

"Therefore, we demand the immediate creation of an *Imperial Housing Bureau*.

"In the future, land must serve exclusively for production and nevermore as a source of profit made without labor.

"The land of Germany must belong in usufruct to those who wish to employ it for homes. He who already has a plot of land leased from the State or Municipality may retain free title thereto under this law, if he so desires.

"Anyone desirous may obtain a similar plot of land.

"The welfare of the people is superior to the profit of speculators!

"Only in this way shall we attain to respect for honest labor and to internal peace."

The above proclamation, says Mr. Wittstein, is an historical document in the history of German labor and in that of the Georgist movement. He further announces that, since the 29th of April, 1920, the Housing Bureau Law is an accomplished fact, and predicts that Herr Damaschke, president of the Georgist League, will be first head of the Bureau.

Mr. Wittstein also makes the statement that the Duke and Duchess of Hesse, and Marshals Hindenburg and Ludendorff are Georgists, which is interesting if true.

## Great Britain\*

THE Finance Bill, which passed the House of Commons, repeals the Land Values Duties, stops the work of land valuation, and excuses the payment of duties in arrears. Thus comes to an end, temporarily at least, the work begun by the Liberals in the famous Budget contest of 1910. The drama, of which Churchill declared theatrically, in accordance with the histrionic habit of the gentleman, "We are ringing up the curtain on a play that is going to have a long run;" has now reached its final act until the audience demands that the curtain be rung up again.

The debate in the Commons was interesting. Asquith's speech, in which he sought to justify his own record at the expense of his associates, was a masterpiece of hypocrisy. But the country heard some straight-out doctrine of the "the land for the People" uttered on the floor of the Commons, and for the benefit of American readers we present the following remarks of Peter Wilson Raffan, M.P.:

"I rise to oppose this motion. We have now come to the conclusion of this part of the Finance Bill.

"Every political economist from the time of Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Professor Marshall has suggested that there is no tax which a community might more properly employ than a tax upon the land values which the community itself has created. There were innumerable Royal Commissions and Select Committees in regard to this matter, and as far back as 1885 a Royal Commission recommended that there should be such a levy on land values, bearing in mind the fact that enormous sums, running into many millions, created by the community, passed into private hands, the community receiving no levy from it whatever.

\* This matter gleaned from our valued English contemporary, *Land and Liberty*, was in type for last issue, but was crowded out. It is now somewhat belated, but of no less interest.

The great agitation conducted by the present Prime Minister, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, prior to the passing of the 1909-10 Budget, had its root in this desire, that those who were obtaining these large social values for themselves should be called upon to make a contribution to the public revenue. The Prime Minister pointed out again and again how, in his view, those who were able to obtain for themselves these social values had done nothing to earn them. In picturesque language he spoke of the case of London, and he asked what the great London landowners had done which entitled them to the millions of ground rents they were able annually to apply to their own purposes. He said these great London landowners had done nothing by the exercise of their enterprise or by their own expenditure to create these values. London was a swamp, and the landowners did not even create that, and upon that theory he based his scheme that there should be legislation with regard to this matter. In order to show that I am not misrepresenting what the Prime Minister said, let me give a very brief quotation from a speech which he delivered in Carnarvon in December, 1909, in connection with the agitation with reference to this point. He was then in the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said:

"We would say the country has need of money, and we are looking out for someone to tax."

"We do not want to tax food; we will tax no man's raiment; we will not tax the house that shelters him and his family. What shall we tax? We do not want to tax industry; we do not want to tax enterprise; we do not want to tax commerce. What shall we tax? We will tax the man who is getting something he never earned, that he never produced, and that by no law of justice or fairness ought ever to belong to him."

Holding these views, he endeavored to give legislative effect to them in the Budget of 1909-10. I admit at once that, in my view, his legislative achievement did not fully realize the anticipations he had held out to the country. (Hon. Members: "Hear, hear.") Hon. Members cheer, but why was that so? It was because from the start there was such a rally on the part of the landlord class and those whom they could influence against that Budget, that, even before the Budget was introduced, compromise had begun. Instead of having the direct tax upon land values which the country had been led to expect, we had these taxes which we are discussing today, the Increment Value Duty, the Reversion Duty, and the Undeveloped Land Duty.

"The landowners of the country formed themselves into an organization which sought to repeal the Budget and get rid of the valuation and of any levy on Land Values. So far as they were content with public agitation, one has no complaint to make. They had every right to make an appeal on the ground of reason and argument to their fellow countrymen. That appeal, however, did not fall on very fruitful ground. Whenever elections took place on this issue, whether general elections or by-elections, the Land Union cut a sorry figure. At the election in January, 1910, and again in December, 1919, large majorities of the people of this country expressed their approval of the proposal embodied in the Budget, that there should be a levy on Land Values. Even subsequently, when the Courts had begun to give decisions, and it was evident that the duties were not of the full effect that was expected in regard to productions of revenue, the candidates who were most successful in a whole series of by-elections were those who declared that the work already done ought not to be scrapped, but that we should go forward and make an effective levy on Land Values."

"The manhood of this country has been engaged from 1914 onwards fighting the battles of this country. They were appealed to by a recruiting poster, which pointed out to them the bounties of the land, and underneath was the legend, 'Is not this a land worth fighting for?' The men of this land thought it was a land worth fighting for, and in France, Flanders, Mesopotamia, in every field of battle, they performed prodigies of valor. When these men come back I think they are entitled to say that at least some share of the value which they created and which they fought to defend should go to the common people. In my view, these are the changes which have come about as the result of the War. So far from being any justification for abolishing the valuation and abolishing these duties, in my view they give a triple reinforcement to the policy which the Prime Minister advocated in 1914. I think we are entitled to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if in his view there can be any reason except purely political motives for the action which he has taken."

"There is no movement which has so profoundly touched the hearts of the people of this country as the movement for the reassertion of the rights of the people in the land, and although the right hon. Gentleman, who has, like the Leader of the House, fought these duties tenaciously, step by step and inch by inch, now has the satisfaction of seeing his policy carried through, I am quite certain that his action is only stirring up again a sentiment upon this question. Before many years are over we will have another Chancellor of the Exchequer—"

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: "I hope so."

MR. RAFFAN: "Who, although he could not be a more industrious or a more conscientious one, will on this matter be in greater accord with the sentiments of the vast majority of the people of this country and will give us in place of these paltry Land Values a real tax upon Land Values which will amount to a reassertion of the rights of the people to the land that God has given them."

Mr. Myers (Labor) spoke as follows in the course of the debate:

"I shall be echoing the sentiment of every Member in this House when I say we all pay a tribute to the hon. Member who has just sat down, not only for his excellent and, in my view, unanswerable speech, but for the long period of sacrifice, energy, and enthusiasm which he has given to this question, both inside and outside the House. I feel that very little I can say will go in the direction of emphasizing the case he has presented, but there are one or two points of detail to which I may refer. Everything that has been said by the hon. Member through the quotations he has read to us as to the position in 1910 could be reasserted today with infinitely greater emphasis. The needs are greater, the demand is much more pressing, and the general situation in the country demands that something of the sort claimed then should be carried out now.

"We have always asserted, like the hon. Member who has just sat down, that increasing Land Values are due absolutely to social developments, that Land Values are a social product, and ought to go back into the common fund, for the benefit of the community as a whole, never mind when or at what point. That is the general position upon which we stand.

Instances innumerable could be produced to show how in the development of towns, local rates have gone in one direction and the real proceeds of the value of the land has gone in another. In my immediate neighborhood agricultural land is let at £1 and £1 10s. per acre. I have watched the

district develop, houses and factories galore have been erected, and there is great difficulty in purchasing land—the land is taken largely on lease—and I know innumerable instances where agricultural land which was occupied as farming land and the rent of which was about £1 or £1 10s. per acre has been let for building land at 6d. a yard, which is £120 an acre; and the responsibility the landowner had for the local rates has instantly been removed from him. As soon as a house has been erected upon that site, the responsibility for the local rates has gone on to the bricks and mortar, and the landlord has walked away with the ground rent in his pocket and with no responsibilities to the locality.

I am a believer in the doctrine that the entire increment of land should come to the community. The late Herbert Spencer, reactionary though he was in his later days, made a very definite pronouncement on this matter. He said, 'The right of mankind at large to the earth's surface is still valid, all deeds, laws and customs notwithstanding.' I agree with that declaration. I have advocated that doctrine, and I hope to do so again, and until the time comes when the community at large can secure for itself that heritage and rightful possession which I think it ought to secure of the income arising from these duties for public use and for public purposes."

We say Asquith's speech was hypocritical, for he dexterously sought to shift the blame for his own paltering policy to the shoulders of his former colleagues. But he did not escape wholly scot free. After reiterating his faith in the taxation of land values, and quoting from his own Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1914 that the Government through their Chief had accepted the policy —

Mr. Asquith: "What had happened to make this Cabinet decision a negligible thing?" Col. Wedgewood interjected: "The Right Honorable Gentleman forgot the people who put him into power. That is what happened."

To which Mr. Asquith suavely replied:

"I am always interested in the remarks of my honorable and gallant friend, but I fail to see the relevance of that remark. I have not changed my view."

Mr. A. W. Madsen, in *Land and Liberty*, in his usual thorough manner, explains the situation as it stands. While the work of valuation is discontinued the machinery for valuation is not "scrapped." Every sale or transfer of land is to be made of record in the Department, and the particulars recorded. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has promised that the public will have access to the information so far collected. Thus the Department stays, but as Mr. Madsen explains merely as "a land registry and a sort of appeal court for the Government when land has to be acquired for public purposes."

Thus the great issue, which might easily be made the burning one, is for the time being laid aside. The "Great Betrayal," as Henry George Chancellor calls it in an article which he contributes to *Land and Liberty*, is complete. In the meantime a budget is introduced which takes over a thousand million pounds in taxes on commodities, profits and incomes. Mr. Chancellor says:

"Every housewife, every workman, every business and professional man must bear unheard-of burdens. And this is the time chosen not only to take off the duties on

land, but write off taxes owing to the State and even to refund those which have been paid."

And the reason for this change of policy, for the extraordinary reversal of the Prime Minister's declarations made in speeches which shook the pillars of British landed privilege, is given by Mr. Chancellor in the following words:

"Power is sweet. With his present colleagues its retention is only possible by betraying his principles. Therefore the valuation, the existing taxes and the principles themselves must go, that the Prime Minister may continue Prime Minister."

## The Dawn of Civilization

A FAVORITE refuge for those who, seeing the irrefutable logic of the Single Tax position, wish to avoid conceding that it should be generally adopted, is the admission that had it been applied "in the beginning" all would have been well, but "it is impossible in the present advanced stage of civilization." Infant civilizations are always starting newly in various parts of the world, and observation of the circumstances under which they bud and flower are of great scientific interest. One of the latest civilizations to get under way is in British East Africa. The administrative centre seems to be Nairobi, which Theodore Roosevelt immortalized by using it as the starting point of his big game drives.

The British have recently started to bring this territory within the pale of civilization. The first step of course was to clear away the natives, so that the white settlers might be free to take up the white man's burden without ill-advised protests by the aborigines. The method adopted by ourselves of confining the ousted natives to "reservations" was followed. The new settlers came, took up the lands allotted them and then recognized that they had only one ingredient of the wealth which they had come to Africa to accumulate. They had the land—the raw material—but where was the labor to work it? For though it might be a white man's country in the sense of ownership, it was not a white man's country to work.

Of course the situation was highly exasperating. Here were reservations full of lazy, idle natives, leading care-free lives, quite oblivious of their duty to the Empire, and not a man of them willing to work for the white settlers. The aid of the Government was sought and a poll tax imposed—not a poll tax for revenue, but just for the purpose of making these idlers come off the reservations and work for people who could pay them real money wherewith to pay their taxes. But even this did not work, because the natives managed to raise enough on the reservations to sell and pay their poll taxes.

Now another appeal to the Government for help is made and we see the results in an official *White Paper* recently published, which is reprinted in the *Nation* (New York). It is a document calculated to make you break your heart

or split your sides according to the sort of temperament you have.

Of course slave or "forced" labor is not to be even thought of under the fostering folds of the Union Jack. The euphemism of "compulsory" labor was employed during the war to describe the conditions of employment, which necessity compelled. Now, that pretext having ceased to function, all the British officials and the headmen of the various tribes are enjoined by the High Commissioner to see that each community furnishes to the settlers such a quota of laborers, as its size may justify; and the employment of women and children under proper safeguards, of course, is strongly urged. Those who do not co-operate are warned that their names will be reported to the higher authorities. Young men of the tribes are to be compelled to pay their own poll taxes out of money earned by themselves.

Probably little would have been heard of the matter outside of Nairobi, were it not that three Bishops of the Church of Scotland Mission, perhaps fearing the effect of the compulsory labor plan on the spiritual enthusiasm of their converts, ventured upon a respectful remonstrance, pointing out that however carefully worded the High Commissioner's edict might be, it would inevitably be interpreted by the ignorant as a demand for forced labor. Especially were they concerned over the demand for woman and child labor, of the evil consequences of which they already had abundant demonstrations.

This remonstrance was too serious to be turned down by local administrations, so it was sent to Lord Milner for reply. That eminent satrap's answer was a model of diplomatic evasion. In ordinary language its meaning could be put in five sentences, somewhat as follows: "We wish those old Jossers would keep to their own affairs. We need that labor and we are going to have it. Of course, we would prefer that it should be voluntary and without any row, but we are going to have it, cost what it may. It is necessary for the development of the Empire!"

But he takes a couple of thousand words to say it, so that its essential ruthlessness is obscured. Doubtless he feels that it is only "human nature" for the settlers to want the natives to do their work. We could tell him how to proceed, without any question of slave labor being involved. Just take away the reservations as they have confiscated the rest of the land of the natives. Sell the land or give it away to new settlers, and then these benighted Africans will come around, and pray for the men who give them the chance to work. But we fear that as long as these heathen are permitted to retain their reservations there will be trouble and the beneficent designs of the civilizers of British East Africa will fail of fulfillment. With their land taken away, the natives will be in the same position as American labor, organized and unorganized, finds itself at the expiration of the war, with no weapon of self-protection but the strike. And with all its splendid dreams of sharing the Empire of Capitalism (to use the language of our Socialist brethren) going a-glimmering.