

and then to discuss it. THE STORY OF MY DICTATORSHIP and SOCIAL PROBLEMS are specially suitable for such work, as each chapter in them deals with one phase of our great question.

Organize Meetings

This seems a big order; but if a favourable opportunity be waited on, is much more easy than it appears. Most men belong to some Club, Institute, Class, or Association. Well, make use of them. Suggest at the annual meeting or a committee meeting that a lecture or a paper on the Land Question, or the Labour Question, or the Fiscal Question, would be welcome. If your proposal be accepted, then see to it yourself that a man qualified to deal with it on our lines is made available; that one or other of our leaflets is distributed; and that a well assorted supply of our literature is on sale. If you are within reasonable distance, both men and literature can be supplied from one or other of our Leagues. If you are too far off or have a good local man, a supply of literature can be requisitioned, "on sale or return," from the League offices, and thus your risk be limited to the cost of carriage.

Write to Your Local Paper

To this useful and telling work every properly-equipped land and taxation reformer can and should contribute. Some phase or other of our question is constantly cropping up and being discussed in the correspondence columns of the daily and weekly newspapers. Send in your views as moderately and convincingly as possible; if you think it necessary or advisable, use a *nom de plume*. Moreover, whenever possible refer to some book or pamphlet bearing on the question, and state where it can be obtained. The value of this work cannot be over-estimated. Only last month we had a demand for literature mentioned in a letter written nearly four years ago!

There are, of course, countless other means by which good work can be done. Those who seek will find. The field is vast and the labourers few. The struggle is, in truth, only now commencing. Happy are we who are permitted to take part in it, as are all who in any way assist to spread the light. Individually, we may be able to accomplish but little; but we know and rejoice in the knowledge that our united efforts will, sooner or later, accomplish much. For the Golden Age, the time when Justice shall prevail, lies not behind, but before us, and our work is helping to hasten its coming.

An Example from Salisbury

As an illustration of what can be done by those to whom Lewis H. Berens sent this message, the following letter received during March from a correspondent in Salisbury, speaks for itself:—

With reference to my letter to you of the 14th January and your reply of the 15th enclosing literature dealing with the Taxation of Land Values, I am writing to report that the debate, "That the principle of the Single Tax be adopted" took place last Tuesday at the meeting of the Brown Street Literary and Debating Society. I found your literature exceedingly interesting and useful. I may say I had a very vague notion as to the principle of the Single Tax before taking it up, and I have received a good deal of profit from perusing your literature.

I was not surprised that the voting went against me. I realised that what had taken me some three months of studying to understand, would take more than one such debate to win a majority in its favour.

The voting was 25—19, and I am pleased that so many were with us.

It was not difficult to show that the present basis of rating was unsound, and it was easy to show the good results which would follow the result of taxing the value created by the community.

I had expected my opponents' objections, so they were easily dealt with. I felt, however, that the time was too short to deal with everything. I am glad I am interested in the subject, and I have not finished with it by taking part in the debate.

BOLTON HALL ON HOUSING

There are practically only three remedies proposed for bad housing and congestion, each varying in details of its plan:

1st. Municipal construction and ownership.

2nd. Improved transit to get the people away.

3rd. To reduce the speculative price of land.

Is not that the best which will restore the natural condition of access to the earth? Certainly we have an unnatural one now.

If some stranger from Mars were to visit this city, he would notice at once that there were two kinds of neighbourhoods—one where the houses were small, poor, devoid of comfort, and crowded together; another where they are large, fine, luxurious, and with ample space. "Ah!" he would say, "I see, these poor houses are where those live who don't know how to build properly, or who will not work; but the fine residences belong to the skilled citizens!"

We should have to confess that it is just the other way.

"It is exactly the same everywhere," says Councillor James S. Nettlefold, of Birmingham, England. "In the vast majority of cases, poor people live on dear land and rich people on cheap land, which is absurd."

Man is naturally a co-operative animal. Civilisation consists at bottom in capacity to co-operate, to work together, and it is natural that the first thought about decent housing is, "Let the city or the State build houses—for the poor." In other words, take the money raised in taxes, which are nearly all paid by the poor, and use it to build houses for them. If necessary, increase those taxes.

I spent part of the summer once with Professor Howard, an authority on mosquitoes, and he taught me a good deal; and when in our country home the mosquitoes became pretty virulent, I sought for the hole where they were breeding. There was a place between two trees that had a little water in it, and I could see the mosquitoes rising up from there, so I poured on kerosene; a few days after it rained, and the mosquitoes began again, and I again poured on kerosene, my little girl on both occasions watching me. She asked me why I did this, and I tried to explain to her, and her comment was, "Why don't you fill up the hole?"

I had never thought of that.

That is the way our minds work, and that, it seems to me, is what we have been doing, except that we have not even been looking for the hole. We have not been seeking the cause of the congestion. We have heard that congestion is responsible for the poverty.

Doubtless it is, in part; but shutting the people off from the only thing they can work on, the land and the products of the land, is responsible for the congestion.

And the remedies proposed are Municipal Construction or else Improved Transit.

Neither of these is a solution, because it is evident that "Every improvement in the condition of the earth goes mainly and eventually to the owners of the earth." "Then," says some one, "let the city or the State own the earth, the land, and furnish the sites."

Of course, the city may buy up or even get a law and expropriate the land; it may speculate in land value and so furnish sites or build houses for those who create the value; but it would seem simpler and more direct and give less opportunity for corruption and incompetent municipal administration for the city to speculate in land directly, and lend or give the profits to those who want to build houses for themselves.

It comes to the same thing in the end.

Municipal speculation in land may succeed; municipal building can't, at least in our American communities as at present run. It is admitted that private enterprise builds better and cheaper than the public officials do. Now, Alden and Hayward, in their book on "The Problem of Housing," say—

"Another ill-effect this artificial value of land has upon our cities is its creation of that house-famine of which we

have already spoken. We have seen that private enterprise has very largely failed to supply a sufficient quantity of dwelling-houses for the working classes. One of the main reasons for that is, that in consequence of the high price of land, buildings cannot be put up at a rent which it would be possible for the workers, who need such houses, to pay, and which would at the same time make it a safe investment for the builder, even in the case of building enterprise not strictly private. This "corner" in land has operated very injuriously on those semi-public semi-philanthropic bodies such as citizens, dwellings, companies, and co-operative societies that has endeavoured to cope with the deficiency in the supply of good houses."

Rapid transit raises rents. Every permanent improvement in the soil," says Thorold Rogers, "every high road, every bridge, every railroad raises rent—the landowner sleeps but thrives."

In view of the enormous increase of land values which the new Rapid Transit in New York created and which all went to landowners, a bill was passed in New York to authorise assessments on the land benefited to pay the cost of the roads. The interests contrived to make it inoperative.

The effect of such improvements in New York has been to raise the rents rather than to relieve the crowding. As much is being spent on Rapid Transit alone as is being spent on the Panama Canal. All of it goes to the owners of the land, and the effect appears at once in rents.

Each day's labour in New York City increases the city's land values by about £60,000.

That, like the Rapid Transit Improvement, goes to increase the price of lots, sites for homes, and where population increases most surely there land values increase. Consequently, in our great cities rents are far the highest. It is notorious that New York City is the centre of things commercial.

The English Board of Trade recently made an inquiry as to the cost of living in twenty-eight American cities. They found that the minimum weekly rents for three rooms in New York City are—

9 per cent.	higher than in	Pittsburg.
22 per cent.	" " "	Philadelphia.
22 per cent.	" " "	Cleveland.
21 per cent.	" " "	Chicago.

A three-room apartment is the minimum accommodation for a wage earner's family, while for this minimum rent in New York City he must usually live in insufficiently lighted rooms and unhealthy ones, which reduce his industrial efficiency: 38 shillings a month is the minimum rate, they stated, for a three-room apartment in New York City. The Board of Trade says, regarding these cities:—

"The predominant rents in New York City exceed those of 19 other cities by over 25 per cent., of 11 cities by over 50 per cent., and of one town by over 12·7 per cent.

Palliatives and remedies are futile. If we are to solve the housing problem we must go to the cause of the evil. As we look deeper we shall find that there is no escape from these propositions: 1st. Cheap land near the centres is essential to good housing. 2nd. Heavy taxation of land values separate from improvement will lessen land speculation and make land cheap. 3rd. This will encourage the substitution of healthy residences for dark disease holes, will reduce rents, and encourage home-ownership.

BOLTON HALL.

LAND AT £584,000 AN ACRE IN SWANSEA.

At a meeting of the Swansea Town Council on April 16th it was stated, according to THE TIMES, that the price of the Corporation's recent purchase of Temple Street Corner for street-widening purposes equalled £584,000 an acre.

THE "HIGHLAND NEWS" ON LAND REFORM FOR THE HIGHLANDS

The failure of the Land Act, whittled down as it was by the Tories, has made it necessary to make an immediate and mighty march forward on the lines of real land reform. We must obtain free access to the land—to all the natural opportunities and resources of the Highlands. What developments are possible, in agriculture, in afforestation, in sport and the tourist trade, can never be known until the land is free to the people.

So long as it remains private property the development of the Highlands can only benefit a favoured few. There is no use talking about the water power. It may be worth a great deal to-day to the man who owns it, but it is worth not a penny to the people of the Highlands, for they have no legal right to it. Yet the water power is a natural opportunity. Can we doubt that it was formed by the Creator for the people whom He sends into this world? It was intended from the time that the earth first took its form that all men should have equal rights of access to it, and it should be the policy and determination of Liberals not to rest until legal rights are constrained into conformity with natural law.

"The Way that Nature Intended"

Now, if we wish to accomplish anything in a practical way, how should we act? The proper course of action is simplicity itself. To-day the water power of the Highlands is worth a certain sum. Mr. Newlands can tell you almost to a fraction of a penny. At present the people who wish to labour must pay the owners of the water power this sum before they can start work. That is the legal position. That must be altered. The boot must be placed on the other foot. The present owners ought to be compelled to pay to the people to whom they deny access the money they would like the people to pay them. The incidence of rent is altogether topsy-turvy. To-day the landlord is a receiver of rent. Now, it is the owner of a thing who ought to enjoy it, and as in equity the people are the owners of the land, the landlords ought to pay rent to the people, that is to the State, and not the people to the landlord.

That is the way that nature intended, and if natural law were permitted to operate we should quickly have the landlords crying to the people to come and work the land. If they had to pay rent so long as they kept the people out they would very quickly be busying themselves trying to get the people in. Then it would be worth while starting to talk about water power, and afforestation, and co-operation, and all the other proposals which to-day simply mean more money for the landlord's pocket.

Perhaps some people think it will be a long time before the landlord is made to pay rent instead of merely receiving it. But it would be a very simple thing to make a beginning. We might make him pay, say, a shilling in the pound. That would be a nice new tax for Mr. Lloyd George. Let him tax rents. And not merely the rents which the landlord receives. That would never do, for the landlord could easily shift that tax. He could simply increase his rents by the amount of the tax so as to make the tenant pay.

The Perfect Tax

There is only one way to get at the landlord. His rent must be taxed whether he receives it or not. Is there a farm without a tenant? The landlord ought to be taxed on the rental of that farm just the same. Has the landlord got land under sheep, bringing in fourpence an acre, while a score of smallholders would gladly pay four shillings for it? Then the landlord ought to be taxed on the rental, not of fourpence, but of four shillings. Has the landlord got a loch with a splendid "head" of water, for which a