

appeared in the *Morning Leader* a paragraph which ran to this effect:—"The Old Age Pension Act is causing a great demand for cottages in Mid-Warwickshire, owing to pensioners leaving the Workhouse to live with their families the 5/- per week making all the difference." Again it was the Land Lords who got away with the benefit.

THE FARMER AND FARMWORKER.

"Opportunity should (not, *will*) be given for the cultivator to become the owner of his own land on reasonable terms by a system of land purchase." The Irish Board of Agriculture reported in 1912 that as a result of the Land Purchase Acts, there "had been a marked increase in the number of 'gombeen' (*i.e.*, money-lenders), the total indebtedness of the purchasing tenants having increased by some \$12,000,000."

"Housing should be treated not as a local but as a national problem." The Land Lords will not mind in the least which way it is treated. A "rapid and adequate provision of housing accommodation," whether by public or private enterprise, is all the same to them. They stand to pocket the millions of taxpayers' money spent on the schemes anyway.

RATING AND LAND REFORM.

We thought we were going to get through without any mention of the land, but here it is, right at the end as a sort of "fill-up." "Reforms in local government are long overdue. . . . Poor Law relief requires immediate action," we are told. But the cause of poverty is not once mentioned. We hope that those responsible for inviting Mr. Asquith to the International Conference on Taxation of Land Values at Oxford, in August last, where he was featured as the great attraction of the gathering, but was scared away at the prospect of questions, are pleased with the very qualified "support" he gives them in this statement of Liberal policy. All he has to say is "The present rating system discourages improvement and penalises those who create industries or provide houses. It must be so altered that as great a part of the burden of rates as is practicable is transferred to those who benefit most by the efforts of the community—namely, the owners of the site value." Note that "as far as practicable." After this we get a reference to "Leasehold enfranchisement," which, the authors go on to say, "has long been an object of Liberal policy." It has certainly long been used as a means of staving off any real drastic proposal, but we do not recollect that either of the signatories, both of whom have had their turn of office, ever attempted to attain this particular "object."

Against the fallacy, common to all the foregoing Manifestos, that by control, regulation, and inspection at the hands of a few elected persons called a Government, the people are to secure their economic emancipation, the Commonwealth Land Party strongly protests. Tory, Labor, Liberal, and I. L. P. alike agree in taking from the

individual producer an increasing part of the wealth which is his, and leaving the Land Lords to take as theirs the rent of the Land which is properly the communal revenue of the people. All agree in talking about Land Reform, and when their utterances are examined, they are again found in complete agreement in favor of Land Purchase. Alone, we, of the C. L. Party, see the thing as it really is, hence we can have no part or lot in any policy, no matter from whence it may come, which does not demand the immediate full restoration of our lost rights in the land, and that without the payment of a penny of compensation. Only by the freeing of the Land to Labor will the unemployment problem ever be solved and the economic freedom of the people achieved.—J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

Says the Single Taxer to the Farmer

THE SINGLE TAX REVIEW is probably justified in poking fun at what the doctors are recommending to the farmer to get him out of the fix he's in. Justified or not justified, the SINGLE TAX REVIEW certainly enjoys the spectacle of Democrats, Socialists and Republicans all telling the farmer what to do, and none of them able to better the patient to any appreciable degree. "There are the old, old suggestions," says the exponent of Henry George, "for getting the farmer out of debt by lending him more money; for increased production through more scientific farm methods; for Government fixing of prices; for more anti-railroad legislation." There is almost a chortle as the REVIEW continues:

"They have the obvious defect that they lead to the same result—an ever increasing surplus of farm products for which no markets can be found. Why not tell the truth about farmers? Millions of them are poor and in debt because they have been robbed of a large share of the value of their products. They have been robbed by the high protective tariff, by excessively high interest rates, by unduly high freight rates, by unjust systems of local, county and State taxation. There is no mystery about the causes of agricultural depression. The remedy is not in the direction of more laws, commissions and regulations of industry, but in the repeal of the class legislation from which the farmers are suffering. The best thing that the Government can do for the farmer is to reduce the oppressive burden of taxation that is crushing him."

If the SINGLE TAX REVIEW had stopped there, the remedy would sound wonderfully like the remedies which it had just condemned. But it continues thus:

"And destroy land monopoly by establishing the single tax and leave him (the farmer) alone to work out his own problems."

All remedies heretofore proposed have been bad, argues the SINGLE TAX REVIEW, because they all tend to "an ever-increasing surplus of farm products for which no

market can be found." Presumably any remedy which tends in that direction is bad. Would the single tax, for example, tend in that direction? According to the theory of the single tax, "destroying land monopoly" makes land "free" and forces unused land into use. If that be true, how will overproduction be helped by forcing more land into use? It looks dreadfully as if the SINGLE TAX REVIEW had landed a devastating blow upon its own head.

To make the matter more interesting is the suggestion that the single tax would relieve the farmer of his burden of taxation. In Texas the average agricultural land pays six cents an acre to the Treasury at Austin. The highest land in Texas—the highest average rendition in any county, that is—pays about sixty-cents an acre taxation to the State. Now the single tax that the REVIEW advocates is a tax which will amount to the "complete collection of the economic rent." That is defined as five or six per cent. (or whatever the current rate of interest is) per year of the value of the land apart from its improvements. State tax now averages six cents an acre, but the single tax would be, let us say, six cents per \$1. of the value of the acre. If land in Texas is worth on the average of but a dollar an acre, the single tax would exactly equal State tax. If Texas land is worth more, the single tax would be proportionately more. At ten dollars an acre it would be ten times the State tax. At a hundred dollars an acre it would be a hundred times the State tax. Under this phase of the matter, possibly the SINGLE TAX REVIEW is right—its tax would reduce over-production by running the farmer out of business.

There is something in that. But there is mighty little in it to cause jubilation on the farm..

Before we drop the subject, however, it is but fair to say that in proposing to collect "the full economic rent" the SINGLE TAX REVIEW is more extreme than the "modified" single taxers. The SINGLE TAX REVIEW is what is called a "pure" single taxer. Single tax advocates have tremendous disagreements among themselves over how much of the economic value of land they are going to confiscate by taxation. But all single taxers countenance to some degree and in some manner the confiscation of a part of that economic value. They don't call it confiscation, or at least very few of them do, but if you happen to own the land the result is much the same.

Dallas, (Texas) *Morning News*, Oct. 25.

The Single Tax Cureall

FROM the headquarters of the Single Tax League comes a copy of the resolutions passed by the international conference of the Single Taxers held at Oxford, England, August last, at which conference delegates from fourteen nations met. The charge made by this conference against the present system of land holding is embodied in the following paragraph:

"Plainly the unjust inequalities of wealth, the ever-recurring business and industrial depressions and the persis-

tence of poverty with the vice, crime and misery it compels are results of private monopoly of land, the private confiscation of land rent and the denial of the rights of the people to the land of their country."

The remedy for this wrong and the defense against the consequent imminent social overturnings forecasted by the conference, is according to a further resolution: "The recognition of the equal rights of all to the land by collecting as public revenue the economic rent of the land by direct taxation of land values," the abolition of all other taxes and the establishment of absolute free trade throughout the earth.

There is enough truth in the Henry George theory to demand a serious survey of the argument. Doubtless the proprietorship of land in a large way has from time immemorial acted against the best interests of man. It is doing so now in more than one section of the earth. The unearned increment in land—that value that accumulates on idle land by virtue of improvements made to neighboring land—has worked rank injustice at times. Every observer of land booms and the improvement of new lands has seen examples of this. A modified single tax law has done much to defeat this kind of unearned profit.

But the private ownership of land is not always an un-mixed blessing to the owner of the land. The average man who owns vacant property in this city, for example, is just now squirming under his taxes and regretting the lost interest on his money invested. It is the history of such property in this city that the man who has attempted to speculate in this way has generally lost. Thousands of city lots have come into the city's hands by the misfortune of taxes too heavy to be borne. The fact is we have in Oregon today a tax policy almost identical with that proposed by the single taxers and the movement is on to remove the burden from land rather than increase it. It would be difficult to persuade the average landholder in Oregon that he had an unfair advantage over the landless citizen.

Farming conditions just at this moment show that millions of land owners are not making as good an income as employees. The awful pictures of the oppressed landless wretches drawn by this international conference do not much apply to America at the present time. There are evils in the present system of land holding, but it is debatable as to whether Henry George has shown the way out of the woods or a path deeper into the forest.

—Portland *Telegram*

THIS land question is the bottom question. Man is a land animal. Suppose you want to build a house; can you build it without a place to put it? What is it built of? Stone, or mortar, or wood, or iron—they all come from the earth. Think of any article of wealth you choose, any of those things which men struggle for, where do they come from? From the land. It is the bottom question.

—HENRY GEORGE.