

the producers of it; but what I do wish to do is to prevent them from continuing this wheedling process in the future."—"A village within a few miles of Glasgow where the landlord let out 50 acres of land for building purposes. No feuing took place till a railway was made which passed close to the village, when the *feu duty rose 150 per cent.*"—"In Dulwich, five miles east from Charing Cross, London, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the nearest railway station, the fee-simple for ordinary building land is £140 per acre. The value of the buildings is £5,000, which must be handed over to the landlord in good repair after the 99 years' lease has expired. The rateable value in this district is about £450 per acre, and I do not think I am far out in saying that the total 'economic' rent is about £225 per acre."

PROGRESS.—The House of Lords has adopted the report of the Select Committee on Betterment. The Committee reported in favour of taxing Betterment—the increased value attaching to land through public improvements—for communal purposes.

THE LAND.

TO THE LAND, YE IDLERS.

BY JOHN MURDOCH.

Depression in trade is felt everywhere, and all sorts of explanations are propounded, but nothing is really being done towards reviving it. Agriculture is depressed, and hardly any attempt is being made to get the two great departments of business to shed light on each other. How can trade flourish when a large portion of the money which ought to be in circulation among traders and manufacturers at home goes away to other countries for food which could be grown at home? Wages are low, and thousands are out of employment. How could it be otherwise, when 800,000 men have been dispensed with by the farmers and sent into the towns to compete for employment and under-bid each other in the labour market? Another result of this dropping of so many farm workers is that immense stretches of land are not tilled at all, and most of the rest is not more than half worked.

Take another set of figures. There are 48,000,000 acres of arable land in these three kingdoms—i.e., land which has been under crops—not any of which is merely estimated as capable of being made to yield. There are, of course, millions which have not yet been reclaimed. Of the 48,000,000, we know, from the annual Agricultural Returns, that there have been 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ millions let down in permanent pasture, leaving only 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ millions actually being tilled! In other words, there is of good land put out of tillage an area equal to the whole surface of Scotland, with seven of the Northern Counties of England added. This calls up the spectacle of a fine rich island, one third larger than Scotland or Ireland, standing out in the Atlantic, with not a spade or a plough, and not a grain of seed going into the ground, and yielding nothing but what unaided nature calls forth.

Put these 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ millions in another form. They would afford a farm of 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres to each of a million families, or five million souls. But, of such good land farms of half that size—namely, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres each—would suit better, and thus afford holdings for two million heads of families, or ten millions of people—more than the entire population of Scotland and Ireland put together! These millions of farms are much better situated for the purposes of trade and agriculture, of employment and income, than if in an island in the Atlantic or stretching along the banks of the Ohio or the Nile. They are lying in patches in every county in England, Ireland, and Scotland, just where they are wanted. If these 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ million acres were in an island or on a distant continent, ships and railways and innumerable equipments would be required to transport the people to them, and, after the money required for emigration had been spent, there would be further sums required to build houses and to buy seed, manure, and implements. As those millions of acres are at present distributed there need be no expenditure in transporting the people to them. All that is required is an authority in every parish to redistribute the land among the people on the spot.

Supposing these millions of acres brought into cultivation according to the rules of approved farming, there would be of grain, of potatoes, of milk, butter, and cheese, of beef, bacon, vegetables, &c., what would keep in the country the greater part of the money now sent to other parts of the world for agricultural products. This money would go to the villages, but it would not remain there. The tillers of the soil would distribute it among the tradesmen and dealers around them; the tradesmen would send it off to the towns and cities, where it would pay for the goods now lying on the shelves and in the stores of grumbling merchants and manufacturers.

The year before last £144,000,000 sterling were paid away for imported articles of food which could be raised at home. There was a talk of giving a spur to trade by expending £7,000,000 on ships of war. These £7,000,000, put where it would promote the cultivation of the ground, would be reproductive, and would go on for generations yielding and returning more and more. The money spent on gunboats is spent unproductively. And what are £7,000,000 to £144,000,000?

These £144,000,000, expended at home, would give so much employment on the land and so much in the towns that in a very short time trade would revive and improve to such a degree that manufacturers could not meet the demand. They would call in more men until the labour market was drained, and still the supply would not be equal to the demand. Masters would then begin to compete for men, so that wages would rise and hours could be reduced to what the workers thought proper to stipulate.

GOD SPEED THE SPADE.

There are plenty of living witnesses (says a contemporary) who can testify that, while the agricultural returns give, as the country's average, 29 bushels of wheat to the acre, the spade produces 40 and 50 and 60 bushels; and General Sir Arthur Cotton, by very deep digging, has recently been realising the enormous yields of 100 and 140 bushels to the acre. It is, therefore, principally a question of cultivation, of which there are now three recognised systems—the old plough system, which skims the surface and goes about six inches deep, is called extensive; the free use of artificial manures, stimulating heavy crops, but quickly exhausting the soil, is called intensive; but that which, like the spade and the new steam-digger, go deeper down, is called thorough—it turns up part of the subsoil, and the invaluable phosphates along with it, and when that subsoil is well broken and thoroughly exposed to the light and moisture of the atmosphere, with its treasures of ammonia, and well manured, the best possible conditions of great fruitfulness are secured. It is an astonishing thing, but no man in the kingdom has ever proved what six acres can be made to produce irrespective of cost. We have no such data, and we want to provide them. Land is the honestest thing in the world—the better we treat it, the more we are rewarded. Moreover, it is one of the settled things in husbandry, that the spade will always beat the plough.

Highland Notes.

On Saturday, 21st July, a meeting of the Executive of the Highland Land League was held in the offices of Mr. John Macrae, solicitor, Dingwall, to make arrangements for the forthcoming conference and demonstration at Bonar-Bridge. There were present, Mr. J. G. Mackay, Portree, President of the League; Mr. Myles Macinnes, Portree; Mr. G. G. Macleod, Ardgay, treasurer; Mr. J. Macleod, Dingwall, late of Brora; Mr. W. Ross, ploughmen secretary; and Mr. Macrae. The meeting provisionally fixed upon Wednesday, 5th September, at 1 p.m., for the conference, and the demonstration for the following day at 3 p.m. It was agreed to invite Messrs. Michael Davitt, John Burns, Tenant, Munro-Ferguson, Dr. Wallace, Sir Charles Cameron, Sir John Leng, and other Liberals and land law reformers to the meeting. It was arranged that the President, Mr. J. G. Mackay,

would preside at the conference, and Mr. Angus Sutherland, M.P., at the demonstration.

We understand that Mr. Donald MacRae, of Balallan, has resolved to contest the County of Inverness at the next general election as an advanced Radical and Land Law reform candidate.

Until the beginning of the present century all the arable land and pastures of the island of Iona were held in common; the inhabitants had their dwellings either in the village of Balimore or its immediate vicinity. They were like the Jews of old, having had to watch their sheep and cattle all night on the hills during summer and harvest time. However, about 80 years ago all the arable land on the island was divided into 30 separate small farms or crofts; but about 47 years ago, owing to the failure of the potato crop and other circumstances, a considerable number of the crofters emigrated to the Colonies, and their vacant crofts were then joined and put into three ordinary-sized farms. The tenants of these three farms are entitled to keep 15 cows with their followers, a pair of horses, and about 120 sheep. At present there are three farmers and seventeen crofters on the island, who are divided into two townships. As a rule the crofts consist of about fifteen acres more or less, eight acres of it being arable land and the rest pasture. Each crofter is entitled to keep six milch cows with their followers and one horse, with a share of the large hill common, which extends to over 1600 acres, for grazing their sheep and cattle. The rents vary considerably, but the average is about £11.—*Oban Times.*

Foreign News.

A Single Tax Member of the New Zealand Parliament writes to Mr. Michael Davitt *inter alia*—"I am in communication with the editors of the *San Francisco Star* and the *St. Louis Courier*. They assure me that George's ideas are making wonderful progress and Mr. George himself, in a letter to me, says 'The Single Tax idea will shew itself shortly in our politics in great force.' In the neighbouring Australian Colonies also equally cheering news is heard. There are three papers there specially devoted to advocating the principle, and in Sydney recently the land grabbers have become so alarmed that they have formed a Defence League to fight the Single Taxers."

The General Election just over in New South Wales has resulted in a Free Trade victory. The Ministerial Protectionists have secured 39 seats, the Labour parties 28, and the Free Traders 58. Some sweeping Constitutional changes have been made in the Colony. Formerly there were 74 districts returning 147 members; now there are 125 districts, each returning one member. All property qualifications for electors have been abolished, and one man one vote, with a three months' residential qualification, obtains. There were no less than 527 candidates for the 125 seats.

The attempt at Hyattsville, Maryland, U.S.A., to exempt improvements from municipal taxation, having been declared unconstitutional, a new charter has been drafted and introduced into the Maryland Senate, reincorporating the Town of Hyattsville, and permitting the reformed method of taxation.

Judge James G. Maguire has introduced to Congress a Bill "to provide increased revenue by a direct tax on the value of land in the United States."

Henry George has been asked to explain the Single Tax before the Legislature of New York State.

"Free Land League" is the title of a new organisation, formed in New York, with the following platform:—"America is fast becoming the property of a few. All men have a right to live without paying some one else rent. We would abolish this system of landlordism, which is killing American manhood, by concentrating all taxes on land values, thus making cheap land and high wages."