

SEPTEMBER PUBLIC FORUM

The public forum on September 13 was the best attended to date. Subject was "The Land Question in India" discussion being led by Mr. C. P. Wohlers, municipal valuer.

Mr. Wohlers dealt with the actions of the Indian Government towards solution of the land problem in rural areas. States held by the independent princes such as The Nizam of Hyderabad had been resumed sometimes with compensation in others without. This example was cited where the Nizam's tenants had been called on to pay up to 70 per cent. of their produce in rent. With direct tenancy to the State the rent was reduced to 4 per cent. Investigation was being made of use made of land and where found inadequate resumption and reallocation was made.

Mr. Wohlers considered a great deal of improvement was already evident in the condition of farmers and others and that irrigation projects now in hand would further raise conditions.

Opposition of landholders dispossessed had weakened with the evident improvement in conditions of the people.

Mr. E. F. Halkyard, who had been resident for many years in India, spoke also on the earlier history of the land problem in India and gave a different viewpoint. He thought most solid ground for solving the land question in India lay with municipal administrations and their rating of site values. In the ultimate, the public collection of land rent from urban centres was more important than rural.

Questions were asked to Mr. Wohlers and answered on various points then the meeting was thrown open to the public to comment briefly or present further views. A very interesting and informative evening then closed.