

Address

BY

HENRY GEORGE,

IN TEMPERANCE INSTITUTE, BRIDGETON.

The Hall was crowded long before the advertised hour for opening the Meeting.

Among those on the platform were Rev. W. Leggat, Rev. J. M. Cruickshank, Rev. W. L. Walker, Rev. D. E. Irons, Messrs. Donald Macrae (Balallan), A. C. Morton (City Councillor, London), John M'Phun, John Murdoch, D. M'Lardy, David Baxter, Wm. Nicol, George Paton (Secretary of the Branch), John Gentles, Peter Burt, J. M. Cherrie, Councillor Dr. Neilson, John Ferguson, John Glover, Alex. Mair, Robert Montgomery, Wm. Mitchell, John Miller, Edward M'Hugh, Richard M'Ghee, J. Shaw Maxwell, Alex. Calder, Wm. Cochran, J. Campbell, J. Carmichael, James Willock, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Burns. J. Kinnaird, President of the Branch, in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN said:—Ladies and Gentlemen—The members of the Eastern Branch of the Scottish Land Restoration League have invited you here this evening to hear an address from a gentleman whose name and fame is well known to all of you. The address will not be upon the basis of any party, either religious or political, but upon the great question in which all kinds and conditions of men are deeply interested—the social condition of the people. The deep poverty in which the mass of the working people in this country is steeped is causing a vast deal of attention amongst the upper classes. The housing of the poor is attracting the attention of very high officials indeed—from the Royal Commission, headed by the Prince of Wales and Lord Salisbury, to the Synods of the Church. Strange it is to think that the workers—the men who produce all the wealth—are everywhere in a state verging upon poverty. Various schemes have been proposed, and we have for a long time carried out large schemes of charity. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are expended annually in this country to try and fill up this great gulf of poverty; yet the cry continually is that of the daughter of the horse-leech—more, more! The more that is given, the more is required! Charity is no cure for the evils of poverty.

Such being the case, it is our duty to carefully consider any scheme that is laid before us for the purpose of abolishing poverty. Mr George, several years ago, published his work, "Progress and Poverty." This book has received many and severe criticisms. It has been called by some the work of a dreamer; it has been accepted by others; it has been shuttlecocked about; but the men who thought the subject out discovered that at least the nucleus of the cure was in it. Further study brought about the conviction that it is not by the charitable dole—it is not by the death-bed bequest—that poverty can be cured. The only means that can abolish poverty is by doing justice—by acknowledging the right that men have to live upon this earth, and to live by their labour. Mr. George will deal with the mode whereby he expects that the wealth produced by the worker shall belong to the worker—that "he who works not, neither shall he eat"—and a brighter and nobler vision of the future shall be placed before the working classes, that all may live in comfort and enjoyment. Mr. George will answer questions which anyone may put. (Applause.)

Mr. GEORGE, who was received with tremendous cheering, again and again renewed, said:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—As I rise before this audience to-night, I do not feel as though I had anything to explain to it. I am inclined to think that this audience knows it all already. I feel in coming to Bridgeton as though I were in the house of my friends. Our chairman has carefully explained that this is not a political meeting, and that this is not a political party. All the same, I am very glad that you go into politics occasionally. All the same, while quite and completely agreeing with him, I believe that it is only through political action that what we wish for will ever be accomplished. I do not mean by that the attaching of ourselves to any party. I trust you here look upon your two great parties as we in the United States look upon ours—as good to use, bad to be used by. But what will compel respect and bring legislation is the ballot, and the determination to use it. (Cheers.)

I do not feel before an audience like this as I do when I go out to preach to the heathen; but, nevertheless, I have been told that it is always well to make at least a brief explanation of our principles, as there are certain to be some present who do not understand them. Let me then begin with a confession of what I may call the "Single Tax Faith."

We believe, in the first place, in the equality of men—not meaning by that that all men are of the same height, that all men are of the same weight, that all men can do precisely the same things in the same way. We recognise differences in individual men. When we say that all men are equal, we mean that all men

are entitled to an equal chance. We believe—ay, I think I can say all of us, for I doubt if there be an atheist among us—we believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth; and we believe that He made the earth for the dwelling-place of all the human creatures whom He should call into it. We believe that He made it for all of them, and not for some of them, and we believe that they, all of them, are equally entitled to the use of His bounty. We believe, therefore, that every human being has an equal right to the land of his native country. We do not believe that the land of each country should be divided up in equal pieces between all its people. We do not believe that that would be possible, or even if it were possible for the moment, that permanent equality could be secured in that way. What we aim at is not merely the equality of the present generation with regard to natural opportunities, but the equality of those who will follow us. We do not propose to divide up land—let me repeat it again, because there may be those here who have formed their opinion of us from hostile newspapers. We do not propose to give to every citizen an equal piece of land. What we propose to do is to make them all equal sharers in whatever benefits result from the ownership of land. We recognise that land cannot be divided up equally. We know that land is not all of the same value, and that land values are constantly changing. We know that some people require the use of more land than other people, and that some require that use more directly than others. What we aim at is, that while one man may have 10,000 acres of great value, and another a less valuable piece, and another a piece of no value, and a fourth holds none directly, they shall all be put on the same plane. We propose to secure that by simply having land contribute according to its value to the revenues of the community—that is to say, to the whole people. We propose to reach this end not by dispossessing present landowners of their holdings, and then letting the land out again to individual tenants. We propose to take nothing formally from the present landowning class. We propose simply to put upon land values a tax, commencing, as we will have to do, slowly, and increasing it as quickly as we can—a tax that, as soon as may be, shall take for public uses, the annual value of land—that is to say, that premium which the advantages attaching to any particular piece of land gives to its holder; the advantages which enable him by the same labour, or the same expenditure, to enjoy a larger return, or a more valuable use. And in doing that, we propose to abolish all taxation that bears upon labour, that restricts production or accumulation, or tends in any way to lessen the amount of wealth in the community. We are, if I may recur to an American phrase, the Abolitionists

of the present day, and it is in accordance with the fitness of things that at our head, in the glorious old commonwealth of Massachusetts, stands that true son of a true father-- William Lloyd Garrison. (Great applause.)

We are the Abolitionists of the present day, not merely because our aim is the fulfilment of theirs, not merely because, as they abolished chattel slavery, we desire to abolish industrial slavery; but because our methods consist mainly in abolition. We differ from the Socialists in this important particular, we do not believe that it is necessary to construct any complex scheme to right the wrongs of society. We do not think it necessary to create any great machine. What we believe is alone necessary is to abolish restriction—to give free play to natural harmonies. What has won so many of us from the blank despair of atheism is that we believe—ay! we see—that there is an order, and a harmony, and a beneficence in social laws; that we see that the Intelligence that created this world has not been either a niggard or a blunderer; that we see that what is needed to abolish poverty is not charity but justice. What we aim to give is freedom.

Labour! the creator of all wealth! That labour should be a drug in the market—that all over the world the labouring class should be the poor class—what does it result from? Simply from want of freedom. All that labour needs is fair play. (Cheers.) All that working men want is justice; not charity, not condescension, not complex schemes of doing something for them. (Great applause.) To solve the labour question, all that we hold to be necessary is to recognise the principle that all men are equally children of the Creator—equally entitled to the use of His bounty; equally entitled to employ their labour on the materials He has provided, and equally entitled to enjoy its fruits. We have no quack remedy for social evils. Our remedy is justice—to restore to men those equal rights which the American Declaration of Independence says are given to each human being by his Creator, and are inalienable—cannot be bought, cannot be sold, cannot be given away, cannot be justly taken from men by the edict of any king or the enactment of any Parliament. (Cheers.)

We differ from the Socialists of all grades by attaching far less importance than they do to capital. We recognise the fact that the two primary factors of all production are land and labour. (Cheers.) We deny as utterly absurd the declaration made by a certain school of political economists whom the Socialists have copied, that labour cannot be employed until capital is accumulated. We say that it is labour that produces capital. We say that when, in any productive occupation, an employer employs men and pays them wages, that he is not advancing capital to

them, but they are advancing capital to him. (Cheers.) We say—“Open to labour the indispensable element of all production, give to labour the use of land, open to men willing to work the boundless natural opportunities of productive work,” and then the whole foundation of the social structure will be made firm and true; and if then there is any unemployed man, it will be because he does not want to work; if then there is any poor man, it will be because he deserves poverty. We say that then the power of the capitalist to grind labour will be absolutely gone; that then this divorce so unnatural—but that we have become so used to it that we think it natural—this divorce between labour and capital will cease; that every labourer will then have in his hands the power of becoming a capitalist and that the mere owner of capital cannot grind. That then instead of the one-sided cut-throat competition with each other—of men debarred from natural opportunities of employing themselves, and forced to compete against each other for the wages of an employer—employers will be competing for workmen, as much as workmen compete for an employer. (Applause.)

So far from being deniers of the rights of property, we are the upholders of the rights of property. We think that there is a sacred right of property. We arraign the present order of things because it does not sufficiently respect the rights of property. We say that all that a man makes and produces belongs to him—to him alone, and to him as against all the world. And we say that, just as it is wrong for any one to take from another that which is his property, that which he produces, or which he gets by the free will of another who has produced it—that just as it is wrong for an individual to do that, so it is wrong for a Government to do it. (Applause.)

We in the United States denounce that monstrous tariff of ours as robbery; we denounce our tariff taxes of all sorts as no better; and we say that when, because a farmer has grown two blades of grass where one grew before, because a builder has erected a house where none stood, because a capitalist has put up a factory, because anyone by his exertions has gained wealth or saves it,—we say that when the tax-gatherer comes down on anyone of those and says because you have saved, because you have produced, therefore give us so much of it every year, that this is a violation by government of the spirit of the command—“Thou shalt not steal.” (Cheers.) We say conversely, that to allow individuals to reap where they have not sown, to allow individuals to put into their pockets that increase of value which attaches to land by reason of the growth and improvement of society, is to encourage theft. And we say that, by abolishing all taxes upon the products

(Applause.)
As for this talk of compensation that you hear of occasionally, we hold that if there is to be any compensation, it should go, not to people who have unjustly profited, but to people who have unjustly suffered. (Hear, hear.) But in this simple plan of ours, moving on the lines of taxation, taking nothing from anybody, but simply changing the system of taxation, we hold that there is no room for anyone to raise the cry of compensation. (Cheers.)

I congratulate you, men of Bridgeton, on the great advance that those truths have been making. On the other side of the Atlantic, I can assure you that they are going forward most rapidly—more rapidly than when I was here before I could have dared to hope. Our movement is to-day making its way through the United States far faster than any such movement ever made way before; and I come to this side of the Atlantic only to find the same thing.

All over the country our ideas have been diffusing themselves. Many get them directly; many more get them indirectly. They are in the air. They are making their way through the thought of the whole nation; and when this question comes into practical politics, then you will see the supporters of the Single Tax springing as it were from the ground. That is the way with all great revolutions. The seed is sown, and in darkness and silence it germinates. You do not see the result until the Spring comes, until the rains have fallen and the warm sun shines down, then you see the little green shoots spring above the ground where all seemed dead. Men go on working away to disseminate a great truth, and those who are opposed look at the surface of things and say "nothing has been accomplished." But that thought is all the while eating away at the foundations of the ancient wrong,

and suddenly there comes a little shock, and the whole great edifice that had before seemed as firm as ever comes crashing to the ground.

I, in my own time, have seen just such an epoch. Why, one of our best men, when I was last in Washington, Charles Nordhoff, said to me:—"When my first child was born, the first day its mother was able to sit up, I sat by her bed side and I said to her, 'Let us teach this child to hate slavery, let us teach it from its birth to do what it can to abolish that cruel wrong. Slavery will never be abolished in its time, but still during its life it may do something to hasten the day of abolition.'" Earnest as he was, hopeful as he was, Charles Nordhoff did not see that the day which he only dared to hope his grandchildren might see, was even then dawning. Yet so it was. That child could hardly prattle before slavery was dead! (Great cheers.)

We arraign day after day, week after week, this twin form of slavery, this bitter accursed injustice which disinherits men, which deprives little children of their birthright, and sends them out of the world before they have fairly come into it. The hoary wrong looks on the outside just as strong as ever. The price of land does not fall. Editors of newspapers and leading statesmen stick their heads in the sand like ostriches, and declare we are making no impression. But do not mistake, this great truth is now permeating the minds of men, and in God's good time we shall see the result. So monstrous is the present condition of society, so utterly unnatural is the wrong that disinherits men, that makes the great majority of people in a country like this utterly landless—men really without a country, without any legal right to the use of one square inch of that element without which men can neither work nor live—so utterly unnatural, so utterly monstrous, so utterly opposed to all clear thought, to all human perception of divine truth, is it, that it cannot endure when it is fairly arraigned. All we have to do is to bring it into discussion and it must go on. No one can travel through this country, no one can read the newspapers, without seeing that the Land Question is in discussion, that it is in reality the burning question of the time; and when the land question is discussed the days of landlordism are numbered. (Cheers.)

I congratulate you, men of Bridgeton, on what you have done, and I urge you to go forward. Much has been done, but much remains to be done. There are heathen yet to convert; there are people who seem to have no idea of any distinction of kind between a house and the lot on which it rests, between a sack of barley and the surface of the globe upon which it is grown, between a fish pulled from the sea and the sea from which it is pulled. Do not

denounce the landlords, but as our Methodist friends might say—"wrestle with them." (Great applause.)

Here, for instance, is a pamphlet with which I was presented yesterday. Its printed title is—"Crofts and Farms in the Hebrides, being an account of the management of a Highland estate, by the Duke of Argyll." (Laughter.) This is the printed title, but as it comes to me it reads this way,—"*Crofts and Farms in the Hebrides, being an account of the management of a Highland estate, carefully worked in the devil's kitchen by the Duke of Argyll—(great laughter)—one of the worst landlords in Great Britain.*" Now I hope the man who wrote that found some relief, but I do not think it helps to convert the Duke of Argyll. The Duke really looks upon himself as a great benefactor, and he describes how he and his ancestors have made the island of Tiree and the island of Mull. And he shows the necessity of landlords. He actually thinks that landlords, instead of being absolutely useless animals, are of the very highest use. (Laughter.) He says, "one of the great advantages of the landowner is that he can choose the persons who can live upon the land." (Ironical cheers.) He says, "perhaps there has seldom been a single case of the fundamental violation of that old doctrine of the old laws of Scotland that makes the choice of persons or the right of choice the most essential of the duties and of the rights of ownership. Without this right and that intelligent exercise of it, which is guided by the most natural and legitimate motives, I am satisfied that there would have been no increase in the agricultural products of Tiree, which have actually risen, and the island would have remained stagnant." Whereas, as he shows in another place, the improvement has been so great that the rent there is 220 per cent more than it was 30 years ago. (Laughter.) What a pity it is that we have not some one so intelligent as the Duke to be landlord for the whole earth. (Laughter.) There are lots of people here whose room he might think better than their company. (Renewed laughter.) You know what a great Scotsman said about the inhabitants of England—"twenty-eight millions, mostly fools." An intelligent earth-owner who would properly use his choice of people who should live upon his estate—why, see the good he might accomplish! (Laughter and applause.)

The Duke goes on in another place to tell how the people of one of his islands received a great benefaction from their landlord. He read in a newspaper of a gentleman who had discovered a way of making something out of seaweed. He entered into correspondence with this gentleman, engaged him, and got up a company for the manufacture of this chemical product from seaweed. They set up works on his island and employed the

capital and efforts the requisite security of a lease." They say, the inventor contributed the knowledge, somebody else contributed the capital, and the Duke—he contributed the seaweed (laughter.) As for the people who did the work of gathering the seaweed, they contributed nothing. (Great laughter.)

Well, now you may laugh, but that gentleman (the Duke) is a gentleman; he is a distinguished Scotsman; he is a distinguished member of one of the Scottish Kirks; and he represents Scotland in one of your legislative bodies—the House of Lords—and yet he actually thinks these things, actually seems to think that if there had been no Duke of Argyll there would have been no seaweed. Don't you think there is a good deal of need yet for missionary work in Scotland? (Laughter.)

But here is something worse. (Laughter.) I cannot recall what I said at this. A gentleman in Greenock yesterday told me that about six weeks ago the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, minister of the Trinity Church, preached there in Trinity Church, at Greenock, from the text—"We are debtors to the Jews, to the Greeks, and to the Romans." And he said in the sermon—"God has given the things of this life to the rich that they may have the ineffable blessing of ministering to the poor." (Cries of "Shame.") Ay—shame! it is shame! (Applause.) There are noble exceptions in all churches, thank God! among Catholics, among Episcopalians, among Presbyterians of the three kinds, among Unitarians, among Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Swedenborgians, Quakers, and so on. Now, of my own knowledge, of many earnest preachers who are doing all they can to spread the light of the great truth, that there is no respecter of persons—that all are His children. (Applause.) But that blasphemous doctrine—that *devil's* doctrine—was preached and re-preached from thousands of so-called Christian pulpits. (Hear, hear.) Ay, men! there is need of missionary work, of work among the Churchmen, of work among the so-called Christians, of work among those who go into the poorest places telling these poor people that the God above has created them a happy world hereafter, without one single word about the world He intended for them here. (Cheers.) If the Church will not do its duty, let it be our privilege to do what we can to supply its place. Let it be our privilege to go abroad and among the heathen wherever we can find them, to preach the glad tidings of the

great gospel that the God above is really our Father; that this vice, and misery, and want, and suffering that festers in the very heart of our civilization, is not according to His will, but because we are miserable sinners; because we have transgressed His will; because instead of doing justice, we do injustice. Let us go with the hope, with the faith, that the truth must triumph; with the glad tidings that this world, without waiting for the next—by doing God's will, by obeying His law of justice—can of itself be made a Heaven; that there is no need of any involuntary poverty; that there is no need of overwork; that in His providence on this bountiful earth we might all be rich, in the sense of all having not merely the necessaries of life but the reasonable luxuries as well; that He has not brought forth men on such an earth as this to live on the average—as Mr. Ferguson tells me, statistics in this country show among the working-classes—only 25 years, but that, as the Old Testament tells us, peace and plenty and length of days will follow the people that obey His law, will follow the people who build on justice, while the judgments of the Everlasting will inevitably fall upon the nation who thinks it can build on injustice. Ay, and as you know, my friends and my brothers—ay, as you who have engaged in this cause know—there is in this work something that pays us for all we do as we go along. (Continued applause).

QUESTION.—How is the Single Tax to prevent the capitalist appropriating a greater share of the profits of labour than a fair proportion of the capital he has laid out?

MR. GEORGE.—I think it is going to prevent him from appropriating more than his fair share by enabling labourers to get their fair share. I think no one will work for any capitalist for less than he can get by working for himself, and as opportunities are opened in which the labourers make fair wages, they will not leave them to go to work for the capitalist for less. So long as in California 10 dols. a day could be had at the diggings, no capitalist—I don't care how rich—could get labour for less than 10 dols. So long as 5 dols. could be had, no capitalist could get men for less than that.

Now we do not mean to say that the Single Tax upon land values will induce everybody to go to farming, or to opening mines, or to building houses, but it will so free natural opportunities that many will do so—enough to take the surplus off the labour market. And the men who go to work in producing wealth will in their turn make an opportunity for others to go to work to produce. So that, instead of this chronic overproduction of goods and surplus of labour, as it is called, there will be increased activity in all departments. Let me tell you a little story that illustrates the present system. There is a gentleman in London—

Single Tax man. His father was a distinguished man in New York, and represented his district in Congress. Travelling round the world, he got into a manufacturing business on this side of the water. He came the summer before last to New York. He preferred to live in New York, and wanted to establish his business there. We Americans say that what we want is manufactures. We have been forcing ourselves to pay two prices for manufactured articles on the pretence of encouraging manufactures. Here was an American who wanted to come home to set up a factory. But before you have a factory you must have a place on which to put it. You cannot hang a factory in the air. Now, Mr. Burroughs wanted a place near railroads and near water. He took a walk, and saw the very place he wanted. There is a peninsula jutting out into the Hudson River in the upper part of New York City. It is full of rocks and cedar trees; the railway on one side, and the water on the other. That little rocky peninsula was just the place he wanted. Nobody was using it. It is in exactly the same state to-day as it was when Henrick Hudson first sailed up the river. Here was a man who wanted to add to the wealth of New York. There was a place that suited him, and no one using it. One would think that Mr. Burroughs would only have to settle down, and build his factory, and everybody would say "Welcome!" Instead of that he first had to look around for the man who owned that natural opportunity. After some time he found him—(laughter)—and the man said he wanted 150,000 dols. for the land. Burroughs said to him—"You are not using it." "No," he said, "nor do I ever intend to use it, but I want 150,000 dols. for it all the same. I have been holding that place for years knowing that some one would come along, and want to improve it, and I intend to make him sweat for my waiting." Mr. Burroughs "moved on."

Then he went to the other side of New York, and there he saw on the East River a lot on which cows were grazing. He said, "This will do pretty nearly as well as the other place." He then went to the owner of this lot, who wanted 50,000 dols. an acre for it, although it was not being used. He "moved on" again. Then he went up the river, miles above the city of New York. He found plenty of places that suited him, plenty of places that no one was using. But he found that, even for land overflowed by the river, the owners wanted from 20,000 to 50,000 dols. an acre. Mr. Burroughs came back to London. The little peninsula remains there as rocky as ever, and the Hudson is flowing just as ever over submerged land on which, were it not for the "dogs in the manger,"

he would gladly have built. He did not erect his factory in New York, and the "demand for labour" that he would have made there does not exist.

Now this illustrates what is going on in all parts of the United States and in all parts of this country. The men who want to "improve"—the men who want to labour, and employ others to labour—are prevented from doing so by those who, having got possession of the land which is necessary to improvement and indispensable to labour, will neither use it themselves nor let others use it. If you were to tax out these "dogs in the manger" who are holding idle land around this town and other towns like this, do you imagine that any builders or any of the building trades would have no work? Do you not think that wages would go up as they never went up before, not only in the building trade but in all similar trades? Imagine the increased demand that would be caused by this prosperity; and imagine how it would affect the building of ships for example. Look at those Americans who are coming over here this summer. For about each American that is coming, I can tell you that there are a thousand who would like to come. What is the reason they do not come? They have not got the money—that is all. (Laughter.) What is the reason they have not got the money? Look at the millions of acres of unused land, and the millions of unemployed men who would like to be at work producing things, which in their turn pay for iron and steel ships, and you have the reason. So it is through all the avenues of industry.

QUESTION.—A certain shipbuilder in Glasgow died recently leaving over £1,000,000; does Mr. George think that the men who build and finish the ships receive a just return for their labour? If not, would he explain how the adoption of the Single Tax would remedy the injustice?

MR. GEORGE.—I think there may be some question as to whether this gentleman made his money in shipbuilding. In such cases there is generally another element comes in. (Hear, hear). Mr. McGhee tells me that it is so in this case. I have never seen the man who can be said to have fairly earned £1,000,000. In the present state of things, when men who are working receive only a few shillings a day, and the employer takes the surplus of their earnings, what enables him to do so is monopoly. And there is a great power which comes from aggregated wealth, by reason of which men are able to build up the various monopolies which give such opportunities.

But mark you how that comes. It comes from the poverty of other people. If the gentlemen on this stage are each worth £100,

and I am worth £1000, I am worth ten times as much as they are, and I am that much stronger. If they have only £10 each, I am relatively enormously stronger, although I have yet only £1000. But if they have nothing, I am still more powerful alongside of them. Now this fundamental robbery of labour that keeps the wages down to the point of mere existence, that compels civilised countries to feed men on charity to prevent them dying by starvation, enormously increasing the power of the man who has means, is the denial of the right of men to work for themselves. Give all a fair chance to make earnings for themselves, by opening to use the indispensable element of all production, and that power would disappear.

And now, mark you, all these indirect taxes, all these taxes that fall upon wealth, tend of themselves—without going further—to monopoly, for this reason, that they raise prices. They require more capital to do a certain amount of business; therefore there are fewer people who can engage in that business. And those who do engage in it can pay the tax and get larger prices. One who never thought of the monopolising effect would suppose that the men in such a business would object to the tax; but, on the contrary, they always wish it kept up. Take for instance the tax on cigars. Instead of the cigar-makers wishing the tax abolished, they have used every effort to prevent Congress from reducing that tax on cigars. They know that the tax has had the effect of crushing out all the little cigar-makers, and they do not want this monopoly destroyed. They want it to take large capital to go into the cigar-making business. The same with matches. We put a tax on matches which crushed out the little match-makers, and made the price of matches three or four times as high as it ought to be. And the match-makers that were left fought bitterly the repeal of the tax.

QUESTION.—Would not the incidence of the Tax on Land Values almost immediately fall, not on the ground landlord, but on the tenant, and through him finally on the community?

MR. GEORGE.—I think the ground landlord would, even now, without any tax, add all he could to his rent; and for the life of me, I fail to see how any tax on ground values would give him power to add anything else. To make taxes fall upon ground values, you must tax all land values alike; that is to say, you must tax the value of the vacant lot just as fully as you tax the value of the used lot, and this, instead of enabling land owners to hold out for higher prices, would force them to sell.

QUESTION.—What is your view of that Land Nationalisation plan of compensating landlords by the payment of terminable annuities?

MR. GEORGE.—This is the scheme of my friend Alfred Russell Wallace, who has done a good deal to educate public opinion with regard to the evils of our land system. But when it comes to a remedy, I think he is a little slow. I would like to do something in my lifetime, and not wait till my grandchildren come. Of course all these compensation schemes and annuity schemes are utterly impracticable, and it behoves us to be practical. Landlords never can be bought out. They may be bought out theoretically on a piece of paper, but as a matter of fact, they never can be bought out, and they know it perfectly as well as you do. I do not know whether I should speak of politics—English politics—but the gentlemen who conduct Her Majesty's Government are going to try and buy out £50,000,000 worth of the Irish landlords next winter; and possibly they may do that. I hope not. But if they do, I venture to say that the thing will stop right there. They will not do it again. Just look at the absurdity of the scheme, to take a little privileged class and spend the millions of the British taxpayers to make it greater. The smaller the privileged class is the better, because you can get rid of it much easier. But if I am any judge of public opinion, I think the people on this side of the Irish Channel have got a good way past any scheme for buying out the Irish landlords. (Cheers.)

QUESTION.—Do you not think that the great increase of machinery floods the labour market? How will the Single Tax prevent this? (Cries of "Don't answer.")

MR. GEORGE.—Oh, yes! The gentleman has probably been reading the *Scotsman*. So long as there is want in the world, so long as men want the things that are produced by machinery, there cannot be too much machinery. If machinery were brought to such a state of perfection that steam yachts could be made at a pound a piece, I myself would like to buy one. And so it is with everybody else. The forces of production cannot be too great. It is not that there is too much machinery, but it is that distribution is unjust. And the reason of that is the fundamental injustice which gives to some people that which by natural right belongs to all.

Mr. PETER BURT moved a resolution in favour of the taxation of ground values for local and imperial purposes, which was seconded by Mr. RICHARD M'GHEE, and supported by Mr. JOHN FERGUSON.

On the motion of the Rev. D. E. IRONS, M.A., B.D., seconded by Mr. DONALD MACRAE, Balallan, a vote of thanks was awarded to Mr. George for his lecture; and Mr. GEORGE having proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Kinnaird for presiding, the meeting terminated.