

inclined to look at our practical proposals for raising revenue to meet the deficit is as it may be.

We propose the taxation and rating of land values for quite a different reason, namely, to relieve industry of the burden it now bears, and to free the land from the deadly and choking grip of the monopolist. We propose taxation of land values to bring land into the market and in this way to lead to the expansion of industry, to the employment of labour on land held from labour at speculation prices. This is our job to make and maintain public opinion for this "penalising policy." To this end we must strive all we know how to keep our forces intact, to keep our doors open and our various leagues ready, when the time comes, to resume our propaganda at the old pace.

Quite a number of our supporters are giving freely to the various relief funds and schemes promoted to cope with the terrible hardship and misery so bravely endured one way or another by the victims of the war and their dependents. We rejoice in this spirit of sympathy and liberality on the part of our people; we would not have it otherwise, but nevertheless we feel constrained to remind them of the movement which has had in the past their constant and abiding care, the movement which they believe in as one pregnant with hope for the future. We do not intend, we do not require, to argue the case with our friends for their consideration. The movement is theirs as well as ours, and our faith in it is no greater than their own. We are persuaded that as an agency to advance our common cause the United Committee and the Associated Leagues have been fully justified in recent years in what they have striven to accomplish to arouse sentiment in the country for our practical policy and to bring it to its present position in Parliament.

But we rest our claim not on past effort, but rather on the task which is ours in the future, let us hope in the near future. The war cloud will pass away in due time, but our ideas of how to establish enduring peace will remain, and we must not slacken in our zeal and enthusiasm to make these ideas quickly ripen into action. The sentiment is heard on every hand that this war must be an end of all war. So may it be. But we Single Taxers, we who stand for an equitable distribution of wealth as a means to peace and progress, know that such wars will come again and again if the social problem be not solved. The war on the battlefield, with all its passion and hatred seems, nay is, the very essence of human folly and cruelty. But it cannot endure. Not so the war in the slums against poverty, the war with hard times, the war with disease and death which spring from chronic unemployment and low wages, the war with consumption which is the daily lot of millions condemned to live in the overcrowded sections of our towns and cities, the war against selfishness, apathy and ignorance. This is the war which, always present, will remain with us in all its hideousness, when the last gun has been fired and the last man has fallen on the blood-stained fields of Europe.

This is the war we are out to end, for we know that only as it ended can we be assured of an advancing civilisation.

When this titanic struggle between the armed forces of the Continent is over, and reason is once again at her difficult but never despairing task of engaging enthusiasm in the bloodless campaign for freedom and justice, we must see to it that our voice shall be heard and our influence felt in the market place and in the senate. It is for this purpose, for the task which is ours and which we are called upon to complete, that we ask our friends and supporters everywhere to join in the effort being made to keep our forces together at this time.

J. P.

COTTON TRADE CRISIS

By ARTHUR H. WELLER.

The President of the Local Government Board has issued a statement in which he says "The fears of a deep and widespread dislocation of trade have happily not been realised, and except in a few particular trades unemployment has proved to be much less serious than was anticipated." Another authority, Mr. Chiozza Money, has also on several occasions assured the public that the expectation of great distress and unemployment was a delusion, and he explained what may have appeared to some people to be neglect, by writing in the *DAILY NEWS* of October 7th:—"I did not take the trouble to advise governing powers how to cope with an enormous and unprecedented amount of unemployment for the simple reason that I did not believe that it would occur." Equally comforting, but misleading, are the Board of Trade returns for September, which show that unemployment had fallen by 1.5 as compared with the preceding month. These figures, however, only refer to total unemployment and give no indication of the great volume of partial unemployment due to works running on short time.

In Lancashire, besides a high percentage of unemployment, the short time worked is estimated to be equal to a complete stoppage of 50 per cent. or more. It is not likely, therefore, that these views of trade experts will bring much comfort to the people engaged in the Lancashire cotton industry. The outlook here is decidedly bad, even if the cotton trade be considered only one of the "few particular trades" which were excepted in the Local Government Board's statement. In any case the following opinions of practical men are interesting, if only by way of contrast. Sir Charles Macara, a man of wide experience whose opinions carry weight in cotton circles, says:—"The complete closing down of the mills in Lancashire in a short time is certain. That will be a national disaster of such magnitude that practically every industry of the country will be adversely affected." Mr. William Tattersall, another well-known authority on Lancashire's staple industry, wrote to the *DAILY NEWS* on October 3rd to the effect that the outlook in the cotton industry was very black. He believed that 75 per cent. of the weaving machinery would be idle before the end of November.

Many mills in Blackburn are still working out orders which were on the books before the war began, but a prominent manufacturer of that town is of the opinion that not a single day's work has been booked in Blackburn since war was declared. The position of the Trade Unions is serious, and this is recognised by the Government's decision to make emergency grants to voluntary associations which provide benefits for their unemployed members. It is stated by the *LABOUR LEADER* that the textile unions paid out during August and September ten times as much in unemployment

benefits as was paid during the whole of 1913. The foregoing are sufficient to show the effect of the war upon the cotton trade. The situation is alarming, and efforts are being made to cope with it.

THE SUPPLY OF COTTON

An opinion widely held is that the crisis is largely due to, or is aggravated by, a surplus supply of cotton. "The position the war has brought about," says Sir Charles Macara, "is that instead of a scarcity of cotton we have one-third of the raw cotton of the world for which there are no buyers." This too-abundant supply of cotton on the market creates an uncertainty as regards prices, and so the buying of cotton is at a standstill and cotton operatives are out of work. The effect of the price of cotton falling in accordance with the big supply and small demand, would be to reduce next year's crop by driving many planters out of the business. On the one hand, it is said, the artificially-maintained high price of cotton in this country—due to operations in Liverpool—is deterring manufacturers from keeping their people employed in manufacturing for stock. On the other hand, if cotton could be obtained at its present true market-value, there would be a disastrous shortage of raw cotton next year.

It was reported in a recent issue of the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN* that a commission of experts appointed by the Egyptian Government had been making inquiries in London and Lancashire into the prospects of the demand for Egyptian cotton, and that the Government was proposing a compulsory reduction in 1915 of nearly 60 per cent. of the acreage devoted to its production. The correspondent who sends these particulars gives some interesting information about the effect of this industry upon the value of Egyptian land. "The result of the very high prices obtained for the crop in recent years," he tells us, "has simply been to raise the level of rents and the price of land in Egypt to an extent probably unequalled in any agricultural country in the world. Rents of £10 to £15 an acre have become quite common . . . a fall in the price of the crop must sooner or later produce a fall in these high rents, and there are indications that the landlords are prepared to demand any sacrifice of other interests concerned rather than suffer such a fall."

DEMAND FOR COTTON GOODS

Amongst the various proposals for dealing with the crisis the following are of interest:—Sir Charles Macara says the remedy is clear. "The Governments of this country and the United States must jointly create a reserve of the raw cotton which is not required now, and thus secure the position of the planter and insure the continuity of supply for future years . . . if this is done the cotton industry might be carried on by working half or even full time during the whole of the war." Another proposal is to establish a "futures" market and a "spot" market in Manchester in order to protect cotton spinners against the domination exercised by Liverpool in maintaining high prices.

These views are fairly representative. Interest seems to be mainly concentrated on the question of the supply of cotton, and very little attention is given to the effective demand for cotton goods. It would appear to be the opinion of some of these people that production determines consumption; certainly the proposed step to regulate the supply and the price of raw material is beginning at the wrong end. The truth is that the demand for consumption determines the direction in which labour will be expended in production. The real cause of the abnormal depression in the Lancashire cotton industry and the consequent surplus of raw cotton, is the reduced demand for cotton goods—the loss of customers—occasioned by the war. Eighty per cent. of our cotton manufactures are sent abroad, and most of this trade has been brought to a close, at least temporarily, as well as a considerable falling off

in the home-consumption of the remaining twenty per cent. This is accounted for in the *MONTHLY COTTON TRADE CIRCULAR* by the remarkable statement that "the fact of the matter is the world is over-supplied in cotton goods, and there will have to be a depletion of stocks before fresh buying of importance can take place."

Little need be said to show the absurdity of the idea that people are poor because they have created too much wealth. Without stopping to survey the conditions of the whole world—with its millions of people in Europe, India, China, and elsewhere, who need more cotton goods—we may briefly consider the position of our own country. According to Professor Bowley 32 per cent. of our adult wage-earners get less than 25s. a week, and even in the cotton industry, in spite of trade unionism, the wages of 21 per cent. of adult men for full time are less than 20s., and of 48 per cent. less than 25s. The low wages paid to agricultural workers are too notorious to need more than mentioning. The 1911 census shows that there are 1,229,555 agricultural workers, and all these people are in receipt of wages which make it impossible for them to procure for their families even the minimum quantity of cotton goods demanded by considerations of health and decency. A few years ago it was stated upon good authority that more than twelve millions of our population were living on the border-line of destitution, and this in a time of peace, to which Professor Bowley's figures also refer. There can be no doubt that the position is worse to-day owing to the war, but the foregoing is sufficient to show that the part of the world with which we are most concerned—our own country—is not "over supplied with cotton goods." If the purchasing power of the British public were increased to the point where all could procure the cotton goods they need, a home-market would be developed that would quickly stimulate the Lancashire industry and lessen, if not abolish, our dependence on foreign markets. With an effective demand that would be less liable to fluctuation, because less likely to be affected by foreign complications, the supply of raw cotton might be left to take care of itself. Planters in America and Egypt would need no special inducements to keep pace with the new requirements, and prices would be determined by the economic law of supply and demand.

HOW TO INCREASE THE DEMAND

It is impossible to do more here than state that the suggested home-market for Lancashire cotton goods can be built up by developing the natural resources of the country. At the present time, while we depend on foreign supplies for 80 per cent. of our food, nearly half the cultivable area of England is under permanent grass; and in the towns of England and Wales, where more houses are urgently needed, 2,533,035 acres of land are mis-used for agriculture, while more than 21,000,000 people are herded together on only 1,351,104 acres. If all land were taxed and rated on its capital value, whether used well, used badly, or unused, millions of acres would become available at lower prices for agricultural, mining, and building purposes, and every branch of trade in the country would be stimulated. Not only would this increased activity augment the purchasing power of the general public, but as unemployment decreased wages would tend to rise, and an effective British demand for British cotton goods would more than compensate for the loss of foreign markets, and would increase our strength and independence as a self-supporting nation.

The permanent prosperity of the cotton industry, like that of every other industry, depends upon the development of the natural resources of the country—the good use of the land—and that can be speedily brought about by the taxation and rating of land values and the untaxing of industry, as advocated by the Land Values Group (176 members) in the House of Commons.