

The United Committee Report.

The Seventh Annual Report of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, which appeared in our last issue, has been reprinted as a pamphlet of 56 pages, illustrated with seven of the striking cartoons recently issued by the Land Values Press Bureau, and containing portraits of Lewis H. Berens, Joseph Fels, and Lord Strathclyde. A useful feature, which will be appreciated by those who seek first-hand information regarding the movement abroad, is a complete list of Land Values leagues, journals, and correspondents in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Hungary and Switzerland.

We doubt if there is any organisation of the kind anywhere which can issue such an informing and inspiring record of effective work done or which can show better value in the return for the confidence placed in it by its financial supporters. This Report speaks for itself, and its appeal for increased assistance for the movement for land values taxation should be liberally responded to by all who have the cause at heart. We will gladly send a copy of the Report to any one making application for it to our offices.

BOLTON HALL ON CHARITY

ADDRESS BY BOLTON HALL AT THE CONFERENCE OF CHARITIES AND CORRECTION, NEW YORK, MAY 20TH, 1914.

I have in my hand the last report of the Department of Labour at Albany upon Unemployment. On page 4 we find that the average proportion of Unemployment in Organised Labour during last year was more than one-quarter. (In the month of February it was one-third out of work, and in December 40 per cent., largely owing to seasonal idleness.) Think of that! over twenty-five per cent. of the most intelligent and best organised and most skilled workers unemployed. I leave you to imagine how many unemployed among the unorganised and inefficient workers that represents. But we hardly need this Report. Prof. Warner estimates in "American Charities" that insufficient employment is the cause of one-third of all cases of poverty; your own statistics show that this is an under-estimate, and publication of these statistics has generally been discontinued. I saw some hundreds of these disemployed cowering in the storm last Wednesday midnight, waiting in line for a loaf of bread.

I attended the other evening a conference upon the Unemployed called by Miss Roberts at the Hotel McAlpin, and we had an excellent assemblage of charitable people and economists, and after a warning had been given that we did not want to consider trifling palliatives, the most vital suggestion that came from any economist or charity worker was an employment agency—a new socialistic government-sustained, city bureau-managed employment agency, though the trade unions have better and more efficient employment agencies run at their own expense than you could get in twenty years.

And this was their only remedy and the Mayor's only remedy in the face of 25 per cent. of organised labour out of a job; 25 per cent. of men would not go hungry if a little employment society could find jobs for them. The Salvation Army representative said that he was sick over the fact that there are no jobs for these men. All that you really do with your employment Societies recalls Theodore Hook's story:—

The boy was somewhat wild, and his father said to him: "John, it is time you were settling down and taking a wife."
"Why, so it is, father," answered the lad; "whose wife shall I take?"

You get a man a job—you do not make a job—you cannot make a job. Whose job do you get for him? And having gotten that man a job, you then have the displaced one—a little less efficient, or a little higher waged, for whom you have to get somebody else's job.

Why cannot you make a job? Why—because all jobs consist in labour applied to land or to the products of land, and none of your plans tend to open the land to the people. Yet you discuss Recreation. Carlyle's "making sofa cushions against the day of Judgment" is wisdom compared to that.

I spent some time the other day in re-examining MISERY AND ITS CAUSES, by Edw. T. Devine; POVERTY, by Robert Hunter; CONSTRUCTIVE AND PREVENTIVE PHILANTHROPY, by Jos. Lee; CHARITY AND SOCIAL LIFE, by C. S. Loch; SOCIAL PATHOLOGY, by Dr. Sam. George Smith, which are perhaps the leading books upon modern charity. I looked through the indexes of those and others for "land," "farming," "gardening," "vacant land cultivation," "taxation," "monopoly," "speculation in land"—not one paragraph in those excellent books on any of those subjects, nor in your own nice harmless programme. Overcrowding was discussed, but, absurd as it is, there was no word about building sites withheld for a rise in price. And for a good reason. You charity people, we charity people (for I have worked with many of those here and I work with them still, and many of them I respect and like, as I do Dr. Devine and Robert Hunter), know that it is not safe to bring up the land question; that that thing is loaded! That monopoly does not want it discussed—that many here are uneasy now because I speak of it, because we cannot for ever blink at it.

I hold in my hand here the reports for one year of the Cultivation of Vacant Lots by the Unemployed in twenty cities. Philadelphia alone employs yearly about one thousand persons at an expense of about seven thousand dollars (\$7,000) and the workers produce about sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) worth of truck. This report shows 8,590 persons employed for the season at a cost of \$9,234, say \$1.10 per person. We had to discontinue similar work in New York because we could not get the use of even one acre of land, yet there are three vacant lots on Fifth Avenue between 37th and 47th Streets. And yet in all these valuable books I have been able to find only one little paragraph, sneeringly dismissing the whole thing from consideration; dismissing that practical form of relief which in various cities employs more people than all your charity devices, laundries, leather work, wood yards, and so on put together.

But I have yet to hear of a committee of charity folk appointed to inquire why we cannot get the use of the land; or to investigate the relation to Unemployment of speculative holdings of coal and oil and farming lands as well as suburban and city lands.

There is no reason on earth why everyone who wants work in New York should not be employed upon the lands that are now vacant and unused in and immediately around the City of New York itself: there is no reason, except that we "have added field to field until there is no room on the face of the earth" for the worker.

Why is this land question ignored? This is a question I mean to have answered, and I know how to force the discussion—I mean to have it answered by the charity people. And pending a reply I am sorry to have to think that the question of "the people back to the land" is too near to the question of the land back to the people to be comfortable for those who, through monopoly and the consequent legal power of godless extortion, are able to grind the faces of the poor while they sop their consciences by contributing to charities which they know to be ineffective.

Now I have a "constructive programme"; but it is not new, nor does it appeal to charity people, nor have I time to state it here.