

duce drastic measures for dealing with the land and housing problems, and urges the importance of providing for the separate valuation and rating of land values, apart from improvements; for the compulsory purchase of land by public authorities, for any public purpose, at a price based on this valuation; for the regulation and planning of urban areas; and for increased powers to a central authority to promote housing and small holdings."

A good business-like beginning. As Mr. Churchill said: "We were ringing up the curtain on a piece that was going to have a long run." Well, we shall see. Anyway, we can only regard the day's proceedings as a great triumph for our ideas. It is now beyond recall that a Liberal Prime Minister is at one with us in the policy we have promoted in the political field during the last twenty years or more. In the meantime, other undercurrents in the Cabinet, if not in the House of Commons, seem to have prevailed, and the land bills now before the house are not for valuation, but for the planting of people on small holdings in England and Scotland. These bills have one redeeming principle which we must recognize as something to be grateful for. They do not propose to create peasant proprietors, as the last bill did for Ireland. They propose to establish the small holders as tenants of the State. Meanwhile, the bill for the separate valuation of land applying to Scotland has been introduced, and the Prime Minister has promised to see it passed during the present session.

The valuation bill for England is a little more difficult owing to the chaotic condition of the present system of assessment. We are publicly assured however by the Prime Minister that the English valuation will be brought forward next session and Dr. Macnamara, M. P., (Parliamentary Secretary of local Government Board) stated on Saturday, 22nd of June, at Manchester, at a public demonstration organized by our United Committee of the Manchester branch of the English League that "the Local Government Board would earnestly bend their energies to the work of preparing the bill this autumn." This demonstration at Manchester on the 22nd of June was a signal success. It was our first big meeting here. As the *Manchester Guardian* points out the traditions of the town, as the home and inspiration of the free trade movement, mark it out for such a similar propaganda. It is said that what Manchester and Lancashire think to-day England will think to-morrow. Well, it is admitted all round that we have a good beginning in this direction of starting this volume of thought and we mean to maintain the fight.

F. SKIRROW.

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THE SINGLE TAX MOVEMENT IN SWEDEN.

The Henry George movement in Sweden is not new. For more than twenty years ago the teachings of Henry George had attracted the attention of Swedish social reformers. His first books, "Progress and Poverty," "Social Problems" and "Protection or Free Trade" were translated into Swedish as early as the middle eighties. But this attention was only very superficial and partial. Many years before the publication of "Progress and Poverty" the struggle of the Swedish farmers to rid themselves of the old land tax had dominated the whole political life of the nation. Also the few social reformers whom we had working at this time were influenced by the farmers' movement in the direction of making the land free of all taxation. It was natural in such conditions that George's idea could not be easily understood. Of course, in reality there was a great difference between our old very unequal land tax and the proposal made by Henry George. But the people in general failed to make a just distinction, and so his theory was met with opposition from ignorance when it was not opposed by vested interests.

Now, this struggle was ended several years ago. The land tax is abolished. The social condition is not improved, but people have begun to reflect and question whether the settlement is satisfactory that relieves land of taxation. For this reason the teachings of Henry George are now beginning to be understood. In recent years the propaganda for the taxation of land values has made real progress. In our neighboring country, Denmark, it is the class of small farmers who especially favor George's proposal; in our country it is the large and well organized temperance party which is most attracted by it. Prohibition is becoming more and more possible, but the high taxes on intoxicants which would then be lost to the government hinders further legislation in that direction. For two years past the proposition has been made that the government should resort to a tax on land values, and so make it easy for the nation to adopt prohibition. Yet this proposition is not made entirely from financial considerations, but also for social reasons. It has become more and more clear to temperance reformers that bad social conditions are largely the cause of intemperance. Consequently, the improved social conditions which would be the result of taxation of land values would also work beneficially in favor of temperance.

Recently small societies have been formed in some parts of the country chiefly for the purpose of spreading the idea of land value taxation. Much of the press also is beginning to advocate the wisdom of our pro-

posed means to break up the land monopoly, especially the monopoly of forest land, which has been largely increasing during the last few decades.

The idea of taxing land values has also been advocated in Parliament in this year by Mr. Carl Lindhagen, M. P., the Mayor of Stockholm. He has by a motion in the House requested the government to investigate the matter with a view to ascertaining the best means of applying the principle to legislation. But vested interests were too strong in the Parliament to permit the motion to be carried. It was defeated in both chambers. About the same time the proposal was in the House to tax the *increased* land values only. This proposal was defeated in the upper House, but carried in the lower. It was, of course, also very easy for this most very democratical House to carry this measure. The tax on increased values would not be a yearly tax, but only a tax when the land was being sold—an idea which is realized in some cities of Germany (*die Zuwachsteuer*). I was rather glad that the latter was rejected, because I am not sure that its adoption would not have hindered the realization of the greater principle. And I am also more and more opposed to the taxation on increased land values only, because it would be only partial, and would be effective only in advancing communities and not in rural districts, nor in stationary communities, which would be left untouched. The influence would be for the rural population to migrate to the towns in yet larger numbers. I consider it is very necessary for the Single Taxers in every country to think out this important phase of the question.

We have now in Sweden a very hard struggle to propagate our radical ideas, and I would finally appeal to my fellow countrymen in the United States to assist in the contest as much as possible. I intend this autumn to visit the United States for the purpose of studying the social problems of the country. I would invite any of your readers who may feel disposed to communicate with me to do so to the address below.

"Land Values," 876-77 Strand,

London, W. C.

JOHAN HANSSON.

PROGRESS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

Some further details of the tax provisions in the New South Wales Local Government Act are given in a letter from Mr. J. R. Firth of Sydney, received just after the last number of the REVIEW went to press. This act, now in operation, creates a number of new local governing bodies called *Shires*, which cover all of New South Wales not under local government before (practically the county districts) except the very sparsely settled portion.

These shires have only one source of

revenue, a tax on unimproved value of land, not to exceed two-pence in the pound, *i. e.*, 4 cents on each \$4.80, or a little under 1 per cent. They can tax nothing else, though they will receive a subsidy from the central government.

The act also gives new power of taxation to municipalities. Under the former law they were compelled to raise their revenue by a tax on the annual income from improved real estate and a similar tax on 5 per cent. of the capital value of unimproved land. But the tax on vacant land could be evaded by leasing it for a horse pasture at a low rental; while the tax on improvements was much the heaviest because computed on gross rental.

Under the new law the municipality must impose a tax of a penny in the pound on the capital value of all land. The balance of the revenue can be raised by a tax on improved property or an additional tax on land values only. In the latter case the total levy must not exceed the amount that would be produced by a tax of 2d. in the pound on unimproved property and 2 shillings in the pound on the rental of improved property.

The important feature of this legislation is the recognition of land values as the proper subjects of all increases in taxation.

While the taxes proposed will not give the people a greater share of the annual rent, in most cases, than is now taken by real estate taxes in the United States, still the increase obtained will be accompanied by a decrease in the taxation of improvements. Instead of seeking for new ways of taxing labor products the people of Australia and New Zealand are gradually shifting the tax burden on to the land values.

PROGRESS IN GERMANY.

Quoting from the German Single Tax organ the progress the Fatherland is making in putting our fundamental truth into practice I will only name a few of the larger communities, though in Saxony alone nine towns, ranging in population from 551 to 5,085 inhabitants, have adopted a land value tax.

But the city of Leipzig, also in Saxony, 371,434 inhabitants, did not seem to feel quite safe, so it has limited this new tax on land value to three years, and stipulates that the extra income from it shall be used to build good roads. The city council of Mannheim, together with the councils of other towns in Baden, asked the government of Baden for the permission to tax the increased value of land not in use.

The Committee of Finance of the Hessian government urged unanimously the adoption of a bill taxing the unearned value of land in the face of petitions from the land owning societies. Quite a number of small towns near Blumenthal, Hanover,