals concerned in municipal affairs. Wright was no prepossessing platform stalwart. There was nothing "becoming" about him, as a reporter tried to describe him in one of the local papers. His voice did not carry far, and he spoke in a rather dull, monotonous tone. He was never disturbed by hecklers. His calm manner wore them down, and after ten or fifteen minutes "they gave him up as a bad job" and left the rest of the crowd to him. His arena was the famous Bull Ring of Birmingham, an open air place that was famous for its meetings late on Saturday night, as far back as the days when Joseph Chamberlain was a Radical and a municipal favorite.

⁴ London, Andrew Melrose, 1911.

After a few weeks in Chapman Wright's district, I was called to London by the Whips. The Chief Whip was J. A. Pease, who was perhaps the most useless person in the position that could be imagined. Alexander Murray, Master of Elibank, and Percy Illingworth were amazed at the progress that had been made. Unknown to Pease, they questioned me about what they could do to further the progress of the movement. I told them that all we needed at that time was speakers who knew the subject and that I thought we had at our disposal all the men fitted to address audiences. The shortage of lecturers was a fearful handicap, and I returned to the Midlands hoping that the Whips would discover men who could supply the demands of constituencies in the Home Counties, the areas round about London.

After the Birmingham district was set in motion, I went to Wolverhampton, and it was there that something of an electoral "miracle" took place. I was familiar with the district round about, for I had drilled Frederick Guest as Liberal candidate for Kings Wynford before the General Election of 1906, and I had then made the acquaintance of Radicals who became fast friends of mine. Several of these men fought constituencies, but I have space here only to mention Alderman Thorne, who later became member for Wolverhampton East. The others who played a large part in sowing the ground to produce the right electoral crop were Norrie and Douglas Graham, the proprietors of the *Wolverhampton Star*, an evening paper.

One man who should be mentioned is Dr. A. E. W. Hazel, whose reputation as a scholar was of great value. He was a scholar of Jesus College, Oxford, and was a first in Classics and Law. His people were of what George Bernard Shaw would call "the lower middle classes," and the vast majority of his district looked upon Hazel as one of their own and were justly proud of him.

At the turn of the year 1909, the progress that had been made in the great industrial areas of England and Wales could no longer be ignored by the chiefs of the cabinet. I remember distinctly taking a deputation from the West Riding of Yorkshire to see Asquith about finding a land values candidate for them. At this interview Lloyd George was present, for he had become Chancellor of the Exchequer. To the surprise of some of the members of the delegation, Asquith referred to *property in land* and suggested that some relief should be given to the local communities by *taxing land*. These expressions shocked the Georgists.

The delegation returned to Yorkshire with the vague promise from the Prime Minister that their demand would be considered. At this interview I do not remember Lloyd George saying much. Indeed, it was impossible to tell whether he was interested in the matter or not.

Here it is necessary to remind the students who have inquired about this movement that the famous Land Values Manifesto (1907?) had, prior to this campaign, become something of a dead letter. Although thirty per cent of the members of the Liberal party had signed it, there was not a signature from a member of the Cabinet on it. This should be mentioned because some students have asked the editor of the *JOURNAL* about Philip Snowden's connection with the movement. It was not until the end of the First World War that he became interested in it, and I shall tell later how that came about. But at the time of the Land Values Manifesto, Philip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald signed it under pressure, and to each name an asterisk was affixed. A footnote explained that they were in favor of it "for revenue purposes only." It was Joseph Fels who insisted on Snowden and MacDonald signing the Manifesto. Both at that time were given to socialistic notions, although they generally voted with the government, probably for strategic reasons. Both sat for constituencies in which there was a strong Radical remnant opposed to nationalization and socialism.

Problems of Land Revaluation

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT announced that it intended to revalue some of the land of England and Wales and place taxes upon it, the enthusiasm in the country scarcely knew any bounds. It startled the government into taking action and planning the best method of dealing with the measure to be presented to Parliament. The announcement, however, in no way curbed the ardor of those who had formed leagues for the taxation of land values in the constituencies. Their efforts continued unabated. Indeed, the announcement of the government was something like a spur that urged men to greater efforts. It was extraordinary to find that after the turn of the year, men of both parties vied with each other to take the platform and explain the proposal to audiences ever increasing in size.

During this period not one Cabinet member except Winston Churchill (whom I shall deal with later) was known to deliver an address upon the question. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was silent, and the Prime Minister, who spoke once or twice upon the free trade

question, scarcely referred to the proposed legislation. Some of the writers who have dealt with this period have overlooked the Cabinet's indifference in describing the campaign. The enthusiasm of the town authorities, who welcomed the government's promise, was also a factor in the initial success of the movement.

In England and Wales, local taxation is called "rating," and the impositions for local purposes are circumscribed. They are limited to the land and building. If the buildings, whether they be houses or factories, are not occupied, no rates are levied; and unoccupied, bare land goes scot-free of rates and taxes. Therefore, most of the municipalities of England and Wales had for many years asked for larger powers to levy taxes upon unused and ill-used land. This is to put it briefly.

The appeal that was made by the Land Values Movement to the local authorities in the towns was welcomed by mayors, aldermen, and town councillors as a way to improve their districts. In this the movement was considered a non-party matter, even though a Liberal government had promised to introduce a measure that would give relief. The agricultural districts of the country remained stolidly Tory in attitude against the measure. It did not seem to concern the farming population. But those who used land outside of what was called the "iron ring" round the towns, feared the consequences of such legislation would make market-gardening and other such small vegetable and fruit producing areas unprofitable.

One of the most difficult questions to answer, which was put to land values men by townspeople, was "Where do urban values end and agricultural values begin?" It was a poser, for it touched directly upon what would happen if land values were heavy enough to break the iron ring of urban value and bring the land beyond it from a rating value into a taxable value. This question was never understood by Lloyd George or any member of the Cabinet. It was, however, an important one for the urban communities.

I could give example after example of what this meant to the landlord class. There was a small colliery on the borders of North Wales that employed some two or three hundred men. Their dwellings were grouped about the mouths of the pits, and they were as primitive as any to be found in the old bread rows built in the Hungry Forties. There was a small local council called the parish council, and they decided to appeal to the local landlord to sell land for the purpose of putting up new dwellings. A main road to Chester ran between the colliery and a great

park and agricultural land on the other side. All this domain was rated under the Agricultural Rates Act at about the average price of 12*s.* an acre—only half being paid locally, the other half being subscribed by a subsidy of the government. Petition after petition was sent by the miners to the local landlords without receiving, at first, the courtesy of a reply. But persisting in their demand, they learned at last, that the price of an acre amounted to nearly £1,000. Five years after this took place, the miners were still in their old dwellings and not a house had been built on the estate on the other side of the road.

Lloyd George's Budget of 1909

THERE WAS SCARCELY A TOWN in Great Britain where similar examples were not found. When the Budget was presented to the House by Lloyd George, he spoke for three hours, and after a recess, he resumed the reading and received cheers from all parts of the House. Dr. William George, in his book, *My Brother and I*,⁵ devotes several pages to the unusual performance, but he makes no reference at all to the few Radicals in the House who did not join in the demonstration. Nevertheless, it must be said that they looked upon it as "a beginning" and some of them said he had put in the "thin edge of the wedge."

The *Liberal Magazine* for May 1909 gives a succinct description of what the land values section of the budget contained. It reads as follows:

Three new land taxes are proposed: (1) a tax of one-fifth, or 20 per cent., upon the increment of value accruing to land from the enterprise of the community of the landowners' neighbours. This will not be retrospective. Beginning with a valuation of land now, the duty will be charged upon the increased value when it is sold or passes upon death.

(2) An annual duty of a halfpenny in the pound on the capital value of undeveloped land. A tax of a halfpenny in the pound on ungotten minerals, calculated on the price which mining rights might be expected to realise if sold in the open market at the date of valuation. *All land having a purely agricultural value and parks to which the public are allowed access will be exempt.*

(3) A 10 per cent. reversion duty on any benefit accruing to a lessor on the termination of a lease (*italics mine*).⁶

It is unnecessary to go into the detail of how the bill fared in the committee stages. It was soon realized by the Radicals in the House and in the country that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not earnestly concerned in the land values section of the budget, and that his chief object was to find money for old age pensions and insurance for sickness.

⁵ London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958.

⁶ *Loc. cit.*, p. 231.

Upon close examination of what had happened to the bill before the third reading, it was found that the bill had suffered severely, and doubt spread in the constituencies as to whether it would amount to anything if the Lords accepted it. Later, when it was discovered that the landlords were not to value the land for tax purposes, but that the government would do it for them, Radicals realized that they had been duped, for the change really meant endless litigation. The cry went out in the constituencies where there were Radicals, particularly in the Midlands, the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in Northumberland and Durham, that they had been "sold" by the Chancellor so that he could make it easy to steer the bill through the Commons. We may now consider the charge that was made by many of the Liberals in the House.

It was said when the bill was sent to the Lords that it was so overloaded with matters of immediate moment for electoral purposes that the land values section of it was almost completely smothered. Here is a partial list of "clutter," as it was called, the over-loaded bill attempted to carry. It was aimed to provide taxes for the following projects: old age pensions, invalidity insurance, unemployment insurance, the Navy, the National Development Fund, labor exchanges, improvements of main roads, etc. The amount the Chancellor expected from the taxes upon land values for the forthcoming year was so ridiculously small that it impressed many of the Liberals who were not Radicals that the Chancellor did not "mean business" and that the landlords of the country would sleep without nightmares.

Those who are interested in this question should read *My Brother and I*, for in the section devoted to the Budget of 1909, they will find that Lloyd George over and over again during the different stages of the consideration of the bill in the House of Commons, wrote saying that he hoped his bill would be rejected by the House of Lords. This the Lords did towards the end of the year, and the Prime Minister called for a dissolution and a General Election.

The Intrusion of Foreign Affairs

THE TIME HAD COME for a thorough electoral examination of Lloyd George's efforts, and he was soon to realize that his budget of "sops and doles," as it was called, was not anything like so popular with the voters as he imagined it would be. The result of the January 1910 election gave the government a majority of 124. The unparalleled majority in 1906 had dwindled to less than half. What the government would have done

without the 81 Irish votes was a problem no one cared to dwell upon.

After the election, I had several interviews with the Liberal Whips about plans for resuming the land values campaign in the constituencies. Percy Illingworth and some of the other Whips were convinced it was the only question that could revive interest in a Liberal government. But they realized with me that it would take a little time for the active men in the constituencies to recover from the shock, the narrow escape from defeat the government had experienced. Later, the action of the Lords in passing the budget when it was returned to them in 1910, brought about a very different state of affairs than what was hoped for by the Whips. The peers had acted under duress, the threat of the Prime Minister to create a sufficient number of them to vote the bill through the Lords.

The Prime Minister dissolved Parliament again, and in December 1910 another General Election took place. Asquith challenged the veto of the House of Lords, and went to the country for a mandate to introduce a bill putting a curb upon its veto. The representation in the House of Commons was very little different after this General Election than it was after the one that took place in January.

It seemed to many of us that all the extraordinary work that had been done by the land values committees for two years before the budget was introduced had come to naught. I admit that I and the other sanguine men in the movement felt dispirited about it. However, the spring after the second General Election was devoted largely to the measure to curb the veto of the House of Lords and to the so-called social reform measures for which taxation on incomes had been imposed in the Budget of 1909.

Soon the political atmosphere was to change in the most unexpected way. The German government sent a gunboat called the *Panther* to a small African port, Agadir, and the embassies resounded with alarms. London editors outdid themselves in the clamor they made for the government to deal drastically with Germany.

In the many books that I have read upon this matter, I have found such utter confusion of notions as to why it happened that I would advise the student to turn to my articles, "Edward VII and the Entente Cordiale," published in this JOURNAL.⁷ This amazing blunder on the part of the German government played right into the hands of Lord Esher, Admiral Fisher, and Winston Churchill. These men were aching for some such opportunity to "Copenhagen the German navy" (Fisher's plan) and land

⁷ Pt. I, July 1957, V. 16, No. 4, pp. 353-68; Pt. II, October 1957, V. 17, No. 1, pp. 87-101; Pt. III, January 1958, V. 17, No. 2, pp. 179-94.

British and French troops somewhere near the German frontier. The dreadful consequence of the furore created by the Agadir incident was Asquith's shift of Churchill from the Home Office to the Admiralty. This took place in November 1911.

How was it possible in these untoward circumstances to think of starting a new campaign for land values in the constituencies? It taught me a salutary lesson. Many excellent movements for reform fail because there is a period when one has to stop to catch one's breath, just at the time when a spurt is needed. After the two elections of 1910, we "rested on our oars," and our boat drifted and got stuck on a mud bank. This is the way the interval was described by an old-fashioned Radical.

Top-heavy "Social Reforms"

THE SAD TOLL of the by-elections during 1911 and the early months of 1912 brought home to the Whips the patent fact that Lloyd George's budget of what was called "social reform"—old age pensions, insurance for sickness, labor bureaus and other catch-vote schemes—was not popular. In eight by-elections during 1911 and 1912 the government lost seats. It seemed almost impossible to stop the rot that had set in.

Then when springtime came, I told the Whips that if they would make things easy for me in the House of Commons by finding a pair for me, and lighten my attendance at committees, I would take the first opportunity of seeing what could be done in a by-election with a land-values candidate. The chance came when a vacancy occurred in North-West Norfolk. I suggested Edward Hemmerde, and the Whips sent him down to the Liberal committee. He was adopted, and in a straight fight with a Conservative, won easily. This was the first victory giving a gleam of hope that had come to the party since the budget was introduced. Hemmerde was by no means a Georgist, nor did he know much about the land values problem; still, he was pledged to vote for it, and for the time being that was sufficient for me.

Soon after this, a vacancy occurred in the Holmfirth division of Yorkshire. I immediately got in touch with the Radicals of the West Riding and told them if a candidate was adopted who was in favor of the taxation of land values, I would spend a good deal of my time in the constituency. This was the first of two "miracle" elections. Sidney Arnold was adopted, and in a fierce three-cornered fight, won by a comfortable majority. The day before the poll I was told by the *Daily Mail* reporter that the journalists had picked a Conservative to win the seat, owing to the split in

the Liberal vote caused by a Labor man polling dissentient Liberals. The result of the poll was as follows:

June 20, 1912		
S. Arnold (L)		4749
R. G. Ellis (U)	3379 -	1370
W. Lunn (Lab)		3195

After this it was at Hanley that the greatest victory of the spring was achieved. When the seat became vacant, I recommended Leonard Outhwaite, who had fought Joseph Chamberlain in West Birmingham in 1906. Outhwaite was a thoroughgoing Georgist and could put the land question from the platform as well as anybody in England. Here, again, it was a three-cornered contest. If ever there was an uphill fight for the Liberals, this was one. The seat had been captured in 1910 by a Labor man who beat the Conservatives by more than three thousand votes. Now it was to be a three-cornered contest. The Labor man was locally known and highly respected, and the Tories had picked a man whom they considered to be fitted for the occasion.

It turned out to be the most strenuous contest in which I had ever taken a part. Most of the front-bench men of the Tories came down to support their candidate. Indeed, the array of their orators was nearly as formidable as the one they sent to the Hyde Division of Cheshire I fought in December 1910. The night before the poll Charles Hand, the brilliant reporter for the *Daily Mail*, asked me if I thought the Liberals had a chance. I did not commit myself. He then told me that the Tories were convinced that it was "all over but the count."

The result astonished everybody—Liberals, Conservatives and Labor people. Here are the figures of that "miracle" election:

July 13, 1912		
R. L. Outhwaite (L)		6647
G. H. Rittner (U)	5993 -	654
S. Finney (Lab)		1694

It will be seen by adding the poll of the two Labor men that they did not receive twenty per cent of the ballots cast. These three elections were, however, only a flash in the pan. The attention of the public shifted from domestic affairs to rumors of war. There could be no denying the atmosphere on the continent was charged with electrical storms. The British Navy was ready, Haldane's army was all set to move, and though the government tried to give out that there were signs of peace, the general public no longer placed faith in ministerial statements. Fisher

had predicted in a written memorandum (1905) and "afterwards also personally to Sir M. Hankey, the Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence," that the war "would certainly occur in August, 1914."⁸ During these months of uncertainty as to what was going to happen, the public showed less and less interest in political meetings. Whatever chance there was of a revival of the real question of the taxation of land values was balked in July 1914, and when the first shots were fired, the obsequies of the movement were performed by only a handful of mourners.

The Roles of Churchill and Snowden

IT SEEMS TO ME that questions about Lloyd George, Philip Snowden, and other men who have been associated with the Land Values Movement should interest students who are devoting hours of research to what really happened to this phenomenal demand from the voters of Great Britain and why the Budget of 1909, so far as the revaluation of the land was concerned, turned out to be an utter failure. All this is comprehensible. But I cannot say that I understand the utility of the quest at this time of day.

There is, however, a question that was put to me often before World War II, when I lectured on economic reform in the United States. It concerned the part played by Winston Churchill in the Land Values Movement before the budget was introduced. I wondered at this, but afterwards I discovered that the reason for the inquiry was his enthusiasm for the measure before the budget was introduced, and that there was no record after 1909 that he showed the slightest concern over its fate.

Two short leaflets published by a land values society gave quotations from Churchill's speeches delivered in 1907, at Drury Lane Theatre, London, and in 1909 at King's Theatre, Edinburgh. Here it must be admitted that Churchill was the first Cabinet Minister to realize that the Land Values Movement would win votes for the government. I know how he was impressed with this fact. He had learned from the Whips' office what was taking place in the constituencies.

Winston Churchill knew less about land values taxation than Lloyd George. We know from *My Brother and I* that the Chancellor of the Exchequer read *Progress and Poverty* when he was sixteen. But there is no record anywhere of Winston Churchill reading any work of Henry George. Indeed, in one of his portraits he pours contempt upon him. I am the only one who knows the secret behind the two great speeches mentioned in the leaflets published by the land values society.

⁸ Lord Fisher, *Memories*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919, p. 64.

Winston received from the United Committee leaflets and short pamphlets, and he read Outhwaite's tract upon Cobden and his suggestion for revaluing the land and taxing its value to provide relief for the abolition of the breakfast table duties. These were the authorities he used in building up his two speeches. No one had a keener sense of making capital of electoral movements for his own particular purposes than Winston Churchill.

I never met a Radical who trusted him. When he crossed the floor of the House in 1904 and deserted the Tories of Oldham, he did so because he thought the Liberals would win the next election and that his chance of sitting with the government would be secure.

I shall now deal with Philip Snowden. He did not show the slightest inclination to study the problem until World War I, when he sat next to Leonard Outhwaite in the House. When he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924, he admitted that his knowledge of the question was gained from Outhwaite, but he was unable to do anything worth recording towards enacting a valuation bill.

As for Lloyd George, I was surprised to read in his brother's book that he read *Progress and Poverty* about the time he was sixteen years old.⁹ If he did so, he kept the knowledge of it to himself. I knew most of his Welsh colleagues, and I do not remember one of them at any time during the twelve years I was engaged in British politics saying that Lloyd George knew much about the question. Some years ago I went through several of his speeches, but only here and there could I find a slight reference to the subject. The students who are interested in Lloyd George's connection with the movement might read, side by side with his brother's book, the excellent biography called *Lloyd George*, written by Thomas Jones, who was President of University College of Wales at Aberystwyth.¹⁰

I would not spend the time, at my age, in dealing with such a subject as this if it were not for a feeling that I have had during the past few years that there are students in our colleges who desire to know some of the history of the failure of the Land Values Movement in England. It surprises me to learn that this curiosity, at a time of specialization, is occupying the minds of our young scholars. Perhaps from the above review of the crucial period of the movement in Great Britain they will learn that the people themselves can be impressed with the justice of the reform only by a direct appeal. To leave it entirely in the hands of mere

⁹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 127.

¹⁰ London, Oxford University Press, 1951.

politicians is not only a futile way of trying to promote the movement but, at best, one that will use it merely to gain a new source of revenue for prodigal expenditure. If the question should be revived in this country, educate the people first, and that will enable them to insist on their demands when the time comes for legislation.

Port Washington,
Long Island, New York

A Society for the History of Technology

IN AN EFFORT to assess the impact of technology on society, a group of interested scholars have joined to form the Society for the History of Technology. The Society is sponsoring meetings at which various aspects of technological history will be investigated. It will publish a quarterly journal, *Technology and Culture*, devoted to the study of the development of technology and its relations with society and culture.

The executive committee of the newly-formed society consists of: chairman, Melvin Kranzberg, Case Institute of Technology; Carl W. Condit, Northwestern University; Howard Mumford Jones, Harvard University; Edward Lurie, University of Michigan; Robert Multhauf, Smithsonian Institution; William Fielding Ogburn, University of Chicago; Stanley Pargellis, Newberry Library; John B. Rae, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Richard Shryock, Johns Hopkins University; Lynn White, Jr., Mills College. An advisory council is in the process of formation.

As its first program, the society was the co-sponsor of the meeting of the humanistic-social division of the American Society for Engineering Education, held at the University of California, Berkeley, on June 16-17, 1958.

The society expects to begin publication of *Technology and Culture* in the Fall of 1959. Applications for charter membership (\$10) in the Society for the History of Technology should be sent to Professor Melvin Kranzberg, Room 315, Main Building, Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland 6, Ohio. [Excerpt from an announcement from the society.]