

## The Campaign in Great Britain

### TORIES, LIBERALS AND LABORITES ALL AGREE

THE impending General Election has produced a crop of "Manifestoes." The Tory, Labor, I. L. P., and Liberal Parties have each put one forth, and the bewildered elector will find it no easy matter to detect any fundamental difference between these pronouncements. Without exception, all are alike based on a concept of the community as a group of utterly helpless beings who require to be nursed, tended and controlled throughout life by some one (or more) of the increasing army of inspectors, drawn from the ranks of the "ruling" class. Against this false concept we of the Commonwealth Land Party unceasingly protest.

The normal human is far from helpless. Indeed, he is the most resourceful and adaptable in the whole of animal Creation. It is only where he is in bondage that he waits for someone to set him to work. He is in bondage today, and to that fact is due the seeming helplessness of the army of unemployed now in our midst. As to the cause of that bondage and the way of escape, all four manifestoes are silent. That this silence is due to ignorance we fully believe, for those at the head of the various political parties are just as humane as the rest of us, and equally sincere in their desire to see the sore evils of the body politic—poverty and its awful consequences—removed, or, if their imagination cannot yet picture the entire disappearance of poverty, at least, considerably mitigated.

#### DRESSED WITH A LITTLE BRIEF AUTHORITY

To take Mr. Baldwin first. On Monday he quoted Disraeli, and applied his words to his own party. "When a Minister has to deal with the general arrangements of the commercial affairs of the country, he has two main objects to attain—first, how to employ the people; and, secondly, to secure them a variety of employment which in the case of failure of any particular branch may prevent their being left without employment."

It is utterly ridiculous to suppose that the commercial or other affairs of the country are "arranged" by any Minister. All that such can do is to throw a monkey-wrench into the machine every time they interfere. Does Mr. Baldwin really think that were there no Cabinet, the affairs of the country could be any worse than now? The people themselves always arrange, and they do it the better in proportion as they enjoy freedom from Governmental interference or restriction.

So far as Mr. Baldwin's manifesto goes, it is a case of "keep the home fires burning" on a diminished purchasing power, due to robbery under Protection. Even he has been forced to admit that "It may well be that before the re-adjustment comes between the home production and the

imported production you may have in some articles a rise in price." As Mr. (now Lord) Balfour said, "The object of Protection being to encourage industries, the means by which it obtains that object is by the manipulation of a fiscal system to raise home prices." So that, camouflage it how he may, it is his intention to raise the cost of living at home in the hope that in some strange way there may be more employment result. At all times a reduction in the purchasing power of the masses has been followed immediately by an increase in the amount of unemployment. All experience is against him, however, and should he get a majority and put his new-found policy into operation, nothing but disaster will follow for this people.

#### THE LABOR PARTY

With this opening statement on the subject of Tariffs we are in full accord. "They are an impediment to the free interchange of goods and services upon which civilized society rests. They foster a spirit of profiteering, materialism and selfishness, poison the life of nations, lead to corruption in politics, promote trusts and monopolies, and impoverish the people." As to unemployment, we are told that "The Labor Party alone has a positive remedy." This is to take the form of "national schemes of productive work, with adequate maintenance for those who cannot obtain employment to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families." So there is still to be unemployment in spite of the "positive remedy!"

"The Labor Programme of National Work includes the establishment of a national system of electrical power supply, the development of transport by road, rail and canal, and the improvement of national resources by land drainage reclamation, afforestation, town planning and housing schemes. These not only provide a remedy for the present distress, but are also investments for the future." They certainly are—for the Land Lords! As Thorold Rogers wrote:—"Every permanent improvement, every bettering of the general condition of the people raises rent."

In regard to Agriculture, we read:—"The Labor policy is one that will develop agriculture and raise the standard of rural life by establishing machinery for regulating wages with an assured minimum." Here we have that hoary old fallacy that wages can be regulated by Statute. As well enact that the sun shall in future conform to "summer time," or that the law of gravitation be suspended. Then as to that "assured minimum." When will the workers get away from that slave mentality which asks for a "minimum?" Surely the trouble is that they are always on the minimum.

Next comes The Land. "The Labor Party proposes to restore to the people their lost rights in the land, including minerals." We had supposed that minerals were land, but let that pass. It is refreshing to find "land" mentioned in a Labor pronouncement. The Commonwealth Land Party may take some credit for having brought this subject to the notice of the leaders of Labor, but their education is

not yet quite complete. We are not told how it is proposed "to restore our lost rights in the land," whether by the impossible method of the Snowden Nationalisation Bill, with its 50 years' purchase of the rental value of our "lost rights," or by the fundamental demand of the Commonwealth Land Party which Ramsay MacDonald prevented the delegates to Labor's last Annual Conference from endorsing.

In the Speaker's Handbook of the Party we read (p. 90):—"Abolition of Landlordism. The substitution of public for private ownership in the land (subject to equitable treatment of each person whose property is required for the public good . . . underlies, in principle, all its specific proposals." This is the dishonest purchase method camouflaged under the guise of "equitable treatment." After the reference in the Manifesto to the Land Valuation Department, we are not at all surprised to find the Taxation of Land Values mentioned quite casually. The Department is to be "re-equipped" for "securing to the community the economic rent of land, and facilitating the acquisition of land for public use." This savours of purchase, and the economic rent of the land will never be secured to the community that way. Has not Major Attlee declared for "permanent, not life, bonds," interest bearing and heritable?

We note that the Taxation of Land Values is to make possible a reduction in the burden of the income tax, abolish food duties, etc.—perhaps it was an accident that put income tax *first* in this connection. For over 40 years past, since the Newcastle Programme, the Liberal Party have dangled this bait before the British electors. Taxation of Land Values was one of the main planks in their platform—but they were very chary of standing upon it. At a time of acute and unprecedented economic crisis, when nothing short of a drastic and revolutionary change will meet the needs of a people broken after a "victorious" war, it was Arthur Henderson, Secretary of the Labor Party, who stole this bunch of mouldy carrots from the Liberals and held it before the electors at the by-election in Newcastle, last January. On this "fundamental" issue there is no difference between Liberal and Labor, and it is not to be wondered at that quite comfortable old Tories are remarking one to the other, as happened in our hearing on a recent journey from the North, "I don't seem to mind the Labor Party now so much, do you? The leaders are quite reasonable men!" They are—well, let us say "reasonable." It requires courage and honesty to go right out for the immediate restoration to the people of their lost rights in the land. It is little use appealing to the people, as the authors of this Manifesto do in their concluding note, to "make a generous and courageous stand for right and justice," unless they are themselves quite free from any suspicion of playing for safety.

Alone of all the parties, the Commonwealth Land Party stands four square for right and justice in demanding the immediate restoration of our lost rights without one penny of compensation to those now improperly withholding them.

#### THE I. L. P.

The framers of this Manifesto live in a world of their own. Words, words, words, without a single constructive idea emerging. An undefined something called "Socialism" is called for, with plenty of "must" and "control." But after all, perhaps it is too much to expect any practical proposals from a party that has attained its 31st year without yet having made up what it is pleased to call its mind upon the fundamental question of man's relation to the raw material of his very being—the Land. "The State *must* control the nation's credit power, industry *must* become a public service, and land a national heritage!" Have not these wise ones yet learned that land is now, and has always been, a national heritage? The trouble is that the heritage is being stolen from us daily. Even in the select inner circle of the I. L. P. are to be found those who profit by the evil thing. To the theft of our heritage—a continuing offence—is due the phenomenon of willing workers unwillingly idle. Stop the theft, and the workers would employ themselves: but that would not be Socialism, cry the defenders of landlordism in the I. L. P. Perhaps not! But it would be commonsense, and in accord with justice.

#### THE LIBERAL PARTY

From the newly united Liberal Party comes a long Manifesto over the signatures of Mr. Asquith, and "Two Eagles," a redoubtable Sioux Chief of Welsh extraction, lately returned from a tour of the U. S. A. "The Liberal Party," it declares, "is not content with criticising the proposals of others. The country has made enormous sacrifices to restore the national credit. A bold and courageous use should be made of that credit on enterprises that would permanently improve and develop the home country and the Empire; such as internal transport by road and water, afforestation, the supply of cheap power secured by the co-ordinated use of *our* resources of coal and water, reclamation and drainage of land."

This is just the same game of enriching the Land Lords by way of costly improvements that both the Labor Party and the Tory Party favor, and which at best can only temporarily affect the question of unemployment. "Liberal policy concentrates upon lifting from the homes of the poor those burdens and anxieties of the old, the sick, and the widow with young children, which the community has power and the duty to relieve." When the National Insurance Act was imposed upon the people by Lloyd George, we recall a leaflet, issued by the Liberal Publication Department, in which a very harrowing story of East-End poverty was told; how the breadwinner fell sick, the home was being sold up by degrees, and then "the benefits began to flow. Ten shillings a week came in, *it paid the rent.*" Yes, a great deal of anxiety was removed when the landlords knew that the rent would be provided for under the paternalistic Insurance scheme. Again, we remember that shortly after Old Age Pensions became payable, there

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