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ERRATA

Chapter 4 f.n.9 William Saunders (1823-95) a mine-owner in Somerset and for a time M.P. for a Hull constituency. Saunders started a series of Western newspapers in the 'sixties and then founded the Central News Agency, the first news distributing agency. He was an ardent land reformer from 1882 until his death, and an uncle of J.A. Spender who was at one time his private secretary. Spender was sacked from the editorship of The Eastern Morning News for being "not really sound on Henry George". Wilson Harris J.A. Spender p.12. Saunders wrote a history of the first L.C.C. Obituary The Times 2nd May 1895.

Chapter 4 f.n.72 At this election Helen Taylor took part in a campaign which has considerable significance in suffrage history. The candidate for North Camberwell, who she supported, withdrew and she campaigned in his place. A letter from Henry George was widely circulated on her behalf and George Jacob Holyoake was prominent on her side. The returning officer refused to accept her nomination however. There are numerous examples of Helen Taylor attempting to convert the Restoration League and the L.N.S. to supporting the suffrage movement.

Chapter 9 Hollesey bay should be Hollesley Bay.

Chapter 9 f.n.42 Edward Carpenter My Days & Dreams (1916) Chap.VII

LAND REFORM 1880 - 1919: A STUDY OF THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUES
AND THE LAND NATIONALISATION
SOCIETY

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Master of Arts, Summer 1961.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

U.C.T.L.V.	United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values.
L.N.S.	Land Nationalisation Society
E.L.R.L.	English Land Restoration League
E.L.T.L.V.	English League for the Taxation of Land Values
S.L.T.L.V.	Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values
L.R.U.	Land Reform Union
L.T.R.A.	Land Tenure Reform Association
L.V.G.	Land Values Parliamentary Group.

Land Reform 1880-1919: A Study of the activities of the English Land
Restoration League and the Land Nationalisation Society.

Introductory

This thesis is a study of two organisations which came into existence shortly after the publication in England of Henry George's Progress and Poverty, perhaps the most famous text book on economics ever written. Both were started to popularise George's doctrine of the "Single-Tax" and both had to modify their ideas before any considerable headway was made. An explanation of their great initial success is that they appeared in the 1880's, at a time when radical interests were beginning to revive and before organised Socialist movements were on the scene as a counter attraction. They were, in fact, a stepping stone to socialism and were important as forerunners of the modern Labour Movement in Britain. Practically every Socialist of note in the nineteenth century owed something to Henry George. Most of them soon realised the limitations of the American's work,¹ and Socialist "exposures" of the inadequacy of the Single-Tax were common from the late 'eighties onwards. Nevertheless, the Land Reformers were always regarded as useful allies by most of the Socialists, and many people remained as members of both these branches of the reform movement. Ardent single-taxers in return, however, bitterly attacked, and

1. For G.B. Shaw's attitude, for instance, see Chap. 4. f.n.40.

still do attack, socialism as a hindrance to their truly far reaching proposals. Only in the nineteen twenties and thirties did they change.²

Although the land reformers were able to appeal to the reforming zeal of young liberals and nascent socialists, they were also able to appeal to a deeper, ingrained and widely held attitude about the common ownership of land. As will be seen, both George and Alfred Russel Wallace, the two greatest exponents of land reform in Britain in the nineteenth century, based their theories on a concept of "natural rights". The land belonged to the people, and the existence of private property in land was tantamount to robbery. George and Wallace were able to call on any number of economists and thinkers to support them, and their appeal touched a responsive chord among the masses. It was not long since land had been more widely dispersed, and the writings of people like Cobbett had taught the working class to look back to a "Golden Age" when the labourer owned a plot of his own. These sentiments were never far from the lips of most working class leaders, and every movement they led in Britain paid homage to the demand for a "return to the land". As the years went by and the workers became even more divorced from the countryside these demands grew more attractive. This will explain much of the popularity of Chartism in its last phases and why the land reformers got such widespread support during the 'nineties for instance. These leaders were probably converted

2. See Chap. 11 for reasons.

by the academic appeals of George and Wallace, but the masses responded in a more irrational, sentimental and traditional way. Thinkers and leaders from Tom Paine to John Stuart Mill effectively paved the way for the success of Progress and Poverty.

Precursors of the Land Reform Movements.

The Physiocrats, the leaders of radical thought in eighteenth century France, first gave expression to many of the ideas that Henry George,¹ and Russel Wallace were to popularise in the 1880's, and their writings had a considerable influence on British reformers. The Physiocrats' ideas were founded partly in error and were ridiculed by contemporaries,² but the popular appeal of their notions was more important for later reformers than their economic reasoning. They denigrated the industrial side of life and maintained that only the agricultural classes produced true "wealth" (the excess of the mass of agricultural products, and metals, above their cost of production). The revenue of the State must be derived altogether from this net product and ought to be raised in the most direct and simple way - namely, by a single impost of the nature of a land tax, an impôt territorial. Proudhon later "invoked the name of the Physiocrats to support his proposal to tax land 100 per cent",³ and using their belief in natural rights voiced their best known slogan: "Who made the land? God. Get thee hence then proprietor".⁴

1. George dedicated his Protection or Free Trade to "the memory of those illustrious Frenchmen of a century ago .. who, in the night of despotism, foresaw the glories of the coming day". George was honest enough to admit, however, that he had not read them.
2. Voltaire for instance ridiculed the idea of the impôt unique in his L'Homme aux quarante écus.
3. H. Higgs, The Physiocrats, chap. 6, "Influence of the School".
4. Quoted Gide and Rist. A History of Economic Doctrine. P.584.

It was the Physiocrats' appeal to natural law with the contention that every man had a right to land that caught on in Britain. Thomas Spence (1750-1814), writing at a time when labourers were being pushed off the land during the so-called agrarian revolution, made an eloquent plea for a restitution of their "rights".⁵ God gave land to the people, and at any time it belongs to all the living inhabitants of the country, he maintained. Ancestors have no right to barter this right away, and so private property is immoral. Land should be taken over by the state and vested in the lowest unit of local administration, and rents, which would be enough to meet all governmental needs, would be paid into the parish treasury and used "for all laudable means". Beyond this Spence drifts into a world of "Godwinian anarchy",⁶ but his ideas were carried a stage further by William Ogilvie, a writer of much greater ability.

Ogilvie was a Professor at King's College, Aberdeen, and wrote his Essay on the Right of Property in Land in 1782. He based his work on a concept of natural rights and foreshadowed Ricardo in trying to determine the "true value" of the soil. This was essential if any major scheme of land reform was to be implemented because there were obviously other rights, connected with labour and improvements, that had to be taken into account. Ogilvie separated the value of land - the price to be paid for it - into three possible parts, the original (or undeveloped) value, the

5. The Real Rights of Man a lecture reprinted several times. For Spence's idea of a perfect state and the means of attaining it see his Description of Spensonia (1795). On Spence also see Olive Rudkin, Thomas Spence and his connections.

6. Alexander Gray. The Socialist Tradition. P.258.

value of improvements made on it and the "contingent or improvable value", depending on an estimate of its future use and amenity. A Board of Agriculture ought to be set up, he said, which would purchase land, at a price arrived at by using his formula, and re-let it "in small farms of a single plough only"

Ogilvie's theoretical ideas lacked the simplicity of Spence's, but very similar plans were put forward with greater success by Thomas Paine (1737-1809). The value of land was once again separated in theory into original and improved value, but Paine concluded that in practice it was "impossible to separate the improvement made by cultivation from the earth itself", yet that "every proprietor owes to the community a ground rent".⁷ This rent, or land tax, should be used by the State to create a fund out of which would be provided marriage allowances, old age and disability pensions.⁸

The ideas of Paine, Spence and Ogilvie, none of whom had a political following of any dimensions, produced no great effects in the early years of the nineteenth century, but they did make the demand for a return to the land, a part of the heritage of the British working class. Cobbett kept these demands alive with his talk of the need for a reinvigorated countryside, but by and large the issues of land reform, while still alive, were pushed into the back-ground. The working class directed most of its energy to the Owenite Movement, trades unionism, the political

7. Agrarian Justice, in The complete writings of Thomas Paine. ed. by P.S. Foner. P. 611. An idea that later reformers entirely disagreed with.

8. Paine's plan brought forth a violent attack from Spence who accused him and his supporters of "selling their birthright for a mess of porridge".

reform struggles and, later, Chartism. It was not until that movement had passed its hey-day that land reform was seriously considered again.

In 1843 Feargus O'Connor launched his Chartist Land Scheme. The working classes had tried both economic and political action without success and welcomed the new move with alacrity. O'Connor's aim was to create a nation of small freeholders and the Chartist National Land Company actually started a number of settlements in various parts of the country.⁹ The responses O'Connor received was testimony to the desire for the return to the land, which the working classes now regarded as a means to escaping from the distresses of industrial life, but the scheme was never practical and was wound up amidst complete ridicule in 1848. It had been attacked by the radical section of the Chartist movement since its inception, however, and these disputes served to make the issues of land reform known, and introduced the question of nationalisation.

Bronterre O'Brien, the chief Chartist theoretician, led the attack on "O'Connor's land lottery".¹⁰ Small freeholds, he maintained, were a form of pure landlordism and would produce all the evils of landlordism. "Every man who joins these Land Societies", he wrote, "is practically enlisting himself on the side of the Government". And later: "His (O'Connor's) land

9. See W.H.G. Armytage, 'Chartist Land Colonies,' Agricultural History Review. Vol. 32. No. 4. 1958. P.87-96.

10. O'Brien's quarrels with O'Connor first over Chartist election policy then land reform are described in Max Beer, History of British Socialism, Vol. 2. P.119-123.

scheme is a government plot to stifle in embryo our movement for the nationalisation of land".¹¹

O'Brien's demand for land nationalisation was not the result of socialist theorising, nor was it based on a concept of natural rights. He claimed to believe in "the perfect inviolability of private property", yet was prepared to admit that on occasion public needs might justify an interference with those rights. He had a hatred of "every species of monopoly",¹² and state interference to break one was justified. The worst possible kind of monopoly was one in land, and nationalisation was the most effective way of destroying it. The state should take over land (to be bought at the death of existing owners), compensate the landlords and re-let to the highest bidders. Rents should be paid into District Banks and then loaned out to "industrious men to stock farms and manufacture goods on their own account".

In 1850 O'Brien formed the National Reform League. It was a small body but "to some extent influential ... in the field of ideas"¹³ and it is interesting as the first organisation declaring land nationalisation to be one of its major aims. The seven propositions of the League also included a demand for the nationalisation of mines and minerals. The N.R.L. was shortlived, but some of its members became addicted enough to the idea of land reform to reappear in the rather more influential movements of the 'sixties.

11. The National Reformer, 9.Jan.1847 and 14.May 1847 quoted Armytage, op.cit.

12. G.D.H.Cole, Chartist Portraits, P.256.

13. Ibid., P.263.

After the collapse of O'Brien's Chartist Reform League, Ernest Jones became undisputed leader of the movement and he too was an advocate of land reform. Jones was an erstwhile supporter of O'Connor's scheme, but by the time he broadened the Chartist programme in 1851, he had been completely won over by Bronterre's writings. Land reform was to be a main aim of a reinvigorated movement, but "nationalisation ... is the only basis of national prosperity" it was stated.¹⁴ Landlords were to receive compensation for the loss of their property, but O'Connor's ideal of a peasant proprietary system was anathema to Jones. "It must be observed that the occupiers of the land are to be tenants, not free-holders" - a distinction of vital importance. "There is nothing more reactionary than the small freehold system" he went on, "it is increasing the strength of landlordism".¹⁵ The Chartist programme of 1851 marked a very distinct step in the history of the working classes' attitude to land reform. O'Brien and Jones (and O'Connor) completely convinced it that proposals to create a system of small freeholds would not work, would produce small landlords and all the evils of landlordism, and usually represented a "landlord's plot" anyway.¹⁶

14. John Saville. Ernest Jones, Chartist. Appdx. 3.

15. Ibid. P.138.

16. See for instance Joseph Hyder's remarks in 1911 in Public property in Land, Land Nationalisation. Soc.Tract No. 107. "The tendency of landed property to make its possessors selfishly conservative and reactionary is proverbial. A man with £100 in the Savings Bank may retain his democratic reform tendencies, but as Disraeli once said "a settlement of peasant proprietors is a Tory camp". Everyone knows the character of the 40 shilling freeholder in this country and of peasant proprietaries in general in every country where they are established. Surely there are sufficient obstacles to progress without further increase of them". P.22.

Schemes of this kind were to be produced later, as will be seen, but they received little response - a remarkable change from the days of Cobbett.¹⁷

By the time that it adopted land nationalisation as one of its major aims, Chartism was practically a spent force and land reform did not become a popular demand in the 'fifties. Agriculture underwent a period of great prosperity and attention was diverted away from questions relating to the land. The working classes directed their activity into new channels and paid little or no attention to Jones or writers like Patrick Edward Dove (1815-73), an economist who almost completely anticipated the work of Henry George.

Dove wrote during the period when it was confidently expected that free trade would ruin agriculture, and when it became so fashionable to produce schemes of reform that even Herbert Spencer advocated the nationalisation of land.¹⁸ Dove believed that common ownership of land was a natural right, but communism had been shown to be impractical. This was his ultimate goal, but as an immediate step, he said, rent should be nationalised. Taxes on labour and industry were pure robbery. Tax rent and the state's income would be so great that all other

17. It is possible that another factor contributing towards this attitude is the reactionary position taken by the European peasantry in the events of 1848, which were closely followed by the organized working class in this country.

18. In the famous chapter 9 of his Social Statics, Spencer was later to modify his ideas and continually tried, very unconvincingly, to explain his early beliefs away. For one attempt see A symposium on the land question edited by J.H. Levy (1890). He was a constant critic of the single-tax and Henry George's reply to him is contained in one of his last books, A Perplexed Philosopher (1892)

forms of taxation could be abolished.¹⁹ Dove attracted no attention in his lifetime and joined no popular movements. Henry George wrote Progress and Poverty without having even heard of him, and so completely did Dove's work become forgotten that no mention of it was made when land reform proposals began to reappear in the 'sixties.

The third wave of nineteenth century land reform agitation began in the late 'sixties and was the result of interest arising out of a series of set-backs to agriculture, the condition of the rural labourer and the Irish problems, all of which focussed attention again on the land. In Ireland the Fenian agitation was concerned largely with attacks on the system of landownership prevalent there, and in England the "Golden Age of Agriculture" was drawing to a close. For the labourers, however, there had been no "Golden Age",²⁰ and radical journals of the period began to publish scores of articles on the condition of the rural poor with proposals for reform in their interest.²¹ It was inevitable that in this atmosphere new land reform organisations would appear.

19. Dove's work was called the Science of Politics and was published in two parts. The first, The Theory of Human Progress and Natural Probability, in 1850, and the second, The Elements of Political Science in 1854. Carlyle was one of the few to applaud Dove's work when it appeared.
20. "...only to the farm worker, unorganized, inarticulate and exploited was the name given to this period ... a bitter misnomer". C.S.Orwin, History of English Farming. P.73.
21. See, e.g. one of the most famous by Capt.Maxse on Our Uncultivated Lands. Fortnightly Review. Aug.1870.

In 1869 a group of O'Brienites who had continued to meet during the lean years, returned to the agitation for land reform and created The Working Men's National Reform League. Prominent among them were Patrick Hennesey, Frederick Riddle and Martin Boon,²² and out of their organisation grew John Harvey's better known Land and Labour League.

The Land and Labour League carried on a moderately successful campaign for several years and a number of branches were established in the provinces. Its programme, which was 'advanced' enough for the League to be considered "promising" by Marx, was drawn up at a series of conferences held late in 1869, and was issued over the signatures of Boon, John Weston and George Eccarius.²³ Prominence was given to demands for nationalisation and the cultivation of wastelands, but by 1870 the League devoted its attention almost entirely to international politics. Eventually it succeeded in isolating itself from all but the most extreme sections of the Labour movement, and then shared the unpopularity of the groups that supported the Paris Commune. It lingered on for a few years as a small, ineffective group that occasionally came alive at election times.²⁴

22. Boon published an O'Brienite plan on Home Colonization in 1869.

23. Weston and Eccarius were both prominent members of the international Working Men's Association. Eccarius was a German Marxist and secretary of the International. The I.W.M.A. added its demand for land nationalisation to the League's by passing resolutions in favour of it in 1867, '68 and '69.

24. Simon Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-86, P.123. f.n.1. prints an address issued by the Land and Labour League at the election of 1874.

The land reform organisations of the late 'sixties had the powerful support of Charles Bradlaugh, and the activities of the Leagues were regularly reported in his National Reformer. Bradlaugh at one stage in his career toured the country lecturing on the problems of the land and later became President of the radical Land Law Reform League. He wrote the pamphlet that formed the basis of the League's demands²⁵ and which one hostile critic said "put the Radical Programme into a nut shell: - The enormous estates of the few landed proprietors must not only be prevented from growing larger, they must be broken up".²⁶ This was a gross exaggeration and Bradlaugh's policy was in fact a moderate one which attracted a number of influential politicians to the League.²⁷ Among these were Alexander MacDonald, Peter Taylor, the Anti-corn Law M.P., Capt. Whalley, Ashton Dilke and Thomas Burt. The Land Law Reform League was still in existence in the 'eighties but declined in importance as more radical groups emerged and as Bradlaugh became involved in the more sensational events of his political career. The League was important, however, in keeping the problem of the land and the condition of the rural poor before the public, but certainly of much greater importance was the activity of John Stuart Mill.

25. The land, the people and the coming struggle.

26. The New Revolutionary Party, Quarterly Review April 1881

27. Bradlaugh did express concern at the increasing size of estates and the divorce of the labourer from the land, but his reform proposals were moderate even by contemporary standards. His main demand was for the state to be given compulsory powers to purchase uncultivated land at twenty years purchase. See also his Open Letter to Gladstone, National Reformer. 31 Oct. 1869 for similar ideas.

Mill had published The Principles of Political Economy in 1848 and had given his tremendous support to many of the contentions held by Land reformers since the days of the Physiocrats. He began with the usual appeal to natural law:-

"When the "sacredness of property" is talked of", he wrote, "it should always be remembered, that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to landed property. No man made the land. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is wholly a question of general expediency. "The claim of landowners to the land is altogether subordinate to the general policy of the state. The principle of property gives them no right to the land"²⁸

Mill's appeal to natural law was linked with Ricardo's theory of rent. English political economy in the first half of the nineteenth century was dominated by the problem of rent, and Mill used Ricardo's contentions to justify the taxation of land for essential State purposes:-

"Suppose that there is a kind of income which constantly tends to increase, without any exertion or sacrifice on the part of the owners ... in such a case it would be no violation of the principles on which private property is grounded, if the state should appropriate this increase of wealth ... created by circumstances, to the benefit of society, instead of allowing it to become an unearned appendage to the riches of a particular class". This is actually the case with rent. "They (the landowners) grow richer, as it were, in their sleep, without working, risking, or economizing. What claim have they on the general principle of social justice, to this accession of riches?"²⁹

Mill's powerful attack on landlordism and the unjust taking of an "unearned increment" was followed by practical proposals which stopped short of nationalisation. As a first step to reform, a valuation of land should be made. The value ascertained would henceforth be exempt from taxation, "but after an interval a rough estimate might be made of the spontaneous increase

28. J.S. Mill, Principles of Political Economy (1909 edit.) Bk. 2. Ch. 2. para. 6 P. 233

29. Ibid. Bk. 5. Chap. 2 para. 5 P. 818

which has accrued to rent since the valuation was made ... On this and other data an approximate estimate might be made how much value has been added to the land of the country by natural causes; and in laying on a general land-tax, which for fear of miscalculation should be considerably within the amount thus indicated, there would be assurance of not touching any increase of income which might be the result of capital expended or industry exerted by the proprietor". This would be perfectly in accord with the dictates of social justice; "amply sufficient allowance is made, if the whole increase of income which has accrued during this period from a mere natural law ... is held sacred from any peculiar taxation ... I see no objection in declaring that the future increase of rent should be liable to special taxation".³⁰ Later writers were to build on Mill's thesis and address themselves to the problems of valuing land, but in 1870 Mill himself created an organization to work for land reform.

The Land Tenure Reform Association was composed largely of influential Liberals with a leavening of Labour leaders. Professor Fawcett, Cliffe Leslie and Thorold-Rogers were all economists who gave their support, and Charles Dilke, Alfred Russel Wallace, Capt. Maxse and John Morley were also members. Peter Taylor became one of the treasurers and Howard Evans and Andrew Reid were secretaries. The International Working Men's Association was represented by Ben Lucraft, George Odger, editor of The Beehive, Cowell Stepney, Randal Cremer, T. Mothershed

30. Ibid. para. 5. P.819

and John Weston. These members of the International were responsible for the radical nature of the programme of the L.T.R.A., a programme which emerged as almost exactly like that outlined in The Principles.

Mill drew up the ten point programme for the Association³¹ but lacking from the first draft was any proposal to tax the "unearned increment", despite the fact that he had advocated it for over twenty years. Typical liberal demands for the abolition of primogeniture and for measures to remove legal and fiscal impediments to the transfer of land, were followed by pleas for small state tenancies, the preservation of Commons and the encouragement of agricultural co-operation, Article Four,³² which demanded the taxation of the unearned increment, was only included after pressure had been put on the Liberals by the members of the International. Mill resisted their demands for immediate nationalisation and continually urged a moderate policy, deploring the "violence" of the resolutions "of a rival society formed by working men who thought the programme ought to be much bolder".³³ He urged caution "because of the powerful opposition they were likely to provoke" - and probably also because he wanted to keep the rather more "orthodox" Liberals in the movement.³⁴ Howard Evans has testified to the

31. Programme of the Land Tenure Reform Association with explanatory note by J.S.Mill (London 1871)

32. Article Four read: "To claim for the benefit of the state the interception by Taxation of the Future Unearned Increase of the Rent of Land"

33. M.St.John Packe. John Stuart Mill. P.491. The Rival society is presumably the Land and Labour League.

34. E.g. Prof.Fawcett was obviously not in favour of anything as radical as the taxation of the "unearned increment". In his Manual of Political Economy, which had gone into three editions before 1870, while he agrees with Ricardo's theory of rent he does not advocate this form of taxation.

fact that agreement was not general. "As a matter of fact" he wrote "most of the members of the committee accepted the Fourth Article rather out of a deference to Mill than from healthy acceptance of his view ... most of them fought shy of the Unearned Increment".³⁵

The Land Tenure Reform Association existed for a few years and carried out a series of enthusiastic meetings before interest began to wane. The Great Depression began in 1873, agrarian prosperity came to an end the following year, and interest was once again diverted away from land reform. The Association was never a united body and did not long survive Mill's death in 1873. The importance he personally attached to land reform may be shown by the provision in his will whereby "should his adopted daughter, Miss Helen Taylor, not survive him, his modest fortune should be devoted to Land Reform,"³⁶ but obviously many of his colleagues did not agree with him. Many took to other forms of radical activity or joined groups less likely to offend the Liberal hierarchy.

The Land Tenure Reform Association is nevertheless vitally important in the history of radical land reform in the nineteenth century. Its programme embodied ideas on the common ownership of land which had been put forward by reformers since the eighteenth century, and Liberal and Labour leaders had joined together to demand a programme which had received the blessing of the greatest authority of the period. For the first time an authoritative radical alternative was put forward to the schemes

35. Ibid. P.35. Actually Mill left the Association £500. St. John Packe op.cit. P.491 f.n.1. His last two articles were written for the L.T.R.A. just before his death.

36. H. Evans. Radical Fights of Forty Years. P.34.

of typically Liberal organisations like The Commons Preservation Society³⁷ and The Cobden Club,³⁸

After the demise of the L.T.R.A. land reform in England languished for a decade, but in Ireland issues similar to those that had been discussed by English reformers were fought out often in the most violent fashion. While Disraeli sacrificed British agriculture on the altar of free trade and devoted his time to social reform and imperial affairs, Irish problems ensured that the question of the land would not be forgotten. Across the Channel events could be seen happening that threw the issues involved into sharp relief, and it was as a commentator on Irish affairs that Henry George first achieved international prominence and was introduced to Great Britain.

37. Formed in 1865 with Prof. Fawcett, Shaw-Lefevre (Lord Eversley) and Sir Robert Hunter as its most active members. Stuart Mill was a member and so too were many others in the L.T.R.A. For the activities of the Commons Preservation Society see Leslie Stephen, The Life of Henry Fawcett, Chap. 7 and Winifred Holt, Beacon for the Blind (a life of Fawcett) Chap. X.
38. Formed by Thomas Bayley Potter in 1866 to agitate for "Free Trade in Land" an aim justified by the oft quoted remark by Cobden in 1864, that if he "were 5 and 20 or 30 ... I would have a League for free trade in land, just as we had for free trade in corn". History of the Cobden Club by some of its Members P.26. Stuart Mill, Shaw-Lefevre and Fawcett were all members of the first committee. The Cobden League continued to devote a large part of its attention to land problems until the outbreak of the Great War.

Ireland and the Creation of the English Land Reform
Movements.

The "land problem" to most radical reformers in the nineteenth century was the result of the process whereby ownership of the land was becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. This, it was maintained, not only led to increased power in the hands of a class which it had been hoped had been ousted from authority in 1832, but accounted for the miserable conditions in the countryside. Landlordism, it was believed, was liberalism's greatest enemy, and until landlord influence in both country and town was destroyed, any effective reform measures could be blocked. Every Liberal organisation from the Cobden Club to the later Georgeite societies had as its object, either the mending or ending of landlord rule - and in Ireland what lengths the abuses of that system could go to were tragically demonstrated.

The famines of 1846 - 8 produced an Irish Encumbered Estates Act (1849), which, it was believed, would put an end to 'the war between landlord and tenant', but the hopes of the Whig government were dashed. The Act ignored vested interests and "allowed the sale of an encumbered estate on the petition of a landlord or creditor, in the hope that a secure title would attract English investors with capital for developing the land",¹ but few investors could be found to take land in a country which had recently been the scene of revolution. "Its chief result (was) to substitute for a thriftless but easy going gentry, a company of grasping absentee (Irish) landlords, who rack rented their

1. E.L.Woodward. The Age of Reform. P.342.

tenants without mercy, where their predecessors had at any rate left them alone".² Emigration and the elimination of the smaller landholders were not stopped and in a few years violence reappeared, and a new agitation sponsored by Gavan Duffy was started.

Duffy was one of the few survivors of the rebellion of 1848 and was editor of The Nation, the journal responsible for creating The Irish Tenants League. The League's demands were for the famous "Three F's" - fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale - which the Act of 1849 had not granted, and surprisingly an agitation developed which succeeded in uniting the whole country.³ At the election of 1852 around fifty M.P's were returned, pledged to oppose any government hostile to their demands, but bad parliamentary tactics and the bitter personal quarrels that were a result of the last outburst of anti-papal feeling in Britain, destroyed their unity and led to the downfall of the tenant rights associations. Duffy left his country in despair and Ireland became dominated by the activities of the secret societies, and in particular the Irish Republican (Fenian) Brotherhood.

The I.R.B. led a violent campaign for independence that culminated in the abortive rising of 1867. Its propaganda had little direct connection with land reform - except perhaps through the writings of Michael Doheny - but it was of a kind to attract attention to the land. The Brotherhood regarded itself as a direct descendant of the United Irishmen and although Home Rule

2. W.Lyon Blease. A Short History of Liberalism. P.248.

3. For the full programme of the League see T.A.Jackson. Ireland Her Own. P.255

was its main aim, Fintan Lalor's agrarian ideal found a minor place in its programme. "Every man has a simple object to accomplish" it was stated. "It is to rid the land of robbers, and render every cultivator of the soil his own landlord..."⁴

The Fenian Brotherhood never commanded the support of earlier movements for independence and this led the English Liberals to believe that Ireland was not irreconcilable. "The redress of agrarian grievances" (as seen by the English legislature), "and the abolition of the privileges of the Anglican church, might even yet bring about this long-delayed reconciliation"⁵ it was reasoned. Disestablishment was followed by the Irish Land Act of 1870.

The Land Act was intended to improve the lot of the "tenants-at-whim"⁶ but was not a success - as no Act could be that did not include provisions for ensuring the fixity of tenure and fair rents that had been stock demands since the days of Duffy's agitation*. The "Ulster Custom", whereby tenants had rights to improvements, was extended to the whole country, and compensation for disturbance was granted - except when eviction was due to non-payment of rent. Unfortunately no provisions were made for the re-adjustment of rents, and after the collapse of agricultural prosperity in 1875 and the subsequent fall in prices, many

4. Ibid. P.280

5. Woodward, op.cit. P.346.

6. The increase in tenancies-at-whim was a result of the Act of 1849. During the period of Palmerston's governments, the new landlords made a wholesale changeover from the practices of an earlier time. In 1870 out of a total of 680,000 farms, 525,000 were occupied by tenants-at-whim. B.Inglis. The Story of Ireland 1848-1914. By creating these new and insecure forms of tenancy, Inglis writes, the landlords "slit their own throats" and made reform certain. Ibid. P.145.

tenants found themselves unable to pay the high rates contracted earlier. Evictions continued and agrarian crime went on at an undiminished rate, despite coercion. To make matters worse the years 1877-9 saw crop failures, rent increases and famine on a scale reminiscent of the 'forties. It was in those years that Michael Davitt turned to a belief in the need for another organized movement for land reform in Ireland.

Davitt (1846-1906) was born in County Mayo, but worked in Lancashire cotton mills for most of his life. In 1865 he joined the Fenians and three years later became organizing secretary for England and Wales. In 1870 he was imprisoned for gun running and spent the next seven years in Portland goal, during which time he occupied himself in an attempt to clarify his attitude towards social problems. "The very day he was discharged the ex-Fenian rejoined the I.R.B. and was elected a member of the supreme council, but he was obsessed by one subject along - the Agrarian question".⁷ Davitt's concern for land reform was to remain uppermost with him for the rest of his life.

The "lectures" that Davitt wrote in Portland were later published in 1885 as Leaves from a Prison Diary. They show him to be an untidy thinker and his specific proposals are not clear. At one stage he appears to be an advocate of land taxation and at another, an advocate of a system of peasant proprietaries.⁸ Later he graduated towards the ideas of land

7. Joan Haslip. Charles Stuart Parnell. P.74.

8. Leaves from a Prison Diary. P.222 and 245. Davitt said later that he was converted to agrarian reform in 1877. Fall of Feudalism. P.146-7 (1904)

nationalisation that were more acceptable to the Socialists, whose ranks he eventually joined,⁹ but in the 'eighties everything he wrote was permeated with echoes of Henry George's Progress and Poverty.¹⁰ Davitt met the American author during a visit to the United States in 1878, and they remained closely associated until George's death in the 'nineties.

Davitt returned from America and became convinced that it was necessary to convert the Home Rule movement into one that regarded land reform as at least as important as independence. The evictions and continuing depression had prepared the ground for him,¹¹ and he met with an enthusiastic response when he created the new Irish National Land League. Davitt wrote in 1904 that the League was the result of a single visit to Irishtown, but in fact a whole series of meetings had been held in that area between April and August 1879, at which the local organisations that eventually merged into the Land League of Mayo (16th August) were created. Davitt and John Devoy of the Clan-na-Gael, the American branch of the I.R.B., were largely responsible for the spread of the agitation for land reform, and it had reached considerable proportions by the time the National League was set up in October 1879. Davitt was a secretary and Charles Stewart Parnell was President.

Parnell's reasons for taking part in the "New Departure" were almost certainly a desire to stop the Irish Movement splitting into two separate sections, led by himself and Davitt, and

9. For Davitt's connections with the Labour movement see T.W. Moody. Trans. Royal Hist. Soc. Series 5. (iii) 1953.

10. For a description of George's ideas see P.39

11. P.S.O'Hegarty. Ireland under the Union.

a determination to stop the Land Reform movement taking on too radical a colour. Davitt had been getting his response from vague talk about land nationalisation, but Parnell never made any pretence of accepting anything approaching that. At Irish-town in May, for instance, a large audience listened to Davitt expound his ideas, and then Parnell talked of the need for a prosperous peasantry. He always, afterwards, linked his appeal for participation in the land war with one for a land system on the continental pattern, and the net result of his activity was defeat for Davitt's ideas. In the League "formal emphasis was placed more on the need for fair rents than for the destruction of landlordism".¹²

At the general election of 1880, the Nationalists won 60 out of the 105 Irish seats. The new Liberal government at first appeared to be completely ignorant of the pressing need for agrarian reform in Ireland and Parnell's biographer points out that the Queen's speech at the opening of the first Parliament entirely ignored the Irish land problems, despite the fact that between 1876 and 1880, no less than six Bills had been introduced that were the subject of large scale debates.¹³ The Nationalists immediately produced a Bill of their own and this had the desired effect when Gladstone's Government drew up

12. Inglis op.cit. P.147. What had happened to rents in Ireland can be gauged from a famous court case quoted by P.S.O' Hegarty, op.cit. where "rent ... had, within three years following on the purchase of land by Mr. Buckley of Ashton-under-Lyne, been increased in proportions varying from 55 p.c. to 500 p.c."
13. R. Barry O'Brien. Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891 Vol. I. P.228 et.seq.

legislation based on their demands. The Compensation for Disturbance Bill, which must have been anathema to Davitt, duly passed the Commons - but with considerable defections on the Liberal side.¹⁴ This gave the Lords an excuse to oppose the measure and they rejected it outright. Following this latest "insult" to the Nationalist movement, the Land Campaign in Ireland really got under way.

The violent period of the land war, extended from the Lord's rejection of the Irish Bill until Parnell asserted his control over the Home Rule movement in 1882. "Boycotting" and atrocious agrarian crimes went unpunished. "Captain Moonlight" was said to "rule three provinces and much of the fourth", and all this directed attention to the problem of the land. "It was all agrarianism" wrote Cowper, the Viceroy, "with separation in the background". The campaign was largely financed by the Clan-na-Gael, which had hitherto regarded the New Departure as "immoral and unpolitic" and which had been won over by the pleadings of Davitt during a second visit to the U.S.A.

The government at Westminster reacted to the violence in Ireland by reverting to coercion and linking it with reform. The Irish leaders were arrested, Habeas Corpus suspended, the National Land League banned, and the Land Act of 1881 was passed. The Act was Gladstone's second great measure of Irish land reform, and once again represented demands more like those of Parnell, than Davitt. Tenants were given "The three F's"

14. The second reading was carried by 299 to 217. 20 Liberals voted against and 50 abstained. The vote for rejection in the Lords was 285 to 51.

they had agitated for since Gavan Duffy's movement of the 'forties, but there were serious obstacles that had to be removed before the Act could become effective.

The greatest defect was that the Act contained no provision for helping tenants in arrears with rent, and Gladstone entered into a compact with Parnell to remedy the anomaly. Parnell had been imprisoned at Kilmainham for organising a 'No Rent' campaign, which had failed owing to clerical opposition,¹⁵ and had then agreed to a deal with the Liberals. In exchange for a cessation of coercion and an Arrears Act, the Irish leader promised to use his influence to end crime and disorder, and co-operate with the government. The compact was greeted with hostility by some Liberals, and caused the resignations of Cowper and Forster, the Chief Secretary. Two days after Gladstone announced the end of coercion and the preparation of an Arrears Act, Cavendish, the new Viceroy, was murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

"The incident in Phoenix Park ... disturbed the outward semblance of the Kilmainham settlement, but the settlement itself endured".¹⁶ By this time considerable dissensions had become apparent in the Nationalist movement, as a result of differing attitudes towards land reform, and Parnell's reactionary approach was bitterly attacked.¹⁷ Davitt had continued his

15. He is alleged to have said that "only place where the tenants were strictly living up to it, was on his own estate at Avondale" Haslip. op.cit.P.212.

16. Conor Cruise O'Brien Parnell and His Party 1880-90.P.83.

17. Davitt also had differences with Parnell over the "No Rent" campaign and objected violently to the 'Kilmainham Treaty'.

muddled, yet effective talk of the need for land nationalisation, and while in America - "stirring up trouble in the already troubled waters of the Clan-na-Gael" - had persuaded¹⁸ Patrick Ford to finance a Land Nationalisation Campaign. John Dillon was another Land League official making fiery, radical speeches and Egan and Brennan were others who supported Davitt in objecting to the Land League being turned into "a moderate Tenant Right Association" by Parnell.

Faced with the possibility of revolt, Parnell reasserted his control over the Irish movement. He destroyed the chances of it becoming a land nationalisation organisation, made Home Rule its major objective again, and pledged it to his own views of land reform. Parnell's attitude towards nationalisation was shown clearly in an interview with The New York Herald, when he declared it was an "undesirable" notion and "one which would never come within the range of practical politics".¹⁹ The National Land League was not recreated when he came out of prison and the Ladies Land League, which Davitt had formed and which had carried on the agitation after the N.L.L. was suppressed,²⁰ was disbanded.

For a year Ireland was without a Nationalist organisation

18. Ford (1835-1913) was editor of The Irish World. Between 1880 and '81 he organised 2,500 branches of the Land League in the U.S. and raised and sent over \$300,000 to Ireland. He quotes Gladstone in the preface to one of his books, A Criminal History of the British Empire, as saying that: "But for the work of the Irish World there would be no agitation in Ireland".
19. Quoted Haslip op.cit. P.241. For another, Marxist, interpretation of the land war see T.A.Jackson op.cit. in which the Kilmainham Treaty is regarded as a "bourgeois betrayal of the working class".
20. It had spent no less than £70,000 during the seven months of Parnell's incarceration, and was closely connected with Davitt and Henry George. St.John Ervine, Parnell. P.34 f.n.1.

of any kind, and then Parnell made what appeared to be at first a concession to Davitt and Dillon by forming the Irish National League. Its programme was entirely his own, however. The League was created in October 1882 and in his inaugural speech Parnell, after stating that independence was to be its foremost aim and "Land law reform" of only secondary importance, described his ideal system as a property owning peasantry,"....no solution of the land question can be accepted as final" he declared, "that does not insure the occupying farmers the right of becoming owners by purchase of the holdings which they now occupy as tenants".²¹

By pledging the Nationalists to Home Rule and a reactionary land policy, Parnell achieved another of his objectives by getting rid of the radical elements that had opposed him. The parliamentary party, "the land agitation . . . safely shelved, coercion a fact", and "the election still far distant",²² entered into " a prolonged spell of relative inactivity".²³ Egan and Brennan retired from politics because of the new turn events had taken, and Dillon left the country in disgust. Michael Davitt henceforth devoted his time and energy to movements in England and left Parnell in undisputed control in Ireland.

Events in Ireland before 1882 had been followed closely in England and elsewhere, and inevitably some radical conclusions

21. Barry O'Brien op.cit. Vol.I. P.370. Henry George, Jnr. Life of Henry George. P.376.

22. Conor Cruise O'Brien op.cit. P.85

23. Barry O'Brien op.cit. Vol. 2. Chap. xx.

were drawn from the disputes there. The prolonged struggle between the land nationalisation group and Parnell had ended in complete success for the ideas of the latter, and the Irish movement had in fact become a wholehearted supporter of peasant proprietaries of the kind Feargus O'Connor had advocated in England in the 'forties. Since that time radicals had regarded these proposals as reactionary in the extreme, and it was inevitable that Parnell's victory should redirect their attention to the land. The most prominent of the people driven to renewed activity was Alfred Russel Wallace.

Wallace (1823-1913) was born at Usk and educated at Hertford. At the age of thirteen he left school and went to work in Hampstead, where he came into contact for the first time with the organised working class movement. Wallace attended lectures at "The Hall of Science, John St." in company with members of the Mechanics Unions, and there read the works of Robert Owen, Paine and the early land reformers. He regarded Owen for the rest of his life as "my first teacher in the philosophy of human nature and my first guide through the labyrinth of social science".²⁴

Russel Wallace worked for a number of years as a surveyor and then in 1848 went with H.W.Bates (1835-92) on a voyage to the Amazon. As a result of his work there and in Malaya, he built up a great reputation for himself as a naturalist and explorer. While in Malaya he also wrote the famous essay on evolution which he sent to Charles Darwin, to form a part of

24. A.Russel Wallace. My Life. P.57

the joint communication the two made to the Linnean Society in 1858. In that essay the ideas of The Origin of ~~the~~ Species were given to the world for the first time.²⁵

The results of Wallace's investigations in Malaya were published in book form in 1869,²⁶ and a chapter on the land systems he found there produced an invitation from Stuart Mill asking him to join the committee of the Land Tenure Reform Association. Wallace took part in the activities of the L.T.R.A.²⁷ until the economist's death put an end to it. Then between 1873 and 1879, "having become strongly impressed by the teachings of Spencer, Mill and other writers as the necessity of restricting rather than extending state agency,"²⁸ he retired from political activity. Events in Ireland, however, convinced him of the need for state action to remedy the evils of landlordism, and he turned once again to consider the problems of land reform - but with a very definite preference for the ideas of Davitt and a healthy dislike for those of Parnell.

Wallace watched the struggle between the two wings of the

25. For Wallace's own description of the paper see his The Wonderful Century (1903 edn) P.381. Darwin had been working on his contribution for two years and was alarmed when Wallace wrote and sent off his in two weeks. For the correspondence etc. between the two see William Irvine. Apes, Angels and Victorians. P.82. et. seq.
26. The Malay Archipelago. (1869)
27. He returned to England in 1862.
28. A.R. Wallace My Life op.cit. Actually in retiring from political activity for the reasons he gave, Wallace was not doing justice to the ideas of Spencer or Mill (or any other Liberal thinker). All made the point repeatedly that state interference (of some kind) to break the land monopoly was justified, and quite in accordance with the dictates of Free Trade.

agrarian movement in Ireland, and the victory for Parnell prompted him to write the first of his notable contributions to the literature of land reform. When the Land League announced its wholehearted rejection of land nationalisation, and its support for a system of peasant holdings, Wallace expounded his views in an article in The Contemporary Review.²⁹ The ideas put forward there were developed at greater length in book form two years later.³⁰

Russel Wallace was no economist. He used the same techniques in dealing with social and political problems that he used as a naturalist - those of the untrained but acute observer, the skilled amateur. The economic reasoning in Land Nationalisation was neither sound nor original. It was borrowed unashamedly from Henry George³¹ and was used simply to add weight to the author's assault on landlordism, the greatest evil existing and the cause of all Ireland's problems! Rent increases take up all increased profits, he believed, and so wages and interest fail to rise. "It follows that the old idea ... that capital and labour are antagonistic, is a mistake", he went on, "both suffer from the same enemy, the landlord"³² "It is the continuous increase of rent, the price that labour is compelled to pay for the use of land, which

29. How to Nationalise the Land. Contemporary Review Nov. 1880

30. A.R. Wallace. Land Nationalisation, its Necessity and Its Aims. The ideas in the book are really a development of those in the Contemporary Review articles, modified to take account of subsequent developments - for instance, the Land Act of 1881. The two works will be discussed together

31. George's work was unknown to Wallace when he wrote the Contemporary Review article however. There is a curious parallel in the way he worked independently towards the ideas of, first, Darwin and then George, and eventually collaborated with both. He acknowledged the latter in Land Nationalisation.

32. A.R. Wallace. Land Nationalisation. P. 169.

strips the many of the wealth they justly earn, to pile it in the hands of the few who do nothing to earn it."³³ "Land-lordism per se. is necessarily evil".³⁴ No such weighty onslaught on the British system of landholding had been heard before the 'eighties, and from this time onwards Wallace's language was typical of that used by reformers.

The basis of Wallace's work can best be considered in detail when discussing Henry George, but one of the most important facts about Land Nationalisation must be mentioned here. The book was a radical alternative to what schemes of land reform were being put forward in England at the end of the 'seventies, and was sure to appeal to radicals dissatisfied with Liberal policies. Wallace's attack on these was scathing.

The Cobden Club's proposals for "Free Trade In Land" once challenged by the L.T.R.A. were the most popular of the Liberal reform schemes after Stuart Mill's death, and Wallace pointed out their shortcomings at great length. He agreed with Charles Russell's contention that the British land system seemed "to have been contrived, as if by some malevolent genius, to develop the worst qualities in the national character, and repress the worst",³⁵ but disagreed with the Club's mild proposals to reform it. He objected to "the hind" being treated "as an element of production, nothing more, which it is not in the interest of his employer to maltreat", and made an impassioned plea on behalf of the labourer, who:

33. Ibid. P.171

34. Ibid. P.192

35. Quoted Ibid. P.136

"has a right to refuse to be treated as a mere portion of the farming stock, to be housed well or ill as the landlord chooses, and the placing of him in this position is the condemnation of "Free Trade in Land", as the panacea for all the evils connected with the land-system put forward by the Cobden Club school of reformers." ³⁶

Free trade, the Cobden Club was told, would not stop the evils of landlordism and the engrossing of land, but would aid it. By comparison with what would happen if free trade in land was achieved, the system created in Ireland under the Encumbered Estates Act was desirable.

The author of Land Nationalisation wanted to evolve a scheme that would appeal to both Liberals and the working classes, who were prepared to envisage the State in a more positive role, and he succeeded to a remarkable degree. Destroying landlordism would lead to "real free trade in Land" he told the Liberals, while his scheme of nationalisation was not of a kind that they would find offensive. Land value was comprised of two parts; the "inherent right", the value of the land as such, which no individual had an absolute right to, and which was the possession of society as a whole; and the "tenant right", which was the result of labour expended on improvements and cultivation. This was language like that used fifty years earlier by Paine, Spence and Ogilvie, but Wallace went on to say that these two values could "easily be separated" and were in fact being separated at that time by the Land Courts in Ireland. A nationalisation act ought to be passed and all land valued, minus improvements - the valuation to be completed within five years. After that, the state should take over that value (the "inherent right") and this would become a constantly revised

perpetual quit rent payable to the central government, (the "tenant right" could be purchased by an individual and would remain vendable private property). The land could either be purchased for a fixed sum, or the previous owners could be given the full revenue they had hitherto derived from the land, by terminable state annuities for a number of lives. Wallace insisted that owners should be compensated, and the latter was the method he personally preferred. He believed that land values had risen continuously since the Conquest and would continue to do so. He had no objection to landlords having profited from this in the past, but his scheme would make certain it would not happen in future generations, and here he was simply re-echoing the words and attitude of Stuart Mill.³⁷

Wallace's schemes never had the clarity and attractiveness of popular later proposals. He described the practical application of his ideas in a passage which makes an interesting comparison with the clear, simple forecasts for the future made by Henry George, and goes a long way to explaining why he never attracted the support that the American did:-

"the day the (Nationalisation) Act came into force every existing tenant would be entitled to continue in the occupation of his house, his farm, or his land of any description, as a holder under the State, on payment of a fixed quit rent; but to constitute him such a State tenant he must first purchase, or otherwise acquire the tenant-right. He will be enabled to do this, either by purchasing it from the landlord under private arrangement, or, if an agreement as to its value cannot be arrived at, then the official valuer of a "Land Court", similar to those which administer the Irish Land Bill, may be called in to determine the fair value. As soon as this is paid by the tenant, he becomes the absolute owner of the tenant-right, and as such the holder of the land under the State

37. Ibid. P.197

(another form of landlordism) strictly prohibited. Mines were also to be nationalised in the same way as land.

The Contemporary Review article, putting a radical alternative to the mild proposals of Liberal organisations, attracted the attention of reformers throughout the country and revived their interest in land reform. A.C. Swinton⁴³ wrote to Alfred Russel Wallace suggesting the creation of a new organisation, and a small group held a number of meetings to discuss the project. As a result of their deliberations the Land Nationalisation Society was brought into being on the 6th March 1881.

The L.N.S. made it quite clear at the outset that it had no connections with any other movement, and that it had, in fact, been specifically created to oppose them. One resolution passed at the inaugural conference read: "That this meeting is of the opinion that "Free Trade in Land" would have no tendency to remove the worst evils resulting from land monopoly: and that, by facilitating the extension of private ownership of the land ..⁴⁴ it would most probably aggravate rather than diminish those evils."⁴⁵

The new organisation attracted a large number of influential radicals. Russel Wallace was elected President and prominent among early members of the L.N.S. were Swinton and two ladies, Helen Taylor, Stuart Mill's stepdaughter, and Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, an important figure in the movement for the emancipation of women. Professor Francis Newman, earlier an

43. For an obituary of Swinton by Russel Wallace, see Land and Labour April 1905. The two first met apparently through the spiritualist movement, which attracted many radicals in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

44. See L.N.S. Tract No. 1.

45. 1st. Ann. Rep. Land Nat. Soc.

opponent of Wallace's, and the brother of Cardinal Newman joined,⁴⁶ and so too did T.F.Walker, William Saunders and Isaac Pitman. David Urquhart, once prominent in the Chartist movement also became a member.⁴⁷ Representatives of other, older, land movements included E.T.Craig, of Ralahine⁴⁸ and Dr.G.B.Clark, the Scottish radical, once prominent in the International Working Mens' Association and the Crofter's movement. Specifically working class agitators who joined the L.N.S. included a number of people who were to play an important role in the history of the Society, but who are best known as founder members of the Social Democratic Federation - H.H.Champion, R.P.B.Frost and Herbert Burrows.

The Land Nationalisation Society began its career with a moderate plan of campaign. A conference was held at which the Society accepted Wallace's scheme as the basis of its programme and the first of a series of pamphlets were issued. The L.N.S's activities attracted a fair amount of notice in the press, and it undoubtedly benefited from the way events in Ireland had attracted attention,^{to} ~~the~~ the disputes between different groups

46. ~Before Wallace's work appeared, Newman wrote, he regarded landlords as a "deplorable necessity: for I thought we had to choose between the despotism of the Executive (if not of the Crown yet of a Bureaucracy) and the despotism of landlords". Wallace's proposals came moderately "as did the Roman Sibyl to King Tarquin". On the State as Land Property. L.N.S. Tract No. 7 (undated ca. 1884)

47. Urquhart joined the Chartists in an attempt to win them over to the Russophobe ideas he had gained working in Constantinople.

48. Craig who died in 1895 was an Irish Land reformer whose experiments attracted a great deal of attention in the 'eighties. See his Irish land and Labour Question Illustrated in the History of Ralahine and Co-operative Farming (1882)

of land reformers. In September 1882 it held the first of its really great public meetings, when Henry George, now a well known figure as a result of his activities in Ireland, came over and addressed a meeting in London.

George (1839-97) was born in Philadelphia and spent most of his early life as a sailor. Later he took various posts in Canada and California and eventually gravitated towards journalism and a study of economics. His experiences on the frontier coloured all his writings and his first work, Our Land and Land Policy, dealt specifically with the evils that he saw (correctly in many cases) would come when it no longer existed. The remedies George proposed were mild by comparison with those he advocated later, but he did suggest land taxes that might "diffuse" ownership. Private property in land was not condemned outright as yet.

Between 1877 and 1879 George was engaged in writing Progress and Poverty. It was published in America in the early months of 1880 and gradually became known and built up a reputation for the author as a reformer of first rate importance. At the end of the year it was brought out in England by Kegan Paul,⁴⁹ and after a slow start sold well, was extensively reviewed, and eventually made available to even the poorest reader in cheap editions.

The ideas of Progress and Poverty are neither completely sound nor original - and they have been touched on in the discussion of Wallace's work. The importance of the book - and by far the most important reason for explaining its perennial popularity - lies not in its logic, but in its simple appeal,

49. F.A.Mumby. The House of Routledge. p.197

in wonderful language, to a single, sure remedy for all society's ills. George followed Ricardo regarding rent and showed that it was determined by the margin of cultivation. Leaving Ricardo he went on to prove "by one of the most curious pieces of reasoning in the book"⁵⁰ that the margin determined not only rent, but wages, profits and also interest. This meant that, as Wallace also believed, there was in fact, an "identity of interest between labourers, employers and capitalists. Their remuneration is in every case a reward of effort, and in every case they are robbed by the landlord!"⁵¹

Having established the landowner as society's greatest enemy, George went on to contend that as land was the source of all wealth, and people had a natural right to it, landownership by private individuals was immoral and should be abolished. Society should reassert itself and take its natural inheritance back from the people who held land out of the market, and were the cause of depressions and every form of social misery. This could be done easily, and no form of nationalisation, in the strictest sense⁵² was necessary.

George proposed to tax land values. "It is not necessary to confiscate land" he wrote, "it is only necessary to confiscate rent ... we already take some rent in taxation. We have only to make some changes in our modes of taxation to take it all".⁵³ Let the government value land and "levy a 100% tax upon rent" (the "unearned increment" or the "inherent right" that society's endeavours and not the landlords produced) "and the landowner's

50. Arthur Birnie. Single-Tax George. P.71

51. Ibid. P.72.

52. Not Russel Wallace's

53. Progress and Poverty (1884 edition) Book VIII. P.288

sponge would be squeezed into the coffers of the State"⁵⁴
As rent is always more than sufficient to defray all necessary expenses of government, these should be met by a tax upon rent alone, to be brought about by a gradual reduction of all other taxes. Landlords would be left in undisturbed possession, with nominal ownership of the land, and with an income over and above the tax, just sufficient to induce them to collect rents and act, in fact, as mere land agents. Obviously this would involve absolute free trade since all taxes on imports, manufactured goods, documents, successions, personal property, buildings or improvements would disappear. Nothing made by man would be taxed at all, and the right of private property would thus be absolute, once a system based on the "single-tax" on land had been created.

George watched events in Ireland closely and his third book, published in 1881,⁵⁵ was a collection of newspaper articles dealing with the Irish agitation. He obviously hoped that the Nationalist movement would turn into one pledged to his own ideas and he appealed to the Land League to "transform their agitation into an international crusade against landlordism"⁵⁶
Parnell, beginning to put forward his preference for peasant proprietaries, was attacked, and Michael Davitt - the only member of the agitation George had faith in - was defended.⁵⁷
The book was published in England and produced an invitation from

54. Birnie. op.cit. p.75

55. The Land Question.

56. Birnie op.cit. P.85

57. Ibid. P.98

Patrick Ford, asking the author to visit Ireland as special correspondent of The Irish World. George arrived at Queenstown in October 1881.

While in Ireland George wrote regularly for Ford's paper. He visited England at the invitation of Helen Taylor, and made four moderate speeches in the provinces, but little notice was taken of him by the press.⁵⁸ His first enthusiasm for the Irish movement was dampened by Parnell's activity and by August 1882 he was practically writing off Ireland as the field for an agitation for the single-tax. George began to look to England and Scotland and hoped for a chance to try his luck there. In September 1882, his wish came true. He had been wrongfully arrested as an agitator with J. L. Joynes⁵⁹ and had become the centre of a dispute between Britain and the U.S. This gave him an enormous amount of welcome publicity, and probably prompted the invitation from Wallace and the Land Nationalisation Society.

The meeting in London was a great success. George diplomatically took care not to present himself as a reformer with ideas very different from his sponsors. He talked of the "fight for nationalisation being world wide," but steered clear of advocating his single-tax panacea.⁶⁰ Nevertheless it was apparent that his real proposals were well known. Professor Newman,

58. Davitt had been associated with George at some of these meetings and his pronouncements had helped widen the breach between him and Parnell. For a description of the meetings in May and June, when Davitt came out "flatly for "land nationalisation", see H. George Jnr. Life of Henry George P.379 et seq.

59. For details of the tour he and Joynes conducted and the arrest, see Henry George, Jnr. op.cit.

60. For a report of the meeting see The Times. 6th Sept. 1882

in a letter read to the meeting, praised Wallace's "great book", yet paid George an even greater compliment. Progress and Poverty was winning adherents rapidly and this led to important developments in the Land Nationalisation Society.

Writers on Henry George have commented on his remarkable success in Britain in the 'eighties, and explained this largely in terms more applicable to a successful novelist. It is perfectly true that Progress and Poverty was magnificently written and easily understandable, but this alone is not sufficient to explain his popularity.⁶¹ George was in fact incredibly fortunate in his timing, and it is doubtful whether he and his work would have been as successful had they appeared either a few years earlier or later. In the early 'eighties, the issues involved in the "land question" were well known as a result of events in Ireland. The Liberals themselves had also helped prepare the way for George, by constantly talking in gloomy terms of the "drift from the land",⁶² labelling the landlord as the embodiment of reactionary toryism and pouring out treatises from the Cobden Club, the Leasehold Enfranchisement Association and soon. It was established that there was a problem, and that was the contribution to George's success of these mild

61. For instance Erich Roll. A History of Economic Thought.

"The mixture of oracular presumption, insistence upon a single idea, and muddle-headedness on economic problems in general, is sufficient to explain the meteoric rise and almost equally rapid exhaustion of his (George's) power". P.425. Harold Laski wrote of George's "eloquent confusion". Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians. P.83.

62. The drift from the land had continued throughout the century and it was believed that the competition of the rural labourers with the town workers for unskilled jobs was a major cause of depressions. For figures of the extent of the rural depopulation see J.A.Venn Foundations of Agricultural Economics P. 288. ~~For the last three decades of the 19th. century the size of the rural population was more or less stationary.~~

organisations. He went on to show that it was possible to "break the old spell of impotence" as the Liberal groups had not⁶³.

The Liberal party had also lost much of its attractiveness for reformers in these years, and new ideas and organisations were almost certain to be supported by the younger members of the party. This is also vitally important in explaining George's success. Radicals had been looking for a means of rejuvenating Liberalism and they were largely responsible for directing attention to the land. At one stage they actively promoted rural trades unionism,⁶⁴ and it was gradually becoming apparent that a popular attack on landlordism was a sure way of winning renewed support. Political reform was practically complete, and in a paradoxical way it seemed that liberalism's destiny might be tied up with the land. Also, no socialist movements had yet come onto the scene to compete for radical favour. When Progress and Poverty and the Land Nationalisation Society appeared, reformers joined the Society as the best, almost the only, organisation they could support - but reformist groups of the left seem invariably to split over either the pace at which to proceed, or the interpretation of their ideas, and this happened in the L.N.S. within two years of its creation.

A small group of land nationalisers began to meet to discuss the content of Progress and Poverty, and very soon discovered that George's and Wallace's (and the L.N.S.'s) attitudes towards the compensation of landlords, were diametrically opposed.

63. See S.G.Checkland. Review of Charles Albro Barker's Henry George in Ec.Hist.Rev.2nd.series. Vol.IX No.3. April 1957.

64. See P.63

Russel Wallace, like Stuart Mill, was prepared to leave the landlord in complete possession of his past gains. He was worried only about the future, and a large part of his work was devoted specifically to evolving a just method of compensating the owner. George on the other hand, took a righteous attitude, and declared that compensation was out of the question. Land belonged to the people, and private property in land meant they had been robbed; taking it back by means of the single-tax was completely justified, and there was no conceivable reason to compensate:

"Because I was robbed yesterday," George wrote, "and the day before, and the day before that, is it any reason that I should suffer myself to be robbed today and tomorrow? Any reason that I should conclude that the robber has a vested right to rob me".⁶⁵

George discovered that his cavalier attitude to compensation worried many supporters (and attracted others) almost as soon as Progress and Poverty was off the press. To the reasonable claim that a person investing in land, in good faith, and in a way sanctioned by centuries of experience, ought not to be singled out for special treatment, George and his followers simply replied that this was a risk he had to take. This worried people as early as November 1880, as is shown by a letter George wrote describing a Canadian follower as "a thorough convert, with the exception that he thinks the men to whom the

65. Progress and Poverty op.cit. P.259. with Professor Newman's summing up of Wallace's scheme leaving "to the landlord all that tenants for 800 years have wrought to the soil".
L.N.S. Tract No. 7.

State sold the land, ought to get some recompense"⁶⁶ Davitt was always applauded, but with the same reservations. "Davitt proposes compensation" George wrote to Patrick Ford, "of course neither you, nor I, nor Bishop Nulty"⁶⁷ agree to anything of that sort".⁶⁸ This was an attitude that George never deviated from, and by holding it, it was obvious that he or his followers could not long work in complete harmony with Wallace, and his followers in the L.N.S.⁶⁹ In April 1883 differences came to a head and George's followers decided to secede and create a group of their own.⁷⁰ Henceforth there were to be two rival land reform organisations, nominally working towards the same ends, but in fact competing for support, and often bitterly critical of each other.

66. Henry George Jnr. op.cit. P.341. Helen Taylor was another member who would not accept George's no compensation ideas. See a report of her remarks at a meeting where George was present. Ibid. P.428. f.n.1.

67. Bishop Nulty of Meath, an early Irish supporter of George. The American contributed to the Bishop's discomfort by publishing an uncensored interview with him in The Irish World, and this led to Nulty being branded as a communist, and disfavour at Rome. He rehabilitated himself by showing intense hostility to Parnell in the O'Shea divorce case. For his ideas on land reform see his "Essay on the Land Question". Appdx. in Henry George's The Conditions of Labour. (Henry George Foundation edit. 1934) P.201-18.

68. Henry George Jnr. op.cit. P.383.

69. That George's attitude on compensation would most likely cause dissension in the ranks of the L.N.S. was apparent to contemporary observers. See The Times editorial in the issue reporting George's meeting (6th. Sept. 1882) where his and Davitt's attitudes are compared.

70. The 1st. Ann. Rep. of the Land Reform Union begins with a sketch of the creation of the breakaway group.

The Single Tax and Socialism.

The Land Reform Union "launched as a public body at a meeting held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on Tuesday 5th. June", attracted a number of radicals who obviously agreed with the views of Progress and Poverty in their entirety.¹ Prominent among these were the Reverends J.E.Symes² and Stewart Headlam³ both Christian Socialists and members of the Guild of St. Matthew,⁴ Britain's oldest Socialist organisation, which worked for the single-tax unceasingly until it was disbanded in 1909). Others included James Durant, the publisher, who brought out the cheap editions of George's book,⁵ William Reeve another publisher, William Saunders, T.F.Walker, Dr. Clark and Richard McGhee.

By another group the creation of the L.R.U. was obviously meant to be a move to the left. These were members of the Democratic Federation, set up in 1881 to "continue the great

1. 1st. Ann. Rep. of the L.R.U. op. cit.
2. The Rev. John Elliotson Symes (1847-1921). A University Extension lecturer 1875-80. Later he became Professor of English Literature (and then Principal) at University College, Nottingham (1881-1912). Symes wrote the first text book on political economy in this country that had a definite single-tax bias.
3. For a biography of Headlam see F.G. Bettany Stewart Headlam
4. Founded in 1877.
5. Max Beer op. cit. estimated that by the end of 1882 no less than 100,000 copies of Progress and Poverty had been circulated in the U.K. alone. Stewart Headlam has left on record a statement that "Davidson" (the future Primate) "told me that he had got the Queen to read Progress and Poverty which she found difficult". Bettany op. cit. P. 84 A measure of the popularity of George's book, and its appeal, is perhaps the number of later works with titles clearly modelled on it. e.g. Rowntree's Poverty and Progress, Chiozza Money's Riches and Poverty, Mallock's Property and Progress, etc. It was eventually translated into a dozen different languages. Perhaps Sun Yat Sen was the most distinguished of the translators.

work of Spence and Owen, Stephens and Castler, Ernest Jones and George Jacob Holyoake".⁶ The Federation was moving towards socialism, but as yet had not become the doctrinaire body it was to be later. It was, in fact, as much the product of the ferment of the late 'seventies as any of the other groups already mentioned. It had a nine point programme containing a demand for land nationalisation - "the only one of a socialist nature ... at that time better known and more popular than any other".⁷ Obviously George's demand for confiscation without compensation appealed to members of the D.F. and prominent among those leaving the Nationalisation Society for the Reform Union were Frost, who became secretary, Champion, elected treasurer, J.L. Joynes and Helen Taylor.⁸

The Land Reform Union began its campaign in 1883. Public lectures were delivered by Helen Taylor, Davitt and Saunders,⁹ the first pamphlets were issued¹⁰ and the Christian Socialist was started by members of the Guild of St. Matthew to advocate the single-tax. At the end of the year it was decided to invite George over for a lecture tour, and a special "Henry George Lecture Fund" was set up with the Christian Socialists,¹¹

6. Justice, organ of the Federation, quoted by Max Beer. A History of British Socialism. Vol. 2. P.247.

7. Ibid.

8. Helen Taylor used to describe herself at this time as "Land Nationaliser and Socialist" and was a member of all three organisations L.N.S. Land Reform Union and Democratic Fed.

9. P.67 et seq.

10. e.g. A Catechism on the Land Question and The Right to the Use of the Earth.

11. The Revs. Hood, Symes, Headlam and Auchmuty. Another contributor to the E.L.R.L. was Henry Hutchinson who also financed the Fabian Society.

Saunders, J. Hampden Jackson¹² Helen Taylor and Charles Wicksteed acting as guarantors. George arrived on the last day of 1883 to find trouble in the Union, caused by the socialists.

By the end of 1883 the Democratic Federation members of the Land Reform Union had become dissatisfied with the singletax as an instrument capable of completely reforming society, and socialist attacks on the inadequacy of George's remedy began to appear. The first of these published in England was by Henry Mayers Hyndman, leader of the D.F.¹³ Hyndman had been converted to socialism by reading a foreign edition of Das Kapital, in much the same way as others had been won over by Progress and Poverty, and, as a result, the Federation adopted a completely socialist programme in 1884 and renamed itself the Social Democratic Federation.

The socialists objected to George's belief in the benefits of unrestricted competition. It has been mentioned earlier that the American believed sincerely in the justice of unrestricted capitalism - once the land monopoly had been broken - and "hoped that by the amputation of rent, competitive capitalism might be restored to full vigour, in fact he held an almost millennial view of its potential once purged".¹⁴ Hyndman and his

12. J. Hampden Jackson born in Lincoln spent most of his adult life in Liverpool, working in commerce and eventually becoming secretary of the African Association. Interested in taxation he left an encyclopedia of taxation in MSS. form. A lifelong radical he edited (and subsidized) a periodical called The Argus which published much by Liverpool writers like Hall Caine and Oliver Lodge (Information supplied by Mr. J. Hampden Jackson, his grandson).

13. The Historical Basis of Socialism.

14. Checkland. Ec. Hist. Rev. op. cit.

associates, on the other hand, now believed that most of society's ills stemmed precisely from competition, and went on to claim that George was illogical in attacking only one form of monopoly and only one class. Income from land was not the only form of "unearned increment",¹⁵ There should be State control of all monopolies and taxation to extinguish all forms of unearned wealth, whether from rent, stock exchange gambling, or any other source it was claimed. Society's problems were complex, and to argue, as George did, that there was a single enemy and single remedy was unreal:

"It is quite ridiculous" Hyndman wrote,¹⁶ "to talk of the landlord as the sole cause of the distressing condition of the mass of our agricultural population ... still more foolish to argue that the exaction of rent for land is the chief cause of the sad condition of the mass of workers in our great cities".¹⁷

The early socialist criticisms produced a remarkable effect on George, and Hyndman claimed the credit for the very considerable

15. Henry Fawcett in his Manual of Political Economy-first published as long ago as 1863-had pointed out that there was "no logical reason" why "the State should appropriate the unearned increment on land, but not the unearned increment on other property". Fawcett republished his Chap.VI. as a pamphlet "State Socialism and Land Nationalisation" in July 1883, and by June 1884 9,000 copies had been sold.
16. Hyndman had been a colleague of George's during the American's first visit and they met through the movements connected with the Irish land war. George actively helped the Ladies Land League, and Hyndman worked in support of Davitt in this country, and served on the Executive of The Land League of Great Britain. H.M.Hyndman. The Record of an Adventurous Life P.255. The two held a public debate on the merits of their respective cases. See The Verbatim Report of the Debate in ST. James' Hall July 2nd.1889."The Single Tax versus Social Democracy."
17. Hyndman. Historical Basis of Socialism. P.300.

concessions made to socialist thinking in the American's fourth book, Social Problems (1883).¹⁸ Hyndman had hitherto regarded Henry George as "an intellectual Anarchist" whom he hoped to convert "to the truth as it is in socialist economics",¹⁹ and was delighted with the way he reacted. In Social Problems it was agreed that the landowner was not the only enemy of society, and also that some part of the "loot" taken from society (albeit a small part) was intercepted by industrial capitalists. It was also admitted that the single-tax might not be the all powerful panacea it was once claimed to be.²⁰ George ~~was~~ in fact published a definite contradiction of the main contention of Progress and Poverty, but he left the contradiction unsolved. Single-taxers afterwards tended to ignore the implications of Social Problems and this is exactly what George did in the 'eighties. When he returned to Britain he reverted to talking of the single-tax as "the one great remedy", Progress and Poverty continued to sell despite its author's contradiction and his steps towards socialism were hastily retraced. "It was useless to be angry with him, or press him too hard" Hyndman complained, "for then he only went off to some of his devoted single-tax worshippers, from whom

18. Actually a collection of articles written in America after his first tour in Britain, for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. For Russel Wallace's views of the book see his discussion of it in the L.N.S. Ann.Rep.1883-4.

19. Hyndman. Record of an Adventurous Life. P.290.

20. Social Problems P.264.

he returned more single-taxy than ever".²¹ The truth of that contention can be seen from what happened in the Land Reform Union, and what happened when receptive audiences listened and stimulated George during the tours of 1884.

Within two weeks of George's arrival in Britain, Champion and Frost made an attempt to enlarge the programme of the Land Reform Union, to include the rest of the Socialist objectives of the S.D.F.²² This was a serious threat to an organisation which contained such a large number of people who believed avidly in free trade and were anti-socialist in outlook. George reacted in the way described above and "promptly (made) it clear to these and a few others, who threatened to obstruct his campaign if he did not accept their programme, that he not only opposed the nationalisation of capital, but stood firmly for the principles enunciated in his books".²³ George's followers defeated the Social Democrats and the L.R.U. was re-established as the English Land Restoration League, with a single-tax programme that made absolutely no concessions to the dissentients.

The defeat of the socialists did not mean an immediate rift

21. Hyndman. Record of an Adventurous Life. op.cit. P.291.

On only one occasion during his next tour of Britain does George seem to have been trapped into saying something like he had written in Social Problems. Asked why he did not leave the landlords alone and attack capitalists, he is quoted as saying; "Well, by and by, when they have got rid of the landlords, then, if it was necessary they would go for the capitalists".

22. For the programme of the S.D.F. see Max Beer op.cit. Vol. 2 P.267-71.

23. Anna George de Mille and Don Shoemaker, Henry George: Citizen of the World. The authors here obviously ignore the implications of Social Problems.

between them and the single-taxers. In spite of the fact that George henceforth made no secret of his opposition to socialism, the Social Democrats remained members of his organisation. The reason was obvious. The S.D.F. regarded land nationalisation as a step towards socialism and it was in fact one of their "transitional measures".²⁴ Justice supported the English Land Restoration League until 1887, when a final break occurred. Until then there existed "a curiously friendly dispute ... in which each side recognised the others' sincerity and zeal, but could not accept its economic beliefs,"²⁵ and this added at least weight (if not respectability) to the League in its early days.

There is little doubt that Henry George contributed greatly to the history of British Socialism. Coming at the opportune time he did, he attracted scores of reformers who later graduated to socialism, and he introduced them to a study of economics and social problems the easy way. "For the study of political economy," he persuasively told them, "you need no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need textbooks nor teachers, if you but think for yourself."²⁶ Many people who became socialists after going

24. Marx pointed out that he had included land nationalisation as a "transitional measure" in The Communist Manifesto. For his views on George see Hyndman, Record of an Adventurous Life op.cit. Chap.XVI

25. P. d'A Jones, Henry George and British Socialism (unpublished Manchester M.A.Thesis).

26. A statement made in a public address which George hoped (vainly) would get him a chair of political economy at the University of California. Quoted by R.L.Heilbroner and P. Streeten in The Great Economists. P.152

through a probationary period of addiction to the ideas of Henry George, will eventually be mentioned, and among them will be some of the most prominent figures in the British Labour movement. Whether they would have become socialists had George's work never appeared, it is impossible to say - probably they would, but Progress and Poverty made it easier. "He (George) furnished an intellectual bridge over which many passed from individualism into socialism"²⁷ is one verdict, while R.C.K. Ensor claimed that "out of Henry George by either Bellamy or Gronlund"²⁸ was a true pedigree of the convictions held by nearly all the leading propagandists who set socialism on its feet in Great Britain between 1886 and 1900".²⁹ These claims are undoubtedly true, but are the opposite of what George intended, a fact not often mentioned.

The programme of the English Land Restoration League was drawn up immediately after the defeat of the socialists in the L.R.U. It registers George's hostility to their beliefs, and is an adequate summary of the hopes and ideas of him and his supporters, when he was just on the verge of his greatest triumphs. It began with a restatement of the claim for common ownership of the soil:

"The value of land, as distinct from the value of improvements made upon it by the user .. belongs rightfully to the community".³⁰

27. H.M. Lynd. England in the Eighteen Eighties. P.143.

28. All three were Americans and Bellamy and Gronlund were to become two of George's most effective critics. See Chap. IV. f.n.84 and 85.

29. England 1870-1914 P.334

30. Manifesto of the English Land Restoration League.

The methods of retaking the land, the League's attitude to free trade, and the first steps to be taken towards its objective were described in proposals to:

"abolish all taxation which now bears upon labour, improvement and thrift, which increases the cost of commodities and enjoyment, and fines men for adding to the Common wealth. We propose to increase taxation on land until the whole annual value is taken for the public benefit and, finally to make the English people themselves the landlords of England".

"... as a first step to this end, we shall demand of our representatives in Parliament a reimposition of the tax of 4s in the £ on the current value of land,³¹ irrespective of whether it is rented, used or kept idle by the holder. And we shall also demand at the same time, a measure giving all local governments the power to collect rates from an assessment upon the value of land, exclusive of buildings or improvements, and ~~ir~~respective of use." ³²

The final paragraphs of the programme were obviously aimed directly at the Land Nationalisation Society and pledged the League to strict Henry Georgeism:

"The question of compensation is - a purely theoretical one .. we cannot tolerate the idea that the people of England shall be compelled to buy back the land which is theirs by natural right, or to compensate those who now appropriate those earnings in the future". ³³

The Manifesto made it clear that at last an organisation specifically pledged to work for the single-tax had been created in England, and was issued over the signature of Frederick Verinder (1858-1948), secretary of the E.L.R.L. Verinder had been an Elementary School teacher in Bethnal Green,

31. Land reformers throughout the nineteenth century urged a reimposition of the 4s land tax of 1692. It was alleged that landowners evaded the tax and scores of articles and books were written on the subject. See e.g. William Jameson's chap. on Land Monopoly in The New Party ed. by Andrew Reid, J. Stuart Mill op.cit. Book 5, Edwin Adam, Taxation of Land Values and the article on "The Taxation of Land Values" in The Social Democrat Vol. II. 1898 P. 212-4 and "The Present Position of the Land Tax" by A Hook. Land and Labour Aug. 1906 (reprint of an Economic Journal article)
32. Manifesto of the English Land Restoration League.
33. Ibid.

between 1872 and '77 and there had met Stewart Headlam. He was one of the founders of the Guild of St. Matthew and became its first secretary. Like the Rev. Headlam, Verinder was attracted to the ideas of Henry George, but, unlike him, did not go beyond them and embrace socialism. He remained a single-taxer to the end of his life and wrote numerous pamphlets, articles and short books. At this time he used his position as sub-editor of The Church Reformer (1883-89) to publicise Progress and Poverty and the activities of the League.³⁴

The E.L.R.L. was open to all who approved of its objects on payment of a small annual subscription. Political clubs and associations were asked to affiliate and it was governed by a General and an Executive Committee (elected at the Annual General Meeting) together with one member from each affiliated club. The office of treasurer was held by William Saunders, one of the guarantors of "The Henry George Lecture Fund".

George's tour in 1884 took on the appearance of a triumphal progress. He was in Britain for practically the whole of the year³⁵ and wherever he went was assured of a huge audience. His first meeting was held in the St. James' Hall, London, where

34. For a short biographical sketch of Verinder see Bliss and Binder Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (rev. edit. 1908-) and The Labour Annual No. 1 1895. Many of Verinder's articles and tracts are mentioned in the text. He also wrote three small books, Land, Industry and Taxation, Land and Freedom, and My Neighbour's Landmark; Short Studies in Bible Land Laws. His best known pamphlets were The Great Problem of Our Great Towns, Our Daily Bread and Land for the Landless. All written to suit the various phases the movement was going through. Verinder was active secretary of the E.L.T.L.U. until 1946.

35. His tour for the E.L.R.L. lasted from January to April. He then returned to the U.S. but came back at the invitation of the Scottish Land Restoration League and stayed from November to January 1885.

Henry Labouchere, editor of Truth, deputed as Chairman for John Ruskin. It was an impressive start to the tour³⁶ and from London George went into the provinces, where he held a number of sensational meetings. Press notices were numerous, and many were favourable.³⁷ He took what he called "the advanced position on compensation", painted rosy pictures of a society purified by the single-tax, and made his opposition to socialism clear. His anti-compensationist attitude attracted more opposition as the tour went on, but scores of reformers, won over by the fervour of his appeal, joined the single-taxers.³⁸ Among these were Sydney Olivier, The Rev. Philip Wicksteed,³⁹ the economist, and George Bernard Shaw. Shaw has left a record of how he fell under George's spell:

36. For The Times report of the meeting see the edition of 10th. January.

37. For the press reception of George see E. Lawrence. Henry George in the British Isles. P.35. Punch was consistently hostile to George and Progress and Poverty and equated his doctrine with socialism. George was always referred to as "George the Fifth" a nickname coined by Labouchere.

38. A disastrous meeting was held at the University of Oxford however, where Alfred Marshall was George's chief critic.

39. Wicksteed was a Unitarian Minister who later had connections with the University Extension movement and John Trevor's Labour Churches. He persuaded Arnold Toynbee to give his famous last lectures on Progress and Poverty. For Wicksteed see C.H. Herford. Philip Henry Wicksteed (1931). For Henry George's influence in Unitarian circles see P.205 et seq. Wicksteed's review of Progress and Poverty is in The Inquirer 30th Dec. 1882. and three articles on the book follow on 21st April, 5th and 12th May 1883.

"One of the first public meetings I haunted was at the Nonconformist Hall in Farringdon Street, in 1884. The Speaker of the evening, very handsome and eloquent was Henry George, American apostle of Land Nationalisation and the Single Tax. He struck one dumb, shunted me from barren agnostic controversy to economics. I read his Progress and Poverty and went to a meeting of Hyndman's Democratic Federation, where I rose and protested its drawing a red herring across the trail blazed by Henry George." ⁴⁰

In February George crossed the border into Scotland and found an enthusiasm for his ideas that even excelled that of England. Once again he found the ground well prepared for him. It was an area of the British economy where "feudal style landholding, and aggravated conditions of industrial working class poverty were present,"⁴¹ which had over the past few years received the detailed attention of emissaries from the Irish Land League. Even more recently Michael Davitt had toured the country speaking of George and preaching "land nationalisation with a burning eloquence unknown since Chartist times".⁴² These orators obviously contributed to the troubles in Scotland, and when George arrived he found distress and discontent prevalent in the towns and the Crofters war in progress. Revolt

40. Sixteen Self Sketches by George Bernard Shaw. P.58. cf. the remarks of Samuel Smith, M.P. "I have never known such an outburst of Socialistic feeling as occurred in 1883 -84. Progress and Poverty became a sort of Bible with multitudes. George appeared to them a second Moses to lead the suffering Israel of the nineteenth century out of the Egyptian bondage of cruel land robbers". Smith. My Life Work. Chap. XVI. P.148. Smith was an opponent of George's maintaining that society only progressed once the justice of private property was recognised. He took part in a public debate with George on this tour and his speech is printed. Ibid. Appdx. IV. See also his article attacking the American, "Nationalisation of the Land" Contemp. Rev. Dec. 1883.

41. Charles Albro Barker. Henry George. P.400

42. Thomas Johnston. History of the Working Classes in Scotland. P. 393.

had flared up in Skye and the Highlands everywhere were seething with discontent. The agricultural depression had affected Scotland as badly as it had the rest of the British Isles, but there were other irritants which led to violence.

Scottish agrarian history has something in common with that of both England and Ireland. In the Lowlands the agricultural system resembled that of the English, while in the Highlands it was more like that carried on in Ireland. There the crofters were as attached to their small parcels of land as the Irish peasants were, and were bitterly resentful at continued depopulations caused first by an invasion of sheep breeders, and then by rich men anxious to turn large tracts of land into deer forests. This gave the clearances all the appearance of a class war,⁴³ and led to the creation of The Highland Land Law Reform League, an organisation dominated by the same Dr. Clark who had helped form the L.N.S. and Land Restoration League in England.⁴⁴

Henry George used the existing reform organisations to provide him with audiences, and cleverly played on the sympathies of all the discontented elements in Scotland. The great landowners were attacked in a way that delighted the crofters,⁴⁵ and

43. For the extent of the depopulations and the barbarity with which they were often carried out, see Johnston op.cit. P.186 et seq. and David Keir. 'Desolation of the Highlands' in Fact. No. 17. Aug. 1938.

44. See Dr. G. B. Clark's The Highland Land Question for his description of crofters needs in 1884. For a description of its aims see Russel Wallace's address at the L.N.S. conference in 1884. L.N.S. Ann.Rep. 1884.

45. George was involved in a dispute with the Duke of Argyll, a great landowner who had reviewed Progress and Poverty. His remarks and George's reply were published by the S.L.R.L. as a pamphlet called The Peer and The Prophet.

the industrial workers were told that land taxation would solve the problem of unemployment, and stop the drift of rural labourers into the towns. Presbyterians were asked "to be missionaries at home rather than to the heathen",⁴⁶ and George's appeal met with an enthusiastic response. After one meeting in Glasgow "500 persons remained behind to take part in the formation of an organisation to propogate the ideas of the lecturer"⁴⁷ and a week later, on the 25th February 1884, George returned to preside at the creation of the Scottish Land Restoration League.

The S.L.R.L. is an important organisation in the history of the single-tax in Britain. The meeting at which it was created was organised by John Murdoch, editor of The Highlander,⁴⁸ Richard McGhee, John Ferguson, a direct link with the Irish land movement,⁴⁹ and Harold Rylett, 1,940 signatures were collected on the membership list that evening, and within the

46. Charles Albro Barker op.cit.P.400. Lawrence op.cit. P.35 quotes an amusing report from the New York Tribune to the effect that when "the Duke of Buccleuch died with a hearty contempt for Mr. Henry George's wild schemes of disorder and confiscation", he arranged in his will "for the management of his estates for 1,300 years to come".

47. Henry George, Jnr. op.cit. P.434

48. For Murdoch's career as a lecturer in England see Chap.8.

49. Ferguson was born in 1836 in Antrim and according to the Labour Annual No.1. 1895 (then anti-single-tax) he was "well educated but with high class prejudices". He was a traveller for a firm of stationers and went to Glasgow in 1859. There he formed the first Home Rule League outside of Ireland. By 1895 he was said to have "given 1,200 platform addresses, and written 1,400 articles and letters on economic and social problems". Ibid. Obituary Ibid. 1907

next few weeks branches were set up in most of the principal cities that George had visited.

The Scottish Land Restoration League was organised on similar lines to the E.L.R.L. Political groups were asked to affiliate and membership was open to individuals paying a subscription of one shilling a year. Branches were to have not less than ten members and government was by an Executive committee elected annually. William Forsyth was its first President, and the list of Vice-Presidents included the Rev. Alex Webster, the Dean of Guild Brims, Angus Sutherland, D.C.MacDonald, a solicitor, Richard McGhee, Peter Fleming and George M.Sutherland, another Glasgow solicitor. The officers were John Crosby, treasurer, John Goldie, secretary, and John Murdoch, "acting secretary", while the committee included a number of names that were to become famous later.⁵⁰ Among these were J.Shaw-Maxwell, Finlay Hall, Peter Burt, J.Bruce Glasier, Edward McHugh and John McCulloch. The programme of the S.L.R.L. was also very similar to that of the English League, strictly Georgeite and demanding the reimposition of the 4s tax as a first step.⁵¹

The S.L.R.L. immediately began its campaign. The first pamphlets and addresses were issued⁵² and the League entered into

50. One of the S.L.R.L.'s first publications, Greetings to the People of Scotland dated 27th Feb.1844 is, however, signed by Alexander Webster, Chairman, and David McLardy, Secretary, neither of whom had been mentioned before.

51. Ibid.

52. e.g. Glasgow Rents and Taxes by "Gratis", The Land Question and How to Solve it, by "Civis Mundi", Startling Facts About Pensions and Land Tenure, Land and Labour, a reprint of a lecture by Robert Cherrie, and The Restoration of the Land to the State, also by Cherrie.

an alliance with Dr. Clark's Highland Land Law Reform League. George's panacea was put forward as a remedy for the troubles and eventually a "No Rent" campaign, which had considerably more success than Parnell's, was started in selected parts of the Highlands. Once again violence broke out and 250 Marines had to be stationed at Tiree to maintain order. Arthur Balfour, then Secretary of State for Scotland,⁵³ recognised the way the older Crofter's organisation had been won over by the Restoration League. It now based itself, he said,

"partly on misrepresentations of Mr. Henry George, and partly on misrepresentations of Scripture, but as the head of the Tiree branch had lately been imprisoned for theft," he went on, "his views on Holy Writ were not authoritative".⁵⁴

The agitation and the depopulations went on practically unchecked until the Liberals returned to power. The Crofter's Commission had been set up in 1883 and its report led eventually to the Crofter's Holding Act of 1886.⁵⁵ These were undoubtedly

53. An office created by the Salisbury Caretaker Government of 1884-5.

54. Blanche E.C. Dugdale. Life of A.J. Balfour. Vol. I. P. 111. Balfour was one of the major critics of Henry George at the famous three day Industrial Remuneration Conference in 1885. Reports appeared in all the newspapers and Balfour went on record as saying that: "To compare the work of such men as Mr. Henry George, with that of such men as Karl Marx, either in respect of its intellectual force, its consistency, its command of reasoning in general or of its economic reasoning in particular, seems to me Absurd". J. Clayton. The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain, 1884-1924. P. 25. Headlam (and to some extent Shaw) represented the Georgeites at the Conference.

55. The Royal Commission reported in 1884. The Act created the Crofter's Commission with the power to fix fair rents, cancel arrears of rent, etc.

forced from the governments by the agitations led by the S.L.R.L., but the Act had nothing in common with the single-tax doctrines of the League, and was a conservative measure.⁵⁶

The English Land Restoration League also took part in the Crofter's agitation. Meetings were held in England, usually in conjunction with local Liberal organisations, at which sympathy with the Highlanders was expressed. Numerous petitions were drawn up and circularised and sent to Parliament⁵⁷ before the Liberals fell from power.

While the Crofter's agitation was in full swing the Restoration Leagues were confronted with a general election - the first under the extended franchise. At that time (November 1885) George's work and activity were still news, and Progress and Poverty (and criticisms of it) still occupied the journals regularly. Arnold Toynbee devoted his last public lectures to Henry George and Hurrell Mallock's Property and Progress (1884)⁵⁸ is only one of the refutations which admitted its importance - and perhaps enhanced its popularity.⁵⁹ The Leagues were also

56. John Murdoch wrote an account of the agitation in 1886. The Crofter's Revolt Against Landlordism.

57. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1886-7. The League was severely restricted by a lack of funds however. Income for 1886-7 only amounted to £185. It was also prominent in the demonstrations that preceeded the 1884 Parliamentary Reform Act.

58. Mallock (1849-1923) was the author of The New Republic (1877) and reviewed George's book in The Quarterly Review. He became well known later as an anti-socialist writer and at the time of George's tour was a Conservative candidate for a Scottish constituency, and an outspoken opponent of the Georgites. He was eventually made to withdraw his candidature.

59. e.g. "The Nationalisation of the Land". Edinboro' Rev. Jan. 1883. Frederic Harrison was also a critic of George's. See his Autobiographic Memoirs Vol. II. p. 297-8

expanding, in Scotland steadily taking over the Crofter's Reform organisations, while the E.L.R.L. had twenty affiliated clubs, with a total membership of 12,000.⁶⁰ There was also a particularly flourishing single-tax league in Birmingham.

The election of 1885 was fought mainly on the question of Home Rule, and the issues involved in the new radical programme drawn up by the group of Liberals who looked to Joseph Chamberlain as their leader. A good indication of the effect Progress and Poverty and the emerging single-tax organisations had had, even at that early date, is the fact that the "Unauthorised Programme" was produced largely as an alternative to the schemes they were offering.

Chamberlain had realised that an agitation attacking the land system was a sure method of winning support for the Liberals, a decade before the single-tax agitation began. In the 'seventies he and a group of Birmingham Liberals had actively taken part in the creation of Joseph Arch's Agricultural Trades Union⁶¹ and it is clear that several of them had hopes of converting it into an organisation for land reform.⁶² This at that time meant some kind of an alternative, first, to the "Free Trade in Land" palliatives of the orthodox Liberals, which were

60. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1885-6.

61. Prominent were George Dixon, M.P., Auberon Herbert, William Gibson Ward, "a crank with a play of Land Nationalisation", Baldwin Leighton, Jesse Collings and Edward Jenkins. See Reg. Groves. Sharpen the Sickle, Arch's Autobiography, S. Hutchinson Harris, Auberon Herbert, Crusader for Liberty, Chap IX. and G.E. Fussell, Tolpuddle to T.U.C.

62. For Jesse Collings', a trustee of Arch's Union, resolution on the need "for a closer connection with the land" see J. Collings and J.L. Green. Life of Jesse Collings. Part 1. P.115.

not proving popular, and secondly, to the hated peasant proprietaries demanded by Parnell and the Irish party. Little very definite emerged in the early years, and the Chamberlainites simply talked vaguely about the unjustness of the existing system and the need to get the labourer "back to the land".⁶³ When Progress and Poverty appeared Chamberlain was said to have been "electrified" by reading it and meeting the author,⁶⁴ but not completely convinced-and he was too astute a politician to commit himself to the doctrine of the single-tax. He was determined to fight the next election on a radical programme nevertheless, and arranged for a series of articles to be written in The Fortnightly Review. These were collected and published as The Radical Programme (1884) and an interesting organisation known as The Allotments Extension Society⁶⁵ was created to agitate for the demands regarding the land. Jesse Collings formulated these, and it is clear from his remarks that the Restoration Leagues were very important in prompting the writing of the "Unauthorised Programme":

"Whatever may be our opinion of the particular methods advocated by Mr. Henry George" wrote Collings, "it would be blindness to deny that the principle of Land Nationalisation is spreading with considerably rapidity, and that a new form and force are given to the land question which it is impossible to deny"

63. See the introduction to C.H.D. Howard (ed) Joseph Chamberlain A Political Memoir for radical ideas in the period before George's work appeared.
64. J.L. Garvin. The Life of Joseph Chamberlain. Vol. I.
65. Frederick Impey was the founder of the A.E.S. and according to a biographical on him in the Birmingham Illustrated Weekly Mercury was partnered by Collings and Lord Ilkeston.

"The increasing demand in its favour can only be satisfactorily met by some just and practical scheme by which the present monopoly in land can be broken up, and which, by giving the tiller of the soil an open career, will stay the exodus going on." ⁶⁶

The "just and practical" alternatives to Henry George turned out to be the demands for state tenancies for small holdings, usually associated with the slogan "Three Acres and a Cow", formulated by Frederick Impey,⁶⁷ This is the limit of Chamberlain's concession to the demands of the land reformers, but he made some attempts to gain the support of the land taxers. In a typical speech at Ipswich, for instance (14th January 1885), he talked of the need for "a revision of taxation, including the taxation of ground rents and the contribution of personal property in local rating"⁶⁸ but never formulated any real proposals. Nevertheless Chamberlain's speeches, however insincere, were useful publicity for the Georgeites. His campaign methods also seem to have owed something to the American. His vitriolic speeches were unlike anything heard before from a politician of his calibre, and were more like those George was

66. Jesse Collings. Fortnightly Review. cf. Chamberlain's statement that "if something is not done quickly ... we may live to see theories as wild and unjust as those suggested by the American economist adopted as the creed of no inconsiderable portion of the electorate". "Labourers and Artisans Dwellings" Ibid Dec. 1883. and C.H.D. Howard op.cit. P. 108 Gladstone held similar ideas about the threat of Henry George. At his instigation the Cobden Club printed and circulated "Progress of the Working classes in the last half century", based on Sir Robert Giffen's statistics. "I have read with great pleasure your masterly paper", Gladstone wrote. "It is probably the best answer to George: and I hope it may be practical to give it wide circulation".
67. F. Impey. Three Acres and a Cow (1885). See also his Housed Beggars, a paper read to the British Association in 1886
68. C.H.D. Howard op.cit. P. 110.

making in Scotland, than those being made by Gladstone, for instance. Chamberlain's most famous speech in which he attacked the landlords as "parasites who toil not, neither do they spin" sounds almost like an exact quote from Progress and Poverty.⁶⁹

It is quite certain that the "Unauthorised Programme" was responsible for a great deal of the success the Liberals had at the election of 1885, particularly in rural areas.⁷⁰ The single-taxers devoted most of their attention to work in urban constituencies, and there is no record of any open conflict between the representatives of Chamberlain and Henry George. Both were taking part in a general indictment of conservatism, and representing a form of liberalism which made no claim to be official policy. Nevertheless, they were basically antagonistic and it is interesting to speculate on what would have happened to Henry George in England, had Chamberlain put forward his "just and practical" alternatives three or four years earlier - before Progress and Poverty had appeared and established itself. Undoubtedly they would have been popular, but the single-tax movements would surely have had much more difficulty in establishing themselves.

The English Land Restoration League conducted a vigorous campaign at the election for the immediate policies outlined in the Manifesto. Large quantities of literature were distributed.⁷¹

69. Progress and Poverty. Book VII. Chap. 1, "The Injustice of Private Property in Land", is one of the most powerful in the book, crammed with Biblical quotations of the kind used by Chamberlain, and certainly one of the most widely read and quoted.

70. The rural areas became overwhelmingly Liberal. See the Rev. C. W. Tuckwell. Reminiscence of a Radical Parson. P. 45. et. seq. for a description of the campaign for the "Unauthorised Programme" in the country districts.

71. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1885-6.

and the propaganda was said to have had considerable success. The single-taxers concentrated heavily on one or two constituencies and two of their Executive members were successful. William Saunders (who had, however, local connections)⁷² stood as an official Liberal and won Kingston-upon-Hull by a majority of 363, and John C. Durant got in with a narrow majority at Stepney. There were also a large number of candidates returned who had promised to support at least a part of the League's programme (usually the reimposition of the 4s tax and "rating reform"). The results made George, in America at the time, rejoice that the "little knot of thorough going Land Restorationists" were accompanied by "quite a large number of fringe men sufficiently advanced for immediate purposes".⁷³

George obviously expected some quick successes for the single-taxers in the new Parliament, but misread the political situation in Britain. The Liberal victory was not due to the Land Restorationists' appeal, or to any single demand. Dissatisfaction with conservatism, support for the "Unauthorised Programme" and sympathy with liberal economic policies in general were almost certainly the prime considerations with the electorate. Also the victory proved to be an illusory one and the government was out of office within a few months, brought down by the dissensions caused by its support for Home Rule. Nevertheless, in that short time the single-taxers introduced their demands into the House of Commons. William Saunders proposed a motion on rating

72. See f.n.9.

73. Henry George, Jnr. op.cit. P.453. For a typical election pamphlet see The Land Question and The General Election op.cit. issued by the Birmingham L.R.L.

based on the famous passage in The Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes (1885) in which Lord Sheffield advocated the rating of vacant land in the neighbourhood of towns at "4% on its selling value". The E.L.R.L. conducted a campaign outside Parliament to gain popular support for the proposal⁷⁴ and Saunders succeeded in getting a useful debate of five hours duration before it was astutely referred to a Select Committee on Town Holdings.⁷⁵ Handel Cossham,⁷⁶ who later became an Executive member of the E.L.R.L., also proposed a motion rather more strictly in accordance with the demands of the League's Manifesto. This asked for a tax of 4s. in the £. on land, but it disappeared in the welter of Irish debate that led to the election of '86.

The English League's successes were not repeated in 1886 and it complained of the apathy it met everywhere.⁷⁷ Saunders standing again at Kingston as a Gladstonian Liberal was defeated and John C. Durant did not enter the contest at Stepney. Furthermore, many of the "fringe men" who had been sympathetic in 1885 were defeated. Results in Scotland, however, were more impressive on both occasions.

Glasgow saw a series of contests in 1885 involving single-tax candidates which G.D.H. Cole said "deserve to be regarded quite as much as Burn's fight for Nottingham, as the pioneer battles for independent labour representation".⁷⁸ This is only partly

74. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1885-6.

75. Appointed to enquire into terms of occupation, compensation for improvements etc. and "into the question of imposing a Direct Assessment on the Owners of Ground Rents, and on the Owners of Increased Values Imparted to Land by Building Operations or other Improvements".

76. M.P. for Bristol East.

77. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1886-7

78. G.D.H. Cole. British Working Class Politics. 1832-1914. P. 100.

correct. Most of the people involved certainly became socialists, as did so many single-taxers, and were financed by an early group demanding labour representation in Parliament. Nevertheless, whatever they became afterwards, they stood as single-taxers in 1885 and believers in free trade who hoped to convert the Liberal party to a policy based on Henry George's ideas.

The Labour Representation Committee of the Glasgow Trades Council "asked 20,000 Trades Unionists to give a shilling each for Parliamentary candidates"⁷⁹ in 1885. What the response was is not known, but the Scottish Land Restoration League, and allied organisations, put up a number of candidates whose support gives some idea of the response to single-tax pamphleteering and campaigning in that area.

The S.L.R.L. had five official nominees. The three that fought Glasgow constituencies suffered heavily from Parnell's manifesto urging the Irish to vote against the Liberals,⁸⁰ but Shaw-Maxwell at Blackfriars polled 1,156 in a three-cornered contest. William Forsyth, President of the S.L.R.L., gained 978 votes at Bridgeton, but Wallace Greaves (Tradeston) got only 86. The other two League candidates were John Murdoch, bottom of the results with 74 at Partick, and James Morrison Davidson, a radical journalist and Scots nationalist, who polled only 65 at Greenock.

79. Johnston op.cit. P.262

80. Moody op.cit. C.H.D. Howard in an article in the E.H.R. LXII.1947, suggests that in some constituencies the Schools question was of equal importance however.

There were other candidates supported by the S.L.R.L. These often stood as Crofter's candidates or nominees of the Highland Land Law Reform League, but the liason with the single-taxers was very close and often the two groups had a joint membership. Angus Sutherland, for instance, a Crofter's candidate who polled 1,058 against the heir of the estate in Sutherland, (Marquis of Sutherland, Liberal, 1,701) was a Vice-President of the S.L.R.L. and was supported by it. So too was Francis Irvine, a "Radical Labourist" who polled 1,530 at Aberdeen, and Alexander McDougall, who gained 967 in a three-cornered fight in Perth. Three Crofters candidates were successful, Charles F. Mackintosh and Donald MacFarlane in Argyllshire and Caithness, and Dr. Clark of the English Restoration League and the Highland Land Law Reform League in Invernesshire.

In all these contests the candidates supported by the S.L.R.L. ran against official Liberals. Their votes cannot be regarded as votes for Henry George. They measure the intensity of particular grievances connected with the land, and several of the candidates may have been set up to demonstrate the way radical feeling in Scotland was developing. In the next election the situation had altered very considerably.

In 1886 the Scottish results were better for the Liberals, as always, than the English. The Restoration Leagues (and the Land Nationalisation Society) never wavered from their belief in the need for Irish Home Rule, and so obviously on this occasion were more acceptable to the Gladstonians on that account. Dr. Clark held Inverness as a Gladstonian with a huge majority, and Angus Sutherland, the crofter's son, another

official candidate, defeated a dissentient Liberal overwhelmingly in Sutherland (1462-583). Andrew Provand, who was to become an important advocate of land values taxation won a Glasgow seat, and Francis Irvine increased his poll in Aberdeen West, against only one opponent, Shaw-Maxwell, Forsyth and MacDonald did not stand again. In North-West Lanarkshire R.B. Cunninghame-Grahame, who stood as a S.L.R.L. candidate, and not a Gladstonian, defeated John Baird, a Conservative, by 4,269 to 3,698.

Cunninghame-Grahame's candidature is perhaps best explained in purely opportune terms. The previous year he had fought Baird unsuccessfully in the same constituency as a Radical,⁸¹ and later became a prominent socialist in the Scottish Labour Party and the I.L.P. His possibilities of success alone may have prompted the S.L.R.L. to support him, because Cunninghame-Grahame seems to be one of the few socialists who owed little, if anything to Progress and Poverty. Three years later he was involved in a long drawn out dispute with Henry George in the columns of The Star, which was ended only by a letter from George Bernard Shaw.⁸² This antagonism, however, did not prevent him from co-operating with the single-taxers as useful allies, and in the 'nineties he became a Vice-President of the English Land Restoration League.

After the set-backs of 1886 the Restoration Leagues turned to political activity outside Parliament. The E.L.R.L. was

81. Cunninghame-Grahame (1852-1936). He contested a Glasgow seat as a Labour candidate in 1892 and split the Liberal vote.

82. Shaw's letter was published 7th June 1889

particularly active in the unemployed agitations in London, and these proved to be a very useful source of propaganda.

The unemployed demonstrations began in the winter of 1885-6. They were organised by members of the Social Democratic Federation and the single-taxers were in the habit of using the gatherings as a means of giving them a ready audience. In 1887 a group from the E.L.R.L. including Headlam, Verinder and William Saunders attended the meetings in Trafalgar Square that culminated in the riots on "Bloody Sunday" (13th November). Saunders was arrested for his part in an affray a week earlier, was discharged and then brought a complaint against the police accusing them of illegal arrest.⁸³ All this attracted attention to the League and also advertised the rifts that had developed between the single-taxers and socialists by then.

The E.L.R.L. had become accustomed to finding itself the object of abuse from Socialists at Trafalgar Square, and the "uneasy alliance" between the two groups was broken. There are a number of reasons for the antagonism. Authoritative Socialist attacks on George that carried more weight than Hyndman's,

83. See the E.L.R.L. pamphlet (No.12) by Headlam. Why Trafalgar Square was proclaimed. For a description of the whole unemployed agitation see Arthur H. Nethercot. The First Five Lives of Annie Besant. Chap. on "Bloody Sunday in Trafalgar Square". The single-taxers were not alone in using the gatherings. Nethercot talks of the chance they gave scores of "little groups ... to exploit their panaceas. Kropotkin and .. Mrs. Wilson with their Anarchism; Stepniak and Madame Novikoff with their Nihilism and Terrorism; Engels with his Communism; Headlam and Shuttleworth with their Christian Socialism ..." etc. Ibid. P.243.

appeared from Lawrence Gronlund⁸⁴ and Edward Bellamy⁸⁵ and had widespread influence. In Britain the Fabian Society had been formed in 1884 and had begun to attract members away from the single-taxers and had added its weighty attacks to the criticisms of George.⁸⁶ The American himself had also alienated many of his erstwhile supporters by his behaviour. His attacks on socialists had reached a peak of intensity when he fought and defeated them in the American Labor Party, and he acquired great unpopularity by refusing to add his protest to the outcry against the execution of the Chicago Anarchists. He also gave his support

84. Gronlund (1846-99) was an American Socialist. His two tracts attacking George were Socialism versus Tax-Reform and The Insufficiency of Henry George's Theory, both dated 1887. In both he attacked the single tax wing of the American Labor Party and argued, from the usual premises, that neither reform nor free trade could accomplish the desired abolition of the wage system.
85. Edward Bellamy (1850-98) author of the famous socialist Utopia - Looking Backward. (1888)
86. Sydney Olivier and G. B. Shaw are two examples of people graduating from the E.L.R.L. to the Fabian Society. Webb was a member of both in the 'nineties, but Headlam was the only person who seems to have had long and continuous connections with both. The exposures of George were not long in coming. Olivier wrote Tract No. 7. (Capital and Land) and Shaw's contribution to the famous Fabian Essays in Socialism was written, he said, actually to "check-mate Henry Georgeism" (Jubilee Edition) P.177. Shaw said he resigned from the E.L.R.L. after it refused to embrace socialism. There is no evidence beyond Shaw's statement for this, but if it is true it means the struggle went on after Champion's and Frost's attempt had failed. Sixteen Self Sketches. op.cit. P.63.

to Grover Cleveland, the Presidential candidate who promised tariff revision towards freer trade, and sections of his fifth book Protection or Free Trade finally established him as an ally of liberalism rather than socialism. "There is in reality no conflict between Labor and capital" he glibly told his readers at a time when unemployment and riots were widespread in England, and went on to call the socialism of Marx, Hyndman and Gronlund "a high purposed but incoherent mixture of truth and fallacy, the defects of which may be summed up in its want of radicalism - that is to say, of going to the root",⁸⁷ precisely what the Georgeites were accused of in turn.⁸⁸

In Scotland socialist organisations appeared later than they did in England, and there the single-taxers were almost entirely responsible for the creation of the Scottish Labour Party. Keir Hardie, an Ayrshire miner's leader, who had hitherto been "a worshipper of Carlyle" came momentarily under the influence of Henry George. The American "came to Scotland" he wrote a few years later:

87. Protection of Free Trade. Chap. 28. "Free Trade and Socialism" In his last book George, who was deeply religious, said that he saw "no evil in competition", but deemed unrestricted competition to be "as necessary to the health of the industrial and social organism as the free circulation of the blood is to the health of the bodily organism" and claimed that "Socialism tends towards Atheism". The Condition of Labour (1891) P. 91-2. It was in this book too that George horrified Socialists by chiding Pope Leo XIII for "counseling the State to restrict the employment of women and children".

88. The Socialist League, created by William Morris in 1885, gave qualified support to George until the events of 1887. Morris was quite uninfluenced by Progress and Poverty while Belfort Bax was positively anti-single-tax. "Land Nationalisation", he believed, "had been untimely ripped from its mother's womb". Quoted Jones. op.cit.

"and I read Progress and Poverty which unlocked many of the industrial and economic difficulties which beset the mind of the worker trying to take an intelligent interest in his own affairs, and led me, much to George's horror in later years when we met personally, into Communism. " 89

Hardie was invited by J.Galloway Weir, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the Highland Land Law Reform League, to stand as a candidate for the S.L.R.L. at Mid-Lanark.⁹⁰ He was helped by Champion, then editing The Labour Elector, and scores of land reformers, and out of the election arose the S.L.P. in 1888.

Among prominent single-taxers who created the Scottish Labour Party were Shaw-Maxwell, Bruce Glasier, George Mitchell, Dr. Clark and John Ferguson. The new organisation took over the Land Restoration League's programme in toto and Point Five of its demands asked for "the reimposition of the old tax of 4s. in the £. upon the present value of land, taxation of land values and nationalisation of mining royalties without compensation".⁹¹ This might account for the amicable relations which always existed between Scots socialists and single-taxers, or, more probably, the strength of Scottish liberalism (which became closely identified with Georgeism) made the socialists less likely to attack the Leagues in the way English Labour leaders

89. E. Hughes. Keir Hardie. P.23. Shortly after the Mid-Lanark election Hardie was adopted as a candidate for West Ham and another biographer of his says this was done at the instigation of members of a branch of the E.L.R.L. W.Stewart J.Keir Hardie P.65. This is not substantiated elsewhere.

90. Hardie's election platform included, among other things, "the nationalisation of land and mining royalties, ... an 8 hour day for miners, taxation of land values and anti-liquor legislation". Hughes op.cit. P.44

91. Johnston. op.cit. P.264.

did. Whatever the reasons, the antagonism in England described later, did not exist North of the Border. People like Ferguson, Shaw-Maxwell and John Murdoch tended to devote more time to the older movement as time went on, but they never refused to call themselves socialists also - despite Henry George's attitude.

In 1887 prospects for the Restoration Leagues must have appeared poor to contemporaries. The Liberal Party with which their destinies were bound up, had been irretrievably split and conservatism was strongly entrenched in power. George's theories were no longer unchallenged and new and dynamic Socialist organisations had appeared to compete for radical favour. Furthermore, most socialists were openly hostile, and the early alliance between them and the single-taxers was broken. It was necessary for the English League in particular to find a new basis of support, and this did happen. The break with socialism turned out to be a blessing in disguise, and in 1887 the period of the single-taxers' greatest influence began.⁹²

92. Lawrence op.cit. said that the beginning of the single-taxers' influence was in 1889, but it certainly began two years earlier than that, just after the final break with the socialists and with the creation of the London Municipal Reform League's Committee for "The Taxation of Ground Rents and Ground Values". See Chap. 6.

Chap. V. The Land Nationalisation Society, 1883-89.

The record of the Land Nationalisation Society between 1883 and '89 was by no means as impressive as those of the Restoration Leagues. It had a long list of influential members, but most of its time was taken up in academic discussions about its programme. It was governed by a President (Russel Wallace) and an Executive committee elected at the annual general meeting. C.A.Windhurst and William Jameson were the secretaries until 1889, when Joseph Hyder, a most effective propagandist for the L.N.S., was appointed as a salaried officer.¹ Among the earliest list of Vice-Presidents were Professor Newman, Helen Taylor, William Volckman and Canon E.D.Girdlestone - the ally of Joseph Arch. Trades unions, Co-operative Societies and other organisations were invited to affiliate, and membership was open to any individual on payment of a small annual subscription.

Wallace and his colleagues spent a great deal of time justifying their attitude towards compensation, the issue on which the Georgeites had so completely broken with them. To propose to simply take land would invite opposition they maintained. A system promising compensation would be more readily accepted and would be the quickest and easiest way to nationalisation; any other scheme would endanger the very stability of society:

"To try and get land without paying for it", it was contended, "must inevitably mean a struggle between the propertied and unpropertied classes ... and it is impossible to exaggerate the dangers that such a conflict would entail. It would be very likely to degenerate into a violent,

1. L.N.S. Ann.Rep. 1889.

unscrupulous attack upon property, which would end, as all such movements do, in anarchy succeeded by despotism." ²

Few indictments of the doctrines of Henry George painted such a dismal picture and it contained a point of view which members of the L.N.S. never really deviated from. On the methods of compensation, a less rigid attitude was shown and eventually a compromise scheme was worked out. Russel Wallace developed the ideas of Land Nationalisation in an early pamphlet,³ and came to the conclusion that his terminable annuities could be paid off, out of increasing rents, in 56 years. Charles Wicksteed, on the other hand, one of the original members who left to form the Land Reform Union, but who returned to become one of the most prolific of the land nationaliser's pamphleteers,⁴ proposed that landlords should be dispossessed and then compensated by government bonds to the amount of 30 times the ground rent (the real value of land minus improvements). These would bear a fixed rate of interest of $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. "which would be the amount of the ground rent". He believed, like Wallace, George and most other commentators, that land values had been rising for the past 300 years and would continue to do so. To take the rising value for the community's use, the rent to be paid to the state would have to be constantly revised, and then a growing surplus over and above what was needed for compensation and interest payments would be received.

2. Charles Wicksteed. Land for the People. How to obtain it and How to manage it. P.6.

3. The Why and How of Land Nationalisation. L.N.S. Tract No. 6 (1883)

4. Wicksteed. op.cit.

This surplus could be used partly to relieve taxation,⁵ and partly to redeem the bonds. In an elaborate series of tables Wicksteed estimated that, given a yearly increase in rentals of one percent.⁶ redemption could be completed easily in 71 years. If the whole surplus was devoted to redeeming the bonds the process could be completed in 53 years, and a system of real free trade would then be in existence.

The two schemes aroused considerable discussion among L.N.S. members, and eventually it was decided to adopt Wicksteed's proposals as official policy on a par with Russel Wallace's. At the annual meeting in 1886 the President stated that: "The success of Land Nationalisation is more to me than any scheme, and, as I feel that this success will be ensured by the adoption of State Land Bonds of Consols, in lieu of terminable rentals, to compensate landlords, I willingly sacrifice my weekly off-spring for the public good".⁷ The following year the Society held a special meeting to revise its rules and agreed to a resolution stating that it "approved of, as practicable, the method of compensating landlords by State bonds redeemable at par."⁸ The two methods of compensation were put forward as alternatives for the rest of the L.N.S.'s existence.⁹

5. As rents would continually rise, more and more would be available to relieve taxation. The final aim therefore of the L.N.S., "culminating in the substitution of one general tax... on ground rent values in place of all other taxation" was the same as the E.L.R.L.'s Notes on Compensation. L.N.S. Tract No. 6. A.R. Wallace.

6. He reckoned two per cent was a more reasonable figure. Wicksteed. Land for the People. op.cit. Chap. 11.

7. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1886

8. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1887

9. As late as 1911 an L.N.S. pamphlet gave the schemes equal importance. See also F. Thomasson's article. "Terminable annuities vs. Land Bonds." Land and Labour. Feb. 1902

The question of compensation was not the only one causing disputes between land nationalisers and single-taxers. Wallace and his colleagues contested a basic belief of George's that a tax on rent could not be shifted on to the tenant.¹⁰ The Restoration Leagues continually issued pamphlets invoking recognised authorities to support their view,¹¹ but were met by the L.N.S. using socialist arguments. It was not sufficient to tax a landlord, and leave him in control of the land it was claimed. While a monopoly in land remained the owner could, and would, act as a monopolist. The 4s. tax for instance, would be immediately shifted on to the tenant. Stuart Mill's stepdaughter put forward this view in The Liberal and Radical Year Book:

".. the whole taxation, whatever it might be, would practically be paid by the tenant. If the taxation amounted only to an equitable rent, the landlord would lay on a rack rent and pocket the difference. If .. the tax levied was so high as to equal the highest rent that could by any possibilities be exacted .. the unfortunate tenant would pay the whole of it".¹²

Wallace summed up his Society's attitude towards George's plan of leaving landlords in control as:

"not only a very indirect method of land reform but useless, and even mischievous, because it leaves all power to the landlords and does not tend to restore the land to the people. To tax the great Highland landlords will only make them get more out of the wealthy sportsmen who rent deer forests, and higher prices from all who want,

10. "The tax on land values is the only tax of any importance that does not distribute itself. It falls upon the owners of land, and there is no way in which they can shift the burden upon any one else". Progress and Poverty op.cit. Book VIII. Chap.111. P.303.
11. The favourites were Thorold-Rogers, Prof. Fawcett and Stuart Mill.
12. Liberal and Radical Year Book and Statesmans Encyclopedia 1888.

and must have, land for homes and other purposes".¹³

If the landowner could shift a tax, and if leaving landlords in control, as the single-taxers wanted, was ineffective, it was necessary for the L.N.S. to provide a scheme of state control that would meet the demands of social justice. Once again the one adopted was the outcome of a combined effort by Wicksteed¹⁴ and Wallace and represented an advance on the ideas of Land Nationalisation. At the valuation the tenant right would be separated from the ground rent. The State Bonds or annuities would be given to the dispossessed owners and the land handed over to Local Land Boards elected by universal suffrage. These Boards would not interfere with the use of land, except as arbitrators, and would collect rents from whoever owned the tenant right, and pay interest on the bonds "through the Imperial Exchequer". Thus the evils of State management would be avoided (sic) while still nationalising the land.

This was the kind of scheme for destroying landlordism that the L.N.S. offered as an alternative to the single-tax, and it is little cause for wonder that it did not meet with the same response as George's panacea. In 1885 Wallace was forced to admit that the Society had hardly grown. George's ideas

13. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1884. cf. Henry W. Ley (one time secretary of the L.N.S.) "I am in agreement with ... (Herbert Spencer) as to the absence of logic in Mr. Henry George's 'tax'. Elaborately arriving at land as "common" property Mr. George's "remedy" leaves it private property, to be "bought, sold, bequeathed and devised". The remedy, instead of sweeping away the evils of private property intensifies them". Symposium on the Land Question. ed. J. H. Levy (1890)

14. Wicksteed's proposals were published as L.N.S. Tract No. 25 Village Politics and Cottage Farms.

were attracting reformers away from the L.N.S. and few branches had been set up - only one at Norwich was very active - and there were few affiliations.¹⁵ Most of the Society's proposals were put forward as a means of providing small holdings that might put an end to rural depopulation moreover, and in this they competed with the radical proposals of the Unauthorised Programme, another explanation for a lack of success.

It has already been shown that Chamberlain - or more particularly his followers - drew the same conclusions from the Irish land war as most radicals did.¹⁶ It showed the evils of landlordism par excellence and made them determined to put an end to its worst excesses if possible. This could be done they maintained by creating state tenancies for small holdings which would have the threefold attraction of; giving the farmer a sense of social responsibility that absolute ownership never did; stopping the engrossing of land that had worried Liberals for the last half century; and stopping also the drift from the countryside to the towns.¹⁷ With those opinions members of the L.N.S. entirely agreed.¹⁸

Many of the L.N.S.'s early tracts and lectures dealt with the question of small holdings, and there is little to distinguish them from the writings of the Birmingham radicals. Peasant proprietaries were attacked as a "prop to conservatism"¹⁹ and the advantages of small scale farming were detailed at length.

15. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1885

16. Chap. 4.

17. Chap. 3 f.n. 59.

18. See Wallace's Presidential address at the annual meeting of the L.N.S. 1885 where he attacks the "Small Farms and Labourers Holding Company", an organisation set up to create proprietary holdings, and also deals with rural depopulation. Ann. Rep. 1885 See also Ann. Rep. 1884.

19. L.N.S. Tracts Nos. 1.2.15 etc.

Frederick Harrison, who was rash enough to say that it was inefficient, was singled out for special attack.²⁰ It was also agreed that local bodies should own the land and help prospective buyers (in Jesse Collings' case it was to be the County Councils, soon to be created, and in Wallace's elected Land Boards). Whereas in the Unauthorised Programme, however, the "quit rent or perpetual ground rent on the land purchased" was to remain always the same apparently,²¹ in the L.N.S.'s scheme it would be periodically revised to take up the unearned increment.

This concern with small holdings must have made the L.N.S appear a part of the dissentient Liberal movement. Davitt, now less enthusiastic for the single-tax, lectured extensively for the Society and it conducted a vigorous campaign involving "heavy expenditure" prior to the election of 1885.²² The tone of the propaganda may be gauged by the special pamphlet, State Tenancies vs Freeholders, written by Wallace for the election,²³ and by The Six Points of the People's Land Charter, which relegated the Society's ultimate aim to last in its election demands. The points were:

1. "Restoration of the land to the Nation".
2. No State, but local administration of the land.
3. Rights to small holders.
4. Security of tenure at fair rents.

20. See Wallace's address. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1885

21. Jesse Collings. Fortnightly Review. op.cit.

22. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1886

23. L.N.S. Tract No. 15.

5. Revaluation of the land every 30 years.²⁴
6. Extinction of the present landlords legal claims by terminable annuities. ²⁵

The L.N.S. welcomed the results of the election of 1885, but its hopes were dashed by the Home Rule crisis. At the election of the following year it found little response to its campaigning, but went on using most of its time and money advocating small holdings. By 1889 there was a special Small Holdings Fund with a balance of £500, and every lecture given in that year under the auspices of the Society, was on the need for ending rural depopulation and easing urban problems by the creation of small holdings. Before the fund was wound up hundreds of lectures had been given and 25,000 "suitable tracts" distributed.²⁶

The Land Nationalisation Society did take some part in political activity other than the small holdings movement between 1883 and '89. When it was created the L.N.S. had announced that it would remain quite distinct from any other organisation, but within a few years groups more acceptable than the Cobden Club had appeared, and by 1886 the Society had links with the Fabian Society, for instance,²⁷ and had even taken part in the very moderate work of the Commons and Foot-path Preservation Society. Perhaps because of a lack of a dramatic response to its ultimate proposals the L.N.S. eventually declared its willingness to co-operate with any group in a pamphlet that makes dismal reading compared with the optimistic

24. Wicksteed had wanted annual revaluation.

25. L.N.S. Tract No. 13

26. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1890

27. Ann. Rep. 1886.

forecasts of 1883:

"It is enough for us of the present generation to set the ball rolling, and in the right direction", it was stated. "Those who come after us will do the rest. Meanwhile every acre (requisitioned) by the people and for the people (and not for a peasant or any other proprietor) is so much land nationalised, no matter whether it be done by a central or local authority." ²⁸

The Society had taken part in the Reform agitations, the mass meetings of agricultural labourers and the Crofter's movement,²⁹ but could draw only slight satisfaction from its record in 1889. The T.U.C. had discussed land nationalisation for several years and eventually adopted a favourable resolution in 1889 (when S. Shaftoe, a Vice-President of the L.N.S., was President of Congress),³⁰ and the Labour Electoral Association had also made land nationalisation "a plank on its platform".³¹ Secretary of the L.E.A. was Thelfall, another Vice-President of the Society, who had also organised a series of Trades Union meetings on land reform and succeeded in carrying resolutions accepting nationalisation on L.N.S. lines.³² None of this can be said to be directly due to the activity of Wallace's organisation alone, but there is no doubt that its propaganda and continued criticisms of conservative legislation helped to produce these results, small though they are.

28. Land Nationalisation. L.N.S. Tract No. 31. by A.J. Ogilvy reprinted from the Co-operative Annual. 1890

29. See Land Nationalisation in Scotland by W. Jameson L.N.S. Tract No. 29. supporting a bill for the Highlands drawn up by J. McGilchrist Ross.

30. The resolution read that: "This Congress ... is of the opinion that no reform of the Land Laws will be satisfactory unless through land nationalisation". T.U.C. Ann. Rep. 1889

31. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1889

32. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1889

Chap. VI. The Land Restoration Leagues and the Municipal
agitations for the taxation of Land Values 1887-1905

Between 1887 and 1905 the English Land Restoration League grew in strength and influence until it became one of the strongest pressure groups in the country. In 1891-2 it reported an expenditure of only £282. from the General Fund with an outstanding sum of £4.13. 2 "due to the General secretary", but by 1900 it had an income of over £600 and was holding an average of 400 lectures and meetings annually in urban areas alone.¹ Four years later the League had a total income of £1,280 and the number of branches and affiliations had increased.² In 1904 for instance Fred Skirrow³ was appointed agent in Yorkshire and a new Tyneside Branch for Northumberland and Durham was created. By the time Balfour's government fell there were no less than five English, one Welsh and three Scottish Land Taxation Leagues in existence. This increase in strength started almost immediately after the single-taxers final break with socialism.⁴

The public hostility of most of the organised labour organisations meant that the single-tax movement became more acceptable to the radical free trade members of the Liberal Party. It meant that it was now possible for a person to join the Georgeites without fear of being branded with "socialist" ideas,

1. For the E.L.R.L.'s rural campaigns see Chap. 8.

2. The rather dramatic increase came with the attack on free trade. There was a large increase also in the early 'nineties during the Liberal revival, but this did not continue.

3. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep.

4. See Chap. IV.

and between 1887 and 1905 scores did join, and the more moderate demands of the Restoration Leagues became accepted as the premier demands of progressive liberalism. The first contact between Georgeites and a strong Liberal movement came through the organisations working for municipal reform in London.

The London Municipal Reform League was created in 1881 by Corrie Grant, J.F.B.Firth, John Lloyd and James Beal, to agitate for the reform of London government of radical lines.⁵ It was composed largely of influential Liberals, among whom were Dilke, Sidney Buxton and Sidney Webb, and it demanded an alternative to the rule of the vestries. Apart from trying to evolve a scheme of government however, it also tried to work out a programme for radicals to implement. Housing was regarded as a major problem since the publication of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes and this set the Municipal Reformers the task of finding an alternative to the schemes of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Association.

The Leasehold Enfranchisement Association was a Liberal organisation created in 1883 which had as its object: "To obtain for leaseholders compulsory power of purchasing the freehold".⁶ This, it was urged, would solve the problem of high rents and shortages, and the Liberals in the Reform League had supported it for a number of years. London's housing problem

5. Gibbon & Bell. A History of the London County Council.

6. Liberal and Radical Year Book ... 1888 op.cit. President of the Association was H.L.W.Lawson M.P., the secretary James Jowland M.P., and the Hon. secretary Howard Evans.

was so great however, that even Metropolitan conservatives began to agree to the policy of leasehold enfranchisement,⁷ and this played a great part in forcing the Liberals to evolve a more radical scheme. Sidney Webb, a few years later, claimed to have always regarded it as "reactionary" (the "urban equivalent of ... "Three Acres and a Cow")⁸ and reckoned that: "How this ever came to be considered a Radical measure, or one deserving the support of the masses who are not property owners, will remain a mystery for future ages"⁹ His objection (apart from the fact that conservatives supported it) was that more property owners would be created, and the reform he proposed instead was the same as his answer to the problem of rating, the other major concern of the London Reformers.

Local rates in Britain in the 'eighties were levied on a principle found on the Elizabethan Poor Law, whereby Overseers were ordered "to raise a tax on interests all of which come under the head of (l)and and improvements fixed to the land".¹⁰ This system was eventually fixed by an Act of 1836¹⁰ which described the basis of assessment as "the estimate of the annual value of the several hereditaments rated thereunto, that is to say, of the rent at which the same might reasonably be expected to be let from year to year". The basis of "the annual value

7. Sidney Webb. The London Programme. P.116

8. Margaret Cole (editor). The Webbs and Their Work. P.77 See also Webb's Facts for Londoners. (anon.Fabian Society Tract)

9. Webb. The London Programme op.cit. P.114. See on leasehold enfranchisement Ibid. Chap.XII, Frank Bamfield, The Great Landlords of London, and Fabian Society Tract No. 22, The Truth about Leasehold Enfranchisement.

10. The Parochial Assessments Act.

of immoveable property" was determined by a further series¹¹ of statutes, and the system was extended to Scotland in 1856. "Thus throughout the United Kingdom rates (were) levied according to the annual rental or use value of the subject land and houses, or land and improvements taken together".¹²

This system led to grave abuses which worried reformers from the 'fifties onwards. Their main objection was that it enabled landowners in towns to keep land out of use, and rated at a low level as agricultural land until a rise in value, due to amenities produced by community effort, enabled them to sell in the open market for building purposes. In this way huge fortunes were made and the landowning interests infuriated Radicals by regarding it as a legitimate source of profit. The Spectator, for instance, was especially incensed at some mild proposals that Bradlaugh once put forward for forcing uncultivated land into use on the score that: "great properties in the Home Counties, kept waste in the hope that London would build upon them, would be confiscated".¹³ The Times referred to the same scheme as "downright plunder".¹⁴

Keeping land off the market in this way not only enabled landlords to make huge profits, but it put up the price of land in general:

"This system allows, indeed encourages, the owner to keep valuables out of use, or poorly used", it was claimed, "thus forcing up, artificially, the price of land which is allowed to be put to use. So long as he keeps land

11. By the Land Values Act of 1856.

12. Edwin Adam. Land Values and Taxation. (1907) P.112.

13. Quoted Hypatia Bonner Bradlaugh and J. Robertson. Life of Bradlaugh. Vol. 2 P.138.

14. Ibid.

idle he pays no rates on it.¹⁵ Meanwhile the value of his land is rising year by year owing to the growth of population around him, and the expenditure of the rates and taxes to which others are contributing, whilst he benefits, but contributes nothing".¹⁶

Another injustice of the rating system was that land put to its best use was ipso facto taxed highest. Improvement even on agricultural land, was restricted by the need to pay additional rates and this had a particularly bad effect on farming. If improvements were exempted from local taxation, it was claimed, both agriculture and building would be enormously encouraged. (This was tried in the Crofter's Act of 1886)

These attacks were not new. John Stuart Mill had placed his objections on record in 1848 and the Georgeites had often repeated substantially what he had said. Their voices were raised at a more opportune time, however, and Sidney Webb was obviously influenced by the propaganda of the Restoration Leagues, when he was writing articles for The Speaker that were afterwards published as The London Programme (for the Municipal Reform League). He was also deeply impressed by a splendidly written and widely distributed E.L.R.L. pamphlet by Hugh Fletcher Moulton, Q.C.¹⁷ that outlined a method of promoting the

15. This was written in 1907 when agriculture had been relieved by the Agricultural De-Rating Act of 1896.

16. Adam.op.cit. P.113

17. The Taxation of Ground Values. One hostile reviewer commended Moulton's "easy, flowing, rather rhetorical style.. unusual in treatises of this nature, and .. well calculated to attract persons who are usually repelled by the logical severity of economical investigations". C.H.Sargant in The Contemporary Rev. Feb.1890. Moulton was one of the most brilliant lawyers of his time, but his erratic parliamentary career stopped him from being of great use to the Georgeites. Elected in 1885 he was defeated in the following year. In 1894 he was returned at a by-election and lost again in 1895. He won the seat for Launceston in 1898 and kept it until 1906, when he was made Lord Justice of Appeal. There is a Life of Lord Moulton (1922) by Hugh Fletcher Moulton. Obit. The Times 10th March 1921.

single-tax by easy stages for the first time.¹⁸

Sidney Webb estimated that rates in the Metropolis had risen by 60 per cent in a decade (1873-4 to 1883-4) and that there had been an increment to the landlords, which eventually equalled £15 millions a year. In saleable value (at 15 years purchase) this amounted to £225 millions. Furthermore, Webb claimed that he could determine, "from official sources", exactly what the true unearned increment was, and this amounted to no less than £14 millions in the year 1870/71.¹⁹

The London Programme went on to demand an "Unearned Increment Bill" which would "secure to the public at large the whole benefit of any future (sic) rise in the value of urban land". This would provide for an exact valuation to find the true site value, devoid of improvements, which the local authority could use as the basis for compulsory purchase and taxation. Moulton had also proposed that urban land should be separately assessed, and that the taxes (rates) levied on the assessments should be distinct from all others and, "paid by the owner, or, if by the lessee, deducted from his rent".²⁰

Webb's scheme scored an almost immediate success among members of the Municipal Reform League, and in the summer of 1887 "an independent committee" was created, "to advocate the

18. Progress and Poverty had not contained any scheme for implementing the single-tax, but in The Irish Land Question George had recognised that it might be easier to proceed by easy stages towards a tax of 20s. in the £.

19. Webb. The London Programme op.cit. Chap. 18. Webb became a Vice-President of the E.L.R.L. in the 'nineties. Henry George in Progress and Poverty op.cit. P. 302 had said that, unlike Paine and the earlier reformers, he believed, "the value of land can always be readily distinguished from the value of improvements."

20. F. Moulton. The Taxation of Ground Values. P. 8.

"Taxation of Ground Rents and Ground Values" in order to lessen the burden of Taxation which now presses so heavily on industry".²¹ There is little doubt that the intense activity of the English Land Restoration League in London had helped prepare the way for this move. Moulton's pamphlet had demonstrated that the land taxers were not Utopians demanding the immediate laying on of a tax of 20s in the £., and they restated their demands to suit the Municipal Reformers. Emphasis on their belief that a land tax could not be shifted onto the tenant was put well to the fore, and it was represented as a means of relieving the rate burdens on houses and buildings.²² Faced with the new and heartening move in the L.M.R.L. the Land Restoration League accepted a resolution from Handel Cossham at the annual general meeting in 1887, and a similar committee was set up. Negotiations between the two groups were opened and the outcome was a decision to create a "United Committee for Advocating the Taxation of Ground Rents and Values".

The object of the United Committee was stated to be: "To substitute the taxation of land for the taxation of buildings" The first President was Lord Hobhouse and the treasurers were Fletcher Moulton and J.F.Torr. Frederick Verinder became secretary and the executive included Durant, Webb, Stewart Headlam, J.F.B.Firth, William Saunders and James Beal. The

21. The Liberal and Radical Year Book .. op cit. Article on the United Committee P.260. The creation of the U.C."fairly meant", the E.L.R.L.claimed,"that the taxation of Ground Rents and Values has been added to the Liberal programme". Ann.Rep.1888.

22. "To bring down the price of land by taxing land values and to lessen the cost of buildings by ceasing to tax their occupancy, is (a) true "housing policy", it was maintained. E.L.R.L. Ann Rep. 1889. Appdx.

creation of the Committee represented a great advance in the history of the E.L.R.L. and it was in the form of its proposals to levy a tax on ground values that George's ideas became widely held in Britain. He was invited to England in both 1888 and '89,²³ and was delighted with the way the agitation was proceeding. Less visionary than in 1884 he recorded his impressions in a letter home:

"Our ideas are in the air" he wrote, "men get them without knowing where they come from, men think them without thinking they are getting them, and men get them still who look upon us as cranks and visionaries. Mr. Henry Labouchere M.P. for instance recently declared in a speech to his constituents that he was not such a visionary as Henry George. He did not propose to take land from the landlords and rent it out again. What he was in favour of was putting a tax upon land values".²⁴

The United Committee began its campaign in 1887. The Restoration League collaborated with the Municipal Reformers and some benefit was derived from the return visits of Henry

23. He was in England lecturing for two weeks in November 1888, and for a rather longer period in the Spring of 1889. It was on one of these tours that he first used the phrase "single-tax" to describe his proposals. It was also on this tour that George had the public debate with Hyndman. In the Social Democrat's report of the meeting George is called "a pet of the Plutocrats" (1897). For a report of a meeting of George's at Nottingham see Lord Snell. Men, Movements and Myself. P.58-9.
24. Henry George Jnr. op.cit. P.156. For Labouchere's views on the land question see e.g. his article in The Fortnightly Review Feb. 1884 in which he says that "landlords are a mistake, socially, politically and economically" and demands "a land tax at 4s in the £. upon the true yearly value at a rack rent". Thomas Huxley recorded his views on Henry George in a letter to James Knowles on 14th Dec. 1889. "Did you ever read Henry George's book 'Progress and Poverty'? he asked. "It is more damnable nonsense than poor Rousseau's blather. And to think of the popularity of the book! But I ought to be grateful, as I can cut and come again at this wonderful dish". He eventually wrote two articles attacking George. Leonard Huxley. Life and letters of Thomas Huxley Vol. 2. P.245 and 248.

George. Webb wrote several pamphlets for the U.C. and claimed that within a year the "adhesion of about 100 M.P's had been won for the idea of taxing ground values".²⁵ These demands were given official recognition when Moulton and William Saunders were invited to give the evidence before The Select Committee on Town Holdings which was widely noticed in the press.²⁶

A year after the creation of the Committee the first elections to the newly created London County Council took place, and the land taxers were able to report a large number of successes. The electoral organisation of the E.L.R.L., first used in the earlier School Board elections,²⁷ organised the campaign and although little notice was taken of the contests in the press generally, the gains were substantial. Among the successful candidates helped were Lord Hobhouse, soon to be made an Alderman, Earl Compton M.P., and Lord Monkswell - all of whom had been Presidents of the U.C. - Sir John Benn, and Firth²⁸ William Saunders and four others standing specifically as representatives of the E.L.R.L. were also returned.²⁹

25. See eq. his Plea for the Taxation of Ground Rents.

26. Summary of Saunder's evidence in E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1888

27. Stewart Headlam was the first E.L.R.L. member returned. Helen Taylor obviously financed the election organisation extensively.

28. Firth became the first paid Deputy Chairman of the L.C.C. but died in 1889. He is said to have had a considerable influence on Sidney Webb. See The Webbs and Their Work. op.cit. Chapter by McNair.

29. Ann.Rep. 1889. The others are not named, but one is obviously James Beal. Saunders was involved in an interesting contest in Walworth which shows how complete the break with socialism was. His opponents were Maj.L.H.Isaacs (Con.) and Harry Quelch (S.D.F.) See Social Democrat 1899, the biography of Joe Terrett, organising secretary of the Walworth S.D.F. and Quelch's agent.

Webb wrote a contemporary account of the influence of the United Committee and claimed that in its short existence practically all the London radicals were won over to its ideas.³⁰ Reform in the Metropolis had been so long delayed that radical solutions were almost certain to find favour, and the Progressive majority on the first L.C.C. was said by one of its most prominent members to have been "returned full of great schemes mostly formed to secure a millenium for London by return of post".³¹ Within a year the Council had created a "Land Valuation Committee" and had petitioned Parliament asking for a tax of 4 per cent on the selling value of unused land.

By the time of the second L.C.C. election in 1892, independence on it "had virtually disappeared" and a rigid party system was in being. The Council was now divided between Progressives and Moderates, and the former were closely identified with the policy of housing and rating reform via the taxation of ground values. "The subject which (had) overshadowed all others" in the first L.C.C., wrote John Benn, "was the determination of the Progressive Party to transfer some measure of the new policy of social betterment to the ground landlords of London"³². Benn's election address in 1892 called for:-

"continued insistence that Parliament shall transfer to all owners of rental and ground values in London a large share of the taxation which now unjustly falls upon shopkeepers, occupiers and toilers."

30. Socialism in England (1890)"This committee presenting its aims in (a) moderate and practical way .. has clearly exercised a potent influence .. at least two thirds of the members of the L.C.C. adopt its programme".

31. Gibbon and Bell. op.cit. P.84

32. Quoted A.G.Gardiner. John Benn and the Progressive Movement.
P.148

The elections turned out to be a great victory for the Progressives, who were returned with a majority of 84 to 40. The campaign was widely noticed in the press this time, and the English Land Restoration League reported afterwards that 11 out of the 57 members on its General Committee had seats on the L.C.C.³³

There is little doubt that the popularity of the proposal to tax land values accounted for the successes of 1892, and by that time it had become even more widely accepted than just among municipal reformers. As early as 10th. February 1889 Mr. E. Morton, M.P. had proposed an amendment to the Queen's Speech regretting that : "There is no mention ... that measures will be submitted to this House dealing with the ownership, tenure or taxation of land", and Professor Stuart presented the views of the United Committee on numerous occasions later.³⁴ As the Conservative government declined in popularity, so the proposals of the Restoration League grew. Influential radicals

33. Salisbury referred to the L.C.C. at this time as "the place where collectivist and socialist experiments were carried out .. and where a new revolutionary spirit finds its instruments and collects its arms". E.I.Champness. Frank Smith: Pioneer and Modern Mystic. Henry Pelling has pointed out that because of the allegiances of the poorer sections of the community in London it was both necessary for Metropolitan Liberals to put forward radical ideas that would not have been accepted by the Liberal Party everywhere, and made it easier for them to co-operate with socialists. This accounts for the nature of the Progressive programme in large part, and the single-taxers were exceedingly fortunate in finding their reception with the reformers so quickly. For Pelling's points see Bealey and Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906. Introduction.

34. Stuart had once been a Professor of Mechanics at Cambridge and he, Davitt and John Burns were particularly active in a campaign of the E.L.R.L's at this time protesting against the provisions of the Irish Land Purchase Bill. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep 1890.

joined the League in increasing numbers, (F.A.Channing is a typical example), and numerous radical and Liberal clubs affiliated to it.³⁵ In 1891 the Liberals recognised the popularity of the demand to tax land values by including it in "The Newcastle Programme".³⁶

The Newcastle Programme was presented to the electorate at the general election of July 1892. The inclusion of a demand for the taxation of ground values does not indicate that the Liberal party wholeheartedly accepted the proposal, but it is a true indication of its popularity.³⁷ The Programme was in fact an attempt to create "a majority by combining minorities" and included practically every current popular demand. The single-taxers worked enthusiastically for the return of Liberals however, believing in their conversion and the E.L.R.L. announced an expenditure of £1,133. in 1891-2. 40,000 election pamphlets were issued, and the League was able to report a number of successes. It was particularly active in the Metropolis in conjunction with the United Committee³⁸ where, it was reported, "pressure was brought to bear on ... candidates ... to induce

35. Ann.Rep.1887-91. In 1893 there were 63 affiliated organisations. Ibid. 1893.

36. For details see, e.g. The Annual Register 1891 p.180-6 and Simon Maccoby English Radicalism. Vol.2 Chap.VI. For the way official Liberal organisations, for instance The Financial Reform Association, "the intellectual vanguard of the Liberal Party" and the London Liberal and Radical Union, were adopting land values taxation, see the E.L.R.L's Ann.Rep.1887 et seq. George himself lectured to official Liberal organisations in London.

37. The E.L.R.L.said that the Budget of 1888 forced the Liberal Party to face the issue "between taxes on industry and taxes on land, between taxes which rob the people for the benefit of landlords and taxes which take for public purposes those values which the public have created". E.L.R.L.Ann.Rep.1888

38. Lawrence op.cit. confuses this organisation with the more famous United Committee created in 1907. See Chap. 9.

them to support the reasonable demands of London".³⁹ When the results were announced the land taxers looked forward to seeing the Liberals introduce legislation based on their demands.

The Georgeites were bitterly disappointed with the governments of 1892-5. The Liberals devoted most of their time to the problem of Home Rule and were hamstrung by the activity of the Lords. No attempt was made to tax land values, but members of the E.L.R.L. constantly brought the question up in the Commons. Professor Stuart and John Benn⁴⁰ also introduced the L.C.C.'s 'Owners Rate Bill' in 1893, but to no avail.⁴¹ By 1895 the League had become a bitter critic of the government, and of Lord Rosebery (who as Chairman of the L.C.C. had identified himself with its proposals) in particular. W.P. Byles M.P. proposed a typical resolution at an annual general meeting declaring that:

"this meeting .. protests against the neglect of the Government, in spite of its own pledges in The Newcastle Programme, and of a unanimous vote in the House of Commons, to take for the public use the land values which the public create".

The unanimous vote referred to was one on a motion intro-

39. Gardiner op.cit. P.155 See also The Fourth Annual Report of The United Committee for Advocating the Taxation of Ground Rents and Values. 1892. The E.L.R.L. supported a number of candidates of their own who were not Liberal nominees, however, all of whom failed. J.C. Foulgar, Frank Smith and Sydney Hallifax were helped particularly. See E.L.R.L. Special Report 1892.

40. Returned as member for Tower Hamlets. Dr. Clark and William Saunders were others particularly sympathetic to the single-taxers who were returned in 1892.

41. Even in 1894 the League vigorously objected to the buying of a part of the Bedford estate for £200,000 to extend the British Museum because there were "going to be changes" in the tax system "as stated in the Newcastle Programme". Executive Resolution 19th March 1894. quoted Ann. Rep. 1894.

duced by Andrew Provand, the member for Blackfriars, Glasgow, on the 8th. March 1895. It declared that:

"No system of taxation can be equitable unless it includes the direct assessment of the enhanced value of land due to the increase of population and wealth, and the growth of towns." ⁴²

The League was wrong in attaching too much importance to the vote on Provand's motion. It was passed at a time when the government was hamstrung by the Lords and the Liberals were attempting to regain popularity by sending up measures certain to be rejected. That the Unionists in the Commons did not follow the Lord's example and vote against the motion is an indication of the popularity that the League's ideas now had outside Parliament however.

In 1895 the country rejected the Liberals and Salisbury returned to power. The League worked in the Liberal's interest and reported considerable expenditure but few successes. ⁴³ By that time moreover, it had become almost as hostile towards the Progressives on the L.C.C. as it was towards Rosebery and his government

The Progressives had become less enthusiastic for land values taxation after six years of unsuccessful attempts to promote legislation, and they began to consider less ambitious schemes of reform. In 1895 they shared in the Liberal debacle when they lost some twenty seats on the Council and an equal

42. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1895

43. Ann. Rep. 1896 For E.L.R.L. election literature see pamphlets Nos. 29 & 16 (reissued). There are reasons not connected with land values taxation why the Liberals fell from favour in 1895 but it is interesting to record that, as in 1910, the Unionists refrained from mentioning it at the election and so running the risk of uniting their opponents. The Commons' activity in letting Provand's motion pass is also very similar to the way Labour legislation was left alone between 1907 and 1909.

number of Progressives and Moderates were elected. London then underwent three years "of unsteady government by the Progressives propped into power by the Aldermen remaining from the former Council",⁴⁴ and it was during this time that the League worked actively against their party. Shaw-Lefevre's "reactionary proposals" that the L.C.C. should make speculative investments in ground rents were successfully resisted in a vigorous campaign in the Metropolis,⁴⁵ and numerous improvements schemes were attacked. The Housing Committee's plans to sell municipal land were represented as reactionary alternatives to land values taxation and were also defeated,⁴⁶ and from this time onwards the Restoration League was a constant critic of the L.C.C. The United Committee became divided and was eventually amalgamated with the London Reform Union, the main propaganda body of the Progressive Party. In 1895, with the defection of the Progressives, the Conservatives in power at Westminster and their ideas under attack,⁴⁷ prospects looked bleak for the single-taxers, but, as in 1887, a new source of support appeared. On this occasion it was centred on Scotland and the Glasgow Town Council.

44. Gibbon and Bell. op.cit.P.98.

45. E.L.R.L.Ann.Rep.1898. The League's pamphlet written by Frederick Verinder criticising the scheme is published as an appdx.

46. Appdx. to E.L.R.L. Ann Rep.1899. The L.C.C. Proposed New Housing Policy.

47. The most bitter oponent of the land taxers at this time was the Liberty and Property Defence League, formed by Lord Bramwell in 1882. It was an extremely wealthy organisation set up to resist the attacks of land reformers and having as its aim: "the purpose of maintaining freedom of contract, upholding proprietary rights, and resisting socialistic legislation". In 1894 it held public debates with the E.L.R.L. at which 1,500 were present. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1895. See also The Liberty Review organ of the L.P.D.L. 11/18/24 Aug. 1895.

The Glasgow Council had the reputation of being one of the most progressive local authorities in Britain. It held a position in the eyes of reformers in the 'nineties similar to that of the Birmingham Council twenty years earlier, and was well suited to take the lead in a new, radical movement. Sidney Webb had sung its praises in 1890⁴⁸ and the Council's record of achievement was impressive. "Glasgow municipalised its water supply in 1855, its gas in 1869 and actually began municipal housing in 1871".⁴⁹ At first housing was entrusted to private enterprise supervised by the G.T.C., but in 1889 it took over the task itself - with remarkable success.⁵⁰ This coincided with the appearance on the Council of members of the Scottish Land Restoration League.

The S.L.R.L.'s early activity in the general elections and the Crofter's agitation has already been mentioned.⁵¹ The League, despite the fact that it had avowed socialists among its members, remained a pure Georgeite organisation devoted to the full programme of the single-tax. As late as 1902 Joseph Edwards,

48. S.Webb. Socialism in England. op.cit.P.108

49. Johnston op.cit. P.392. Johnston uncharitably goes on to say that: "The reason is not difficult to conjecture". It was that the middle class feared the spread of "working class diseases". His work is spoiled by an extreme bias.

50. J.McKinnon. Social and Industrial History of Scotland. P.253-4

51. Chap. III. At the 1892 election in Scotland a number of Labour candidates had stood and let Unionists in. Among these were H.H.Champion and John Wilson, and among those suffering was James Caldwell. Of candidates acceptable to the S.L.R.L. J. Galloway Weir, Angus Sutherland, Provand, J.H.Dalziel, and Thomas Shaw, were returned. 51 Liberals out of 73 were successful. In 1895 Labour candidates again ran and Shaw-Maxwell fought Provand - who nevertheless got in. Caldwell was returned for Lanarkshire, Galloway Weir was successful and so too were Dr G.B.Clark, Dalziel and Thomas Shaw. Frank Smith, the English single-taxer, stood for a Glasgow seat.

editor of The Reformer's Year Book reported that: "Its Executive so firmly believes in the non-efficacy of any other remedy than their own for social wrongs, and so strongly objects to being even suspected of sympathy with other reforms that they were unwilling to supply information or be represented in the R.Y.B."⁵² In 1889 it sponsored several candidates at the Glasgow Council elections and three were returned, a Mr. McLardy, Peter Burt, President of the League for many years,⁵³ and John Ferguson.

Within a year the single-taxers had persuaded the Glasgow Town Council to consider the taxation of land values as a means of housing reform. Burt and Ferguson were successful in obtaining the appointment of a sub-committee on the incidence of taxation in 1889, which reported in favour of the single-taxer's ideas the following year. Little notice was taken of it while the Liberals were in power at Westminster and there was a possibility of legislation, and while the L.C.C. was in the vanguard of the land tax movement. But in 1895 single-tax influence on the Glasgow Council was increased and Peter Burt moved the successful resolution to put pressure on the Unionist government that sparked off a nationwide agitation. It demanded:

"That the Police Commissioners accept the Report of the Incidence of Local Taxation Committee presented on January 13th. 1890 and, further, that the clerk be instructed to communicate with the various assessing authorities

52. Reformer's Year Book, 1902

53. Land Reformer's Year Book, 1909

requesting their co-operation to petition Parliament in favour of amending the law in accordance with the said report".⁵⁴

The Council circularised other authorities and there began a nationwide series of conferences, publicised by the League's journal The Single Tax,⁵⁵ and organised by the local councils and the S.L.R.L. Invariably it was decided to petition Parliament and great enthusiasm was created for the proposals to tax ground values.

The enthusiasm in Scotland spread to England. In 1895 the E.L.R.L. in conjunction with the Land Nationalisation Society and "The Electoral Committee for the Taxation of Land Values", held the first really great conference on the taxation of land values.⁵⁶ Delegates from trades unions, Political clubs, Trades Councils and land reform organisations, allegedly representing a million supporters, assembled in London along with a large number of M.Ps and local councillors. Resolutions demanding the carrying out of the pledges of The Newcastle Programme were carried, and Fletcher Moulton and Charles Harrison, L.C.C., were responsible for another asking for a separate valuation of sites and improvements, a rate levied on site value and "for the collection of the tax" to be "from the occupier, with a statutory right of deduction, as is the case in Income Tax, Schedule A."⁵⁷ This was but the first of a long series of impressive conferences held regularly

54. For a summary of the report see Joseph Edward's Land Reformers Handbook for 1909. It was proposed that the owners themselves should estimate what the site value was, and that this would then be the basis for taxation.

55. Started in 1894.

56. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1896

57. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1896 Single Tax. Dec. 1896. Harrison was leader of the Progressive party from 1892-98.

by the Leagues, accounts of which take up a large part of the yearly reports.

Conferences on the taxation of land values were also organised by local authorities in England. These were nominally distinct from those organised by the E.L.R.L., but were on an equally impressive scale and were widely noticed in the national press. The initiative obviously came from people like Fred Jowett at Bradford, who had been won over by the municipal demands, in what was perhaps the second wave of people who were to graduate to socialism through the ideas of Progress and Poverty.⁵⁸ In 1897, 150 rating authorities "resolved to petition Parliament for power to rate land values", and they met again in Bradford during the following January to draw up the petition.⁵⁹ Two months later the Battersea Vestry called a similar conference attended by 100 delegates, and later on the Rhymney U.D.C. followed Glasgow's example and began circularising rating authorities. By the summer of 1898, 150 councils had supported Rhymney's resolution,⁶⁰ and this is but a fraction of the activity of those years.

In October 1898 the Glasgow Town Council took the movement a further step forward by deciding to sponsor a Bill for the Taxation of Land Values. At the last election the single-taxers

58. Jowett was strongly influenced by W.P. Byles M.P. editor of The Bradford Observer. Byles was an enthusiastic single-taxer and prominent in the E.L.R.L. In January 1899 Jowett succeeded in getting the Bradford Council to accept a resolution "instructing the Finance Committee to seek powers, with the next Bill promoted in Parliament, to levy a tax on ground values". Fenner Brockway. Socialism Over Sixty Years. The Life of Jowett of Bradford. P. 58. f.n. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1899

59. Reports in Labour Annual 1898 and 1899

60. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1898

on the Council had been strengthened and were now in a majority.⁶¹ In March 1897, a resolution in favour of preparing a Bill had been passed, and on the 14th October 1898, John Ferguson again persuaded the Council to accept it by a majority of 37 to 33.

"The Glasgow Bill" was a complicated measure. It provided for the separate valuation of site values, "calculated at the rate of 4 per cent per annum upon the sum which such proprietors may fix as the price thereof between a willing seller and a willing buyer, such land value being taken apart from the value of any buildings, erections, or fixed machinery, or other hereditable subjects on or connected with such piece of ground".⁶² This was in accordance with the general demands of 1890. Valuation was to be by the owner, and the site value entered in a separate column of the Valuation Roll. The Council ended by "officially asking ... for legislation giving powers to any burgh in Scotland to assess land values for local purposes at a rate not exceeding 2s. in the £."⁶³

After 1898 and the appearance of the "Glasgow Bill" the movement for the taxation of land values became intimately connected with the nationwide campaign for housing reform that had been growing since the publication of the Report of

61. Single Tax. Dec. 1898. At this time Salisbury's government altered the system of London government by creating the Municipal Boroughs and this, needless to say, was resisted by the land taxers as an attempt "to destroy the L.C.C." Ann. Rep. 1898 and 1899

62. Summary of the Bill in the article on Municipal Reform in Glasgow in Labour Annual 1899

63. Ibid.

the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes.

It has been mentioned earlier that land taxation was put forward by Sidney Webb and his colleagues on the L.C.C. as a means of improving London housing, but hitherto the municipal campaign started in Glasgow had presented the demands simply as a more equitable form of ~~laying~~ local taxation. The reason for the new emphasis on housing is not difficult to find. Imperial affairs were becoming increasingly important, and when the Boer war broke out support for every kind of social reform, except housing, disappeared. "The Housing Question", the E.L.R.L. reported in 1900, "was almost the only social question which had been able to hold its own in the public mind since the outbreak of war".⁶⁴ The result was that practically every opposition organisation devoted more time to the promotion of housing campaigns, and the S.D.F., the Land Nationalisation Society and the I.L.P., are but a few that added to the furore. The number of meetings, petitions, and conferences increased enormously and eventually some attempts were made to co-ordinate the movement.⁶⁵ By this time too, influential Liberal leaders had publicly given their support to the idea of the taxation of land values.

John Morley was one of the first of the really prominent

64. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1900. The League was ardently pro-Boer. Whereas it was usually represented as an unjustified attack on a small nation, the single-taxers claimed it was a "land-lord's war". Maccoby op.cit. P.292 et.seq. has described the new taxes levied during the war. All these were resisted and the League supported the Miner's Federation in its vigorous opposition to the proposed coal taxes.

65. See the report of the great Glasgow conference held on 20th. October 1899 at which a small committee under John Paul was set up to co-ordinate the municipal agitation. Reformers Year Book. 1900

Liberals to support the municipal agitation. He encouraged the Glasgow Town Council, and declared that land should be rated at its full (!) site value, a demand far in advance of that of the municipal reformers.⁶⁶ Lloyd George also encouraged the local authorities and so too did Asquith. Harcourt, Grey and Haldane were others who gave their support and so too did the Liberal leader.⁶⁷

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman regularly spoke for and supported the municipal campaigns from 1896. He achieved tremendous popularity among the single-taxers - although it is clear he never went beyond their limited demands as expressed in the local authorities programme. In a typical speech in 1904 he stated that:

"Most municipalities are agreed that a revision of our rating systems must be undertaken and that the owners of site values - those who gain in an especial degree the fruits of the common enterprise and outlay, ought to make a fair contribution to the common charge ... when the time comes to deal with the question, the series of conferences initiated by the City Council of Glasgow ... will be of greatest value".⁶⁸

The reasons for the Liberal leaders supporting the municipal demands are clear enough. Their Party's fortunes were low as a result of disputes over the war, and demands for the taxation of land values and housing reform were increasingly

66. Single Tax. March 1896

67. See Liberal Current Politics 1900. P.189-91. for a selection of speeches by prominent Liberals advocating the taxation of land values.

68. Land Values. March 1904. See The Single Tax, the issues for 1896, for his regular encouragement of the Scottish authorities. When given the freedom of Glasgow after he became Premier, Campbell-Bannerman spoke of it as "a city set on a hill, inspiring and encouraging others in the career of municipal government, so that advanced ideas and practice in municipal government were recognised and accepted elsewhere". J.A.Spender. The Life of Campbell-Bannerman. P.320

popular. Moreover the move had the merit of appearing sincere as the party had once officially supported the taxation idea in "The Newcastle Programme" and scores of young Liberals were joining the E.L.R.L. and demanding its readoption. Every week speeches, leaflets and articles by people like C.P.Trevelyan and James Dundas White were produced to this effect and local Liberal parties obliged and gave their support. At a higher level, the Scottish Liberal Federation regularly committed itself to the municipal demands from 1897,⁶⁹ and eventually even the National Liberal Federation began issuing pamphlets favouring them.

-- Land Taxation and Protection⁷⁰ recognised the single-tax as an alternative to protection and The Liberal Party and the Land Question⁷¹ went even further. The holding up of land for speculative purposes was condemned, land values taxation it was said, would force more land on to the market and the single-tax programme would enable all other taxes on houses and buildings to be abolished. Voters were urged to "support the Liberal Party and the Taxation of Land Values".

It was inevitable that Liberal support for the taxation of land values would produce cries of political opportunism. Periodically they successfully resorted to an attack on landlordism as a means of regaining support, as in 1885 and '92 (and 1906), and

69. Chapter on "Taxation of Land Values" by F.A.Umpherston, secretary of the S.L.R.L. in Liberal Current Politics. op.cit.

70. Leaflet No.2037. Liberal Publication Department. Article on it in Land Values. Aug.1905.

71. Leaflet No. 2041. Liberal Publication Department. 1905. Review in Land Values. Nov. 1905

Brougham Villiers was only one sympathetic commentator who urged them to do so again in a book aptly called The Opportunity of Liberalism (1904).⁷² The Globe realised the danger to the Conservatives and complained that: "It is so easy to pile up clap-trap arguments against the landowner, that the temptation to acquire a little cheap popularity by attacking him becomes irresistible".⁷³ The Standard, a leading conservative newspaper, attributed the success of one of the Parliamentary Bills, that were the result of the municipal agitations, to the reluctance of government supporters to reject such a popular measure when "a General Election is not far off".⁷⁴

The Bill specifically referred to was introduced by C.P. Trevelyan, an important and influential member of the English Land Restoration League, but was only one of a number brought into the Commons between 1901 and 1905. In the first year of ~~the~~ Balfour's administration Sidney Buxton, James Caldwell, and John Burns⁷⁵ respectively introduced Bills promoted by the L.C.C.,⁷⁶ Glasgow and the Battersea conference of rating authorities,⁷⁷ but failed to get them a second hearing. None

72. Brougham Villiers was a pseudonym for F.J. Shaw, author of The Socialist Movement in England (1906) and Tariffs and the Worker (1919)

73. Quoted Land Values April 1904.

74. Quoted Ibid.

75. Burns was regarded as a supporter of the single-tax at the time, but his reforms when a Cabinet Minister made him exceedingly unpopular with the land taxers.

76. Dealing with London only. Details in The Single Tax. Jan 1901.

77. Reformers Year Book. 1900 op.cit. and E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep.

of the measures were acceptable to all the land taxers and there were some acrimonious disputes about details,⁷⁸ but they were supported by extensive campaigning and petitioning.⁷⁹ The following year Trevelyan introduced a measure based on The Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation called 'The Urban Site Value Rating Bill', limited to London and the larger boroughs and providing for a maximum rate of 2s. in the £. on all future contracts.⁸⁰ In the resolutions and speeches accompanying it, it becomes clear that many of its sponsors were looking beyond land taxation as a means of municipal reform and were in fact re-adopting Henry Georgeism as a comprehensive programme.⁸¹ Trevelyan's Bill had a second reading and was defeated by 71 in a House of 387 (19th. Feb. 1902). In the following year Dr. MacNamara⁸² produced another English

78. All three provided for collection of the rate from the occupier and the E.L.R.L. wanted it placed squarely on the owner. The League also favoured an official valuation which the Glasgow Bill did not provide for, and issued a memorandum to branches and asked for discussions of the subject. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1901

79. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1901. Land Values April 1904.

80. Land Values April 1904

81. See e.g. the resolutions proposed by Trevelyan himself at a great meeting in Newcastle, where he said he regarded the fact that land was not rated on its inherent value as the cause of depressions. Land Values. Dec. 1902. and Land and Labour.

82. Dr. MacNamara (1861-1931) Liberal, Camberwell. First editor of The Schoolmaster (organ of the National Union of Teachers) and later President of the N.U.T. Entered Parliament in 1900 and had connections with the E.L.R.L. Held Government office in 1907 and '8 and was Minister of Labour with a seat in the Cabinet 1920. A follower of Lloyd George he went out of office in 1922. Report on his views on land taxation Land Values. Nov. 1904

Bill proposing a limited rate of 1d. in the £. that was also debated and defeated, but by only 13 votes in a House of 353. In 1904, however, Trevelyan's 'Land Values Assessment and Rating Bill' passed its second reading by 223 to 156 (11th March 1904) and Sir John Brunner reintroducing substantially the same measure in 1905 repeated the success (14th April).⁸³

Scottish Bills emanating from the agitation promoted by the S.L.R.L. and its local authorities also appeared in the Commons. In 1903 and '4 George McCrae introduced one dealing with unoccupied land in burghs, but failed to get a second reading. Caldwell brought in "The Glasgow Bill" providing for a 2s. rate and valuation by the owner, and suffered the same fate in 1904 but got a debate and a majority of 143 to 123 in the following year (19th May 1905).⁸⁴

None of these Bills were proceeded with. They were used simply as a means of obtaining debates in which the Liberals were able to air their grievances and attack Balfour's ailing government. Outside Parliament continuous campaigns were held on behalf of them and the popularity of their proposals were immense. This will explain not only the majorities, but the very large attendances at some of the debates. The Conservatives

83. For a summary of the provisions of all these Bills see Willyson Fox. Rating of Land Values. Appdx. IV

84. George McCrae had been Liberal Member for Edinburgh East since 1899 and was described as "a very 'advanced' Liberal, for he believes in one man one vote, Taxation of Land Values, Home Rule All Round, Reform of the House of Lords, and other specifics too numerous to mention". Caldwell was an ex-Liberal Unionist who had sat for Mid Lanarkshire since 1894 as a Liberal. Pall Mall Gazette "Extra" op.cit.



could claim with justice that they could produce alternatives to free trade that in some places got a hearing, but land values taxation seemed to be regarded in 1905 as unquestionably just, and stopped only by the entrenched and reactionary interests in the party in power.⁸⁵

The free trade issue came to a head in 1902 and helped the single-taxers considerably. Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor, had agreed to move towards the "salutary revision" of taxation some Conservatives were demanding, and introduced a duty on imported corn. Chamberlain looked to this as a means of imposing Imperial Preference on the country, but the following year Ritchie produced a Free Trade Budget. This led to a series of cabinet resignations, the disruption of the Unionist Party and a nationwide campaign for Tariff Reform headed by Joseph Chamberlain.

The attack on free trade reunited the Liberal party instantly, and the Land Restoration Leagues proved to be invaluable allies to it. A belief in Henry Georgeism meant a belief in pure free trade, and the E.L.R.L. and its Scottish counterpart had regularly opposed the levying of any additional

85. The Daily News. 14th March 1904 analysed the results of the division on Trevelyan's Bill, which was the subject of a free vote. It showed that 36 "ministerialists" voted for (including Churchill), and only 158 (and not a single Liberal) against. The Daily News had been controlled since 1901 by George Cadbury and gave important support to the land taxers. Cadbury himself was an ardent Georgeite whose experiment at Bourneville was, according to him, "motivated by a desire to give the world an object lesson on the subject of land values". A.G.Gardiner. Life of George Cadbury. P.84

taxation since the 'eighties.⁸⁶ When Chamberlain launched his attack, the Cobden Club opposed his Tariff Reform League with a 'Free Trade Committee' under the Duke of Devonshire. Scores of meetings were held, and the English land taxers joined with their old enemies and entered enthusiastically into the campaign.⁸⁷ One of their first acts was to print a cheap edition of George's Protection or Free Trade, and some 24,000 copies were sold during the dispute. Literature sales proved to be a valuable source of revenue to the English League for the first time, and receipts rose from £96. 5. 9d. in 1902/3 to £527. 7. 6d in 1903/4, and thence-forth rose and fell with the degree of protectionist activity.⁸⁸

Free trade was defended only on the grounds George had taken in the 'eighties. It was desirable, but not enough. Free trade could not be beneficial while landlordism remained:

86. The opposition to the taxes of the Boer war have been mentioned. f.n.64. Earlier the E.L.R.L. entered into a strange alliance with the Cyclists Touring Club to resist a movement started by the Cheshire County Council for a tax on bicycles. Even this was represented as a landlord's plot. E.L.R.L.Ann. Rep. 1896.

87. History of the Cobden Club. op.cit. The League was present at the famous Hyde Park demonstration against the Bread Tax in 1902. Land Values. June 1902. Not only does the working with the Cobden Club indicate its strength in Liberal circles, but so too does the way in which its representatives were allowed to air their views. J.H.Whiteley, for instance, President of the E.L.T.L.V. gave a whole series of lectures at the National Liberal Club in 1904. Ibid. Dec.1904.

88. E.L.T.L.V.Ann.Rep. in Land Values Aug. 1904. A record figure was reached in 1909, however, when the Budget dispute was taking place.

"It is doubtful if the policy of Free Trade has advantaged the present generation at all" one writer maintained in a typical article, "nay, it is certain that it has not. For the power of landlordism, like an irresistible, insatiable force, is in action right down to the edges of our dock walls... absorbing the fruits, the advantages of Free Trade." ⁸⁹

By the time Balfour's government fell the land taxers had a 'Radical alternative to Joseph Chamberlain' ⁹⁰ embodied in their proposals for the 'first Radical Budget'. First "the land tax fraud" would be righted by a reimposition of the tax of 4s. in the £., and this would bring in £40 millions. Secondly the "Doles Acts" ⁹¹ would be repealed and £3 millions a year would be saved. The £43 millions would be spent on the payment of M.P.'s, old age pensions and the abolition of "the breakfast table duties". "Mr. Chamberlain would put a burden of £16 millions on food", it was maintained, "this would take a burden of £20 millions off food". Lastly local authorities would be given the power to rate land values and so relieve trade, industry and the houses of the people of a yearly burden of £50 millions. ⁹²

By 1905 the single-tax organisations had established themselves as important and well organised groups agitating for popular demands that the Liberal party seemed officially committed to. The organisation in England had been strengthened

89. Editorial Land Values Sept. 1903. The League's main election pamphlet was called Not Less Free Trade But More. See also Lawrence Zimmerman The New Protection Movement: From a Land Reformer's Point of View.

90. Land Values, Oct. 1905.

91. The Agricultural De-Rating Acts.

92. Land Values, Oct. 1905

in 1902, when a number of the younger Liberals came to the fore.

At the annual general meeting in 1902 the future of the E.L.R.L. was discussed and some changes were made. The League was reformed as The English League for the Taxation of Land Values, a name which it was thought at the height of the municipal campaigns, would give a better indication of what in fact it stood for. The S.L.R.L.'s journal The Single Tax was taken over at the same time and published in London, renamed Land Values for a similar reason. "We have pleaded", the Editorial announcing the change stated, "not for 20s. in the £., but for a beginning, for the Taxation of Land Values, and that is how the question is coming along. The name 'Single Tax' does not quite convey ... that the paper is specially devoted to the Taxation of Land Values".⁹³ That was undoubtedly true in 1902 but since then a number of young politicians had joined the Leagues hoping for more than just a start towards the single-tax, as the propaganda described above indicates, and many of these became officials of the new organisation. For the first time a President was elected. Crompton Llewelyn Davies M.A.⁹⁴ was the first, and he was followed by C.P. Trevelyan, E.G.

93. Single Tax. May 1902. John Paul became editor of Land Values. The Scottish League, by then known as the Scottish Single Tax League, did not alter its name until 1904, when it became the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values.

94. Crompton Llewelyn Davies (1868-1935) was a son of the Rev. Llewelyn Davies who was a founder of the Working Men's College. Educated at Cambridge he became a solicitor and partner in the firm of John Hollams, but left and entered the Civil Service as solicitor to the Post Office. He was dismissed when letters to his wife, a Sinn Féiner imprisoned by The Black and Tans, were seized. Obituary Times. 25 Nov. 1935 The Alumni Cantabrigienses calls Davies "an original and independent character - critical of current opinion".

Hemmerde, and Josiah Wedgwood among others.⁹⁵ Frederick Verinder was made secretary, and Stewart Headlam was replaced as treasurer⁹⁶ by Lewis H. Berens, a popular supporter of the complete Georgeite case.⁹⁷ Given their record, the numerous declarations of support and^{an} organisation that was now strong throughout many parts of the country, the single-taxers looked forward to the general election and a Liberal administration which they were sure would honour its pledges to them.⁹⁸

95. The list of Presidents to 1914 includes C.P. Trevelyan, Crompton Llewelyn Davies, E.G. Hemmerde, J.H. Whiteley, Sir Alfred Billson, W.R. Lester and "Henry George" Chancellor M.P.

96. Headlam was elected after Saunders death.

97. Berens had played a prominent part in single-tax activity in Australia. He and Ignatius Singer had formed the Adelaide Club in the 'eighties and published a weekly paper in conjunction with Henry Taylor - another single-tax emigrant. Berens and Singer returned to Britain in the 'nineties and were responsible for the first single-tax Utopia, The Story of My Dictatorship (Anon. 1894). It is an amusing piece of propaganda in which Verinder appears as the Police Commissioner and William Morris as "Neighbour William", a misled Social Democrat. Berens became a regular contributor to Land Values and was one of the main reviewers, See e.g. his review of a book by Leonard Hall of the I.L.P. "Which Way, Root Remedies and Free Socialism versus Collectivist Quackery and Glorified Pauperism". Aug. 1904. Berens and Singer also wrote Some Unrecognised Laws of Nature (1897), and Berens alone wrote Towards the Light (1903) and The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth as revealed in the writings of G. Winstanley (1906)

98. Progress had also been made among sections of the Labour movement, although there the taxation of land values was still regarded as but a step towards socialism. In 1904 for instance, Gavan Duffy persuaded the I.L.P. to support it, (report in Land Values May 1904), but Hardie, while agreeing it was "a means to an end", persisted in regarding the single-tax movement "as one of the most reactionary forces in the politics of our time". Land Values Feb. 1906. Earlier the T.U.C. had supported it and ordered the preparation of a Parliamentary Bill. T.U.C. Ann. Rep. 1897 and W.J. Davis. The British Trade Union Congress p. 133. David Shackleton was responsible for the resolution, but no Bill was ever prepared. The E.L.R.L. also worked among members of the Co-operative movement and eventually Verinder and George Palmer became official lecturers for the Co-operative Union. E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1900. The S.D.F., naturally, were bitterly hostile. See e.g. Land Values April 1905. *

Chap. VII. The Land Nationalisation Society,
 1889 - 1905.

The Land Nationalisation Society was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm when it was created, but after the secession of the single-taxers it became a small, relatively ineffective group, devoting most of its time to academic discussions, and quite overshadowed by the Georgeite organisations. Between 1889 and 1905 however, it grew in strength and influence as a result of new appeals and new sources of support. By 1896 it had an income of £863. 13. 4d., and in the following year this had risen to "almost £1,000". In 1898 receipts exceeded £1,000 for the first time and although income dropped during the Boer War, it was up to average again by 1902. In that year the L.N.S.'s balance sheet showed £1,265 from affiliations, donations and membership subscriptions, and a large number of influential Liberal and Labour politicians were named among its supporters. By the time Balfour's government fell, the Society had an impressive record behind it, and was strongly organised as a pressure group, both outside and inside Parliament. This was a remarkable contrast with its position nearly twenty years earlier.

In 1887 the Land Restoration League found strength in its alliance with the London Municipal Reform League, but the land nationalisers were not prepared to join the new move. The executive recorded its reasons in a typical statement in 1888:

" ... they were unable to co-operate with the United Committee for the Taxation of Ground Rents and Values, formed last August", it was stated, "because of their very strong opinion that such taxation would ultimately

fall upon the occupier, so long as private property in land is permitted".¹

The L.N.S. had continued to hope for a single Land Nationalisation Act, but as the connection between single-taxers and the Liberals became closer, it became obvious that it was not a practical possibility. Wallace had talked of the need for a Fabian-like approach in 1886, and the Society duly began to attach more importance to increasing the amount of land owned by the state by any means. It had always supported a demand for the extension of local government, and now it was decided to ask for the new bodies to be given the power to act as agents in the campaign for land nationalisation:

"Let us work on these lines", Wallace said, "extending the power of local bodies to take land, until every labourer can have what he requires and until all towns and villages can secure² possession of the land that immediately surrounds them".

As a practical method of proceeding Russel Wallace recommended another of Charles Wicksteed's schemes. Wicksteed had recognised that the L.N.S. was not proving as popular as the Restoration Leagues, and pointed out that even they (and George) now saw the need to proceed slowly. He asked first for the reimposition of the 4s. tax. The revenue received from it should then be used, not to relieve rates, but to compulsorily purchase more land. This would be vested in the state and then rented out. The rents would be progressively increased to take up the unearned

1. L.N.S. Ann.Rep. 1888. Gladstone shared the views of the land nationalists and was often quoted as an authority against George. He is on record as having said that rate relief "would be a sheer, unmixed, undiluted gift to the landlords". Quoted Ibid. 1891
2. L.N.S. Ann.Rep. 1888

increments in value and more and more land bought, until eventually the whole process could be cut short "at one stroke by State bonds redeemable at par".³

The importance of Wicksteed's proposals lay in the emphasis on 'compulsory purchase', an idea which was certain to appeal to liberals and socialists alike as a means of hitting at landlordism. A.J.Ogilvy developed Wicksteed's ideas further in an article which is of great importance in the history of the L.N.S.⁴

Ogilvy⁵ began by stating his opposition to Georgeite ideas but ended with an ingenious attempt to placate the single-taxers. "It grieves us to think that there is a split in the ranks of the workers", he said, admitting that the L.N.S. had not the support the E.L.R.L. had, "all are agreed as to the end, the abolition of landlordism, the only difference is to means". Although land values taxation might force land on to the market, he went on, it was inefficient, and only an indirect method of attack - "bombarding the enemy, as it were, by Taxation of Land Values until the pace gets too hot to hold him, and he gives up the land, bit by bit, of his own accord - still leaving a monopolist in control". By comparison "The idea of the L.N.S."

3. Wicksteed's ideas were put forward in an article in The Westminster Review, May 1890, and in Our Mother Earth, L.N.S. Tract, No.43.

4. Tax and Take - Both. (Feb.1889) L.N.S.Tract No.26 Ogilvy developed his plan at greater length in an article in The C.W.S Annual for 1890, printed as Land Nationalisation. L.N.S.Tract No. 31.

5. Ogilvy was first editor of the L.N.S.'s journal Land and Labour. He left for Tasmania in 1891, but continued to contribute articles and pamphlets to the land nationalisation campaign. Land and Labour was edited after Ogilvy left by first, Herbert Moberly and then George Croeser. Helen Taylor regularly covered the early deficits incurred in publishing the journal. There is a very brief sketch of Ogilvy's career in Land and Labour. Sept.1906

was "to attack by direct assault". Land Boards should be given, "by a single compulsory Act", powers that were already embodied in existing legislation - the power to take rent and leave a man undisturbed with his 'tenant right', the power to remit arrears of rent, and the right to compulsorily purchase land. Naturally owners were to be compensated by State bonds, and the single-taxers were told that they ought to accept this and tax later if they liked:

"I would have stamped across the bonds the heading 'Land Values'", Ogilvy wrote, "and in handing them over to the dispossessed landlord should say, in effect, "Notice that, and understand that there is a large and yearly increasing party who hold that land values, as such, should be taxed. You have to stand your chance of that".

Ogilvy's attempt to win over the single-taxers produced no effect at all. The L.N.S. took part in the early conferences and demonstrations of the municipal campaign but was the object of constant attacks from the land taxers, and eventually its ideas were decisively rejected in favour of land values taxation.⁶ A statement issued afterwards was a candid admission that the L.N.S.'s ideas were not generally acceptable, and even gave some belated and reluctant support to single-tax notions:

"While favouring the taxation of land values", it was stated, "the Society lays most stress upon the actual compulsory acquisition of public land by public authorities. It proposes to gradually "take the land" as distinct from Henry George's proposal to gradually "tax therent"". ⁷

The L.N.S.'s change of heart to supporting taxation was not very sincere. Support was given to the United Committee's campaign on

6. Report on the L.N.S. Labour Annual 1895

7. Labour Annual. No. 1 1895

behalf of the land taxers on the L.C.C.⁸ but eventually the Society dropped out of the municipal campaign for rating reform almost completely, and once again occupied itself with theorising. Whatever form of land reform was accepted- land values taxation or gradual nationalisation - a valuation would be needed. The L.N.S. was always more practical than the Restoration Leagues, and it adopted ideas on valuation produced by Michael Flürscheim.

Flürscheim⁹ was a German social reformer born at Frankfort-on-the-Main who worked in banking on the continent until 1869. He then went to the United States and engaged in business as an importer, manufacturer and journalist. He attempted co-operative experiments in some iron works he bought, but in the 'eighties began to adopt the schemes of Henry George. Like Charles Wicksteed, however, he grew away from a belief in the single-tax and was won over by Wallace's plans for land nationalisation with compensation to landlords. Flürscheim lived in England between 1890 and 1893 and wrote extensively, in English, on the need for the nationalisation of land and commerce and monetary reform.¹⁰ He became a Vice-President of the L.N.S. and remained a regular contributor to its monthly journal Land and Labour (started in November 1889) for twenty years. On leaving

8. See e.g. Tract No. 61. Land Lessons for Londoners, where land values taxation is represented as inadequate- despite the statement previously quoted from the same year.

9. There are brief biographies of Flürscheim in W.P. Bliss. Encyclopedia of Social Reform and A Handbook of Socialism. London (1895)

10. Land and Labour. April 1897. See also Flürscheim's Rent, Interest and Wages: or The Real Bearing of the Land Question (1891) and The Clue to the Economic Labyrinth. (1902)

Britain, he took part in experiments to create land colonies on L.N.S. lines in both the U.S. and South America.¹¹

Flürscheim's idea was simply that owners themselves should value the land, devoid of buildings and improvements. For obvious reasons, he maintained, they would not over value, and so run the risk of increasing rate charges; nor would they undervalue and tempt the state (or local authority) to purchase the land compulsorily. It is interesting to note that Flürscheim's views were embodied in the single-taxer's "Glasgow Bill", but if this was a result of his work, the debt was never acknowledged. The idea was accepted by the L.N.S. however, and received prominence in its propaganda until the great discussions on valuation during the period of Asquith's first government. The Society's policy was defined afresh in 1897 as:

- OBJECT. To restore the land to the People and the People to the land
- METHOD. Expropriation of present landowners and the establishment of State-ownership, under the administration of local representative authorities.

The one section of L.N.S. propaganda that had been effective before 1889 was that which dealt with small holdings. When the Liberals recovered from the disaster of 1886 they began to consider the need for more rural campaigns, but there was no longer any effective organisation in being to conduct it. This enabled the L.N.S. to join forces with liberalism and lead to an increasing amount of support for it from members of the Liberal party. The Home Rule crisis thus has great significance

11. See also Flürscheim's The Real History of Money Island (1897)

in the history of land reform, and it caused a definite hardening of the parties attitudes towards problems connected with the land.

When Chamberlain left the Liberals in 1886 he took with him the group of radicals who had been responsible for the ideas of The Unauthorised Programme. Jesse Collings, who had been the most outspoken of advocates of state tenancies for small holdings, became a Unionist, and in 1888 was ousted from the Presidency of the Allotments and Smallholdings Association, a post he had held since the organisation was first created. The Liberals declared he had used it as a part of the Unionist Party machine at the general election, and Chamberlain and his colleagues immediately created an organisation of their own to replace it.

The Rural labourer's League came into being in May 1888. It was centred in Birmingham and for a time occupied offices in the same block as the Allotments and Smallholdings Association, an arrangement which must have caused considerable friction if Impey's views on Chamberlain were typical.¹² The R.L.L's objects were stated to be: "For the purpose of securing to the labouring population the benefits of the Allotments Acts of 1882 and 1887¹³ and of other legislative measures affecting them". Collings was elected President, George Dixon M.P. became treasurer and Austen Chamberlain was made secretary. The

12. The offices were at Colmore Row, Birmingham, for most of the time until 1896 when they were transferred to The Strand, London.

13. 50 and 51 Vict. Chap. 48

first list of Vice-Presidents included Joseph Chamberlain, Edward Birbeck, the M.P. for East Norfolk, and R.T.Gurdon M.P., while the committee included Frank Smith,¹⁴ Robert Collier, once an official in Arch's union, and the Reverends Charles W. Stubbs,¹⁵ and T.W.Fowle.¹⁶ Chamberlain's inaugural address gives some idea of the hostility between him and his erst-while colleagues in the Liberal party:

"In 1886 Mr.Gladstone sprung his Irish policy on the country", he declared, "and from that moment the majority of the committee of the Allotments Association directed their efforts to making that organisation a mere branch of the Gladstonian and Home Rule organisation in the country. They rejected the proffered assistance of the Liberal Unionists. They elected on the Executive Committee gentlemen whose only qualification was their pronounced adoption of the latest Gladstonian shibboleth, and they wound up and completed their action the other day, when they deposed Mr. Collings from the Presidency of the Association which he himself had created, an act of ingratitude, folly and bad taste which I believe is absolutely unparalleled in political history".

The history of the Rural Labourer's League is an interesting one. In the first year of its existence a monthly journal called The Rural World¹⁷ commenced publication and the League began to hold campaigns in rural areas. The objects of these were twofold; to win labourers over to the support of the Unionist party; and to influence the Salisbury government- but

14. 1852-1939. A member of the Allotments and Smallholdings Association and later prominent as a Councillor and Alderman on the Worcestershire County Council, where he worked with Frederick Impey in creating the Catshill Colony. By that time he had apparently reverted to liberalism. See P.149

15. Vicar of Granborough, Bucks, later Dean of Ely and Bishop of Truro (1906-19). Author of Land and the Labourers and Village Politics. He was a supporter of Arch's, and once in the Allotments and Smallholdings Association. He became a Unionist, yet still remained a member of the Guild of St. Matthew!

16. Rural World. Vol. I. No. 1. 22d Dec. 1888.

17. It later became a weekly publication.

little headway was made. The R.L.L. became an object of abuse from single-taxers, land nationalisers, liberals and socialists alike. Two extracts from Hampshire newspapers commenting on an early campaign¹⁸ give an indication of the way it was received:

"A great deal of activity has been manifested of late in the formation of branches of the Rural Labourer's League", one Liberal journal commented. "It may be as well to point out that this organisation is very unlikely to do much good ... But it is possible that some have been caught ... by the pleadings of the League that it is a non-political organisation for the real benefit of its working men members. To such we point out that the R.L.L. is a distinctly political organisation, having for its main object the bolstering of the "unholy alliance" of Liberal dissentients and Tories which has kept the present government in power for six years." ¹⁹

"Rural electors need to be cautioned that the Rural Labourer's League is a Tory organisation pure and simple".²⁰

Comments like those of The Hampshire Express may have been justified in 1892 and certainly were later, but they indicate a very severe change in the proposals of people like Collings, and this is important in explaining the importance of the L.N.S. to liberalism. Collings continued to advocate state tenancies for smallholdings in the early days of the Unionist Party, and he never in actual fact departed entirely from a belief in them.²¹ The possibility of converting Salisbury to the

18. By 1892 the League was reported to have had "agents chosen from the working class" in "upwards of 1,000 villages".
R.L.L. Ann. Rep. 1892.

19. Southampton Times and Hampshire Express. 18th June 1892

20. Ibid. 16th June 1892

21. Collings views can be found particularly in two books Land Reform and Land Colonisation, and also in the writings of J. L. Green, an official in the R.L.L. and a follower of Collings. e.g. Allotments and Smallholdings. For a current Liberal statement (1889) see Tenancy and Ownership by John Watson, M.A., a Cobden Club Prize Essay.

liberal ideas of The Unauthorised Programme however, were remote indeed. The Conservative leader, like Disraeli before him, had "little faith in their (smallholdings) economic results", but believed firmly "in their social and political advantages".²² Moreover Irish history had suggested to him that only peasant proprietaries would produce supporters for him and his party.

Faced with Salisbury's attitude, and anxious to join forces with the Conservatives, Chamberlain was instrumental in condemning the ideas he had advocated in the 'eighties. He was Chairman of the group that produced The Report of the Select Committee on Smallholdings (1890) which came down heavily in favour of peasant proprietaries. The reasons are not difficult to find. Not only was Chamberlain anxious to placate Salisbury, but it was obviously impossible for the Rural League to put forward Liberal policies and yet remain opposed to the Liberal party.²³ Chamberlain altered his opinions to suit his new allies, and in consequence the R.L.L. began to advocate the reform on the Irish model that was anathema to liberals and socialists alike. The Conservative party hitherto had had no land reform programme at all, but the presence of the Unionists forced it to adopt that of Parnell, and the Rural League became its chief propaganda body. Hostility to it was certain and this was increased by the support given by people like Rothschild.

22. Speech reported in Blackwood's Magazine April 1892

23. Henry Chaplin, Minister of Agriculture, was one of the chief opponents of liberal type legislation in the government. See e.g. Marchioness of Londonderry. Henry Chaplin: A Memoir P.161

It achieved little, but was important in making the alternatives to the radical ideas of the L.N.S. and the Liberal party clear.

In 1889 the Liberals began a well publicised rural campaign now that the rural voter was an object of attraction to its enemies. Emphasis was put mainly on the need for local government, with the right to take land compulsorily for small holdings. Frederick Impey, Sir Walter Foster, the Reverend Charles Tuckwell, a Vice-President of the L.N.S., and H.P. Cobb were the most prominent leaders of the campaign, and the columns of The Speaker and Land and Labour were used to publicise the movement. It met with an enthusiastic response and in December 1891 a memorable rural conference was held at which organisations were set up to counter "the intimidation in rural districts ... of Radical voters", and eventually L.N.S. proposals were written into The Newcastle Programme. By-elections came to be fought often on the question of smallholdings, and the Conservatives admitted the strength of the demands by passing a weak Small-holdings Act just before the election, in an attempt to stave off what looked like almost certain defeat.²⁴

The Rev. Tuckwell has left a vivid account of the effect produced

24. As the election drew near (and the possibility of Liberal successes became apparent) the Conservatives devoted more and more attention to the rural voter. The journals were full of articles on how to win the country seats, e.g. "The Rural Voter", Sir H. Maxwell National Review, Jan 1892 and "The Plough and the Platform", T.E. Kebbell, Ibid. Apr. 1892. The Liberals made very few protests against the Act - presumably because the election was so near - and this produced almost the only example of the L.N.S. and the E.L.R.L. combining. They, and the Fabian Society, issued a joint pamphlet saying that the smallholders were to be buttresses of the Conservative Party, demanded amendments in Committee, and asked electors: "Are you satisfied with the Liberal members who did not even divide the House on the second reading?"

by the Liberals. "For passive, inarticulate endurance", he wrote, "we substituted intelligent discontent, taught everywhere the rural mind to formulate its grievances and to discern their remedies".²⁵

The L.N.S.'s part in this activity was particularly striking in the areas covered in the "Yellow Van Campaigns". Joseph Hyder went out during the Summer of 1889 with a "land and labour cart" into the Swaffham and Wisbech districts of Cambridgeshire, and held a prolonged series of meetings putting forward L.N.S. views to the labourers. East Anglia was an area particularly strong in Society branches,²⁶ and the following year Hyder returned to the region and held another campaign. Starting in Norfolk, he made a journey that took him through Suffolk and Essex, thence to Leicestershire, then back through Nottingham and Cambridge to Dereham in Norfolk.²⁷ The tours were considered to be a success and the L.N.S. decided to buy and equip a gypsy caravan that would house an itinerant lecturer during each summer season. The vans, painted a vivid yellow, were to

25. C.Tuckwell. Reminiscences of a Radical Parson. P.199. Tuckwell wrote at length in the journals on land reform at this time. See e.g. Village Life in France. Cont.Rev. Jan. and March 1892. He also contributed to an interesting collection on The Place of the Parson in Politics in Review of the Churches. 15th Dec.1891.

26. L.N.S.Ann.Rep.1889-90.Norwich was always the centre of an area that strongly supported radical organisations. The branch there was run by the Rev.W.Freeman and was allied to the Norwich Democratic Association. There was another active branch in Swaffham run by a Mr.Bell.

27. Ibid.

become well known in rural districts in the last decade of the nineteenth century.²⁸

The rural workers were the object of attention from practically every political group in the late 'eighties. The Rural Labourer's League was campaigning among them and had helped prompt the Liberals and the L.N.S. to do the same. The "New Unions" were equally concerned with winning support in the countryside.

Following the great Dock Strike of 1889 there was an enormous growth in unskilled trades unionism, which met with considerable opposition from employers. Strike breakers were brought in from rural districts and it was commonly believed that the dockers may not have succeeded had their strike not taken place during hay and harvest time. The Trades Union Congress discussed the problem in 1890²⁹ and it was decided to attempt to organise the rural labourer for the first time since the 'seventies. Representatives of the Dockers Union, the Workers Union and the Navvies and Gasworkers went into the countryside attempting to organise the agricultural labourer and so increase his wage and stop him competing with the urban workers. Several of the leaders of the New Unions were members of the L.N.S., and they combined their activity with that of the Yellow Van lecturers.

There can be little doubt that Tom Mann and Ben Tillett were largely responsible for the second Yellow Van campaign. Consider-

28. Richard Whiteing (1840-1928) a Vice-President of the L.N.S. wrote a novel called The Yellow Van in 1903. Whiteing was a journalist first on The Manchester Guardian then The Daily News.

29. T.U.C. Ann. Rep. 1890.

able sympathy for the new unionism had been expressed in ~~the~~ L.N.S. circles³⁰ and Hyder's tour took on the form of a recruiting campaign. He travelled from Middlesex to Wales, and back across the Midlands to Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. In Lincolnshire the links with Mann's organisation were particularly close and the meetings were organised by "Messrs. Whitworth and Nickolls of the Docker's Union".³¹

This activity of the L.N.S. undoubtedly contributed to the Liberal victory of 1892. Heavy gains were made in the boroughs, but of more importance were the county results where the vote of 1885 was practically repeated. The number of county seats was increased from 65 to 103 in England, and there were similar gains in Wales and Scotland.³² The L.N.S. distributed over 850,000 pamphlets³³ and was able to boast of several successes among its Vice-Presidents who fought as Liberal candidates.³⁴

Despite these successes and their confident expectations, the land nationalists got little more from the governments of 1892-5 than did the single-taxers. Gladstone had talked for years of the need for compulsory purchase. The Newcastle Programme had contained demands for it, and the rural vote obviously

30. See e.g. T.F. Walker's speech in L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1893-4. Walker, hitherto a prominent Liberal, expresses his support for both new unionism and a Fabian type of socialism.

31. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1892 Rex Russell. Revolt of the Field in Lincs. P.152 for a typical speech for unionism and land nationalisation by Tom Mann.

32. Annual Register 1891-2 P.117-21.

33. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1893. See Tracts Nos. 40, 44-47. e.g. A Parliamentary Candidates Catechism (40) Peasant Proprietary or State Tenancy, Which shall it be? (June 1892) To the Electors of Great Britain and Ireland (June 1892) etc.

34. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1893. L.N.S. demands had been heard in the Commons frequently in the years of Conservative government, where Seymour Kay and Edmund Robertson were its chief spokesmen and opponents of Collings and the Irish legislation.

owed a great deal to the promise of smallholdings, but surprisingly nothing was done.³⁵ R.B.S. Haldane actually introduced a Local Authorities (Purchase of Land) Bill that would have given councils the right to take land compulsorily for holdings, but it met with no success.³⁶ Only the Parish Councils Act, which contained very mild provisions for obtaining land compulsorily, met with the approval of the L.N.S.³⁷ and by 1893 the Society was expressing its disillusionment with the government. Speaking as a delegate at the National Liberal Conference in that year, Tuckwell warned the party against "a second betrayal of the agricultural labourer",³⁸ and complaints of this kind were expressed regularly by land nationalists, until the government fell. At the election of 1895 the L.N.S. suffered the same fate as most radical organisations, and could only report "universal apathy" and fruitless expenditure.³⁹

Paradoxically it was during the years when Liberals were becoming disillusioned with the Gladstone and Rosebery governments

35. Gladstone had spoken of the need to give local authorities compulsory purchase powers during the Midlothian campaign, but demands were not popular until the 'nineties. Shaw and Sidney Webb (then in the L.N.S.) were largely responsible for starting the Newcastle Programme on its way and Webb actually produced the first draft. Anne Freemantle. This Little Band of Prophets. P.96. J.H. Stewart Reid. Origins of the British Labour Party. P.55 et. seq.

36. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1892

37. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1894

38. Tuckwell op. cit. P.207. Fabian Society disillusionment was expressed in the famous tract To Your Tents O Israel, a document of great importance in explaining the move away from Liberalism to more radical reform movements.

39. Among the L.N.S. members defeated were Dadabhai Naoroji, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, Randal Cremer, Sam Woods and Richard Winfrey. See Tracts Nos. 65 & 66, Questions for Parliamentary Candidates, and A Land Nationalisation Manifesto for typical campaign literature.

that the L.N.S. was strengthened by increased support from many of them. Probably this was a reflexion of the fact that they believed their party was losing popularity because it was ignoring the demands of The Newcastle Programme. Whatever the reason, in one year alone, W.P.Byles, J.W.Logan,⁴⁰ Dadabhai Naoroji,⁴¹ and Charles E.Shaw,⁴² all M.P's, were added to the list of Vice-Presidents. So too were the Reverends Stopford Brooke and J.Clifford, and local Liberal parties began to affiliate and subscribe to L.N.S. funds in greater numbers.

Having abandoned its early Utopian ideas in favour of a Fabian like approach, the L.N.S. collaborated with any other organisation having a programme likely to increase the amount of land publicly owned, and this may also have endeared it to Liberals. It continued to help and publicise the work of the Commons and Footpath Preservation Society for instance, and the Association's leader James Hole⁴³ was added to the list of L.N.S.

40. Byles was also an ardent single-taxer (see Chap.VI. f.n.58) who was returned for Shipley as a Lib-Lab. in 1892 and lost the seat in 1895. Logan won Harborough, a Leicestershire seat, at both elections.

41. Like Byles also a supporter of land values taxation and on the executive of The United Committee. Naoroji (1825-1917) was "the father of Indian nationalism and the first Indian to sit in the Commons". He was three times President of the Indian National Congress and sat for Finsbury during the Home Rule Parliament of 1892-5.

42. Shaw was Liberal M.P. for Stafford, returned for the seat again in 1895 with a majority of only 12. Shaw was said to "dilute strong convictions on the subject of Liberal Imperialism with a good many extravagant Radical fads". Brief Biog.in The Popular Guide to the House of Commons (1906) a Pall Mall Gazette "extra" published after the election.

43. For James Hole's early career as a reformer in Yorkshire see J.F.C.Harrison, Social Reform in Victorian Leeds, The Work of James Hole 1820-95. Thoresby Soc.Monographs.III (1954)

Vice-Presidents. So too was Ebenezer Howard, who became an active L.N.S. lecturer, while the Society subscribed to his First Garden Cities Association.⁴⁴

Not only did the Liberals give added support to the L.N.S. in the years 1892-5, but so did representatives and organisations of the Labour movement. It is obvious that the demands for state tenancies and public property in land were even more acceptable to socialists than liberals. The Society had also shown its usefulness in helping unionism in the Van campaigns and an increasing number of socialists appeared in its list of members. Grant Allen, Henry Hutchinson, Ben Tillett and Tom Mann were added as Vice-Presidents for instance, and George Jacob Holyoake joined and served for several years on the council. The list of affiliations in the 'nineties includes many New Union branches, Miners Branches, and Trades Councils, along with the Fabian Society, the S.D.F., the I.L.P. and The Clarion Fellowship.⁴⁵

Russel Wallace's conversion to socialism may have made the L.N.S. even more attractive to people like Mann and Tillett.

44. Howard (1850-1928) was, like Wallace, influenced by the ideas of State Socialism in Bellamy's Looking Backwards. His scheme for Garden Cities first put forward in 1898 in the book that later became Garden Cities of Tomorrow, was very like that of Charles Wicksteed. He formed the Association in 1899 and the development of Letchworth began in 1903, and Welwyn in 1919. The towns were run on a modified version of Howard's scheme, an essential part of which, naturally, was that the unearned increments should be taken for communal use. For Howard, see Dugald Macfadyen, Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movements.

45. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. See Tract No. 62. The Relation Between Land Nationalisation and Socialism. T.F. Walker.

He had always urged socialists to join his Society and regard land nationalisation as the easiest way to socialism, but in the 'nineties he began publicly to declare himself a socialist. He was in the habit of discussing new books in his Presidential addresses, and his conception of "socialism" appears from them as a curious amalgam of the ideas of Bellamy, Benjamin Kidd, H.V.Mills,⁴⁶ and those put by E.Mather before The Committee on The Want of Employment (1895).⁴⁷ Obviously Wallace was influenced by the prevalence of unemployment in the 'nineties and he demanded co-operative communities, renting land from the state and producing for use as his remedy.⁴⁸

The Van campaigns continued in the wake of the Unions until

46. See Mill's views in his Poverty and the State, or Work for the Unemployed. Mills was the trustee of an agricultural colony at Starnthwaite. Benjamin Kidd's book Social Evolution appeared in 1894 and was an attempt to reconcile evolution and religion. Wallace rejected most of Kidd's ideas, but welcomed his stress on evolution and group restraint.

47. Two L.N.S. supporters, Tuckwell and J.W.Logan M.P. were on the Committee.

48. Land and Labour always gave prominence to the activities of the Tolstoyan communities in England, and they may have contributed to Wallace's ideas. The address in which he announced his conversion and discussed Mills, etc.(1895) was published as L.N.S.Tract No.64. His complete ideas on socialism can be found in the last chap.of his Wonderful Century op.cit. In that he recommends Bellamy's last work Equality. Wallace later became prominent as a spiritualist and wrote extensively on that subject. See e.g. an article by A.S.

Headingley on Spiritualism and Socialism in the Social Democrat Vol. II.1898. It is largely a report of a conference of the Spiritualist Alliance at which Wallace read a paper: A call for Spiritualists to become Socialists. See also his On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism. Later on Wallace added anti-vaccination activities to his other numerous interests. See his Forty Five years of Registration Statistics "proving vaccination to be both useless and dangerous".

1896, and emphasis was put increasingly on propaganda to acquaint the labourers with the details of the Parish Councils Act. Land and Labour followed the passage of the Bill through Parliament and the L.N.S. constantly suggested amendments of its own.⁴⁹ When it became law the Society made strenuous efforts to publicise the land purchase clauses and An open letter to electors on the Parish Councils from the Executive,⁵⁰ is typical of this kind of propaganda. Compulsory hiring and purchase was allowed for holdings of limited size it was pointed out, but hiring or purchase by voluntary agreement could lead to holdings with no limits at all. The workers should ensure that representatives of their own class were returned in sufficient numbers to make use of these clauses of the Act, they were told. The local Yellow Van committee would work in their interest at the elections.

There is no detailed record of the successes claimed by the L.N.S. at the first Council elections, but certainly great numbers of workmen were returned. One interesting fact is that greater interest was shown in the Parish than in the Rural District elections. The L.N.S. concentrated primarily on Lincolnshire where the labourers polled remarkably well in the areas where the Vans had been, whereas in Kesteven 80 per cent of their candidates were unsuccessful.⁵¹ In Lincoln:

49. L.N.S. Tract No.53. Suggested Amendments to the Local Government Bill, also Wallace's Presidential address, L.N.S. Ann.Rep.1894 (published as Tract No.56) and Charles Wicksteed's Parish Councils (Tract No.54 Oct.1894)

50. L.N.S. Tract No.60 (Nov.1894)

51. For an analysis of the results of the first Parish Council elections see Richard Heath, The Rural Revolution. Contemporary Review 1895.

"The Committee was enabled, by a special subscription from Miss Helen Taylor, to dispatch Messrs. Petch and Aldrige into the villages of North Lincolnshire upon a new mission" it was reported. "This was to canvass the voters, particularly the women, and by the distribution of literature and the holding of meetings, to prepare the way for the Parish and District Council elections which followed in December".⁵²

The year following the elections saw a new departure in the policy of the L.N.S., when it was decided to concentrate the Van campaigns in the mining areas. The Society had always demanded the nationalisation of mineral rents and royalties, but hitherto this had been a part of its propaganda which had received little notice. In 1893, however, a great coal strike occurred and the land nationalisers had gained the gratitude of the miners by the support they gave the strikers. Out of the publicity given to the conflict emerged the L.N.S. pamphlet on Mineral Rents and Royalties,⁵³ drawing attention to the evils of the existing system and attacking landlordism for throttling the industry. Realising that great possibilities were opening to it, the L.N.S. decided to start "a regular campaign among the miners". By this time there were two vans, and in 1896 Henry Aldrige took one into Northumberland and Durham, while Hyder "conducted a month's tour in the Cleveland Division of Yorkshire under the auspices, and with the aid, financial and otherwise, of the Cleveland Ironstone Miners and Quarrymen".⁵⁴

52. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1895. Lincolnshire was a particularly strong L.N.S. area owing to the campaign with the Docker's Union. See Rex Russell, Revolt of the Field in Lincs. for Union activity and Mann's campaigns there. Henry Aldrige was assistant secretary of the L.N.S.

53. Tract No. 42.

54. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1897. Durham was a particularly good area for the L.N.S. to work in. The miners had a strong interest in local government and had captured the councils in the first elections. See Sidney Webb, Story of the Durham Miners. P. 91 et. seq. and Land and Labour April 1896

Emphasis was still placed on the need to stop the drift from the country districts, and the need for a sensible policy to keep the agricultural labourer on the land. "Why are there too many miners," Aldrige asked. "Why is there unemployment? Because for the last 30 years men have been steadily driven from the villages of their birth by a bad land system to seek a livelihood in the mining districts and manufacturing towns, there to compete in an already overcrowded labour market".⁵⁵ Conditions worsened and wages were low, the miner was told, because of the rural exodus, and all "the great strikes and lockouts... were .. due to the same cause, the landlessness and consequent helplessness of the workers".⁵⁶ Nationalisation of the mines would destroy the power of the owners to stage lockouts, and a sensible land policy would keep the rural worker on the land and stop the competition for jobs.⁵⁷

Mine owners of the nineteenth century gave their opponents ample opportunities for attack, and they were rarely missed. Both the L.N.S. and the Restoration Leagues used the case of Lord Penrhyn, for example, with devastating effect.

Penrhyn had been a Conservative M.P. for Caernarvonshire before he was elevated to the peerage. His estate contained over 26,000 acres of land producing a rent roll of £67,000 a year, and the Bethesda slate quarries which, it was estimated,

55. L.N.S. Tract No. 68. Open letter to the Miners.

56. L.N.S. Tract No. 71. Curse of Landlordism. (undated) by Hyder.

57. L.N.S. Ann. Rep.

brought him another £150,000 in a good year. In 1897 a dispute occurred and Penrhyn locked his miners out. They were eventually forced back, but His Lordship took it upon himself to act as a champion of free labour, and in 1900 a second, and even more prolonged lock out took place.

The second dispute lasted over three years, and the publicity accompanying it was invaluable to those expounding theories of landlord oppression. In December 1902 Penrhyn refused to use the Conciliation Act of 1896, and in March of the following year successfully sued The Clarion for libel. The sufferings of the miners were followed intently, and both the L.N.S. and the Land Restoration League joined in a campaign started by The Daily News which raised £30,000 for the strikers and £2,500 to enable W.J.Parry to pay The Clarion fine. The T.U.C. at one stage donated £1,000 a month,⁵⁸ and 22nd. November came to be known through the Labour movement as "Oppressor's Day". The Churches added their protest against Penrhyn's activity but to little avail,⁵⁹ and the quarrymen returned to work defeated, in 1903. Undoubtedly this strike, and others less well remembered, and the accompanying comments helped make the country susceptible to the Liberal

58. W.J.Davis, The British Trades Union Congress. op.cit. the accounts of 1902 and '03. The contributions finished just before the men went back to work. Earlier in the summer (Aug) a Co-operative Quarry with a capital of £50,000 had been formed to help the miners.
59. e.g. S.E.Keeble, editor of The Methodist Weekly, was a supporter of nationalisation and land values taxation who used his journal to attack Penrhyn and attempted to convert the Methodists to the ideas of the L.N.S. and the Land Restoration League. See Maldwyn Edwards Methodism in England, chap. on Methodism and Politics, for the work of Keeble.

attacks on landlordism five or six years later.⁶⁰

In 1897 Hyder and Aldrige operated among the miners in Wales and collaborated with what remained of the Welsh Nationalist movement. There had been a revival of Welsh nationalism in the 'nineties and the elections of 1892 had been fought in the Principality mainly on the question of disestablishment and land reform, and the results put the Welsh in an extremely strong position. The Government had a majority of only 40, and Wales had returned 31 liberals. Gladstone however, was able to stifle the movement⁶¹ and the election of 1895 proved to be its death blow.⁶² One interesting character, a member of the L.N.S., carried on the campaign, and it was with him that Aldrige and Hyder collaborated in 1897.

Evan (Pan) Jones (1834-1922) was born in Cardigan^{shire}. He was apprenticed as a tailor and in 1853 moved to the mining areas of Glamorgan. There he became prominent in the Temperance movement and three years later joined the Congregational College at Bala. In 1862 he entered the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, and at the end of his studies there he went to Germany where he graduated M.A. and Ph.D. at Marburg University. In January 1870 he was ordained to a pastorate at Mostyn, Flintshire, and he remained there for the rest of his life.

60. For the E.L.R.L.'s attack on Penrhyn see e.g. Ann. Rep. 1897 and leaflet No. 33. Moral of Penrhynism by Verinder. "At present it costs Lord Penrhyn nothing to keep his quarries idle". A radical budget would alter the situation Verinder said. "What would be Lord Penrhyn's position .. if land values were taxed say 10s. in the £.?"

61. He did this by making Thomas Edward Ellis, the Leader, a Whip and appointing a Welsh Land Commission. Rosebery produced a Welsh Disestablishment Bill later. David Williams. Modern Wales P.279. et. seq. and Sir Reginald Coupland Welsh and Scottish Nationalism. Chap V.

62. Williams. op.cit.

Pan Jones became a Welsh Nationalist and linked his demands for Home Rule with land nationalisation. He may have gained an interest in radical land reform proposals during a visit to the U.S. in 1884, when he certainly met prominent Georgites. On his return he and the Reverend Michael D. Jones⁶³ invited Davitt over to lecture on land nationalisation at Blaenau-Ffestiniog where a young solicitor, David Lloyd George, proposed the vote of thanks. This was the period when the land reform movements were gaining ground in England and Scotland and in 1891 Pan Jones followed Hyder's example and toured from Newport, through parts of Brecknockshire, Glamorgan, Carmarthen and thence to Chester, with his van 'Y Ddaer i'r bobl' (The Land for the People). At only one place, however, was the collection sufficient to meet the costs of one night. Gladstonian liberalism, Jones believed, was too powerful and little more was heard of him until 1897.⁶⁴ In that year he collaborated with the Yellow Vans and, finding greater response, he regularly conducted campaigns of his own, building up support for the demands for land reform in Wales and the neighbouring counties.⁶⁵

63. Jones was the leader of Nonconformity associated with the creation of the Welsh settlement in Patagonia in 1865.

64. Jones, known to the L.N.S. as "The Davitt of Wales" edited a weekly entitled Cwrs y Byd (The Course of the World) from 1891 to 1905, and wrote much on religious topics. His autobiography in Welsh, Oes Gofian neu fraslun o hanes fy myw. (Life's Memories or a Resume of My Life's Story) has a number of extracts in English, giving references to his connection with land reform movements. P.172 et seq.

65. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1898.

In 1898 Hyder and Aldrige returned to the North of England, and henceforth the Midlands and the North were their main centres of activity. Yellow Van committees and L.N.S. branches were created in large numbers, and the contributions from local unions largely accounts for the healthy state of the Society's finances in these years. A third Van was purchased:

"The coal miners of Northumberland and Durham and the Ironstone miners of Cleveland have, for the third year, financially and otherwise supported the work", it was reported in 1899. "But in this year a further advance was made. In Leicestershire 12,000 trades unionists contributed to keep a Yellow Van at work in that county for three months".⁶⁶

The Vans continued to go out in most of the years preceeding the election of 1906, and Northumberland, Durham,⁶⁷ Leicestershire and Lancashire were the main centres of activity. In Lancashire a very strong L.N.S. branch was created by Reuben Petch which had the support of J.H.Clynes and several other local M.P's.⁶⁸ Activities were curtailed during the war, but when the attack on free trade renewed interest in radical movements, the campaigns were restarted. Scotland was visited for the first time and branches created there, and in 1905 half of the meetings held by the L.N.S. were Yellow Van Meetings. Just before the election Hyder was campaigning in East Anglia and

66. L.N.S. Ann.Rep. in Labour Annual. 1899.

67. In 1904 the L.N.S. and the miners were strong enough in Durham to secure the return of John Johnson, treasurer of the Durham Miners' Association, at a by-election, as a Liberal. At that time Durham had "three land nationaliser M.PS".
Land and Labour May 1904.

68. Land and Labour Sept.1905.

Matthew Sims, organising secretary of the Lancashire branch, was active in his own area. By this time however most of the local organisations had become absorbed in the housing campaign.

The L.N.S. had kept apart from the municipal campaign dominated by the land taxers, but in 1900 Land and Labour began to devote more attention to it, and the Society began to organise a housing campaign of its own. It has already been mentioned that interest in all radical reform proposals, except housing, declined during the Boer war, and this was certainly one reason why the L.N.S. changed its attitude. Another was its disappointment at the results of the "Khaki election".⁶⁹ Provincial conferences on housing were organised among the Society's supporters in the Co-operative and trade union movements, and at one enthusiastic meeting in Leicester delegates representing 250,000 people were present. As a result of this activity the L.N.S. was responsible for creating the National Housing Reform Council.⁷⁰

The National Housing Reform Council, which "although launched by the L.N.S." was a separate and independent organisation, became an influential body eventually devoting most of its time to Parliamentary work. Its first secretary was Henry Aldrige and in 1906 it had no less than 130 Vice-Presidents in Parliament. Its policy demanded that all insanitary dwellings should be

69. The L.N.S. which was ardently pro-Boer, made elaborate preparations and was very active, but had few successes to report. 54 "land nationalisers" stood it was claimed, and they polled an average 5,000 votes each, but only 13 were successful. For an analysis of the results and replies to L.N.S. questionnaires see Land and Labour. Sept.-Nov. 1900.

70. Ibid. July, Aug. and Sept. 1900.

destroyed without compensation, and that local authorities should make a thorough use of the Housing Act of 1890 - which included some measures for compulsory purchase - but that land should be acquired "on the basis of the valuation which appears in the rate book, not on the basis of extortionate demands by landlords". The similarity with L.N.S. ideas is immediately apparent and most of the Society's provincial branches altered the tone of their propaganda to resemble the Councils. The Lancashire branch was one, and by 1902 the Northumberland and Durham committees were also "almost completely devoted to the Housing question".⁷¹ The Leicestershire group, which had strong affiliations with the Boot and Shoe Union and the support of Ramsay MacDonald, turned itself into the Leicestershire Housing and Land Reform Committee in 1902.⁷²

The L.N.S. loyally supported the N.H.R.C.'s campaign and gave invaluable publicity to it in Land and Labour,⁷³ but in 1902 the Society started a municipal campaign of its own, with a programme entirely its own. A conference was held at the Essex Hall, London, in May at which delegates from 92 Progressive organisations were present. These included representatives of Liberal and Socialist parties, Co-operatives and trades unions, but local authorities and the single-taxers were

71. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. in Land and Labour May 1903.

72. L.N.S. Ann. Rep. 1902. Aldrige was secretary of this organisation. In 1906 it officially transferred its allegiance to the National Housing Reform Council, as did the Northumberland and Durham organisations. Ibid. 1908.

73. For brief summaries of the Housing Councils' activities see The Reformer's Year Book, 1901 onwards.

noticeably absent. Several M.P's including Randal Cremer and Dr. MacNamara were present, and Cremer made an important speech which led to the drawing up of a Bill for presentation to Parliament.⁷⁴ He had had long experience in land reform movements dating from Mill's Land Tenure Reform Association, he claimed, and he urged the executive committee of the L.N.S. to draw up a measure giving compulsory purchase powers to local authorities for any purpose. This would be the most effective way of proceeding he maintained, (and incidentally was the most likely way to appeal to local councils).⁷⁵

The Society adopted Cremer's suggestion and the outcome was the measure that came to be known as the "Tax and Buy Bill". It was similar to Ogilvy's proposals of fifteen years earlier and embodied the concessions he had made to the Georgians. Land whether used or unused was to be valued by the owners themselves. Local authorities were to be given the power to levy a rate of up to 1d in the £. of capital value (or "about 2s. in the £. on the annual value") and the right to take what land they wanted compulsorily. The councils could use, but not sell, the land as they wished. Tenants were to be given security of tenure subject only to regular payment of the (periodically reassessed) ground rent, and provisions were made for the authorities to raise money. The Bill thus embodied

74. There is a life of Cremer (1838-1908) by Howard Evans, with whom he was associated in Stuart Mill's Land Tenure Reform Association. Sir Randal Cremer: His Life and Work (1911).

75. Land and Labour June 1902.

typical Liberal and Socialist demands aimed at strengthening local government and hitting landlordism, while at the same time guarding against the creation of small, reactionary ownerships.⁷⁶

The L.N.S.'s campaign for the "Tax and Buy Bill" eventually won the support of great numbers of local authorities.⁷⁷ It was not received entirely without criticism in the Society,⁷⁸ but the response generally was enthusiastic, particularly among Liberal and Labour M.P's. Meetings were held throughout the country and eventually a Public Landownership Parliamentary Council was created to sponsor the Bill in the Commons. J.W. Logan introduced it for the first time in February 1904, and Dr. MacNamara reintroduced it the following year. No progress was made, but on the second occasion several prominent members, including Keir Hardie, Cremer, Richard Bell and Will Crooks were down to support it. A large number of meetings, notably a

76. Ibid. Mar. and Dec. 1904 for details of the Bill. There was an interesting dispute in the Unionist Party at the turn of the century in which T.W. Russell, once a member of Salisbury's government, began agitating for L.N.S. principles. Russell was left out of the administration when it was reconstructed after Salisbury's retirement and began a campaign (in Ireland) for the right of compulsory land purchase powers for local authorities, and a state aided programme for smallholdings. "Unionist and Russellite Land Purchase" candidates fought official nominees with some striking by-election successes. The result was a further hardening of Unionist attitudes and eventually George Wyndham condemned Russell's ideas outright (Land and Labour Feb. 1902) and legislated on entirely different lines. This paradox of L.N.S. policies being pursued in Tory circles was exploited and the details were regularly reported in Land and Labour.

77. Ibid. Oct. 1904

78. See e.g. Tax and Buy. A Socialist's Criticism - a reprint of a Fabian News article objecting to the methods of valuation in Land and Labour Dec. 1905.

conference of "Metropolitan Borough Councils and Boards of Guardians" at the Hackney Town Hall on 15th May, were held to publicise it. The Parliamentary Council also promoted another L.N.S. Bill "to enable public authorities to acquire land from willing vendors", which George White⁷⁹ introduced. It too made no progress but provoked useful public comment. In 1905 The Manchester Guardian, The Daily News and The Morning Leader were but three newspapers supporting the L.N.S.'s municipal campaign and by the time Balfour's government fell the demands for compulsory purchase powers to local authorities had a tremendous amount of support in Liberal circles.

Naturally the L.N.S. intended the authorities to use their new powers (when obtained) to create the smallholdings which they believed were an essential for industrial distress. The Van lecturers had all given prominence to these demands, and one member of the L.N.S. took part in practical experiments intended to demonstrate their efficacy. Demands for smallholdings had largely dropped out of parliamentary discussions after Rosebery's fall, but Richard Winfrey's activity in East Anglia enabled the L.N.S. and other organisations to keep the issue alive outside. By 1906 the Liberal party as a result was again popularly identified with a promise to create state tenancies for the rural worker. There can be no doubt that this is vitally important in explaining the counties support for liberalism in 1906 and was due in great part to L.N.S. activity.

79. White succeeded Joseph Arch as member for N.W. Norfolk. He was known as "the head of Norwich radicalism" Pall Mall Gazette "extra" op.cit.

Winfrey was born in Lincolnshire in 1858 and became a landowner in that county. In the 'seventies he was one of the Liberals who supported the agricultural trades unionists and he helped Arch fight the election campaign of 1885. Two years later he took over The Spalding Guardian and became active in local politics, working first as election agent for Halley-Stewart and then for the Hon. Arthur Brand. Winfrey was responsible for creating the Eastern Counties Liberal Federation and gained local prominence as a passive resister and an ardent pro-Boer. He stood unsuccessfully for South West Norfolk in both 1895 and 1900 and became a Vice-President of the Land Nationalisation Society in the year of his first campaign. Winfrey became a regular contributor on smallholdings to Land and Labour and worked as a Yellow Van lecturer in 1904. His views were entirely those of the L.N.S. but he also joined the English Land Restoration League (who repaid him by consistently attacking his experiments). Strangely enough he wrote as late as the nineteen forties that after hearing Henry George speak and reading Progress and Poverty "I was a convert to his method of land taxation, and am still".⁸⁰

Winfrey made some early attempts to use the conservative legislation that was in force. In 1889 he was elected to the Holland County Council and was responsible for determined efforts to use the Allotments Act. "The land for the people" he wrote, was the motto at the first council elections" and

80. Winfrey. Great Men and Others I Have Met. (1943) P.101. this and Leaves from My Life (1936) by Winfrey, was privately printed and circulated.

"Whaplode", he boasted, "was the first parish in England where land was actually purchased under the 1887 Act".⁸¹ Winfrey became chairman of the Council's Smallholdings Committee and urged the labourers to petition for holdings under the 1892 legislation in the way the L.N.S. was suggesting. Unfortunately, he said, "this first Tory Act was a farce" and little headway was made.⁸² In 1894 the Conservatives gained control of the council and called a halt to the buying of land for holdings when the offer of a farm from Lord Carrington was turned down.⁸³ Faced with this situation and with the possibilities of an adequate Smallholdings Act becoming remote, Winfrey decided to set up an organisation of his own to get land for the labourers.

In 1895 Winfrey created the group which eventually became the South Lincolnshire Small Holdings Association. Prominent Liberals, including Halley-Stewart, acted as guarantors and there can be little doubt that there were interested, political motives at work - Halley-Stewart, for instance, along with other local Liberals, lost his seat in 1895. The Association's aims were to purchase and let out land to labourers on L.N.S. lines, so to demonstrate the superiority of liberal tenancies

81. Before this Winfrey had organised a campaign that petitioned the guardians for 1,600 acres, "But as I often said afterwards", he wrote, "this Tory Act gave us large powers of asking, but precious little chance of getting ...". He eventually got 41½ acres. Leaves from My Life. op.cit.P.85. He then formed the Spalding Provident Allotments Club to purchase land, an organisation similar, but on a smaller scale, to his Smallholdings Societies.

82. Ibid. P.104 Details of Winfrey's Van campaigns Land and Labour. Aug. 1904. et. seq.

83. The 1892 Act was permissive and after 1894 "no attempt (was) made to deal with further petitions". L.Jebb. Small Holdings (1907)

and build up a demand for legislation. The experiment proved remarkably successful, and by 1906 no less than 3,200 acres had been obtained. Eventually the movement spread and Carrington and Winfrey⁸⁴ created the equally successful Norfolk Small Holdings Association.⁸⁵

Winfrey's activity stimulated other groups to action, and all the movements were widely publicised and added to the demand for reform on L.N.S. lines. Frederick Impey, Frank Smith and Willis Bund of the Allotments and Smallholdings Association were active on the Worcestershire C.C. and created a well known colony at Catshill.⁸⁶ The Norfolk County Council also took action and created some tenancies, and so too did authorities in Cambridge shire and Hampshire.⁸⁷

While the smallholdings campaign was gathering momentum Chamberlain made his attack on free trade. The L.N.S. was no less enthusiastic than the single-taxers in supporting the

84. The experiments demonstrated not only the value of tenancies as against outright ownerships, but also the need for compulsory purchase powers. Carrington was a wealthy Lincolnshire landowner and he gave much of the land. Without his gifts the schemes would probably have foundered.

85. What importance local Liberals attached to these organisations and their political power can be shown by the way they supported them financially. Winfrey, for instance, was helped by Felix Cobbold, George White and Fred Wilson, all local M.P.'s, and at one dinner alone in July 1900 £1,600 was raised for the Association. Leaves from My Life. op.cit.

86. For a description of Catshill see Jesse Collings' Land Reform op.cit.

87. For brief descriptions of this activity see Jesse Collings Land Reform, Levy, Large and Small Holdings (1911) Jebb op.cit. Reports also appear regularly in Land and Labour.

Liberal cause,⁸⁸ and it claimed that the controversy led to an increase in interest and membership. For the first time the Society, like the single-taxers, entered into amicable relations with the Cobden Club and collaborated in its campaign and published its letters and pamphlets in Land and Labour.⁸⁹ Chamberlain was constantly attacked and reminded of his past and protection was represented as "a landlord's plot". Its first effect, a Working Class Manifesto against Protection declared, would be: "To enable the owners of land to increase rents".⁹⁰

By the time the Conservative government fell the Land Nationalisation Society had established itself as an important pressure group, with a great amount of support among the opposition. It had campaigned in the rural areas and build up a strong demand for the nationalisation of mines and smallholdings legislation. It numbered prominent M.P.s and trade unionists among its most active supporters and was aided financially by scores of Liberal and Labour organisations. Its proposals had become popular with local authorities and were widely known,

88. Flürscheim was one important L.N.S. figure who disagreed with the general attitude. He believed the Society should have supported protection. His articles in Land and Labour gave rise to an interesting controversy which showed the divergence of opinion that existed in the L.N.S. Land and Labour Feb. 1904 et. seq., and an article in the issue of Jan. 1906.

89. e.g. issues of Sept. 1901 and March and July 1902 L.N.S. Tract No. 89 Not Tariffs but Land Reform.

90. Ibid. Jan. 1904 The hostility of liberal land reformers to Chamberlain was increased by the Rural Labourers League's activity on his behalf. It was no less bitter in its attacks than were the single-taxers and land nationalists. See the pamphlets issued just before the 1906 election, particularly one (unnumbered) attacking the Free Trade Union as "a political organisation supported by money people".

and had been introduced into Parliament. Moreover, the Society had played an important part in the campaign in defence of free trade, and it looked forward to the election confident of a Liberal victory and certain that the new government would produce legislation it would approve of. Before describing the election of 1906, however, mention must be made of a campaign conducted in the countryside by the single-taxers.⁹¹

91. Throughout all these years the disputes between the L.N.S. and the single-taxers had dragged on interminably. The columns of Land and Labour, The Single Tax (and then Land Values) were filled with the usual arguments. See e.g. Land and Labour April 1899 where the E.L.R.L. were accused of playing the "Tory game".

Ch. VIII The Red Van Campaigns.

The English Land Restoration League began Van campaigns of its own two years later than the L.N.S. Since the break with the socialists and with its strict belief in the merits of free trade the League had fewer supporters of new unionism in its ranks¹ than the Nationalisation Society, and this probably explains why no move was made to join forces with the new organisations until two years had elapsed after the great Dock Strike. In 1891, however, the E.L.R.L. was approached by representatives of the Docker's Union with a request for propaganda that might be of use to them in the country districts. Large quantities of literature were duly supplied "to the lecturers and organisers who have been sent into the country districts by the Dockers and General Labourer's Union"² and the League decided to set up a special fund for a Van campaign in the rural areas on lines made familiar by the L.N.S.

The single-taxers went into the country districts in an attempt to partly offset the work of the new unionists. Mann and Tillett and many of the other leaders of the 'new departure' were practising socialists, and there seemed to be a distinct possibility that their organisations would become identified with a doctrine strongly opposed by the single-taxers. The

1. Mann and John Wilson, Miner's M.P. for Durham from 1892, are the only two members of the General Committee easily identifiable as unionists in 1891. Sidney Webb was an opponent of the new unions. Tom Mann's biography is called Single Tax to Syndicalism, but it is a misleading title and he says very little about Henry Georgeism.

2. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1891

League hoped that if it intervened the unions would become devoted to land reform and not socialism, but it was to be disappointed. What the League did in fact was contribute to one of the most interesting of all attempts to organise unskilled labourers in the nineteenth century, and functioned loyally as a part of a recruiting drive in many parts of the country. This was partly due to the fact that the campaigns were more often than not conducted by some of the few remaining socialists active in the E.L.R.L.

The Land Restoration League shared the general belief that the drift from the countryside and the consequent competition for work in the towns was the cause of industrial depression and low wages. Language like that used in the tract Specially to Trades Unionists showed that single-taxers and trades unionists were agreed on the causes of social distress, if not on the remedies. The rural exodus was "turning the country men and women .. into competitors against the town workers in the labour markets of the towns", it was stated.³ Ben Tillett's replies to questions put by the House of Lords Committee on Sweating were widely publicised⁴ and the language the League used must have appealed to even the most aggressive leaders of the new movement:

3. E.L.R.L. Leaflet No. 28. Specially to Trades Unionists, also Verinder's Causes of Rural Depopulation. Church Reformer. Jan. 1892. For a contemporary work from neither a single-tax or L.N.S view on the subject see P. Anderson Graham. The Rural Exodus (1892)
4. The Committee reported in 1890 but its Report was not adopted. Tillett, talking of the London Docks, told the Lords that: "for every acre of land that goes out of cultivation, we get a man up here".

"When the great Dock Strike of 1889 broke out", it asked, "where did Mr. Norwood look for his 'blacklegs'?" To the agricultural districts .. When the South London Gas workers struck in the following winter, Mr. Livesey was able to tell his Directors that, "the company can command, and knows where to obtain at a very short notice, any number of capable men". Where did these men come from? From the agricultural districts".⁵

Propaganda of this kind eventually produced a request from the Eastern Counties Labour Federation asking the E.L.R.L. to campaign on its behalf in East Anglia. There had been a number of strikes in and around Ipswich after the dock strike, and Tom Mann had been active in the area. As a result of his activity the Dockers and Bargemen set up unions of their own and the E.C.L.F., which was created "at a conference held at the Co-operative Hall, Carr Street, Ipswich, on 21st May 1890"⁶ represented an attempt to extend unionism into the countryside for the usual reasons. Its aims were stated to be, the return of Labour M.P.s, an eight hours day, an Arbitration Act and the provision of healthy dwelling houses. The strike was to be used

5. Specially to Trades Unionists.op.cit. See also Landlordism the Cause of Depression by A.O'Connor, M.P. (part of his Minority Rep. to the Royal Comm. on Trade Depression) Appdx. to E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1887, published later as a leaflet.

6. Robert Ratcliffe. History of the Working class movement in Ipswich to the end of the nineteenth century. (MSS work in the Ipswich Borough Library.) Ratcliffe's work is simply a series of extracts from local newspapers of the time. It has little on the E.C.L.F. but contains much of great interest on local movements in an interesting area. All the rural unions described were at pains to prove their respectability and emphasised that they were bona fide institutions. The E.C.L.F. was described on many of its circulars as "A union principally composed of agricultural labourers. Reg.No. 639 under the Trades Union Acts 1871 and 1875".

only as a last resort.⁷ B.V.Verney became President, G.F. Ratcliffe treasurer and Joseph Robinson secretary. Robinson was said to have been an ex-member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and was to become the first Labour member of the Ipswich Borough Council.

In April 1891 the first "Red Van" appeared in the Ipswich area to help Robinson's organisation. Shaw-Maxwell, Patrick Hennesey, Verinder and Henry Anckertill were the lecturers and their campaign lasted until October. Their aims, according to the League's executive, were "to educate the agricultural labourers ... in the principles of land restoration", to promote the Labour Federation, ("with a view to political action on the land question"), and to gather information about rural conditions for propaganda purposes.⁸ Despite this very forthright statement however, the campaign concentrated almost entirely upon creating union branches, and propaganda for land reform was confined to the widest generalisations about the evils of landlordism.⁹ 165 meetings were held in 156 different places in Suffolk, and 41 branches of the Federation were visited. 83 new ones were created and the number of union members went

7. Ibid. P.94 By the time of the second annual meeting the officers of the E.C.L.F. were Robinson, Ratcliffe, Edmund Blake - President, Henry Sutton - assistant secretary, and James Punchard and William Brown - organising secretaries.

8. E.L.R.L. Special Report. 1892. P.1.

9. The first Special Report admitted this: "Neither in the lectures, nor in this Report" it said "has much stress been laid upon proposed Methods of Land Restoration. The desire to abolish landlordism, and a sense of the paramount necessity for doing so, must precede all attempts to draft a Bill effecting that object."

up to 7,000. Information about the conditions in the agricultural districts was collected in a manner that The Weekly Dispatch reckoned "would do credit to an assessor of income tax." This was widely distributed to the press in the first of a series of Special Reports, and became useful in the municipal housing campaigns. Verinder summed up the summer's work:

"Local grievances often formed the text for the lecture which always concluded with an invitation to join the Eastern Counties Labour Federation, and to use the union", he went on optimistically, "not only as a means of obtaining better wages, healthier homes and the like, but also as a means to make their votes effective with a view to the abolition of landlordism".¹⁰

The following year a Red Van again helped the E.C.L.F. On this occasion John Murdoch was the lecturer and he concentrated on Cambridgeshire, an area where the Federation had only four branches. Murdoch held 136 meetings during his five months tour and claimed to have created 102 branches.¹¹ The local press gives some idea of the impact of the campaign.

The Conservative newspaper, The Cambridge Chronicle and University Journal, at first tried to give the impression that Murdoch met with little enthusiasm. During the general election however, its tone changed and it was prone to blame the League for Conservative defeats, - with some justice.¹² Lady Blake, who had written an article in The National Review claiming that the Van's work was closely guided by Liberal officials, was extensively quoted, and Murdoch was constantly attacked. "The Red

10. E.L.R.L. Special Report. Among the Suffolk Labourers with the Red Van. 1891

11. Ibid.

12. The Liberals gained one, and so held three out of the four Cambridge seats.

Van has been perambulating the villages of East Anglia, and socialism and sedition have been preached and spread broadcast in our country villages" it was claimed. The Agricultural labourer "is well fitted for the assimilation of the doctrine of equality",¹³ a remark which is a true indication of the way the labourers had been impressed by radical propaganda and the promises of The Newcastle Programme. Later The Chronicle gave more space to the follow up meetings that Joseph Robinson held in the county to form branches of the Federation, but unfortunately never gave any indication of the strength or durability of them.¹⁴

The Liberal press naturally gave a more favourable account of the campaign. There is no evidence that local Liberal officials gave direct support to Murdoch, yet it is clear that his propaganda must have been regarded as in the Liberal interest at the election. The files of The Cambridge Independent Press and Herald give the impression that recruiting for the E.C.L.F. was at first very slow, and memories of what happened to an earlier attempt at unionism in Cambridgeshire may well have been the reason.¹⁵ In

13. Cambridge Chronicle. 6th May 1892. Lady Blake's In the wake of the Red Vans in Nat. Rev. May 1892.

14. See e.g. the editions of Sept. 1892. Apparently there was a resurgence of unionism in Cambridge at the time and the agricultural labourers came out on strike, in many places, almost as soon as the E.C.L.F. branch was created. See e.g. the account of a successful strike for 1s. a week and shorter hours at Barton. Ibid. 22nd April. Robinson's style of speaking was said to show that he "well knew how to tickle the ears of the labourers and stir up discontent". Ibid. 23rd Sept. 1892 and Cambridge Express & Eastern Counties Weekly News. 10th and 17th Sept. 1892.

15. e.g. Cambridge Independent ... 8th July 1892. Cambridgeshire and Suffolk were the areas in which the great lock outs that destroyed Arch's union were staged. These were followed by widespread victimisation. See Groves op.cit. F.E. Green, The History of the English Agricultural Labourer, and Clifford, The Agricultural Lock Out of 1874. See f.n. 27 for Liberal connections with unionism in Cambridge.

July and August, however¹⁶ Murdoch was given space to publicise his activities and the reports that appeared of Robinson's follow up meetings suggest that they were far more successful than The Chronicle would admit. In August Robinson was reported as¹⁷ saying that "thousands ... were joining the Society in Cambridge" and at the end of the year the Land Restoration League said there were no less than 107 branches of the Federation containing 2,305 members.¹⁸

Whatever its exact strength was in Cambridge, the Federation was in a very strong position at the end of 1892. In the first year of its existence subscriptions at the rate of a penny a week had brought in the sum of £126. from 62 branches.¹⁹ For the full year 1891 income was £487. 1s.9d., but in September 1892 Robinson went on record as stating that there were 264 branches with 16,056 members²⁰ - which could possibly have meant an annual income exceeding £3,000. The bulk of this support was in Suffolk.

In Suffolk the Federation (and the Restoration League) definitely made itself conspicuous in the Liberal interest at the general election, and this was the beginning of its downfall.

16. The general election was held in July.

17. Cambridge Independent. 26th Aug. 1892. et. seq.

18. E.L.R.L. Special Rep. 1892. Cambridge Independent. 9th Sept. 1892.

19. Ann. Rep. of the E.C.L.F. 1891 (30th May 1891). Report in The Ipswich Journal. 6th June 1891

20. Ibid. 15th April 1893.

Daniel Ford Goddard, the Mayor of Ipswich, is known to have contributed heavily to the funds of both the E.C.L.F. and the Docker's Union, and Robert Lacy Everett, the candidate for Woodbridge, was associated with the Federation from its very earliest days. These, and other Liberal candidates, received the active support of the union, and Robinson is alleged to have become Lacy Everett's "sub-agent".²¹ The Restoration League was accused by its opponents of having laid "deep and designing plans" to influence the polls,²² which reached fruition when the Labour Federation functioned "as an out and out Radical organisation" in 1892. "One of the strongest political organisations with which the Unionists had to cope ..", it was complained:

"was the Eastern Counties Labour Federation. The way in which this bogus 'union' was employed by our political opponents was nothing short of scandalous and there is no doubt that many hundreds of votes were secured by the extravagant promises of the unscrupulous agents of the Federation".²³

Results in Suffolk were certainly unfavourable to the Unionists, but it is obviously impossible to say how much this was due to the activity of the Labour Federation. There had been earlier signs of a swing towards the Liberals when Sidney de Stern (aided by Richard Winfrey) won a by-election in 1891,²⁴ and he kept the seat the following year. Lacy Everett defeated

21. Ibid.

22. Ipswich Journal and Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridge Advertiser. 15th April 1893

23. Ibid. 27th May 1893.

24. See Suffolk Chronicle for details of the campaign. April 1891 etc.

the sitting member, Col. R. H. L. Anstruther, at Woodbridge, and Francis S. Stevenson was re-elected at Eye.²⁵ Elsewhere polls were all considerably increased.

After the election, the Liberals in Suffolk entered into even closer relations with the E.C.L.F. It is interesting to find an example of Liberal M.Ps joining an alliance with one of the new unskilled unions, and although the motives were possibly interested ones, and prompted by Conservative hostility to the E.C.L.F., the move undoubtedly paid off. Impressed by the work of the Red Vans, candidates in the area subscribed to a Federation "Rural Reform Van Fund",²⁶ and Stevenson, Arthur Graeme Ogilvie, Arnold Morley, Lord John Hervey and Sir William Brampton Gurdon all appear among the subscribers.²⁷ The good that the Federation's Van did was probably offset in many areas by the adverse publicity Robinson and his colleagues were receiving at the time, but in Ipswich Daniel Ford Goddard gained the support of the working class and was returned in 1895 as the first Liberal M.P. for many years. Stevenson was also returned in an election which in most places was disastrous for his party, but Lacy Everatt was narrowly defeated by Captain Pretymann,

25. Francis S. Stevenson was a local figure, however, who was returned for Eye at each election from 1892 to 1906.

26. E.C.L.F. Ann. Rep. in the Middleditch papers in the Ipswich Borough Library. Middleditch was an E.C.L.F. Official and later a founder member of the I.L.P. in Ipswich.

27. Ibid. Minute book of the Ipswich branch of the E.C.L.F. The files of both Liberal newspapers in Cambridge make it clear that the links between the party and local unionism were particularly close there also. See e.g. one of dozens of reports of J.W. Logan, a liberal agent, taking part in a union demonstration at which Tom Mann was present. The Cambridgeshire Weekly News. 2 June 1893.

one of the arch enemies of radicals and land reformers.²⁸ By this time the Federation had been continually under attack for three years and was all but finished.

Robinson's assistance to the Liberals in 1892 gave the local Conservatives their chance to attack the Federation. Before the election they had been reluctant to attack what was obviously a popular movement,²⁹ and had confined themselves to complaints about Robinson's organisation "poaching" members from Arch's³⁰ National Agricultural Labourer's Union. By 1893 however, The Ipswich Journal, with the election defeats a thing of the past, was stating its aim week by week to be "to crush the E.C.L.F." because it was "from top to bottom a huge imposture".³¹ Robinson was said to have circularised branches in the Woodbridge area urging them to vote Liberal³² - a course of action reckoned to be completely unreasonable - and Lacy Everett was "exposed" as being only a lukewarm supporter of the Federation with a policy far different in fact from either it, or the Restoration League. Everett's articles in The Suffolk Chronicle³³ were quoted to support this contention and his speeches, which one letter signed

28. See Chap.X.

29. The Ipswich Journal. 30th May 1891 had stated that while it was feared that the Federation might become connected with one party, it believed that "combination .. is an admirable thing" and that "it fosters some of the best instincts of our imperfect nature".

30. The Ipswich Journal 30th May 1891. Subscriptions to the N.A.L.U. were 2d. a week and the E.C.L.F. were called "nobsticks" and "sweaters ... under-selling Mr.Arch by offering the work he is doing, or professing to do, at exactly half the price".

31. Ibid. 19th Aug. 1893.

32. Ibid. 19th Aug. 1895. Letter from A.L. Edwards

33. Everett was agricultural correspondent for The Suffolk Chronicle

Vigil said "out Herod - Herod",³⁴ were constantly attacked for being insincere.³⁵ Moreover, he was said to have given his labourers the shilling a week rise demanded by the E.C.L.F at meetings at which he was present,³⁶ only six weeks before the election!³⁷ Ford Goddard and the other Liberal candidates were surprisingly left alone.

Robinson was also the object of an incredibly bitter personal attack. He was alleged to have written to a number of strikers in Balsham (Cambs) declaring there was no money for strike pay, when there was in fact a bank balance of £365.³⁸ Robinson declared later that the letter never was sent and that the men at Balsham had either left the Federation or had joined simply to get strike pay. His opponents returned to the attack each week however, and harped on the sums declared in the Federation's balance sheets to have been used for wages and official expenses. "The men, pocketing thousands", a typically vindictive editorial said, were "the officials of the E.C.L.F. who, having set the labourers at the throats of their employers, quietly walk off with their "swag", and then impudently write to

34. Ipswich Journal. 30th May 1891.

35. A letter signed "Yores truly - MARY ANN", written before the election, accused Everett and his supporter Youngman of being paid and insincere agitators. "They du tell me that Everets and Yungman gits paid a good meny five pound notes in the year for this spouten bisness" it claimed. Ibid. 13th June 1891

36. e.g. Report of E.C.L.F. conference with Everett as Chairman. Ibid. 25th April 1891.

37. Ibid. 15th April 1893. Letter from James Wright.

38. Ibid. 15th April and 6 May 1893. Report of an article in The Bury Post. "The officers kept a substantial balance at the bankers so as to make sure of their salaries", it was declared, "but left the labourers with their wives and children in the lurch..."

their dupes, "we can't meet you, because we have no money for you".³⁹

At this stage the Ipswich Mutual Working Men's Independent Federation, took the lead in the attacks on Robinson. It was created by A.L. Edwards, who, according to Robinson, was in close contact with Messrs. Cobbold, Paul and Pretymen, and other local Conservatives and was a part of a deep laid Tory plot to destroy the E.C.L.F. by supplying "blackleg" labour.⁴⁰ Edwards produced letters from the Balsham strikers (but not the original alleged to have been sent by Robinson) and challenged his opponents to prove their claim that he was lying by prosecuting him for forgery. The dispute filled the columns of the local press and eventually the Ipswich Trades Council called the disputants together. The meeting ended in uproar when the chairman refused to allow a discussion of the E.C.L.F.'s balance sheet (which showed that £2,166 were spent on salaries and official expenses) and Edwards refused to discuss his Society.⁴¹

39. Ibid. 23rd April 1893

40. Ibid. 22nd April 1893

41. Ibid. 15th and 22nd July 1893. The chairman refused to allow a discussion on the balance sheet "on the ground that the said balance sheet had been forwarded to the Registrar General, who was the person who should take action if there was any question of falsifying accounts". Cambridge Express 24th June 1893. This was hardly the point, however, as Edwards had simply claimed that the official salaries were excessive! His letters also appeared in the Cambridge newspapers. Robinson's attitude over the Balsham strike seems to be the true one. It was short lived and started in March 1893. The men were asked to work an extra hour (from 6am to 6pm) as was the custom at that time of the year. They agreed but asked for an extra 1/- that would bring them up to the prevailing rate in the district (11/-). This was refused and they turned up at the old time of 6.30 to find themselves locked out. 65 men and boys were involved in a dispute of two weeks duration. Both liberal and conservative newspapers contain reports of Robinson and Punchard actually paying out strike pay and Robinson later pointed out that as the men came out without the Federation's sanction they were not entitled to anything, but were given 5/- regularly. See e.g. Cambridge Express. & Cambridge Weekly News, issues of March and April 1893.

All this publicity ruined the Eastern Counties Labour Federation. Lacy Everett and the Liberal press defended Robinson, but to no avail, and H.B.Holding was sent by the Land Restoration League to campaign on his behalf in the rural districts, but with little success. Opposition to the Federation was increasing and a Suffolk Farmer's Federation was created specifically to take part in the campaign to destroy it.⁴² There were numerous lock outs that drained union funds⁴³ and members began to leave in large numbers. Furthermore there were internal dissensions over proposals to start a co-operative farm. Robinson was particularly identified with the scheme, and, after its failure, resigned in 1894. At that time the Federation had a bank balance of £200. It was reorganised and carried on for a few months under Ratcliffe and Middleditch, but then

⁴². Cambridge Chronicle 28th Oct 1892. Ipswich Journal 22nd July 1892. At that time Lord Winchilsea was attempting to revitalise Agriculture by the creation of a National Agricultural Union composed of all classes involved in the industry, landowners farmers and labourers. The local press was full of the movement which was launched at a great London meeting and then at regional conferences in the agricultural districts. Few labourers joined but a number of branches in Cambridge were set up in villages where the E.C.L.F. had been. For reports of the regional conference in Cambridge, letters from Winchilsea outlining the aims of the N.A.U., and reports of the activities of the Shelford (Cams) and Elsworth branches. See e.g. The Daily Independent Press 25 Jan and 30 Jan 1892. Cambridge Express 7 Jan. 1893. 27 Jan and 10 Feb. 1894 etc. and Cambridge Weekly News 5 Feb. 1892, 10 Nov. 1893, 12 Jan to 16 Feb. 1894 According to the latter the Shelford N.A.U. was captured by representatives of the Fair Trade League. There is a brief biography (of Winchilsea) in the Obituary notices in Ann.Reg. 1898.

⁴³. Cambridge Independent, issues of Sept - Dec for details of the lock outs in Cambridge, Suffolk and Essex.

disappeared completely.nd

The achievements of the E.C.L.F. had been remarkable if short lived. Membership was built up to a height of 20,000 in three years and wages were raised by 1s a week in the face of incredibly bitter opposition.⁴⁵ The long term effects can only be guessed at. Certainly the wage increases were lost, and many of the unionists became prominent in local socialist activity, but beyond that nothing is certain.

The building of the E.C.L.F. was the single-taxers' greatest achievement in the rural campaigns, but they did not devote their attention solely to East Anglia. Following the initial success in Suffolk it was decided to create a special Van fund in 1892. Six members guaranteed £1,000 a year for five years and by the summer five vans were ready for use. It was

44. Robinson did not contest his council seat in 1894 and disappeared from the Ipswich area shortly afterwards and was not heard of again. Robert Ratcliffe told me that added to all his other troubles, there was a whispering campaign against him of the kind few could survive at the time. His interest in co-operative farming appears as early as 1892. See his letter to the Cambridge Independent 16th Sep. and entries of 1892 in the Minute book of the Ipswich E.C.L.F. branch and his resolution at the 1892 general meeting. He wrote a series of regular articles for the Cambridgeshire Weekly News in 1893 ~~and~~ in which his socialist ideas are apparent e.g. 'The Village Homes of England' (29th Dec 1893) and 'What is a Model State of Society?' contain demands for collectivisation of agriculture, and 'Industrial Reform' (16th June 1894) advocates state ownership of industry. 'The Future of Labour - Federation of all Trades Unions' (14th Apl 1893) had his views on unionism. Apparently he wanted one big union on the style of the American Knights of Labour. See also ^{the} speech at Shelford (Cams) in The Cambridge Express 12th Aug 1893 in which he said the E.C.L.F. was 'following the example of the Knights of Labour .. who carried on their work entirely secretly' and held few meetings.

45. The charges that both Edwards and the Balsham strikers were mercenaries in a Conservative plot may well be true. Edward's organisation certainly was commonly regarded as 'a blackleg society'. It was based on Bury and Edwards was closely connected with The Bury Post, a Conservative newspaper. Robert Ratcliffe also told me that he remembers Edwards working as a Conservative agent in the Colchester area of Essex as late as 1906.

decided to use them to help form or strengthen existing rural unions of the kind they approved of. These were organised on a county basis with no "benefit schemes"⁴⁶ They would be smaller than most existing organisations and could work more efficiently with a low income. "Above all", it was believed, they could be more easily persuaded to see the Georgeite truth "that the quarrel of the labourer is not so much with the working farmer, as with the system of private ownership of land, under which both farmer and labourer are robbed".⁴⁷

The first Van went into Berkshire in 1892 with W.S. de Mattos as lecturer. De Mattos was a socialist and an organiser and trustee of the Red Van Fund who had "lectured over 500 times as one of the chief perambulating Fabians".⁴⁸ He worked as a private tutor for the army and the University of Cambridge, and between 1889 and '91 had helped H.H.Champion form the General Railway Worker's Union.⁴⁹ As a result of his activity with the Red Van in Berkshire, the Berkshire Agricultural and

46. This was an objection to the type of scheme commonly reckoned to have been the cause of the decline of Arch's Union. For the labourer's objections to the old type of union see the extracts from The Church Reformer in O. Jocelyn Dunlop. The Farm Labourer. A History of a Modern Problem. P.170 et.seq.

47. E.L.R.L. Special Report 1892

48. Labour Annual No. 1 1895. Henry Pelling. Origins of the Labour Party. p87. De Mattos was also a member of the S.D.F. He was born in London in 1861 and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge.

49. Labour Annual 1895 op.cit.

General Worker's Union was created in April 1892. Two ladies, the Misses C.E. and A.M. Skerrit became secretary and treasurer and Lorenzo Quelch - brother of Harry Quelch of the S.D.F. - was made general secretary. Quelch represented the Berkshire labourers at the T.U.C. in each year from 1893 - 5.

The second and third vans operated in Cambridgeshire and Somerset. Murdoch's campaign in Cambridge has already been described. In Somerset, the Somerset and West of England Farm Labourer's Union, with Fred Weston as secretary, was formed. W.W. Bartlett and Henry Anckertill were the Van lecturers.

Henry Anckertill was organising secretary of the E.L.R.L. at the time of his Van campaigning. He was said to be "a son of one of the oldest landed families in Great Britain" and a grand-nephew of Lord Castlereagh, who "the irony of fate had made a Red Van lecturer .. and a Home Ruler".⁵⁰ He had left school at thirteen and joined the Navy. He left the service in 1875, when he was twenty, to read for Holy Orders, but spent most of his time working in the social reform schemes associated with Alsager Hay Hill.⁵¹ In 1884 Anckertill read Progress and Poverty and was converted by the doctrine of the single-tax. He went to the U.S. and worked with Henry George on The Standard and in the United Labour Party and returned to Britain in 1889. Later Anckertill emigrated to South Africa and became an M.P. for one

50. Brief biography of Anckertill in Labour Annual 1902

51. Alsager Hay Hill (1839-1906). Poet and social reformer. Hill pioneered the idea of Labour Exchanges and started a number in London in the 'seventies. He was editor of Labour News and was a founder member of the Charity Organisation Society. He was secretary of the C.O.S. in 1869-70, and a member of its council until 1880.

of the Durban seats. There he was alleged to have converted⁵² the Prime Minister, the Hon. Harry Escombe, "to the single-tax".

The fourth Red Van operated in North Herefordshire, and Anckertill acted as a lecturer there also. He was assisted by the Reverend A.C. Auchmuty, Vicar of Lucton, and Benjamin Riley. Auchmuty⁵³ was one of the large number of Church of England members of the Guild of St. Matthew who were active in the E.L.R.L. and was a member of the General Council. He helped form the Herefordshire Agricultural and General Labourer's Union on lines approved by the Restoration League, and became its secretary "pro tem". The Restoration League claimed that the four vans that operated in Hereford, Berkshire, Somerset and Cambridgeshire in the summer of 1892 held 458 meetings and created 320 branches of the local unions representing 5,729 members.⁵⁴

The last Van was not ready for a complete tour and was used in the election campaigns around London. Frank Smith,⁵⁵ L.C.C.

52. Labour Annual 1902

53. Auchmuty was a regular contributor to the Church Reformer in company with MacDonald, Webb and Symes. He made a translation of the Divine Comedy and was the author of several pamphlets on the single-tax (e.g. Gems from Henry George). He also wrote an "anthology of English social unrest", Poems of English Heroism from Brunanburch to Lucknow, from Athelstan to Albert (London 1882)

54. E.L.R.L. Special Report 1892.

55. Smith is one of the most interesting of all nineteenth century reformers. He began his life as an upholsterer then joined the Salvation Army and organised its social wing. After a quarrel with Booth he left the S.A., became a single-taxer and was a London County Councillor for 18 yrs. He fought several contests as an independent labour candidate then helped Hardie create the I.L.P. Smith was obviously influenced in his early days by William Saunders and worked for a time as a correspondent on The Eastern Morning News. He became prominent in the suffrage movement and as a member of the Labour Party and gained entry to the Commons in 1929. Only a brief and inadequate life of Smith has been written by E.I. Chapmness. op.cit.

was assisted at Hammersmith, John Foulger (E.L.R.L) was helped at West Marylebone and Sydney Hallifax at Faversham. None of these were successful⁵⁶ but the van went on to hold a series of meetings on behalf of Alfred Simmon's old Kent and Sussex Agricultural Labourer's Union, then reactivated as the London and Counties Labour League. Membership was increased from 2,454 in 1889 to 14,000 in 1890.⁵⁷ Expenditure from the Van fund in 1892 was £1,133.⁵⁸

The size of the Van fund prevented the vans being used in the winter, but during the summer of 1893 the campaigns were reopened again. H.B.Holding, Verinder and George Palmer went to Norfolk to help George Edward's new Norfolk and Norwich Agricultural Labourer's Union, and made some incursions into Suffolk where Robinson was in trouble. Bartlett worked in Hertfordshire and helped create the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Land and Labour League, which had W.H.Boon as general secretary, and the Berkshire Union was helped by a van taken by W.G.Pearson. John Murdoch ventured into Arch's territory for the first time and helped form the Warwickshire Agricultural and General Worker's Union (Charles Channing Secretary), and Riley took the last van to Wiltshire to help the Wiltshire Agricultural and General Worker's Union, formed during the previous winter by John S. Hamilton (secretary). Expenditure during this year was "about"

56. Hallifax stood as a Radical and lost to a Conservative by only 206 votes. Smith, standing as a Gladstonian, lost by 669 to a Conservative; and Foulgar was beaten by Frederick Seager-Hunt (Conservative) by about 450.

57. For the earlier history of Simmon's Union, which was a strong contemporary of Arch's 'National', see Reg. Groves and F.E. Green op.cit.

58. E.L.R.L. Special Report 1892. Compare this with the £282. expenditure from the General Fund. Chap. V.

£1,600, but no details of how, and how much, the lecturers and organisers were paid are available, or how the money was divided up between each area.

The E.L.R.L. attempted to draw attention to evils in the countryside by collecting and publishing information which is an invaluable guide to rural life in the 'nineties, and it also brought the unions together to give some cohesion to the movement. The Special Reports contain fascinating accounts of "sweating" in the villages of Suffolk and Essex at rates equalling 1d an hour, and of the continued existence of domestic pursuits like straw plaiting and clothes "finishing", carried on to eke out a meagre living.⁵⁹ The yearly hirings in Wiltshire were condemned as "slavery" and the League put the issue before the Home Secretary who ruled that the practice was in defiance of the Truck Acts. In October 1893 a conference of all the rural unions (except Arch's) was held at which demands for the abolition of the private ownership of land, and the strengthening of the Parish Councils Bill were passed. George Edwards eloquently decried the existence of "tied cottages" (while they were in existence, he said, the Parish Councils Act would simply "mock them (the labourers) with an empty pretence of self government") and the conference persuaded Cyril Dodd M.P. to take the matter up in Parliament.

59. "There is less freedom, less comfort, less joy in life, among the serfs of the Suffolk landlords", it was claimed, "than existed on many of the plantations in the Southern States during the days of chattel slavery". Ibid. 1891.

1893 was the last year in which any new agricultural trade unions were formed. All of them must have been shortlived and membership fell rapidly as the opposition in East Anglia, spurred others to imitate the activity of the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk farmers. A relatively buoyant period for farming, and eager hopes for an era of liberalism, had undoubtedly been partly responsible for the emerging of the unions, and the deterioration of economic conditions with the onset of the second wave of agrarian depression in late '91,⁶⁰ and disillusionment with the government certainly contributed to their decline. In 1894, for example, only four out of all the unions mentioned in the Red Van reports were present at the Norwich T.U.C., and all had a decreased membership.⁶¹ The Berkshire Union affiliated on a total of only 500 members, compared with 1,924 reported during the summer of '92. The following year only three unions were represented at the Cardiff Congress. The Hertfordshire organisation had disappeared while the Berkshire and Wiltshire Unions had declined even further. Only Edward's 'Norfolk and Norwich' had kept its figures steady at 1,000, but in 1896 at the Edinburgh T.U.C. no representatives of rural unionism at all were present.

The programmes of these unions were no more like that of the Restoration League than the Eastern Counties Labour Federation's, and the single-taxers hoped that they would become

60. Jones and Pool. A Hundred Years of Economic Development. Chap. X

61. Simmon's London and Counties Labour League, which had been represented regularly at the T.U.C. during the lean years of agricultural unionism since the 'seventies, strangely stopped sending delegates in 1892- at time when its strength had increased!

county branches of the land taxation movement were not fulfilled. George Edward's resolution at the T.U.C. in 1894, in which he asked for a Bill "that will give the agricultural labourer security of tenure, with the clauses of the Irish Labourer's Cottage Acts",⁶² was typical of the kind of demands usually put forward, and his union's programme contained no mention at all of any wider schemes of land reform.⁶³ Obviously the labourer cared more about remedying immediate evils than about formulating long term plans for social reform, and the fact that the Red Van lecturers had dwelt so searchingly on local problems probably unwittingly contributed to his attitude.

In 1894, faced with the obvious facts that the unions were not durable,⁶⁴ and the labourers were not potential single-taxers, the character of the Red Van campaigns was changed. Like the Land Nationalisation Society the E.L.R.L. decided to concentrate on getting sympathetic labourers returned at the Parish Council elections. A resolution from Headlam and Saunders passed at the annual general meeting in 1894 declared that:

62. T.U.C. Ann. Rep. 1894

63. See G. Edwards From Crow Scaring to Westminster. Chap.V

64. The League had hoped that the unions might be combinations of farmers and labourers at first, who would unite against the "landlord menace". Unfortunately it was forced to realise that the farmers identified themselves with the owners very early in the campaigns. See e.g. the report of the famous National Agricultural Conference held at the St. James' Hall, London on 7/8th Dec. 1892 which, it was said, proved the farmers "ignorance", in Special Report 1892

"In view of the forthcoming elections of Parish and District Councils, this meeting pledges itself to do everything in its power to increase the funds of the League, and thereby render the League's efforts to prevent the new Councils from falling into the hands of the landlord class".⁶⁵

The Vans held 531 meetings during the summer of 1894, and the lecturers spoke at a further 178 meetings prior to the elections. The bulk were held in collaboration with the unions in Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Bedfordshire and Norfolk, and the propaganda used was very similar to that of the L.N.S. Labourers were urged to capture the councils and use the land clauses of the inadequate Act of 1894, and also to agitate for further reforms that would alter the system of assessment and allow greater financial power to local bodies.⁶⁶ The League claimed after the elections that "wherever the Red Vans and Labourer's unions had been, the labourers and their friends gave an exceedingly good account of themselves, and, in many cases simply captured every seat", but gave few details. It bemoaned the fact that a complete summary of the results was impossible and most local newspapers simply published the names of candidates (as in Cambridge) without any indication of their affiliations. It is possible, however, to find out what happened to the labourers in some of the areas covered by the Vans.

In Norfolk "the tide of popular enthusiasm reached its highest level".⁶⁷ Edward's union was particularly active and succeeded in returning Guardians and both Rural and Parish Councillors.⁶⁸ In 121 parishes the labourers secured the return

65. E.L.R.L. Ann.Rep. 1894

66. See E.L.R.L. Leaflet No.27

67. Richard Heath Cont.Rev.op.cit. P.183

68. Edwards op.cit. P.65

of 437 members, while results in neighbouring Suffolk were only slightly less impressive. In Wiltshire, out of 18 parishes reported well enough for Heath to draw conclusions from, agricultural labourers, and labourers from other professions, polled well and had a two to one majority on the councils. Results for Berkshire were good, but there are conflicting reports about what happened in Warwickshire.

Richard Heath maintained that newspaper accounts of the elections in Warwickshire were inadequate, but showed "that the labourers have not done great things". The League, on the other hand, produced some definite figures. 91 out of the 140 successful candidates in 27 places where there was a union branch, were "labourers candidates" it was reported, and the League was particularly pleased to announce the capture of the council in Barford, Arch's own village, by candidates that it approved of.⁶⁹ In Warwickshire, as everywhere else, Rural Council elections were not contested in large numbers and there were few successes.⁷⁰

By 1895 the League was experiencing great difficulty in the Van campaigns. The Liberty and Property Defence League organised "Anti-Red Van campaigns" (which the League said collapsed "pitifully"), and the lecturers met with violent opposition on occasion.⁷¹ George Edwards, who became a Van lecturer when his union disintegrated, was only one of the

69. Special Report. 1895.

70. Heath op.cit. Pp.197-200. In Warwickshire for instance 18 out of 36 Labour candidates were successful, but only 2 according to the E.L.R.L. were "bona Fide" agricultural labourers. Special Report 1895.

71. Special Report 1896.

lecturers prosecuted for obstruction in Wiltshire, and the local press, which had hitherto been complimented for fair reporting, became increasingly hostile. Moreover, evictions following the Council elections intimidated supporters in many areas⁷² and contributed to the decline of the unions. In 1895 the League referred to the task of keeping a rural union in being as "the modern equivalent of the labour of Sisyphus",⁷³ and finally in that year William Saunders, one of the guarantors of the Red Van fund, died, affecting it financially.

Fewer meetings were held in 1895 than ever before. Most took place in Norfolk, but Devon and Dorset were visited for the first time. The lecturers in Warwickshire took part in a campaign of a kind the League later heaped contumely on Richard Winfrey for when they assisted the Barford Council in getting allotments for labourers, but everywhere apathy following the general election was encountered. The League staked its hopes on a revival of interest as the next Parish Council elections became due, but the tours of 1896 were no more successful than those of '95. The evictions, and the difficulties of the Parish Councils Act, had destroyed the labourers' interest in local government. Attempts to raise hostility against "The Landlord's Relief Acts" surprisingly failed,⁷⁴ and visits to

72. For details of the evictions see Special Report 1894. There was a County Voters Defence Association created which the

73. Special Report 1895. (E.L.R.L. supported.)

74. According to the League there was a dispute in the Unionist Party over the Bill which, it said, represented "an addition of no less than £42 million to the capital value of agricultural estates". The government, it went on, "was compelled, by the pressure of Conservative Borough members, to impose a limit of five years upon the operation of the Bill". E.L.R.L. Ann. Rep. 1896 In 1901, when the Act was renewed, the League once again vainly tried to build up antagonism to it. See the Leaflets Agriculture and Taxation and Why do we tax Houses?

Gloucester and Leicestershire had no tangible results. Finally another guarantor died and the League, which had hitherto spent an average of £1,000 a year in the Van campaigns,⁷⁵ launched an appeal for funds - but with little success.

The 1897 campaign was conducted with only two Vans. George Palmer and Bartlett worked in Essex and Leicestershire. They held 232 meetings (compared with the 413 of the previous year) and expenditure from the Van fund was only "about £450". The Special Report for 1897 gives an exhaustive account of rural conditions in Essex and explains that the reason for working the county "in great detail" was to "induce some increased interest and activity in the 1898 elections of Guardians and Rural District Councillors .. to utilise the existing machinery of local government as a means of advancing its (the Restoration League's) aims". This was an attempt to emulate the success the E.L.R.L was having among urban authorities, which failed in the countryside. In Leicestershire it was hoped to win over the miners, but the lecturers failed despite the directness of their approach. Their particular object of attack was the second Earl of Dudley (William Humble Ward) who was ruining the village of Quarry Bank by mining operations, and who shared some of the unpopularity of Penrhyn.⁷⁶ Later a London "Quarry Bank Committee"

75. Expenditure in each of the years had been:

<u>1892</u>	<u>1893</u>	<u>1894</u>	<u>1895</u>	<u>1896</u>
£1,133	£1,600	£1,100	£780	£774

The large figure in 1893 is accounted for by an additional subscription from Helen Taylor to enable the League to fight the local elections.

76. He acted as mediator with Penrhyn, the League claimed, "at a time when he was wrecking the homes, destroying the industries and dispersing the population of Quarry Bank for his private property". Special Report 1897. Dudley succeeded Thomas Burt as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. Burt had been a miner, but Dudley's only claim to distinction was said to be that "he wrecked the Employer's Liability Bill". Ibid.

was created which the E.L.R.L. actively supported, and a determined effort was made to organise a strike (a radical change in the League's attitude)⁷⁷ which failed owing to the fact that the men were not organised.

In 1898 only one Van was sent out that operated in the Bradford area with I.L.P. help, and in 1899 George Palmer campaigned in Yorkshire and along the borders of Cheshire and Shropshire. War excitement however denied him a hearing, despite the assistance given by the Worker's Union. This was really the end of the campaigns and in 1901 the Red Van fund was wound up and the Vans sold.⁷⁸

The Red Van campaigns were a remarkable phase in the history of the single-tax movement in England. The Georgeites took part in the creation of numerous local unions that they hoped would become supporters of their doctrines and anti-socialist in outlook. Their hopes were not realised and towards the end of the period, despite the "official" attitude, help was given to socialists and new unions alike. There can be no doubt that the Leagues' and the unions' activity played a great part in the victory of the Liberals in the countryside in 1892 and wage rates were raised almost everywhere. The wage increases, the interest created in local politics, and the unions themselves all disappeared when trade worsened and disillusionment set in however. The workers nevertheless had been taught to air their grievances and valuable propaganda about conditions in the

77. See e.g. the statements in the Special Reports for 1892 & '3 where it is said the League would help unions that lay emphasis "on the vote rather than on the strike".

78. Expenditure from the Van fund in these last years had been:
1898 "ca. £150" 1899 - £182

countryside had been widely distributed. Without these ventures into rural unionism a whole generation of labourers would have grown up without experience of combination. When the next revival took place it started in Norfolk, an area where the E.L.R.L. had been particularly active, and was lead again by George Edwards, once a Red Van lecturer, if not a doctrinaire single-taxer. Before this, however, the Conservative government had fallen and the land reformers had achieved some remarkable successes at the election of 1906.

Chap. 9. Land Reform 1906 - 1909

Both the land reform organisations were active at the general election of 1906. The Land Nationalisation Society circulated candidates asking if they would support the proposals of the "Tax and Buy Bill" to give local authorities powers to compulsorily purchase land for housing and small-holdings, and 37 L.N.S. men stood as parliamentary candidates.¹ The Society issued numerous tracts and pamphlets advocating its ideas, and the provincial campaign was particularly vigorous in Leicestershire and Lancashire. Reuben Petch's branch was able to report that eight out of the nine candidates supported in Lancashire were successful.²

The L.N.S.'s programme received support from both Liberal and Labour supporters as might be expected. The Daily News was as vigorous in its support as was Bruce Glasier's Labour Leader, and the Society's lecturers and Vans campaigned for candidates from both parties. An extract from Land and Labour shows the way its arguments were always presented. Dr. John Clifford wrote an article on socialism and the editor commented at length on the fact that: "Possibly some readers ... may take exception to the phrase "if there is any realm in which socialism needs to be applied", although we do not suppose it would be misunderstood by the audience to whom it was addressed. The

1. Land and Labour. Jan 1906. Winfrey, George Hardy (treasurer), Chiozza Money etc. were among the successful candidates.
2. Ibid. Feb. 1906. These included David Shackleton, John Hodge and James O'Grady.

nationalisation of land of course", he hastened to assure Liberals, "stands upon its own merits and the case for it is not affected by arguments for or against socialism".³

Emphasis on the need for smallholdings had always been an essential part of L.N.S. propaganda and it was as important in winning the support of the country districts in 1906 as it had been in 1892. Frederick Impey claimed that the question was "passionately raised" during the campaigns⁴ and the issue was kept alive by the publication of the Report of a Departmental Committee on Smallholdings⁵ (1906). The report outlined the case for reform on liberal lines and the government introduced legislation early in the following year.

The debates on the Smallholdings Bill reveal the extraordinary way in which party attitudes had been crystallised in the period following the Home Rule crisis of 1885. A great deal of preliminary propaganda, conducted mostly by the Allotments and Smallholdings Association and the L.N.S., preceeded the introduction of the Bill which was steered through the Commons by Lewis Harcourt and through the Lords by Carrington (President of the Board of Agriculture). It was heavily weighted in favour of state tenancies and its proposals were spoken of in the opposition press as "revolutionary measures of land reform".⁷

3. Ibid. Feb.1907

4. Smallholdings in England (1909) P.11. A paper read to the British Association in Dublin 1908.

5. cd.3277 For a resume of its proposals see Land and Labour Feb. 1907, L.Jebb Smallholdings (1907) and Levy op.cit. P.131 et.seq.

6. For two large conferences organised by the L.N.S. at which the Prime Minister and Churchill were present, see Land and Labour May 1907. Winfrey was Carrington's "unofficial p.p.s."

7. e.g. The Land Policy of the Government. Quarterly Rev. 1907

The 1892 Act, which had so completely failed, was drastically altered and the County Councils were given the right to compulsorily purchase or hire land for holdings of unrestricted size.⁸ Furthermore it was possible for the Board of Agriculture to act over the heads of any councils that would not use the Act and then charge the County. Harcourt defended the new measure by saying that freeholds were "the open sesame to the money lenders and the gombeen men" and inevitably led to interminable divisions of the land and innumerable sales - usually to large owners. He taunted Collings by pointing out that even he had always put some restrictions on unlimited holdings in his writings, and went on record as saying that if he thought Salisbury's Act of 1892 was producing any results at all he would be inclined to repeal it entirely.⁹

The L.N.S. welcomed the Act of 1907 and was particularly enthusiastic about the proposals for compulsory hiring and purchase. The Society became a defender of the measure and devoted much of its time and energy to explaining its intricacies to rural voters. There was a serious drawback however, and Winfrey voiced the fears of many Liberals as early as November 1907 when, in a speech to the Political and Economic Circle of the National Liberal Club he: "Expressed a fear that the value of land would be put up by 25 per cent owing to the demand for smallholding", and that this would effectively ruin the legislation.¹⁰ By 1911 Fred Horne was writing regular articles

8. The 1892 Act had restricted the tenancies it allowed to 15 acres or an acreage worth a £15 yearly rental.

9. Times. 14th June 1907 Land and Labour Jul y 1907

10. Land Values. Nov. 1907

for The Daily News saying the Act had failed, and Winfrey was complaining that his forecasts had come true.¹¹ What was needed was a valuation of land to give a reasonable basis for compulsory purchase, and this led the L.N.S. to place more emphasis on this part of its demands. A valuation was provided for in the "Tax and Buy" proposals.

The Tax and Buy Bill was controlled in Parliament by the Public Landownership Parliamentary Council. After the election the L.N.S. had circularised Members and as a result the P.L.P.C. attracted a membership of 120 when it was reconstituted.¹² The Bill was introduced in 1906 (along with another Local Authorities (Land Purchase) Bill, allowing councils to buy land from willing vendors) but no progress was made. In 1907 George Toulmin (Bury), a Vice-President of the L.N.S., reintroduced it, and the following year T.Hart Davies¹³ and George Hardy did the same, but with no success. In 1909 the L.N.S. withdrew its measure to allow a discussion on a motion on the taxation of land values proposed by James O'Grady and this proved to be the end of the Tax and Buy Bill in its original form.

11. Ibid. Apl. 1911. For the working of the Act until that date see Levy 6p.cit.

12. See L.N.S. Tract The Manifesto of the Public Landownership Parliamentary Council. The Society's list of "Vice-Presidents in Parliament" was also an impressive one after the election and included MacDonald, Winfrey, Cremer, Chiozza Money, Clynes, Snowden, John Burns and Prof. Arnold Lupton, who had defeated Henry Chaplin at Sleaford.

13. Hart Davies also proposed separate valuation and was seconded by Josiah Wedgwood of the E.L.T.L.V. The motion was withdrawn when Asquith promised a Government Bill in the future. For single-tax criticisms of L.N.S. proposals as inadequate see, e.g. Land Values, June 1907.

The Land Nationalisation Society dropped its Bill because the question of a valuation had become a major issue in party politics, but in a very different form from the method proposed in the Tax and Buy Bill. The disputes will be described later, and it will be sufficient to mention here that the L.N.S. method of valuation by the owners themselves was never seriously considered by Parliament. The real attraction of the Tax and Buy Bill lay in its emphasis on compulsory purchase.

L.N.S. demands for an Act "giving general powers of land purchase" were widely publicised and accompanied by an outside agitation that kept landlords well to the fore as enemies of Society during the years when the Liberal government was running into trouble. Land reform conferences that were widely supported by all branches of the radical movement and numerous local authorities were reported monthly in Land and Labour,¹⁴ and any legislation tending to increase the amount of land publicly owned was publicised and applauded. The L.N.S. also carried on its Van campaigns among the miners and put forward its nationalisation proposals at conferences on unemployment.¹⁵ Publicity was given to any attack on landlordism - for instance, when W.J. Duffy asked for permission to bring in a Bill "to provide for the expropriation of the Marquis of Clanricade from his Irish estates", and there can be little doubt that the L.N.S. helped enormously to create the fund of antagonism towards the landlords that Lloyd George was to tap so effectively later on. The prop-

14. Joint conferences were often organised with the Labour Party, I.L.P. and Liberal Party. see e.g. Land and Labour Jan, May, June 1909 etc.

15. See L.N.S. Tracts State Ownership of Minerals by Joseph Hyder and Unemployment and the Land Question by Aneurin Williams, M.A.

osals of the People's Budget are often presented as ideas sprung on the populace by a crusading Chancellor that gained immediate popularity, but in fact three years of steady and continuous campaigning by land reformers had made them familiar and prepared the ground for him. Most of this activity, and certainly the most spectacular, was conducted by the single-taxers, but the L.N.S. must be given its share of the credit.

The English League for the Taxation of Land Values and its local branches were as active at the general election of 1906 as the L.N.S. 21 of its members stood for re-election and all were successful, while 24 new candidates won and only 15 lost.¹⁶ Trevelyan, the most popular of the single-taxers, had an increased majority, and the League gloated over the defeat of Henry Chaplin by Professor Lupton at Sleaford. Moreover it claimed that the intervention of Lawrence Zimmerman¹⁷ in Manchester led to A.J. Balfour's heavy defeat by the Liberal T.G. Horridge, K.C.¹⁸

In Scotland the S.L.T.L.V. reported intense activity. In the "Khaki election" Scotland had deserted the Liberals, but in 1906 it returned to its old allegiance. Over half a million leaflets advocating the taxation of land values and mineral royalties¹⁹ were distributed, and Liberals and Labour candidates were assisted by the League. 58 Liberal, 2 Labour and only 12 Unionists were returned, and of these 35, according to Land

16. Land Values Feb. 1906

17. Author of Taxation of Land Values (Manchester 1904) a book that caused a considerable stir in single-tax circles.

18. For the election results and commentary etc. see Land Values Feb. 1906.

19. Labour Annual 1907

Values, definitely proposed land taxation as an alternative to protection.²⁰ Among the successful candidates who were later to play important parts in single-tax history were James Dundas White (Dumbartonshire), Thomas Shaw (who defeated Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at Hawick), J.H. Dalziel (Kirkcaldy Burghs) and Alexander Ure (Linlithgowshire).²¹

Land values taxation had appeared in practically every reform group's programme in 1906. The support of the National Liberal Federation and local Liberal parties has been mentioned before,²² and scores of candidates issued manifestos stating their belief in the need for at least some measure of land taxation. A resolution of 1904 definitely committed the Labour Representation Committee,²³ and the I.L.P. had had a statement that "Land values, urban and rural", were "to be treated as public property"

20. Feb. 1906.

21. Only Dundas White of these was a new member. He was educated at Cambridge and graduated LL.B. in 1892. In 1906 he had been for a number of years on the South Wales circuit. Author of Economic Ideals and Island Economy he became p.p.s. to McKinnon Wood, another land taxer, Secretary of State for Scotland 1912-18. Obituary Times 4th May 1951. For a description of Shaw's contest by Conan Doyle see his Memories and Adventures Chap. XX. Doyle campaigned for Chamberlain's ideas but "although (his) reasoning was sound enough", he said, he "had not reckoned on the innate conservatism (sic) of the Scottish character".

22. Chap. 7.

23. For the way Liberal, Lib-Lab and Labour Candidates regarded land taxation, see the replies to a circular sent out by the Tyneside branch of the E.L.T.L.V. in Land Values. March 1906. On 11th Dec. 1909, however, The Times published a letter from J.L. Green, Secretary of the Rural Labourers League, saying that he had examined all the Liberal election addresses issued in 1906 and found that out of the 379 members returned, 235 made no mention of the taxation of land values and these included Campbell-Bannerman, Ure, Lloyd George, Asquith, Haldane, Buxton and Lord Morley!

in its programme since 1895.²⁴ The single-tax cause was also strengthened in the Commons by the success of 31 out of the 83 Progressive councillors on the L.C.C.²⁵ all of whom were pledged to at least the limited aims of the Georgeites.

At a time when the popularity of the single-taxer's demand for at least a start to land values taxation was undoubted, a number of younger people, motivated by a belief in complete Henry Georgeism, joined the movement. While, as Joseph Hyder wrote later, it was true that the single-taxer's received their "main weight and influence from people who see no wrong in private property in land", there were still many who dearly held the beliefs of the 'eighties. Among these "the hope is ... cherished, that when the first step has been taken, the beneficial results... will be so convincing that the next step will become inevitable, and that the moderate supporters of the experimental stage will as ardently work for all the succeeding stages as they now do for the imposition of a universal tax on land according to its value and not its rent".²⁶ Holding ideas of this kind many of the new members gained entrance into Parliament and joined forces with people like Trevelyan. Among them were George Lansbury a member of the S.D.F. who wrote articles

24. Land Reformer's Handbook for 1909

25. Among these were G.A.Hardy, Fred W.Verney and John Benn. Some stood as candidates for Glasgow constituencies and received the aid of the S.L.T.L.V. These were T.McKinnon Wood, J.W.Cleland and A.M.Torrance. For a complete list of the L.C.C. successes see Pall Mall Gazette 'extra' op.cit.

26. The Case for Land Nationalisation (People's edit.1913) P.337.

as late as August 1910 urging a tax of 20s in the £.²⁷ E.G. Hemmerde, R.L.Outhwaite²⁸ "a fanatical single-taxer",²⁹ Dundas White and Josiah Wedgwood.

Wedgwood was a Fabian who had fought during the South African war and later became one of Milner's famous 'kindergarten' of administrators during the post-war reconstruction. He returned to England in 1904 and was introduced to Progress and Poverty by Ralph Wedgwood and C.P.Trevelyan:

"They introduced me to all the works of Henry George", he wrote in 1941, "and Henry George gave me those sure convictions on free trade and the taxation of land values which have at once been my anchorage and my object in politics. Even before I entered Parliament I had become a pamphleteer, a propagandist and a missionary".³⁰

"It is, regrettably, a matter of common knowledge," he wrote in the preface to another of his books, "that I exist only for the single-tax."³¹

Wedgwood joined the E.L.T.L.V. and stood as a Liberal candidate at Newcastle-under-Lyme against Sir A.Seale Haslam, who had represented the constituency since 1900. Wedgwood fought his campaign almost entirely on the question of land taxation and made no secret of the fact that his ideas went beyond those of the municipal reformers. He "preached the Georgeite doctrine from his platform" wherever he went³² and his slogan was "Free Trade, Free Land, Free Breakfast Table".

27. The Worker. July - Aug. 1910

28. Co-author with C.H.Chomley of The Essential Reform: Land Values Taxation in Theory and Practice (1909)

29. Josiah Wedgwood. Memoirs of a Fighting Life. P.83.

30. Ibid.

31. Essays and Adventures of a Labour M.P.

32. C.V.Wedgwood. The Last of the Radicals. P.79.

As a result he was returned to Parliament at his first attempt.

Once in the Commons Wedgwood joined Dilke's Radical Club³³ and "the brotherhood" that he said consisted of Charles E. Price (Edinburgh), Arthur Dewar (Edinburgh)³⁴, Alexander Ure, G.P.Trevelyan and Philip Morell (Henley).³⁵ For a time he was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Walter Runciman, but soon lost the post and embarked upon the struggles of "the four years of that Parliament" which he said "were to me one long orgy of Single Tax agitation".³⁶

The land taxers began to press their demands on Parliament as soon as it met. Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith were presented with a petition from a National Conference of Rating Authorities which reminded them of their early pledges,³⁷ and J.H.Whiteley, an ex-President of the E.L.T.L.V.³⁸ set about organising a "Land Values Parliamentary Campaign Committee" which had 280 members by Easter, 1906.

33. The Club met daily in the Commons and contained people like Chiozza Money who was by no means a land taxer. Rest of the members were Dalziel (who was a Georgeite), Athelstan Rendel, ~~members~~ Percy Alden, Alfred J. King and Ellis Davies.

34. Edinburgh, where there was a strong branch of the S.L.T.L.V., returned three prominent land taxers. The third was George McCrae. See Chap VI. f.n.84.

35. Morell, like so many more of the land taxers, was one of the numerous lawyers in the Liberal majority of 1906.

36. Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit.P.66

37. Land Values.

38. Whiteley resigned as President when given minor government office. He was the Liberal member for Halifax, a two member constituency, and shared the representation with James Parker, Socialist. In the "Khaki election" Parker had stood as an Independent and had succeeded in letting a Unionist in at the expense of Sir Alfred Billson, another E.L.T.L.V. President, and the sitting member. Billson, another lawyer, represented North West Staffordshire from 1906.

In March 1906, only a month after the general election, John E. Sutherland (Elgin Burghs) was successful in the ballot and agreed to introduce the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill promoted by the Scottish municipalities. It was almost exactly like the famous "Glasgow Bill" that the Conservative dominated Commons had let pass in 1905 and provided for the valuation that the reformers of the L.N.S. were beginning to emphasise was so important. Scottish municipalities were to be allowed to levy a local tax of 2s in the £. on the annual value, calculated as "four per cent upon the price of land arrived at between a willing buyer and a willing seller, exclusive of buildings attached to the land". The method of deciding the value is obviously open to criticism, and it is surprising that the single-taxers seriously considered it. Possibly talk of a state valuation earlier in the municipal campaigns would have alarmed too many of "the men who see no wrong in private property in land", and in any case it smacked too much of government interference to appeal readily to the free trade Georgeites. Nevertheless, to work efficiently the valuation in the Scottish Bill would have had to rely on disinterested councils and landlords as liberal and co-operative as Carrington, whereas the League believed most were more like Penrhyn and Dudley. The Land Values Group which had set up a sub-committee to produce a Bill for both England and Scotland,³⁹

39. It was presented to the Prime Minister on 10th April 1906. It dealt simply with provisions for a valuation and made no mention of what tax should be levied. Other single-tax suggestions were put to Campbell-Bannerman, but this measure was bypassed in events that followed. For details J. W. Edgewood. Land Values: Why and How they should be taxed.

decided to support Sutherland. His Bill was read a second time in March, gained a majority of 319 to 61 and was sent to a Select Committee of 15 members.⁴⁰ Harold Cox had been its most bitter opponent, and he was to replace Henry Chaplin as the chief object of abuse from the single-taxers.

Cox (1859-1936), a Liberal, and J.T. Macpherson (Labour) had captured the two Preston seats in 1906 that had been regarded as Conservative strongholds for thirty years. He had once been a Fabian and a University Extension lecturer, and was greatly influenced in his early days by Edward Carpenter. Cox worked at one stage as an agricultural labourer "to gain an insight into the life of English labourers" and started a communist farm experiment which failed. He then turned to journalism and in 1892 produced his Land Nationalisation and Land Taxation, a book which he started to write to support Henry George's ideas, but which ended as an attack on the single-tax. Cox became a believer in pure Liberalism and between 1899 and 1904 was secretary of the Cobden Club. He became noted for his attacks on the Georgeites⁴¹ and was prominent in the defence of free trade. Once in Parliament he quickly established himself as a die-hard opponent of socialism and land values taxation, and was an object of bitter hostility for the rest of his life. Cox earned the undying hatred of Labour members when he proposed an amendment to the Old Age Pensions Bill stating that: "It is

⁴⁰ Land Values. May 1906.

⁴¹ See e.g. his disputes with J. Dundas White in The Daily News 19th and 21st Jan. 1905 and an article on him in Land and Labour. Feb. 1905.

unjust to spend taxpayers money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income and character".⁴² Philip Snowden called him "an incorrigible individualist .. almost the sole survivor of the Manchester School",⁴³ while Asquith said he was an oddity who deserved to be on view in the Commons - even if a special constituency had to be created for him.⁴⁴

Cox attacked the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill for being based on "antiquated metaphysics" and "false economies"⁴⁵ and said that the decision to send it to a Select Committee meant that the Liberals were about to honour their election pledges and take over the measure themselves. Moreover, he went on, the Committee was "so selected that with one, or perhaps two, exceptions, every Member (was) pledged to the doctrine of taxing land values". The single-taxers on the other hand were not so sure. Henry Dalziel voiced the fear that it might be an attempt to shelve the Bill and prophesied that this would in fact happen.

42. H.H.Asquith Fifty Years of Parliament. Vol. 2 P.58. There is a brief chapter on Cox in E.T.Raymond Uncensored Celebrities. Lowes Dickinson was associated with Cox's agrarian experiment in Surrey where, according to Stephen Winsten, the establishment consisted of "two distinguished scholars and a very dull family of agricultural labourers whom they had imported from Kent to till the sandy soil which could grow nothing but spindly radishes". Salt and His Circle. Henry Salt was Cox's next door neighbour at Tilford. See also Edward Carpenter. My Days and Adventures.

43. Snowden. Autobiography. op.cit. P.190

44. H.H.Asquith. op.cit. Vol.2. P.58.Cox later became an Alderman on the L.C.C.(1910-12) and editor of The Westminster Review (1912-29). His books include Land Nationalisation ..(1892), Eight Hour Day, written with Sidney Webb (1891), and Economic Liberty (1920). For a review by the L.N.S. of Land Nationalisation ... see Land and Labour Nov.1907.

45. Land Values. April 1906.

What the government's intentions really were it is impossible to say, but, faced with the possibility of betrayal so early, the land taxers organised a tremendous campaign to force its hand. Meetings to support the Scottish Bill were held in the constituencies and the government was reminded of the popularity of its ideas when the E.L.T.L.V. helped the Reform Party win a sensational victory in the Metropolitan Borough elections.⁴⁶

People like Wedgwood used every possible debate to keep the question of land taxation alive,⁴⁷ and persuaded the government to produce a Blue Book on Land Taxation in New Zealand (cd.3191) and translations of Prussian State documents on the same question that proved to be useful propaganda. A Departmental Committee on the North Nigerian Land Laws brought in "a unanimous report fixing the ... lands system on Single Tax lines",⁴⁸ and in December Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman were lobbied by 150 members of the Land Values Group (L.V.G.) and presented with a draft Valuation Bill and a second petition requesting land taxation signed by no less than 400 M.P.s.

This persistent activity forced the Prime Minister to make a definite statement of his attitude. Hitherto, in opposition, he had been able to give general encouragement to the movement for the taxation of land values, but now he had to outline his ideas in detail. A year earlier he had talked broadly of

46. Later, in strange contrast, the Progressives on the L.C.C. were routed and the Council ceased to be a centre of single-tax activity. Land Values April 1907. The Council almost invariably was of a different political complexion from the Government.

47. See e.g. Hansard for the debates on Rural Housing (27 April 1906) Rating of Machinery (4th May) and the Budget.

48. Wedgwood Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit. P.65.

"reforming the land system" and of "putting a rate on ground values", but in replying to the deputation he cleverly suggested that the questions of valuation and taxation should be separated and that there should be a gradual movement towards their ultimate goal. There should be legislation for a valuation first, he said, then the question of taxation would naturally arise afterwards. "The full reform could not be carried out in a single measure" he went on "and this made it all the more desirable that the necessary preliminary of a valuation should be undertaken without delay".⁴⁹

The Prime Minister's attitude obviously affected the report of the Select Committee which was published in December 1906.⁵⁰ It contained a historical survey of rating in Scotland, but condemned the proposals of the municipalities as contained in the Scottish Bill. It recommended:

- "1. That the Bill referred to the committee be not further proceeded with,
11. That a measure be introduced making a provision for a valuation in the burghs and counties of Scotland apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, and that no assessment be determined upon until the amount of that valuation is known and considered".

Taking over the single-tax proposals in this form represented a very astute political move by the Liberals. The government realised that many of its supporters had pledged themselves before the election to the ideas of the E.L.T.L.V., but that an attempt to put them on to the Statute book was almost certain to

49. Wilson Raffan. 'Policies of the Land Values Group in the House of Commons'. Land Values. Feb.1914. An address given to the National Liberal Club 25th Nov.1912.

50. Reports in Land Values Jan.1907 and Land and Labour Feb.1907

provoke serious opposition. It had a heavy legislative programme, was already running into trouble with the Lords, and was anxious not to provoke further hostility among its followers. A valuation, with a promise of further legislation to follow, was almost certainly the minimum that the single-tax organisations, now strongly organised in Parliament would accept. Restricting it to Scotland, where land values taxation had been⁵¹ all important at the election, also made it less controversial. Furthermore, by taking over the ideas of the Select Committee the government had turned the Leagues from possible critics to definite supporters.

Both the land nationalists and the single-taxers welcomed the proposals of the Select Committee, and the movement for land reform was immensely strengthened when "The United Committee for⁵² the Taxation of Land Values" was created in London in March 1907. The Committee was to play a vitally important part in the agitations of the next seven years, but it is not clear from the reports published either when it was formed, or later, where exactly the initiative came from. Its aims were clear enough, however, and were summarised in one of its annual reports thus. It was to be:

"... a central body representative of the various Leagues for the Taxation of Land Values in Great Britain and Ireland, its function being to strengthen and co-ordinate the agitation of the Leagues, to give general direction to the movement and organise conferences, demonstrations

51. Joseph Chamberlain said after the election that in his opinion Scotland was completely committed to the policy of the Land Taxation Leagues.
52. Lawrence op.cit. P.131 wrongly says the U.C.T.L.V. was an amalgamation of the English and Scottish L.T.L.V's. The statement of aims clearly shows that they remained autonomous bodies with separate organisations and officials.

and campaigns ... wherever it was found necessary and advisable to do so, on a more extensive scale than could be undertaken or managed by purely local effort. The associated Leagues conduct their own responsible and independent work in their own fields by means of meetings Political Economy classes, literature distribution, press correspondence, etc. but they act at the same time in co-operation with one another through the United Committee which supplements as far as possible the resources the Leagues are able to obtain locally ..." ⁵³

Between 1907 and 1914 the U.C. led the movement for land values taxation in Britain, and its activities were followed with intense interest by Georgists all over the world. ⁵⁴ It took over Land Values in the first year of its existence ⁵⁵ and organised a Press Bureau which in 1909-10, for instance, published and distributed 70 articles to 160 different newspapers. ⁵⁶ In the same year 173,000 copies of 39 separate pamphlets were given away ⁵⁷ and in 1910-11 the total had risen to 2,200,00 "sets" representing 50 million leaflets distributed in 234 constituencies. ⁵⁸ The following year another 3 million "leaflets" and 162,000 "pamphlets" were distributed. Substantial aid was given to the dependent Leagues which were encouraged to hold thousands of conferences and meetings. In only the second year of its existence the Committee gave them £1,100 and this led to an increase in the numbers of local organisations. ⁵⁹ In 1909 the E.L.T.L.V. had twelve branches, five of which had sprung up in that year, ⁶⁰ and two years later the U.C. reported that it was composed of repres-

53. U.C.T.L.V. 7th Ann.Rep. 1914

54. The Single Tax Review was a journal which contained news of the movement throughout the world.

55. U.C.T.L.V. Ann.Rep. 1907 in Land Values. Feb.1908.

56. Ibid. 1910.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid. 1911

59. Ibid. 1908

60. Ibid. 1909

entatives of no less than 17 different Leagues (many of which had hitherto obviously been branches of either the English or Scottish L.T.L.V. however).⁶¹

The total sums spent by the United Committee in the years before the war were enormous. Finance came mainly from donations, and £500 were given it at the inaugural meeting. By the end of the year the Committee had received £1,037, and in 1909-10 it had no less than £7,000 at its disposal. During the Budget controversies donations amounted to £10,000 and income never fell below half that figure. It is impossible to find out who more than a few of the contributors were, but it is quite certain that the bulk of the money came from Joseph Fels.

Fels was an American Jew who made a fortune out of the manufacture of the famous Fels-Naptha soap in the 'nineties - "while millions of Americans were still mired deep in the depression".⁶² At the end of the century he began a gradual development towards the ideas of Henry George and experimented with a Vacant Lots Cultivation Association in Detroit, and later a single-tax colony at Mobile Bay. In 1901 Fels came to England to build up his European contacts. For a few years he concentrated on business activity, then later found he had time to spare and began experiments of the kind he had conducted in the U.S. Between £25,000 and £50,000 were spent on a farm colony set up to rehabilitate the unemployed at Mayland (Essex), and further large

61. Ibid. 1911.

62. A.P. Dudden "Joseph Fels of Philadelphia and London" Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography. April 1955 Vol. LXXIX No. 2. There is a brief and unsatisfactory life of Fels by his wife. Mary Fels. The Life of Joseph Fels.

sums were spent on two similar projects at Hollesey Bay (Suffolk) and Laindon (Essex). All three were failures and Fels, his "public object lesson" ruined, turned wholeheartedly to the ideas of Progress and Poverty:

"Deeply discouraged by his lack of clear cut success as a social reformer... Fels now took over the doctrines of Henry George lock, stock and barrel. Hitherto he had described himself as "a kind of half-ass single-tax man".⁶³

Fels conversion probably had quite a lot to do with George Lansbury, who was at that time a convinced believer in the full Georgeite programme. Lansbury was a member of the Poplar Borough Council which had collaborated in the experiment at Mayland.⁶⁴ He and the American became firm friends, and Fels spoke of the Socialist as his "almoner". Under Lansbury's guidance huge sums were given away,⁶⁵ including the £1,700 to Lenin that enabled the historic Russian Social Democratic Labour Party Conference in London (at which it was decided to wage unending war on capitalism) to be completed in 1907;⁶⁶ grants to the Fabian Society; and large amounts to Israel Zangwill's Jewish Territorial organisation. (At one stage Fels offered the Jewish leader \$100,000 "on condition that Itoland be established on a single-tax basis")⁶⁷

Several contemporaries have left on record their impressions of Fels after his conversion to Georgeism, and they are interest-

63. Dudden op.cit.

64. Raymond Postgate. The Life of George Lansbury P.68 et.seq.

65. Dudden op.cit. estimated that Fels eventually gave away \$100,000 annually to various organisations throughout the world. Unfortunately he does not specifically say where the contributions to English single-tax movements went. He says the figure was £10,000 annually.

66. A.P.Dudden & T.H.Von Lave. "The R.S.D.L.P. and Joseph Fels - A Study in Intercultural Contact". American Historical Review 61 (1955) (Mary Fels was eventually repaid by the Soviet Union in 1922).

"When Lenin rose to leave", H.N.Brailsford said, "Fels pressed into his hands one of the single-tax tracts which he always had in his pocket".

67. Obituary notice of Fels by Zangwill in Land Values April 1914.

ing as showing the impact that the ideas of Progress and Poverty could still have in the nineteen hundreds, some twenty years after it had "electrified" people like Joseph Chamberlain. Margaret McMillan described him as being "small like St. Paul, curious like Nicodemus, impetuous like St. Peter, full of traits and eccentricities which estranged and bewildered, but consumed by a burning thirst for righteousness".⁶⁸ George Bernard Shaw was canvassed by Fels and was asked to revert to his idea of the 'eighties, but recommended the American to support Fabianism and Sidney Webb's schemes. "I know of no trick outside his (Webb's) that will be of any use except to make small masters out of large ones", Shaw wrote. "How you, who have prospered by the blessed and beneficent pursuit of making men's clothes clean ... can deliberately set to work to make them dirty passes my understanding. But it's always the same: the lunacy of county life always attacks the manufacturer first". Mrs. Webb, possibly piqued by the niggardly £100 Fels had given to the Fabian Society, spoke uncharitably of him and his wife as: "Dowdy little Americans .. he a decidedly vulgar little Jew with much push, little else on the surface",⁶⁹ criticisms remarkably like those Hyndman made of Henry George in the 'eighties.⁷⁰ Lincoln Steffens, an American land taxer, described a visit from Fels

"Say I've got an excess income of \$250,000 a year which I can't use myself" Fels said. "How can I spend it for others and not do any harm?"

68. Quoted Dudden and von Lane op.cit.

69. Beatrice Webb. Our Partnership. P.291.

70. Fels also gave small contributions to the I.L.P. Poirier Advent of the Labour Party. P.53.

"You can't" I answered.

"I know that" he twinkled. "But I've got to get rid of it, so I ask you; how can I give it away and do least harm?" ⁷¹

The United Committee, which Fels did so much to support, was organised from London and was particularly well served by its able full time officials. Lewis Berens became treasurer, and Crompton Llewelyn Davies and John Paul were joint secretaries. Paul had once been secretary of the Scottish L.T.L.V. and was editor of Land Values.⁷² Edward McHugh, who had been an advance agent for Henry George in Scotland in the 'eighties, and who had collaborated with Richard McGhee in forming the National Union of Dock Labourers in 1888, also joined the staff of the United Committee. McHugh had been in America for a number of years and continued to work for the U.C.T.L.V. until his death in 1915.⁷³ A.W.Nadsen was another official.

Shortly after the creation of the United Committee the Liberals announced their intention of introducing legislation based on the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Scottish Bill. Two important meetings were organised by the L.N.S. and the Land Values Parliamentary Group and held at the Holborn Restaurant and the Drury Lane Theatre. The chief speakers were Campbell-Bannerman, Sir John Brunner and Winston Churchill (at that time a Vice-President of the Lancashire branch of the E.L.T.L.V.), and the audience were treated to a feast of invective that foreshadowed the language of Lloyd George two years later.

71. The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens. Vol.2.Chap.2.P.641

72. See Chap.VI.

73. Obituary Land Values May 1915.

Rosebery, hitherto regarded as (albeit a lukewarm) supporter of land values taxation, was sent scurrying into the opposition camp with complaints against "new predatory measures",⁷⁴ when Churchill spoke of class privilege, and attacked the Peers as representatives of landlordism at its very worst. He accused them of opposing the small holdings legislation and spoke of the need for general compulsory purchase powers for local authorities. Small freeholds were ^{called} "reactionary", and Churchill went on to say that the government definitely intended to produce a Valuation Bill. A verbatim report of the proceedings, complete with the proposals put forward by C.P. Trevelyan and supported by the leaders, was prepared and distributed by the Liberals. No clearer statement of the fact that the party had identified itself with the proposals of the single-tax organisations could have been made.

The Bill was introduced into the Commons in May 1907. Known as the Land Valuation (Scotland) Bill it merely proposed to ascertain the capital land value, described as "simply what land may be expected to realise in the open market divested of improvements thereon".⁷⁵ It passed all its readings in the Commons by the end of August, but the Opposition cleverly exploited the differences that emerged among the single-taxers over the valuation. Arthur Balfour raised the technical question of the taxation of feu duties and accused the Liberals of intending to break existing contracts. This was exactly what the Georgeites wanted

74. Land Values. May 1907. and Land and Labour May 1907 for reports of the meetings.

75. Land Values. June 1907

of course, but Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman made a statement to the contrary, but not until some authorities (Greenock for instance) had been frightened into withdrawing their support. Great consternation was caused in single-tax circles, and the columns of Land Values were filled with letters and articles on the question that produced enough bitterness for one correspondent to liken W.R.Lester, President of the E.L.T.L.V., to Harold Cox!⁷⁶ That worthy naturally spoke against the Bill and proposed "local option", a cry which, when taken up by the Conservatives, enabled Asquith to taunt Balfour with becoming an exponent of Liberal principles. Chiozza Money gave reluctant support for the valuation as spokesman for the L.N.S., but declared that taxation afterwards was not enough. Claiming that there was no united support for the Bill, the Lords rejected it on 26th August 1907.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the government intended to antagonise the Lords, and that it used the single-tax proposals and the single-tax movement quite deliberately to further its own ends. The previous year the Peers had rejected a number of government Bills, and in a widely publicised speech at Edinburgh (18th May 1907) Churchill practically invited them to do the same to the Valuation Bill - knowing perfectly well that it would provoke an outcry:

"The House of Lords has by its veto in the past", he said, "been able to arrest or delay many valuable reforms, but the reform of the land laws of this country, wisely, bravely, determinedly guided, would destroy forever the veto of the Lords".⁷⁷

76. See the correspondence, starting with an article by Lester, in Land Values Oct. 1907 - Jan. 1908

77. Ibid. June 1907

The contention that the Liberals were quite deliberately using the Land Valuation Bill to discredit the Lords (as well as to keep the allegiance of the land taxers) gains some strength when a popular current belief is born in mind. Speaker Peel had ruled in 1894 that the Lords could not alter or reject any legislation affecting rating⁷⁸ and the Liberals contended vociferously (after the rejection) ~~th~~at the valuation was an essential preliminary to rating reform, and that therefore the Lords had acted unconstitutionally. Campbell-Bannerman was able to make valuable play with their behaviour:

"... this rejection", he said, "was a piece of arrogance and high-handedness - the extreme point of the pretensions of the House of Lords. Yes, because the House has no concern with rating and this was a preliminary to it". The two Bills they had rejected, he went on, would be reintroduced "and passed pro forma".⁷⁹

By speaking in this manner the Prime Minister channelled the single-taxers activity into an anti-House of Lords campaign. The United Committee set about organising mass demonstrations and it is quite clear it was being used by the government. Zimmerman, speaking at Manchester, said the land taxers were responding to a definite call from Campbell-Bannerman.⁸⁰ The United Committee circularised the municipalities and urged them to petition for

78. See Land Values. Jan.1908 when Alexander Ure puts forward the Liberal view in an attack on Lord Lansdowne.

79. Ibid. Nov.1907. The Lords had also rejected a Small Holdings (Scotland) Bill that would have extended the benefits of the 1907 Act.

80. Ibid. The single-taxers also claimed that Campbell-Bannerman had issued similar instructions through Sir Alfred Billson in 1899, but that the war had stopped a campaign getting under way. E.L.T.L.V. Ann.Rep.1908

the reintroduction of the Scottish Bill and an English measure on the same lines,⁸¹ as well as a Bill taxing land values. Scores of meetings were held, and the Prime Minister and numerous members of the government spoke under the U.C's auspices. At one gathering in Manchester alone C.P.Trevelyan (secretary of the Board of Education), Dr.MacNamara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade) and Alexander Ure (Solicitor General for Scotland) all addressed an audience of 3,000.

Alexander Ure emerged from the United Committee's campaign as the chief government speaker for land values taxation. He had spent most of his life in Glasgow and had attended the University there. He became a member of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values when he was a lecturer on Constitutional Law and History at Glasgow (from 1878 to 1890). Ure entered Parliament for Linlithgowshire in 1895, but took little part in the business of the House before he and Thomas Shaw were made the principle spokesmen for the Valuation Bill. Wedgwood said Ure was an exceptionally good speaker who proved his ability when Balfour made the mistake of accusing him of "a frigid and calculated lie" about the Conservative party in a campaign speech.⁸² Ure's reply established him as a firm favourite on the Liberal benches and he was a magnificent choice for the part Campbell-Bannerman had chosen for him to play. Between 1907 and 1909 Ure was a popular idol among the land taxers and received star billing in almost

81. Campbell-Bannerman received a deputation in June 1907 and said that an English Bill would be prepared by Sir William Robson for introduction in 1908.

82. Viscount Ullswater. A Speaker's Commentaries. Vol.2. P.149

every edition of Land Values.

By the time the Lords rejected the Scottish Valuation Bill the single-tax movement had encountered organised opposition, particularly in Glasgow - where the Town Council had been captured by opponents. A Glasgow- Anti-Land Values Association had been set up in 1905 and had worked continually against the local Progressives.⁸³ In 1907, like its counterpart in London, that party lost ground in the local elections, and the Town Council never again occupied pride of place in the municipal movement for the taxation of land values. John Ferguson had died in 1906 and his place was taken as Convener of the Council's Committee on the Taxation of Land Values by Councillor Alston - who promptly shelved the question. His action may have been hastened by the fact that the authority was being threatened with a court action accusing it of spending £2,457. 2s. 1d "on promoting a public Parliamentary Bill for the whole country".⁸⁴ The matter was eventually settled out of court, but the Conservatives were able to make great play on the Council's change of heart at what seemed to be the peak of single-tax activity.

The Land Valuation (Scotland) Bill was reintroduced in 1908 and was accompanied by a huge agitation in the country, yet suffered the same defeat as it did in the previous year. Cox and Bonar Law (who said the Bill was "socialism") were prominent in the opposition in the Commons, but the same huge majorities were obtained. The Lords treated the Bill with a little more respect than before, however,

83. See Report of its second annual general meeting. Land Values Feb. 1908.

84. Ibid. July 1908

and Balfour of Burleigh proposed that it should be sent to Committee. There it was mutilated (the Peers adopting Cox's proposal of local option and substituting yearly for capital value) and was further modified at the Report stage. One Peer declared that the Bill was the thin edge of the wedge and that he and his colleagues were determined "not to swallow Henry George's doctrines either in bulk or tabloids".⁸⁵ After this defeat the Liberals announced that they would abandon the measure for the time being.

By the time of the second rejection of the Bill there had been a change in the leadership of the Liberal party, and the single-taxers had been humiliated to find the government asserting its independence of them for the first time. Campbell-Bannerman resigned through ill health and was replaced by Asquith, while Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Asquith told Josiah Wedgwood that despite his earlier promise^d the government had abandoned the proposed English Valuation Bill for that session, and refused to say what his intentions regarding the rejected Scottish Bill were. Faced with this refusal Asquith fell from favour, and several prominent single-taxers like Wedgwood and Lester announced their intention of disassociating themselves from the Liberal Party,⁸⁶ and the United Committee began to organise a campaign for a land taxing Budget that would reach large enough proportions to force the government's hand and hamstring the Lords.

85. Annual Register. English History 1908. Asquith said on 12th.

May that John Burns would introduce an English Bill.

86. Land Values. Nov. 1908

This was not the first occasion on which the Government had been urged to include land taxes in the Budget to defeat the Lords - it had in fact become a stock demand of the Georgeites. Lawrence said that the idea was first impressed on the government a year earlier,⁸⁷ but it had in reality been put forward by the single-taxers since the 'nineties. After George McCrae wrote a letter to Land Values in July 1905 demanding that "the next Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer ... embody such a proposal (to tax land values) in the Finance Act of the year", it was constantly demanded. In 1906 Trevelyan suggested it in Parliament and prompted Joseph Chamberlain to bemoan the fact that "the Chancellor .. should have left the House, while his hon.friend is giving him instructions as to what he should do in the next Budget".⁸⁸ The following year MacNamara, while a member of the government, said at a huge meeting in Edinburgh⁸⁹ that land taxes were a way of defying the Lords.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the government itself started the United Committee's campaign for a land taxing Budget - despite the apparent break in the amicable relations with the single-taxers earlier in the year. The Times later contended that it was Lloyd George who had urged the U.C. on its way, sending

87. op.cit.P.134

88. 2nd.Dec.1907. See Mary Fels op.cit.for an account of the famous "Right to work conference" of late 1908 at which rels, representing the U.C. persuaded the conference to ask "the Chancellor .. to put the taxation of land values in the next Budget". P.154.

89. See also C.H.Chomley and R.L.Outhwaite.The Essential Reform: Land Values Taxation. Chap.18. "The Tax and the Budget".

his instructions through Josiah Wedgwood.⁹⁰ There may have been some truth in the report that the new Chancellor set about antagonising the Lords as early as this by accepting the advice of the Georgeites, but if he did, it is certain that he acted as a representative of the Cabinet and not as an individual. This is clear from the fact that prominent members of the government like Birrell, Tre, Shaw and MacNamara were allowed to take part in the campaign, while the Liberal Whip presided over a meeting in the Commons called by 60 Liberal and Labour M.P.s at which it was decided to petition Asquith. The whole incident gives the impression of being carefully staged. 245 Members signed and Wedgwood presented their demands on 11th November⁹¹ which "respectfully urged upon the Government the desirability of including a Tax on Land Values in next year's Budget".⁹² Asquith's reply, in which he duly promised that "the centre of the government's work "would be "in next year's Budget" once again made him persona grata with the single-taxers.

Asquith's remarks stimulated activity outside Parliament even further. Sir Charles Dilke presided over conferences of M.P.s that demanded a Land Taxing Budget, and petitions prompted by the U.C. poured into the government from hundreds of local authorities and Liberal and Socialist parties. 4,000 societies were represented at one huge conference on "Land Values and the Budget" in the Caxton Hall in February,⁹³ and the Morning Leader reported that the

90. 11th Feb. 1909. No date for the instruction is given. If it is true, then presumably it came after Wedgwood's attack on the Liberals.⁹

91. Laurence op.cit. p.134 wrongly puts the date in December.

92. Land Values Dec. 1908

93. Quoted Land Values Feb. 1909

United Committee had "issued 50,000 and 100,000 pamphlets on the question in (the last) two months". Philip Morell, Wedgwood and Dundas White were particularly active, and Alexander Ure's campaign took on the appearance of a tour by Henry George thirty years earlier. The liberal press were practically united in supporting the U.C's demands, and especially enthusiastic were The Daily News and The Standard, controlled by George Cadbury. The local Land Taxation Leagues also reported increased activity, and campaigning on the grand scale.⁹⁴ Lloyd George, when asked where he would get the revenue he currently needed from, replied that "he was looking for someone's hen roost to rob",⁹⁵ and statements like these from Cabinet Ministers crowned the Committee's campaign. Churchill went on record as saying that:

"For my part, I should be quite content to see the battle joined as speedily as possible upon the plain simple issue of aristocratic rule against representative government, between the reversion to protection and the maintenance of free trade, between a tax on bread and a tax on - well never mind".⁹⁶

As if to emphasise its close connection with the single-taxers (or to reassure them) the government promoted three of their most popular members while the campaign for a land taxing Budget was at its height. Thomas Shaw was made a Lord of Appeal, Alexander

94. Land Values Mar.1909, for instance, for a report of the E.L. T.L.V's activity. It is interesting to notice young politicians who were later to become famous appearing in 1909 as part of the movement demanding Budget taxes on land. Victor Grayson is one, Bertrand Russell at Winbledon and J. Chuter Ede are others. Louis Post and Henry George, Jnr. the American single-taxers, also came over to take part in the campaign.

95. W. Watkin Davies. Lloyd George 1863-1914. P.297.

96. E. Halevy. History of the English People. Epilogue 2. P.281
The National Liberal Federation came out in support of the U.C's demands. Land Values Mar.1909.

Ure was appointed Solicitor General for Scotland and Arthur Dewar, a member of Wedgwood's "brotherhood" became Lord Advocate. Dewar had to seek re-election at Edinburgh and fought a successful campaign against another Harold Cox. By-election results had all been good for the Liberals since the U.C's campaign had begun and were proof of the popularity of its proposals. In the first four months of 1909 nine seats had become vacant and were filled, one by an unopposed Unionist, while all showed no change, with Liberal polls approximately the same as at the general election.⁹⁷

On 23rd March 1909 James O'Grady, the Labour member for East Leeds, proposed a motion on the taxation of land values in the Commons.⁹⁸ The Land Nationalisation Society decided to support the demands and withdrew the "Tax and Buy Bill" that was down for discussion.⁹⁹ A debate took place which Wilson Raffan said was "intended to make the pace for the proposed tax on land values in the Budget",¹⁰⁰ and the resolution declared that "the imposition ... should be provided for without delay".¹⁰¹ O'Grady put the full Socialist case for taking all unearned increments, but cleverly pointed out that for the present he was only proposing a limited

97. Details in Annual Register 1909. The remaining contest was Hemmerde's (see later). In two of the by-elections Frank Smith fought unsuccessfully as a Labour candidate.

98. The Labour movement were solidly behind the agitation regarding the Budget. George Barnes proposed an amendment to the speech from the Throne regretting the absence of any mention of land values taxation, and Philip Snowden had produced the book which he later claimed formed the basis of the Budget - a claim supported by Bonar Law.

99. Land and Labour May 1909. O'Grady was a trades unionist and had been President of the T.U.C. in 1898. W.P. Byles, the old single-taxer, had fought East Leeds as a Labour candidate in 1900 (Bealey and Felling op.cit. P.45) He re-entered Parliament as a Liberal for Salford in 1906 however.

100. Baffan was secretary of the L.V.G.

imposition and was primarily interested in the urban aspect of land taxation. He went on to pay a glowing tribute to Joseph Fels and the work of the United Committee, and was opposed by Cox who "spoke for forty minutes in a debate limited to two hours". Cox pointed out that whatever O'Grady's opinions were, there were people like Wedgwood in the background who happily contemplated a "40s. in the £. tax". He tried to spread alarm by dwelling on the differences between the land taxers on the question of breaking existing contracts,¹⁰² and said there were millions of small investors who had interests in land through the Insurance Companies. He then talked of the difficulties of levying a tax, and went on to say that it was illogical to single out just one form of unearned increment to take for state purposes. A land tax was regarded as the thin edge of a wedge by socialists and Georgeites alike, Cox concluded, and the motion was talked out.¹⁰³

Just after the debate on O'Grady's motion a sensational by-election took place involving one of the most popular of all

102. A modern version of the compensation disputes of the 'eighties.

103. Cox was justified in these last conclusions of course as O'Grady's remarks proved. The Clarion 3 Dec. 1909 agreed with him and said that "The Tories no less than the Liberals, are rendering assistance to the cause of socialism, for they are pointing out that there is no real difference between incomes derived from land and incomes derived from invested capital, which can be generally held to justify the taxation of one and not the other. Quoted F. Brockway. op.cit.

single-taxers. E.G.Hemmerde,¹⁰⁴ President-elect of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, was appointed Recorder of Liverpool and was forced to seek re-election for East Denbighshire. The campaign was fought entirely on the question of land values taxation and the United Committee and the local Leagues were prominent in the struggle. The result was a great victory for Hemmerde with an increased Liberal majority. Nothing could have encouraged the land taxers more, and practically the whole country looked forward to Lloyd George's Budget in April, expecting it to contain proposals which would crown the Georgeites campaign with success.¹⁰⁵

104. Hemmerde (1871-1948) contested Winchester (1900) and Shrewsbury (1906) as a Liberal and was returned with an increased Liberal vote at a by-election for Denbigh in 1906. He wrote a number of plays in conjunction with Francis Neilson, another Land Taxer, and joined the Labour party after the war. He sat for Crewe from 1922-1924. Josiah Wedgwood recorded that he made his first political speech "in Longton Town Hall with the superb Hemmerde as star speaker". Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit.P.59

105. Harold Cox. The Nineteenth Century. Feb.1909, was among these. See also Land and Labour Jan.1909. "Unearned increment due to industry, enterprise and energy no doubt will come under review by the Chancellor of the Exchequer".

Chap.10. The Liberal "Betrayal" 1909-1914

Lloyd George introduced his Budget on 29th April 1909. He had to find unexpectedly large sums to cover the cost of old age pensions, and an increase in the number of Dreadnoughts had become necessary as a result of a jingoistic campaign by the Conservatives. These demands proved to be an added justification, if one was necessary, for including land taxes in the Finance Bill.

The taxes were, by modern standards, moderate in the extreme. There was to be a state valuation of land and Lloyd George imposed a tax of 20 per cent on the future unearned increment, to be levied when the property changed hands. In this way the Chancellor forestalled critics like Cox who had been maintaining that it was impossible to evolve any kind of scheme to take over communal land values. Owners, moreover, were left to enjoy all "the illegal gains made since the Conquest", as the land nationalists said they should, but as the Georgeites said was wrong. There was a further tax of 1/2d in the £. on the capital value of undeveloped land and minerals (which was to be estimated in the first year by the owners themselves, and which was obviously devised to meet some of the demands of the housing reformers), and a 10 per cent reversion duty on any benefit accruing to a lessor on the termination of a lease. The taxes were expected to produce £500,000 in the first year they were levied.¹

The Liberals reacted enthusiastically to Lloyd George's proposals. It seems to have been a rule of politics in the late

1. In the form of £500,000 from each of the first two sources and £100,000 from the reversion duty.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that whenever the Liberal Party needed to renew its popularity it resorted to an attack on landlordism, and almost invariably the attack succeeded. The electoral victories of 1885, 1892 and, to a great extent 1906, were achieved in this way and in 1909 landlords were once again presented as obstacles in the war against poverty and want. Lloyd George's 'Limehouse' speech is typical of the way he presented his proposals in language very like Henry George's:

"Who created these increments?" he asked. "Who made that golden swamp? Was it the landlord? Was it his energy? His brains? .. it's rather odd that an old workman should have to find his way to the tomb, bleeding and footsore, through the brambles and thorns of poverty. We cut a new path for him, an easier one, a pleasanter one, through fields of waving corn".²

The Chancellor's speeches contained the most extreme statements of the liberal case for "the People's Budget", but it was received equally enthusiastically by almost all of the party and its allies. A few Liberals like Hilaire Belloc complained that the taxes were too low,³ but most accepted them. The Labour party declared its unanimous support and Snowden said that had he been Chancellor he would have legislated in exactly the same way, while G.N. Barnes said this was what he and his colleagues had worked for for years.⁴ The T.U.C. gave its support, and although the Irish had complaints of a specialised nature, Redmond called the Budget "great and courageous" and committed his followers by

2. Thomas Jones. The Life of Lloyd George. P.38.

3. Land Values. June 1909

4. Barnes (1859-1940) was leader of the Labour party. An engineer he was earlier associated with John Burns and Mann in the A.S.E. He wrote an autobiography From Workshop to War Cabinet. Wedgwood said that he died at the age of ninety "still faithful to the gospel (of Progress and Poverty)". As a member of the Civil List Committee in 1910 Barnes proposed the nationalisation of the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall.

saying that "all these (land tax) proposals have our complete sympathy".

The Unionist's reactions took the form that might have been expected and they were almost unanimous in equating the Budget proposals with both socialism and Henry Georgeism. The two had become synonymous in Conservative eyes again and the differences between the two ideologies were either misunderstood or ignored in the desire to discredit the latest attack on property - much to the chagrin of single-taxers.⁵ The Daily Express wrote of "a group of essentially Red Flag proposals",⁶ and coined the slogan "LLOYD GEORGE - HENRY GEORGE" to describe the Budget. The rest of the conservative press reacted only slightly less violently. Lord Lansdowne and Henry Chaplin fulminated against "the first step in the socialist war against property", while Balfour said the Budget was being based on Henry George.⁷ Liberals were quick to deny charges like these and pointed to the level of taxation to prove their point, but people like Hemmerde and Wedgwood showed by their statements that they agreed with the Conservatives. Lord

5. Lewis Berens (Land Values Oct. 1907) had much earlier complained of the way the single-tax~~es~~ and socialism had become equated since the general election. Trying to define the differences he too had reverted to the language of the 'eighties. "What is socialism" he asked. "In truth socialism is one of those vague, mystic, abstract terms, the use of which is amongst the greatest hindrances to clear thinking". There was at least one rather odd attempt to claim Henry George as a socialist in these years. See the I.L.P. pamphlet Henry George, Socialism and the Single Tax by T. Russell Williams.

6. 30th May 1909.

7. Land Values. Budget supplement June 1909

Rosebery finally registered his complete break with Progressive ideas by going on record as saying that: "This is not a Budget, but a revolution; a social and political revolution of the first magnitude",⁸ and shortly after the Chancellor's announcement of his intentions Walter Long created a Unionist Budget Protest League to marshal the opposition.⁹

The Land Nationalisation Society also welcomed the Budget proposals. It was particularly enthusiastic about the valuation (and dropped its own valuation scheme from the Tax and Buy Bill) and the Development Fund, which included proposals for compulsory purchase and afforestation.¹⁰ The Society took part in the demonstrations on behalf of the Budget and against the Lords later. Petch's Lancashire branch of the Society had been engaged in an anti-House of Lords campaign of its own since 1907.

The single-taxers' reactions to the People's Budget caused the one note of dissension among the radical ranks. They had been led to believe that the government had been won over completely to their ideas, and the moderate taxes were a bitter disappointment. "We wanted a straight tax of 1d. in the £", wrote Wedgwood, "on unimproved (or site) value. We wanted it, not primarily for revenue, but to give the valuation and registration".¹¹ Instead they got half measures. The valuation was welcomed and the one tax

8. Ibid. July 1909

9. Times. 14th June 1909

10. Land and Labour. Oct. 1909 etc.

11. Memoirs of a Fighting Life p.68

Wedgwood wholeheartedly approved of was the ½d on undeveloped land, "the one ewe lamb of the Chancellor ... in that tax the kernel of the solution of the unemployment difficulty lay", he said, and Penrhyn would have to pay it whether the Bethesda Quarries were working or not. The "German precedents" of the Budget, which allowed certain exemptions were also bitterly resented. "We object, and protest against the arbitrary exclusion of farmers and rural landowners who improve their estates from the operation of this measure", wrote Ogilvy in May,¹² "there is an apparent desire to avoid infliction of hardship on interested parties". A month later Land Values was writing of the government in terms which make a stark contrast with the lavish praises of a month or two earlier:

"The Cabinet are utterly ignorant of what the Taxation of Land Values means", an editorial rather surprisingly said. "Their ignorance makes them timid. They are haunted by the fear that a substantial and universal tax would injure many classes in the community. Their fear is largely created and intensified by the noisy protests of people who claim to represent the interests of landowners and small investors - poor, pitiable people in general. The views of these people are based on the assumption that justice and freedom in matters of industry and trade are things to avoid ...

"We regret that the government did not impose a uniform tax. The country needs it... it would have been a liberal or liberating measure".

The Budget taxes apart from those on land were also the objects of criticism from the purest free trade point of view.

"The taxes on the motor industry, motors and petrol, and the heavy tax on tobacco, are bad company for the tax on land values", it was claimed.¹³ Whatever the majority of Liberals thought, a land tax was one which, levied heavily enough, could make all others

12. Land Values May 1909

13. Land Values May 1909

unnecessary, Lester pointed out.¹⁴

The single-taxers looked for a scapegoat to blame for the Budget. Asquith had been back in favour since his replies to the deputation in November and Lloyd George and Churchill were trusted implicitly at this stage. Josiah Wedgwood decided that Reginald McKenna was the leader of the group that had forced the Chancellor to resort to such weak measures, "and I even went down to his constituency (Monmouthshire, North) to denounce him at a public meeting" he declared in his memoirs.¹⁵ There is no evidence to prove Wedgwood's view, and a few years later Carrington said that it was he who had been responsible for the Cabinet acting on "the German precedents" and exempting agricultural land.¹⁶

Newspaper reports at the time tend to bear out Wedgwood's and Carrington's contention that at first Lloyd George intended his Budget to be more radical than it was. The Daily Telegraph reporting what was supposed to have gone on in the Cabinet said early in April that the Chancellor had "carried the day on the taxation of land values",¹⁷ despite opposition, and would levy a substantial impost. Two weeks later, however, The Times reported that the Cabinet had thrown over the tax and now intended only

14. See Lester's paper in Land Values May 1910 on 'How the Budget makes possible the Untaxing of Industry'.

15. Memoirs of a Fighting Life. P.69. Wedgwood wanted a tax of 2s in the £ on annual value, according to speeches reported in the current editions of Land Values.

16. See the attacks on Carrington in the article 'What is a liberal land policy?' in Land Values April 1911.

17. Daily Telegraph. 6th April 1909

to introduce measures that were "hardly likely ... to satisfy the advocates of land values taxation".¹⁸ This apparent leak prompted questions in the House by Hilaire Belloc, but a few days afterwards The Times was able to boast that its forecast had been a correct one. Two years later the same newspaper carried a more detailed account of what was supposed to have happened during the crucial Cabinet discussions. The first Budget draft was alleged to have been on strict single-tax lines and provided for a uniform tax of 1d. in the £, this subsequently became a ½d tax and ended, mutilated, as the tax on undeveloped land.¹⁹ Whoever was responsible for the opposition was not named, but the composition of the Cabinet suggests that The Times story is more than just plausible. Lloyd George was anxious to embark on ambitious schemes of social reform; he needed large sums of money; and was intensely ambitious and determined to antagonise the Lords. Moreover there was a popular demand for land taxation that was the result of long years of single-tax activity that he could take over and achieve all his objects. The more conservative sections of the Cabinet, on the other hand, were more likely to realise that while some concessions had to be made to the land taxers, the smaller they were, the greater was the possibility of avoiding the head on clash with the Lords that many certainly did not want.

Whatever criticisms the single-taxers chose to make of the Budget, they stood little chance of getting a hearing in 1909. The Finance Bill had become an end in itself, and the electorate

18. Times. 21st April 1909

19. Ibid. 27th March 1911

was not prepared to listen to discussions on its detailed provisions. Faced with this situation, the Georgeites gave unwavering support to the Liberals in the struggle to get it passed.

The Budget passed all its stages in the Commons with large majorities. Harold Cox again led the opposition from the government's side in the debates on the valuation and land taxes, and was honoured on one hectic occasion by a stream of abuse from Horatio Bottomley. The Bill was then sent to the Lords, and on 16th November Lansdowne gave notice that he intended to propose an amendment to reject it. This was passed on 30th November and three days later Asquith moved the famous resolution in the Lower House that condemned the Lords action as "a breach of the constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the Commons". It was carried, Parliament was dissolved, and an election was fixed for early January.

The struggle over the Budget in Parliament was accompanied at all its stages by a nationwide agitation, largely financed and prompted by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. Scores of conferences and meetings were held. On 24th July a huge demonstration was held in Hyde Park, which The Annual Register said attracted a crowd of 250,000,²⁰ and two notable conferences were held in Birmingham and Newcastle, at both of which over 1,000 delegates were present. Another was held in Glasgow and was organised by George Carson, leader of the Trades Council and an ardent

20. From which a deputation led by James Rowlands M.P. (Dartford) secretary of the Land Law Reform Association, once secretary of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Association and now a member of the Land Values Goup, presented a petition to Asquith in May

single-taxer. A procession of 4,000 demonstrators marched to a public meeting attended by 100,000²¹ at which a telegram from Lloyd George was read: "Success to your meeting", he wrote. "The Government mean to fight for the Budget right through to the end and we expect Glasgow as one of the most progressive cities in the Empire to help us win".²²

A number of Liberal organisations were formed especially to fight the Lords, and the United Committee and the single-tax Leagues worked in close collaboration with them. Typical of these were the National Democratic League, with J.E.Dobson as secretary, and the Land Club League, both of which received substantial assistance from the U.C.T.L.V.²³ Most famous of the groups however was the Budget League, created by Churchill, Haldane and Norman Henry in December,²⁴ but this seems to have been entirely independent. The Unionists replied by reactivating the Tariff Reform League and in May 1910, Captain Pretymann, the single-taxer's old enemy, created the Land Union.²⁵

Between the Budget announcement and the dissolution of Parliament there were a number of by-elections which added to the excitement. Twelve seats became vacant. Little could be assumed from most of the results and interest centred on the contests for five. At Stratford-on-Avon the Member resigned to

21. Land Values (quoting The Glasgow Herald) Oct.1910.

22. Ibid.

23. U.C.T.L.V. Ann.Rep. 1909-10

24. For reports of the inaugural meetings see The Times and Annual Register, English History. P.145

25. Land and Labour April 1910. By May the Union was reported to have accumulated £2,000 Ibid. May Pretymann was out of Parliament and had been defeated by Lacy Everett at Woodbridge, a constituency prominent in the Red Van campaigns.

test opinion on compulsory military service and the Liberals lost - even though their candidate had the prestige of being the ex-Premier of British Columbia. At Cleveland, Yorkshire, Herbert Samuel²⁶, unopposed in 1906, was re-elected with a majority of only 971 and achieved the almost impossible task of making no mention whatsoever of land taxation in his manifesto.²⁷ Dr. G.J. Cooper, the member for Bermondsey, who was killed by over exertion and fatigue caused by attendance at the Budget debates (according to The Annual Register), was replaced by a Unionist - Labour and Liberal candidates splitting the radical vote. Land reform played a more important part in the struggle for Cooper's seat than in those mentioned earlier, but in the two remaining contests it was the main issue.

Oswald Partington had to seek re-election for the High Peak division of Derbyshire and had to contend with the ill-timed intervention of a great landowner, when the Duke of Norfolk intervened on behalf of Profumo, the Unionist, in an attempt to sway the Catholic vote. This brought forth the wrath of single-taxers and Liberals who descended on the constituency and helped Partington win a striking victory. Norfolk's act was generally reckoned to have harmed the Unionist cause and the Duke was eventually accused of a breach of the sessional order prohibiting Peers interfering in Parliamentary elections. Certainly it enabled the Georgeites to hold forth on landlord rule.

The Mid-Derby contest in July "turned wholly on the Budget,

26. Samuel had been made Under-secretary for India.

27. Land Values. Aug. 1909. The Annual Register interpreted the result as "not a hopeful sign for liberalism".

land values being put forward as an alternative to protection".²⁸ It was caused by the death of the Liberal member and the United Committee and the Budget League, moved in to help J.G.Hancock, standing as a Lib-Lab, fight H.S.Cresswell, a Unionist. Francis Neilson editor of The Financial Reformer and a convert to the single-tax took control of the campaign and the result was a hectic struggle and a decisive win for Hancock - which the Georgeites represented as a victory for their ideas.

The United Committee, encouraged by the by-elections, took part in the L.C.C. elections. R.C.K.Ensor, George Lansbury, Baron de Forest and John Benn were among the successful candidates helped and the Land Values Parliamentary Group also organised campaigns in the constituencies of Liberal members who were suspect on the question of land values taxation. Sir T.P. Whittaker (Spen Valley) and R.W.Perks (Louth) were alleged to have been "converted" in this way, but little success was made with Rosebery - once the ally of the single-taxers.

Rosebery had taken a stand against the Budget in a letter to the press that Land Values described as "a subtle and treacherous appeal to liberty".²⁹ He urged first that there should be referendum,³⁰ and then later suggested that only 150 selected Unionist Peers should vote in the vital divisions. This prompted Punch to draw up an amusing Examination Paper for Peers for

28. U.C.T.L.V.Ann.Rep.1909-10

29. July 1909

30. Rosebery's refusal to take a definite stand on either side angered Liberals and Conservatives alike. Punch described him as "The Perplexed Patriot" (Jan.1910.P.16) "He dislikes much of the Budget, yet hates Tariff Reform; is strongly in favour of a second Chamber, yet is infuriated by the partisan action of the House of Lords .. mistrusts Home Rule .. yet realises the outstanding success of liberal policy in South Africa". etc.

interested candidates. Some of the questions ordered them to:

"Write a brief historical account of the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, omitting any reference to (a) his being a Welshman, (b) his profession as a solicitor, (c) spoliation, (d) confiscation, (e) robbery.

"Write a short sketch descriptive of incidents in the daily lives of MR.A.J.BALFOUR and MR.URE on the supposition that they had both been cast away on a very small desert island in a frigid but not necessarily calculated latitude.

"Show that the land taxes of the Finance Bill will produce no revenue and will ruin the owners of all agricultural land exempted from their operation".³¹

The attacks on Rosebery, the election successes and the general enthusiasm for the Budget kept the single-tax organisations well to the fore, and led them to expect great things at the general election. Special pamphlets were prepared and distributed on a huge scale - the Scottish League alone giving away over 400,000.³² The United Committee organised tours by Ure and others, and spent a total of £9,627 working on behalf of Liberal candidates. It also donated large sums to the Separate Leagues.³³ The E.L.T.L.V reported that its ideas were well received and that its literature sales increased to a record figure of £574. Donations from Liberals like T.F.Walker, anxious to secure electoral support from the single-taxers, also helped swell the funds of the local organisations.³⁴

The results of the January elections however were disappointing to all sections of the Liberal movement. The rural areas reverted to their old allegiances and returned Unionists in large numbers. In 1906 there had been 337 Liberals returned for the

31. Punch. Dec.1909 P.386

32. U.C.T.L.V.Ann.Rep.1909-10

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

English counties, but after 1910 there were only 226. The total figures for the new Parliament were 397 "Ministerialists" and 273 Opposition, a majority of only 124.

It is impossible to assess adequately what effect the single-taxers had on the election results. Josiah Wedgwood said that the election was won "to the singing of the land song"³⁵ and that "Alick Ure's speeches were mainly responsible",³⁶ but that remark should have been applied only to urban areas - where the United Committee and the Leagues were most active. (The single tax movement had become a completely urban one again by 1906). What did in fact win the election was the Budget, which for some reason or another had less appeal in the country districts. The E.L.T.L.V had 69 candidates in the field and reported 31 successes.³⁷ E.G Hemmerde, Henry George Chancellor, Wedgwood, Trevelyan and many of the other stalwarts were returned, but people like Lansbury, Will Crooks, Benn and W.R. Lester were defeated. Results from Scotland, where the single-taxers were particularly strong, were, as always, better for the Liberals than the English results. One defeat that particularly pleased the Georgeites was that of Harold Cox, who failed as an Independent Liberal at Preston, coming bottom of the poll for^a two member constituency.

The Land Nationalisation Society, although less prominent than the single-tax organisations also worked actively for the Liberals during the Budget struggle. Expenditure amounted to over

35. C.V. Wedgwood. op.cit. P.85

36. Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit. P.67

37. Land Values. Jan-Feb. 1910

£1,450, and special pamphlets were issued and distributed in chosen constituencies.³⁸ Nine Yellow Vans were out, and they concentrated around London, where John Burns benefited from their help, and in Lancashire, where J.R.Clynes, John Hodge, A.G.C.Harvey and A.H.Scott were helped successfully. Aneurin Williams, chairman of the L.N.S. was the one new success, but results on the whole were as disappointing for the land nationalists as for the Georgeites. G.A.Hardy, the treasurer, was defeated at Stowmarket and numerous others lost their seats. When Parliament met the Public Landownership Parliamentary Council was reconstituted and Russel Wallace had to admit that the Society had the allegiance of only 91 M.P.s. From that time onwards it declined in importance and the amount of space devoted to it in radical journals and annuals is an indication of its effectiveness. The Daily News Year Book, for instance, published from 1910 onwards, simply recorded that it was in existence. The Tax and Buy Bill continued to be introduced and the Society retained the support of the Labour movement for it, but no progress was made. In 1912 it got its most impressive hearing but Wedgwood caused an uproar by bitterly attacking it.³⁹ After 1910 the L.N.S. moved into close collaboration with the Liberal Party, and took part in the formation and activities of several

38. L.N.S.Ann.Rep.1909-10 For campaign literature see L.N.S. Tracts No.s89,96 and 99 to 103. For single-tax criticisms see Land Values Jan 1910. Details of the Society's campaign in Land and Labour.

39. "There is not a single taxpayer who does not hate land nationalisation", he said, "as being nothing more nor less than a landlord's plot to get compensation". L.N.S. Ann.Rep. 1912

Liberal groups, particularly the Gladstone League.⁴⁰

The Gladstone League was set up in February 1910, almost as soon as the election results were known. It was widely believed that Liberal defeats in the country areas were caused by unfair pressure being brought to bear on the labourers, and The Daily News made preparations to combat this interference. It created the League to "conduct a strenuous and systematic education campaign on behalf of land reform, free trade, and the freeing of the rural voters from the intimidation which has been exercised with such persistence during the General Election",⁴¹ and the L.N.S. and single-tax Leagues sent representatives to take part in its work. The land nationalists supplied most of the officers and Sybella Gurney and Joseph Hyder represented the Society on the executive committee. G.P.Gooch (ousted at Bath) became treasurer, George Nicholls (an L.N.S. man defeated at Northampton) and R.L.Outhwaite the single-taxer who lost at Horsham, were appointed organisers.

The G.L. was still in existence when war broke out in 1914. It conducted a campaign in the rural areas which began with great enthusiasm, but which strangely enough seems to have declined when the Liberals started to redirect their attention towards the land. Jesse Collings had finally persuaded the Unionists to

40. The Liberal Open Air Speaker's League, and the Free Trade Union, set up to reform constituency organisations, were supported. See reports in Land and Labour. The single-taxers also aided these organisations.

41. Land and Labour Feb.1910. Joseph Hyder, Public Property in Land (July 1911). L.N.S. Tract No.107. A.G.Gardiner was the chief mover in creating the League. For a brief report of the inaugural meeting (at which Lloyd George said "feudalism" was Society's chief enemy) see Ann.Register.English History 1910 P.67

adopt the policies of small ownerships that the Rural Labourers League had demanded since the 'eighties, and the G.L. put forward ready made alternatives to combat them.⁴² The only way to Land Reform proposed state tenancies rather than proprietaries, while Political Intimidation and Beware of the Rural Labourer's League were similar attacks on Conservative ideas. The first annual report of the League declared that 9,261 members had been enrolled in eleven months, and Philip Morell declared that 452 cases of intimidation were investigated and action taken in 243.⁴³ By 1912 the League had a membership of 35,000.⁴⁴

While the L.N.S. and The Daily News were creating the Gladstone League to fight the Conservatives outside Parliament, the single-taxers began to organise themselves in the Commons. Charles Price, Hemmerde and Wedgwood reformed the Land Values Group when Parliament met, and although it was smaller than before, it was a formidable body. Acceptances came from people like Winfrey, G.N. Barnes, O'Grady and Dalziel, and the policy of the

42. When the Conservatives were turned out of office in 1906 the Rural League (it changed its name in 1910) became more important. At the election it campaigned for Tariff Reform (see R.L. Leaflets Nos. 47, 48, 50 and 54) but afterwards discreetly dropped it from its programme. R.L. Bills were continually introduced in the Commons and about 1909 significant headway was made among important Unionist organisations for the first time. See e.g. the important pamphlet by A.A.H. Matthews, Secretary of the Central Chamber of Commerce, The Agrarian Party, a reply to Criticisms. (Dec. 1908) advocating Collings' ideas, and The Tariff Reform League and the Central Landowner's Association also supported him. Just before the January election Balfour hastily adopted Colling's policy as outlined in The Land for the People by Sir Gilbert Parker, and this was the programme the Unionists advocated in rural areas. It probably accounts largely for their successes there. Afterwards definite plans were drawn up for procuring peasant proprietaries, and this was official Unionist policy until 1914. The R.L.'s victory was in fact a hollow one. It succeeded only in converting the party when in opposition.

43. Tims. 13th May 1911

44. Ibid. 15th April 1913

group was immediately put forward in a debate on a resolution proposed by F.W.Verney,⁴⁵ and in another "Land Taxation Reform Memorial".

The Memorial was signed by 134 M.P.s, and was presented to Asquith by Charles Price in April 1910. It contained four main demands and asked for the valuation to be speeded up, for it to be made accessible to the public, and for local authorities to be given the right to levy a rate on the basis of the valuation. Finally the memorialists asked for a Budget tax on all land values to abolish the "Breakfast Table duties" and provide a fund for services like education, poor relief and police. The memorial was in fact a statement of the complete Georgeite case and was a protest against the Budget as it stood. It was to become an important document to single-taxers in subsequent years, and they urged its acceptance on the government hopefully. Land Values forecast that the Budget would again be the centre of political interest in 1910.⁴⁶

The Budget was introduced in June but held little of interest for the single-taxers. It was substantially the same measure as that of 1909⁴⁷ and Barnes' enthusiasm has waned enough for him to call it "humdrum". It passed all its stages in the Commons and was accepted by the Lords and given the Royal Assent on 29th April, the anniversary of its rejection. The single-taxers were unable to affect any changes, and as the country began to move towards

45. Land Values. May 1910. The L.V.G. had 105 members in 1910

46. Ibid. June 1910. See also Crompton Llewelyn Davies article, Ibid. July 1910.

47. For brief summary see Annual Register, English History 1910 Pp.156-66.

the crisis over the reform of the House of Lords, they began to complain of a lack of interest in their proposals.

Faced with a decline of interest in land taxation, the United Committee decided to launch a new municipal campaign to force the government's hand. The annual report for 1909-10 contained the announcement that "a mammoth educational campaign" needing 10 million leaflets costing £15,000 was contemplated. By the end of the following year a third of the work had been completed. £5,000 had been spent on two million copies of How to reduce your rates and taxes that were distributed by the local Leagues, Liberal agents and voluntary workers. Local authorities were persuaded to petition the government on behalf of the Land Taxation Reform Memorial and another vast series of meetings and conferences were held at which Alexander Ure again was the chief attraction.⁴⁸ Ure was still a member of the government and at one meeting at Willesden (24th September) caused a sensation by saying that he thought it would take the Georgeite's advice, and that the Budget was but a prelude to more far reaching measures. "The valuation" he said, "was intended ultimately to transfer all rating and tax -⁴⁹ ation from buildings and the work of men's hands to the land". This was probably said as much to reassure the single-taxers and unite them with the Liberals against the Lords, as to scare the landowners. Wedgwood and Dundas White also campaigned

48. Details in Land Values.

49. Annual Meeting, 1910. English History P.209

North of the Border, under U.C. auspices, one in the Highlands and the other in the Western districts. As a result of their activity two new Land Values Taxation Leagues were set up in Scotland and others were also created in Wales, Yorkshire (organised from Bradford) and the North of England. The latter had Trevelyan and the Liberal M.P.s in the surrounding areas as President and Vice-Presidents, and people like Runciman and Spence Watson joined and became active members. Events in Britain also stimulated activity on an international level and Fels and Verinder represented the U.C. at the International Free Trade Congress at Antwerp,⁵⁰ and Fels and Lester attended the International Unemployment Conference in Paris in similar capacities.

Despite all this activity political interest in Britain in 1910 was centred mainly on Parliamentary reform, and the government made no concessions to the single-taxer's beyond Ure's vague hints. Only in one dispute during the "dull season" did land values taxation vie in importance with the question of reforming the Lords.

In August 1910 the Inland Revenue Department issued the document that became famous as "Form IV" and for several weeks disputes about it abounded in the press. The form was a necessary preliminary to the valuation and prefixed to it were warnings that failure to make a correct return could lead to a £50 fine. Some of the questions were obscure in the extreme⁵¹

50. See the paper Verinder read there Free Trade and Land Values. Reports in Land and Labour and Land Values Oct.1910.

51. Punch entered into the dispute and produced a Form IV of its own. Among the instructions for filling it up was "(For definition of 'land' entirely covered by water see Sea (C) (c))" 7th Sept.1910.

and Capt. Pretymann's Land Union,⁵² created to resist any extension of land taxation, started a campaign against "the bureaucracy" of the valuation. One of its first acts was to issue a Guide to Property Owners called upon to fill up Government Valuation Forms that was in reality a thinly disguised attempt at sabotage. The United Committee welcomed the attack which, it declared, "turned all England into a debating society on the Taxation of Land Values".⁵³ It issued a guide to Land Values and the Finance Act and Land Values regularly carried articles and directives.⁵⁴ Eventually Lloyd George was forced to intervene and received deputations and wrote letters to the press which destroyed the charges of inefficiency and undue expense. He also trapped Pretymann into bringing the matter up in the Commons where the Conservative was devastated.⁵⁵ The Land Union's agitation and the controversy over Form IV did the Unionists little good,⁵⁶ but it was the only time during 1910 when the government and the single-taxers were as closely united as they had been before.

The election was fought on the issue of "Peers versus the People" and considerable apathy was encountered in the constituencies. The Conservatives very soundly refrained from

52. The Land Union claimed a membership of over 12,000 by the end of the year.

53. U.C.T.L.V. Ann. Rep. 1910-11

54. Supplement to the issue of August 1910 was a copy of Form IV. A favourite Conservative analogy was to compare it with "William I's Form IV" Financial News 10th Oct. 1910

55. Pretymann had been returned for Chelmsford in 1910.

56. Several Unionists were reported to have "warned off" the Land Union from their constituencies in the election of December. Land Values Oct. 1911

mentioning land taxes or suggesting that they might repeal those already legislated for,⁵⁷ and the single-taxers were unable to turn it into an issue. Pretyman complained that the constituencies were being "flooded with mendacious literature from the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, whose funds are mainly derived from foreign sources",⁵⁸ but the Georgeites accepted Ure's assurances and worked loyally on behalf of the Liberals. Lloyd George's own pronouncements were very similar to Ure's and contained hints of things to come, but it is interesting to note a difference of emphasis from the speeches of January. Then the taxation of land values was represented as a great and significant step in the war against want, but in December it was put forward mainly as a means of rating reform.

"When we get the complete valuation", the Chancellor said in a speech at Deganwy in December, "we will have a basis then for readjusting the burden of local taxation, and I hope that before I meet you again there will be such a readjustment of the burdens of local taxation that you will have gained from this valuation and not lost".⁵⁹

The results of the election were only slightly different from those of January. The Georgeites were forced to admit that the time was "not favourable" for their ideas, and had no new successes to report. Hemmerde, who had not stood in January,

57 See the report of the Conservative Party's annual conference at Nottingham in 1910 where Pretyman and Fell were completely foiled in an attempt to get the Party to accept the Land Union's policy of repeal. *Ibid.* Dec. 1910.

58. Times 23rd Nov. 1910. In 1912 the United Committee went so far as to admit that "the money Mr. Fells gives .. is considerable. Ann. Rep. 1912.

59. Land Values Jan. 1911.

increased the Liberal vote at Portsmouth, and Lester's poll in Norfolk went up to within 27 votes of victory - the highest ever recorded by a Liberal there. Results for the L.N.S. were also similar to those of January.⁶⁰

When Parliament reassembled in 1911 the Land Values Group was immediately reformed and the campaign for land taxation recommenced. The Land Taxation Reform Memorial was circulated once more and gained 168 signatures. It was presented to Asquith and Lloyd George by a deputation of seven prominent Georgeites led by Wedgwood on 18th May.⁶¹ He asked for a straight forward land tax, and Francis Neilson urged that rural land should be included in the existing tax schemes. Philip Morell dwelt on the well known housing aspects of the single-taxers' programme, and Wilson Raffan announced that the L.V.G. was preparing a Bill of its own. The deputation also dwelt on the pressing need for a readjustment of local taxation, and this gave Lloyd George a chance to sidetrack their agitation.

A reform of local taxation was long overdue in 1910. The existing scheme had been in existence since the passing of the County Councils Act and had come to be known as the "Goschen system". Instead of grants-in-aid, Goschen had assigned expansible sources of financial assistance to local

60. Land and Labour Jan. 1911. Aneurin Williams M.A.^{the} L.N.S. Chairman, lost his seat. Williams (1859-1924) was a director of the First Garden City Ltd. and an exponent of co-operation in industry. He was Joint Hon. Sec. of the Labour Co-partnership Association at one stage. Brief biography in Labour Annual 1908

61. Text of the memorial and policies and speeches of the deputation. Daily News Year Book. 1912.

authorities that were collected locally,⁶² but within two years the scheme was breaking down. The Assigned Revenues did not increase at the same rate as government needs and resort had to be made again to grants-in-aid.⁶³ From 1896 onwards local rating was the subject of a long controversy, in which the single-taxers played a prominent part, as has been mentioned. A Royal Commission on Local and Imperial Taxation was set up in 1897 that reported in favour of an alteration four years later, but nothing was done, and the situation became worse with the rise in education costs after 1902. In opposition the Unionists began to criticise the system continually and the Liberals were forced to agree that the minor changes they had made were not enough. Asquith talked of the "accused Assigned Revenues system" regularly from 1908, and on 30th June 1910 Lloyd George said that an adjustment would be made within a year. When the deputation from the Land Values Group met him and the Prime Minister, the Chancellor announced that he was setting up a Departmental Committee on Local Taxation "to enquire into the changes (that had) taken place since 1901 and to make recommendations ... for the consideration of His Majesty's government with a view to the introduction of legislation at an early date". He invited the single-taxers to give evidence before it.

There can be little doubt that Lloyd George's manoeuvre

62. Typical of these were the revenues from certain Excise and Probate duties.

63. For the development of Assigned Revenues etc. see Redlich and Hurst Local Government in England (1903) Chap. 5, H. Finer English Local Government (1946) Chap. 20, and J. Drummond Finance of Local Government (1952) Chap. 6.

was an attempt to fend off the single-taxers by using the time honoured parliamentary method of appointing a Committee of Enquiry. The land taxation movement had served a useful purpose to the Liberals in the years between 1906 and 1910, but by early 1911 had become something of an embarrassment. Land values taxation had been an incredibly popular cry to them in January, yet had not given great majorities, but in December it was of secondary importance and the party had done just as well! The new government obviously contained opponents of single-tax ideas, and undoubtedly a number who genuinely wanted to wait and see what the outcome would be of what little had already been done. Lloyd George and a few others may have wanted to press on, but were restrained by political considerations and a desire to press on with other schemes of reform. The new Parliament was largely concerned with the Insurance scheme, and was bedevilled by the suffrage question and labour troubles. The Liberals were understandably reluctant to provoke more opposition by reviving landlord antagonism, and not until their fortunes were at their nadir did they do this again. Henceforth the single-taxers were by and large anti-government. With some success they acted as a pressure group from within the party and the keynote to these years is the way in which the government tried to play them off without, at the same time, losing their allegiance completely. This, is of course precisely what it was doing with Labour, safe in the knowledge that the only alternative to reluctant support was complete opposition - and a Unionist government hostile to reform.

The single-taxers put their case before the Departmental Committee in November 1911. Their evidence can be read in the earliest publications of the Committee and in the Minority Report that was issued in 1914.⁶⁴ Their views received considerable Liberal opposition for the first time and this, and various statements by government representatives, made them unwilling to await patiently the final findings of the Committee. At first they had been led to believe by Leonard Hobhouse that the Budget valuation would be completed by 1912, and then Lloyd George had said it would take until 1914. Moreover when the Budget of 1911 was introduced it was seen to contain many provisions which were completely disapproved of and which made minor alterations to the legislation of 1909.⁶⁵ The Liberals probably did this to avoid complications over the Finance Act again, but Land Values was bitterly hostile. The proposals, it declared, showed "the gyrations of the government and the unending labour they have given themselves in their ill advised enactment of the futile and abortive German increment tax".⁶⁶ At one stage in the Budget debates 69 members of the L.V.G. voted against the government.⁶⁷

Lloyd George's statements at this time show how he was playing off the single-tax organisations - which the Liberals seem to have decided could never again be as useful to them

64. Report in Land Values May 1914.

65. Ibid. May 1911

66. Ibid. March 1911

67. List in Land Values May 1911

as they had been in the past. He constantly urged them to await the findings of his Committee, but also dropped hints, as Ure had done before, that further legislation was in the offing. Typical of this is a message he sent to a meeting addressed by R.L.Outhwaite, and they certainly succeeded in keeping the land taxers faithful to him - if not his Party.⁶⁸

"Tell them", he told Outhwaite, "that the valuation is proceeding with much success, and that we expect great things from it. Tell them further that we have not done with the land question yet".⁶⁹

Lloyd George's message was intended to reassure the Georgeites. In that it failed, but it convinced their opponents. The Land Union Journal declared that:

"We now have the highest official admission that the appointment of the Local Taxation Committee is a definite step towards the Single Tax, a part of a preconceived scheme for the confiscation of private land".⁷⁰

The single-taxers chose to believe that the Chancellor was being restrained by reactionary members of the government and indicated that they were not prepared to wait until 1914, when the valuation would be completed, or until the Taxation Committee reported before getting the next instalment of reform. Another campaign outside Parliament was started by the United Committee. Again conferences and petitions were organised, and another municipal agitation, centred once more on Glasgow got under way. In January 1912 a resolution was passed there

68. Land values. Dec.1911 exonerated him from blame for the "discriminating pettifogging useless "land taxes" that are now on the Statute Book".

69. Daily News. 26th Sept.1911

70. Quoted Land Values. July 1911.

favouring the rating of land values, and a petition was circulated to other rating authorities. By the end of March, 33 Town Corporations and numerous Guardians, Rural District and Parish Councils had signed, and the following month 50 more authorities lent their support.⁷¹ The most impressive conference of the year was also held in Glasgow at which Alexander Ure was present. Resolutions were passed supporting the Land Taxation Reform Memorial and asking that the valuation should be speeded up and made the basis for rating. Ure's speech was meant to reassure the delegates that the Chancellor was on their side as usual, even although it was known that there were opponents of the single-tax in the Cabinet:

"It was not customary, nor was it desirable," Ure said, "that one member of the administration should in public bring pressure to bear on his colleague, in order to induce him to take any particular action. The inference to be drawn was that the Minister at whom the resolution was aimed had become backward. Such a thing was not true of Lloyd George ... Bringing pressure to bear on him was like forcing an open door".⁷²

The United Committee also organised a rural campaign in the early months of 1912. It has been mentioned already that the Georgeites agreed with the Liberals and land nationalists that the defeats of 1910 were due to rural tyranny, and in January a campaign run by Outhwaite and John Orr began in Wiltshire. Rural News, a special supplement to Land Values, was published and widely distributed along with a petition asking

71. Details in Land Values Jan-May 1912.

72. Ibid. Oct. 1911

for a land tax to abolish food duties, and by the time the campaign finished in July 1913 over 11,000 signatures had been collected. Wiltshire was the main centre of operations, but Leicestershire and Lincolnshire were other areas concentrated on.

In Parliament the Land Values Group added its demands to those marshalled outside by the United Committee. Dundas White introduced a Scottish Bill intended to expedite the valuation in December 1911, and Francis Neilson produced a Land Values Rating Bill "to enable Rating authorities to adopt site value as defined in the Finance (1909/10) Act .. as the standard of rating".⁷³ Both provided an excuse for the single-taxers to discuss their beliefs, and very few other opportunities were missed. In March, for instance, Wedgwood proposed a typical resolution that produced a reply of the kind they were beginning to suspect. "However much they (the Government) might agree with Mr. Wedgwood in principle", Rufas Isaacs was reported as saying, "they could not declare any opinion until they had the Report of the Departmental Committee on Local and Imperial Taxation".⁷⁴

All this activity succeeded in making the land question prominent again. The single-tax was being put forward as a panacea in opposition to the Liberal "palliatives" which Land Values regularly attacked, and there is no doubt that the United Committee's propaganda had more popular appeal than the current disputes over Insurance and Welsh Disestablishment.

73. Ibid. Jan. 1912

74. Ibid. April 1912. supplement.

The by-elections involving single-taxers, however, played the greatest part in making land taxation the major political issue ^{again} in the summer of 1912.

The first took place in Norfolk and involved E.G. Hemmerde who seemed to make a speciality of contesting sensational by-elections. Hemmerde replaced the late Sir George White (Liberal) and his campaign was conducted entirely on the question of land values taxation. It was widely publicised in the press and George Edwards' Agricultural Labourer's Union gave its support and urged the constituents to "vote solid for Hemmerde".⁷⁵ The result was a Liberal victory⁷⁶ which contrasted strongly with a recent result from South Manchester where, as the tory press was at pains to point out, the Liberals had lost a seat after the land tax was ignored, and the United Committee had been warned off.⁷⁷ Lloyd George had encouraged Hemmerde, and in a widely noticed telegram had said that he was delighted "to find that Mr. Hemmerde has inscribed this all important subject in large and legible lines on his programme."⁷⁶ An incident at the celebration dinner afterwards gives an indication of the kind of funds the single-taxers could command in those days. Joseph Fels in a fit of enthusiasm offered to duplicate any sum donated to the U.C. up to a limit of £20,000!⁷⁹

Another by-election was held at Holmfirth where the George-

75. Times. 23rd May 1912

76. Report Land Values July 1912. The issue has an article by Hemmerde in which he said that Liberal dissensions revolved around the question of "Insurance Act versus Land Reform"

77. Ibid. Sept. 1912.

78. Ibid. June 1912

79. Ibid. Aug. 1912. Fels had been involved in a dispute in the Land Union Journal with Harold Cox. See his reply in the issue of July 1911.

ites helped Sidney Arnold to success and claimed the victory for themselves. Later Murphy, the Liberal candidate at Crewe, campaigned for a straight-forward land values tax of 2d in the £. which, he said, would produce £50 millions a year.⁸⁰ The contest was also widely publicised but a split vote between Labour and Liberals let a Conservative in. The most sensational election, however, was for a Staffordshire seat and involved R.L.Outhwaite.

Enoch Edwards, a popular Labour leader and the member for Hanley died during 1912. At the general election he had easily defeated the Conservative candidate, but the single-taxers decided to make the by-election a three cornered contest.⁸¹ Outhwaite's campaign was no less sensational than Hemmerde's and on this occasion both the Chancellor and Asquith sent messages of encouragement. The Staffordshire Sentinel spoke of another "unauthorised programme", a fair description as Outhwaite stood as a convinced Georgeite and proposed a universal tax of 3d in the £. The result was a great Liberal victory. The United Committee had been prominent and Josiah Wedgwood described the contest in a letter to Fred Crowsley, an imprisoned trades unionist:

"... we had a lovely by-election at Hanley", he wrote. "My friend Outhwaite stood as a Liberal and we polished off the Labour Party and Tories too. All the Single Tax anarchists turned up armed with Progress and Poverty in their hands and won the election as though it was a religious revival".

The United Committee's campaigns of 1912 produced a very definite result on the government, and in August it turned its

80. Ibid. Sept. 1912.

81. Ibid. Aug. 1912

attention to the land once again. Lloyd George announced the setting up of a Liberal Land Enquiry to formulate a policy for the next election and said an official rural campaign was to commence in the autumn. There is no doubt that the Chancellor had been deeply impressed by the way the single-taxers had made their proposals popular again in 1912, and was well aware of the truism that a cry of "the land for the people" was a sure way of regaining support for the Liberal party.⁸² Moreover he wanted to keep the allegiance that the single-taxers had given him for years, and were still giving him, at a time when his popularity elsewhere was waning. The Insurance Act on which he had counted so much had been bitterly attacked and its only result seemed then "to have been to increase the discontent of the industrial proletariat".⁸³ Since 1910 he had also been harmed by the revelations of the Marconi scandals and concerned in conciliating labour and capital, a role unsuited to his character. There was a need for Lloyd George to take the offensive and restore himself (and his party) in public esteem:

"He must find some new slogan", Halevy wrote, "turn the attention of the public to some other question and bring himself once more into the limelight, and the need became more pressing the more enemies he made" ⁸⁴

82. The Daily Herald 14th May 1912, then edited by Lansbury, reported that "Lloyd George knows, none better, that the land is an invaluable asset for a Liberal Cabinet Minister in search of a programme. When in doubt play land reform is a maxim ... followed more than once with advantage". The Labour movement agreed with Lansbury See.e.g. the article 'Wanted a Land Programme' in The Daily Citizen. 2nd Dec. 1913.

83. Halevy. History of the English People. Epilogue. Vol. 2 P. 457

84. Ibid.

"What revenge could the Welsh country solicitor convicted in his turn of having become a capitalist, and moreover of having made use of his political position for that purpose, take upon those plutocrats who, so often wounded by his denunciations had at last found an opportunity to make their enemy suffer?" ⁸⁵

Lloyd George's answer was to "play land reform" and the Conservative press was quick to claim that the government had drastically resorted to land taxation and intended a levy of 20s. in the £. Speculations grew wilder and rumours of a Cabinet split were rife. The Globe, for instance, ⁸⁶ reported that the Master of Elibank, Liberal Chief Whip, had retired in protest against the latest proposals from the Chancellor - who remained! The rumours caught on, and Land Values became alarmed at the latest threat to its campaign:

"In the recent victories of North West Norfolk and Hanley which lifted the Taxation of Land Values into greater prominence" it was said, "some foolish and designing press scribes saw, and made others believe they saw, the imminence of a single-tax of 20s in the £ on land values. Some ... proved to their own satisfaction ... that the Liberal Government were seriously debating and were at loggerheads on such a policy. The advent of Mr. Lloyd George's Land Enquiry Committee lent colour to these speculations, and a spasm of fear, real and affected ran through Liberal ranks. At once it became fashionable to decry and denounce the Single Tax". ⁸⁷

The Conservative accusations, however effective, were absurd, yet they forced the government leaders to define their attitudes clearly for the first time. The single-tax movements, although they contained elements which hoped that a salutary demonstration of the benefits of land taxation would lead to

85. Ibid. P.460

86. 8th Aug.1912.

87. Land Values. Nov.1912

bigger things, had stood for a limited tax for years. Ure and Haldane justifiably marked themselves off from strict George-ites and declared that they were not "single-taxers" and spoke of the proposals of Progress and Poverty as being "utterly impracticable in British politics". Asquith declared in the Commons that the Enquiry's Report would "not include what is known as the single tax", and a few days later the Chancellor declared that he never was, and never would be, a single-taxer". The Prime Minister, in a speech at Ladybank (5th October 1912), while refusing to say what future Liberal land policy would be, assured his audience that it would:

"not embrace what is called the single tax - which to my mind has not a single supporter in the present Cabinet - and which, in my opinion ... is consistent neither with justice nor expediency". 88

The Land Values Group in Parliament and the United Committee both hastened to assure the Liberal Party that they too were not guilty of holding extreme views. It was pointed out that even Hemmerde and Outhwaite, who were extremists, had only asked for a limited (albeit heavy) measure of land taxation, and in May the L.V.G. held a special meeting to define its aims. The single-tax was spoken of in the strictest sense and speeches from people like Sir Albert Spicer were made which declared that most members had never been complete George-ites. Eventually a resolution was adopted unanimously which defined their position and stated what the single-tax had in reality meant to most people since the 'nineties. The Group, it declared:

88. Ibid. Nov. 1912.

"While admitting that the single-tax is impossible, advocate a tax of, say 2d. on capital value for town and country alike, the proceeds of which might be used to relieve local burdens".⁸⁹

The appointment of the Land Enquiry Committee succeeded in keeping the single-taxers quiet in a way that the earlier Departmental Committee never had. The speeches of the Liberal leaders reassured the fainter hearts in the party that nothing drastic would be proposed, yet the remarks of people like Ure and Trevelyan at the U.C.'s annual meeting suggested there would be some small imposition. Also a number of people like Seebohm Rowntree, Hemmender, Winfrey and Baron de Forest, all known to be sympathetic to land values taxation, were put on the committee. Land Values confidently reported in October 1912 that: "Mr. Lloyd George is out to assail the root cause of poverty, and when he comes out courageously for the Taxation of Land Values he will awaken new interest and hope".

The Liberal Land Enquiry was also welcomed by the Land Nationalisation Society. The L.N.S. had been overshadowed by the single-tax organisations for years, but now came to life and put forward its claims for compulsory purchase and an adequate small holdings policy at numerous conferences and meetings. The Parliamentary Landownership Committee issued a new manifesto,⁹⁰ and Society members found opportunities to raise their proposals in the Commons. Chiozza Money was still their chief spokesman and he, like the Georgeites, stressed their limited aims, admitting that complete nationalisation

89. Daily News Year Book. 1913

90. Land Values. Sept. 1912.

was impossible "at that time".⁹¹

The Enquiry was under constant attack from the Conservatives from its inception to its final report. Accusations of secrecy, of underhand dealings, and the usual scare reports that it would suggest a heavy land values tax, were voiced in both the press and Parliament.⁹² The Land Union Journal kept up a relentless attack, and The Pall Mall Gazette, The Daily Telegraph and The Standard are but a few others that constantly referred to it and kept it news. Usually the criticisms were linked with hints of expense and extravagance in the valuation procedure.

The Liberal land campaign was scheduled to begin in the autumn of 1912, but was eventually postponed for a whole year. Parliament was occupied with controversies over 'Marconi', the franchise, Welsh Disestablishment and Home Rule, and the government's appeal to Liberals and single-taxers to await the findings of the Enquiry produced the desired result. The English League, for instance, reported that it engaged in much less activity than in previous years and complained that the public and the Liberal Associations were "shy of active propaganda on the Land Question" and were waiting "until the Government announces its proposals".⁹³ No new branches were formed,

91. See his debate with Francis Neilson for instance in Land Values Sept. 1912. Money's famous book Riches and Poverty, had appeared as long ago as 1905, and he had been an enemy of the single-taxers ever since. On only two pages was Henry George mentioned and swiftly dismissed. Pp. 97 and 240 (4th ed.). For a review of Riches and Poverty by a land nationaliser see Land and Labour Dec. 1905

92. See the Conservative pamphlet The Single Tax and the Taxation of Land Values for typical right wing arguments.

93. E.L.T.L.V. Ann. Rep. 1912-13 in Land Values Aug. 1913.

and for the first time for years the municipalities seemed to have lost interest in land values taxation. In London where "the whole pack of land tax hounds" conducted "a raging Radical land tax campaign",⁹⁴ the Progressives failed to secure any great successes.

In the Commons the Chancellor played off the Land Values Group, which was concentrating on the valuation. Their memorandum in March produced a promise from Lloyd George that a Revenue Bill would be introduced to modify the valuation in a way they approved of. The Bill was duly introduced and read a second time on 29th July but the paragraphs the United Committee and the Leagues put most store by were dropped in Committee. Immediately the Georgeites filled the order paper with questions, but the Bill was jettisoned at the end of the session along with other government legislation. It was almost certainly an empty gesture to keep the single-taxers loyal.

The appointment of the Land Committee proved that the Liberals would fight the next election on the land question, but in 1913 their newspapers gave increasing space to reforms that had no connection with the single-tax. L.N.S. proposals got a serious hearing and consequently Chiozza Money became once again the object of continual abuse from Land Values.⁹⁵ A Labour party policy statement included suggestions for Credit

94. Daily Express. 19th Feb. 1913

95. Money at the time was also advocating a local income tax. Wedgwood wrote that Fred Jowett was never sure "that he was not being hoodwinked over land values" and was "torn between me and Chiozza Money". See Ethel Wedgwood's dispute with Money. Land Values Dec. 1913.

Banks, a minimum wage and fair rent courts that provoked The Daily Herald into hostile comment,⁹⁶ and the Fabian Society's report from its Land and Rural Problems committee came out heavily in favour of a wages board system.⁹⁷ George Nicholls unsuccessfully fought a by-election at Newmarket on the issue of a minimum agricultural wage⁹⁸ and the single-taxers became alarmed and complained against the policies that were in the air and which produced such results:

"There is much disquieting talk in Liberal papers and party circles about such palliatives as a minimum wage and state aided cottages for the agricultural labourer, though it is not clear upon what authority such "forecasts" of "the coming land campaign" rest ... The Labour party appear to agree with the Tories in demanding State aided housing, credit banks and co-operative methods, and with the Whigs in demanding a minimum wage and Fair Rent Courts".⁹⁹

Despite the rumours the singletaxers continued to trust Lloyd George. Only once while they were waiting for the Report did Land Values complain of his "oratorical froth" and "old and empty watchwords".¹⁰⁰ They even accepted his argument that there were more immediate problems than land taxation and that they ought to prepare for the next election and look to the next Parliament for reform. Outhwaite's remarks show their blind allegiance to him: "Today", he wrote:

96. e.g. 18th June 1913. Land Values July 1913.

97. Supplement to New Statesman 2nd Aug. 1913, 'Our Rural Programme', Fabian News April 1913 and H.D. Harben The Rural Problem. See also Hugh Dalton's dispute with A.W.M. (Madsen?) over the single-tax in Land Values April 1911 et seq.

98. Land Values June 1913. Nicholls lost by the biggest margin since 1900.

99. E.L.T.L.V. Ann. Rep. Land Values Aug. 1913

100. Land Values Jan. 1913. The forthcoming campaign was, the Chancellor said, "for the regeneration of rural life and the emancipation of the land from the paralysing grip of a rusty, effete, and unprofitable system". Landlords were "no more necessary to agriculture than a gold chain to a watch". Thomas Jones op.cit. P.42 and 45.

"is not too soon to prepare for a morrow when the House of Commons shall be brought to realise that the people only value political freedom as an instrument for their emancipation from economic servitude."

Lloyd George finally announced the findings of the first part of the Land Enquiry at Bedford on 11th October 1913. The Earl of Beauchamp told 2,500 Liberals that the Chancellor's speech was authorised by the Premier and was on behalf of the whole government - yet it contained no reference whatsoever to land taxation! Land Values, stunned by the omission, complained that:

"Not the knife of land values taxation to cut out the cancer, but the plaster of State control was indicated. There has been nothing like it since Theodore Roosevelt set forth to control the trusts, and the result will be the same".¹⁰¹

The first (Rural) volume of the Liberal Land Enquiry appeared a few days after the Chancellor's speech, and he elaborated on its contents at Swindon on 22nd October. Time was taken in attacking the Conservative proposals made famous by the Rural League, and then the "palliatives" of a minimum wage, State aid for housing, Fair Rent Courts and a host of lesser reforms were put forward! The Georgeites talked bitterly of the Liberals finding "sanctuary with Messrs. Sidney Webb and Chiozza Money", and of "a declension from a crusade of "restoration" to "a Minimum Wage Act". The Chancellor was taken to task for allowing the report to emerge as a "sad medley of unrelated facts" and they called it a "child of protection".¹⁰² However, only half the land programme had been announced, and Lloyd George was scheduled to complete it in a speech in the single-tax stronghold of Glasgow in December. Hopefully Land Values said that "the Taxation of Land Values movement looks with confidence to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to fill in the serious gaps in his programme",¹⁰³ and, to make sure that he did, it embarked upon its last great nationwide campaign to "coerce the country and convert the Liberal Party".¹⁰⁴

101. Ibid. Nov. 1913

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid. Dec. 1913

104. Wedgwood. Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit. P.83.

The Liberals, by advocating reforms of this kind wanted to regain support without provoking opposition like that encountered in 1909 and '10. Ironically the proposals long put forward by the L.N.S. and overshadowed by the controversies over land taxation were dealt with at length and made prominent through a separate report submitted to the Enquiry by Baron de Forest.¹⁰⁵

De Forest had been connected with the land reform movements for a number of years, and was a moderate single-taxer and a member of the L.N.S. He was also on the London County Council and eventually became leader of the Progressives. The ideas of his memorandum were those of the Tax and Buy principle and were based on the compensation methods worked out by Wicksteed and Russel Wallace years before.

De Forest's memorandum dealt with the case for the single-tax. Land values had continually risen he claimed and would continue to do so in the future, and a number of authorities were produced (Progress and Poverty was noticeably absent) to prove his point. He admitted the justice of the case for land values taxation, but went on to maintain, as the Socialists did, that it would be only a partial reform. While the landowner remained he would act as a monopolist; there "would be a continuation of checks upon production"; and he would still be able to "reabsorb the values annexed by the tax". Nevertheless a moderate levy should be imposed. Public opinion at present clearly would not accept anything like a full Georgeite programme

105. Liberal Land Enquiry. Vol.1. Rural Pp.445-70.

and so the best course of action would be to nationalise land, compensate owners, and wait until there was a change of heart. "During that period", de Forest wrote, "the increment in the value of land would probably (be) greater than the compensation which the single-tax was designed to avoid".

Land nationalisation would solve the problems investigated by the Liberal Enquiry. The State should take over the value and control of the bare site, de Forest suggested, leaving all buildings and improvements in private hands. (In rural areas, where the line of demarcation was less definite, it might be necessary to take both). Control should be vested in a number of new authorities which would receive the rents and compensate previous owners. Compensation could be by either perpetual or terminable annuities, so that no huge loans would have to be floated. If the latter method was used, de Forest estimated that it would be possible to pay the bonds off in eighty years from increased land values.¹⁰⁶ He ended with an appeal to single-taxers to forget principles and accept political realities:

"The compensation to existing owners", he wrote, "may be regarded as the cutting by the nation of its losses. It is but a small fee to have to pay for the abolition of a great economic injustice and for the foundation of all future prosperity".

The Georgeites were not prepared to accept de Forest's pleadings and R.L. Outhwaite voiced their disappointment and their determination to agitate in an article which makes an interesting comparison with his hopes of a month or so before:

106. De Forest does not suggest a continuing valuation, but it is obviously assumed throughout. While admitting that the prospect for a nationalisation act was bleak, the L.N.S. rather oddly changed the name of its journal from Land and Labour to The Land Nationaliser in 1912. Russel Wallace, President of the L.N.S., died in 1913.

"In the autumn of 1912", he wrote, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer was expected to launch a land campaign to be based on the taxation of land values ... The meeting was postponed ... The postponement proved to be of a year's duration ... During this period the land reform movement had been transferred into official keeping by the appointment of the Enquiry Committee. Those who brought the issue to the front were set aside, and in place of the land values propagandists there emerged Mr. Seebohm Rowntree of York ¹⁰⁷ and his coadjutors in the formulation of bureaucratic palliatives who had rested since the fiasco of the Small Holdings Act, which lost England for the Liberal Party in the elections of 1910 (sic) ... Pending the issue of the report for England and Wales and the Chancellor's declaration of policy, the Land Values men refrained from agitation, firmly believing that from the outset Mr. Lloyd George would declare the taxation and rating of land values an integral part of the reform programme.

"Allegiance to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has during the past months inflicted a galling restraint on land values men which was only relaxed when it seemed likely to defeat its object. ¹⁰⁸

The United Committee and the Leagues began their campaign to "coerce the country" immediately after the Bedford speech. Alexander Ure had been elevated to the Lords as Lord Strathclyde so was no longer available, but Dundas White and Outhwaite campaigned in all the principle cities in Scotland that the Chancellor was scheduled to visit. The Daily News and Reynolds News took prominent parts in the attempt to force Lloyd George's hand - who obviously had no intention of dealing with land taxation if he could avoid it. ¹⁰⁹ The United Committee received a donation of £1,000 from the "Victorian Free Trade and Land Values League" which Fels immediately doubled and it, and

107. Rowntree was an active lecturer for the Northern branches of the L.N.S.

108. Land Values Feb. 1914. 'A warning from Scotland' by 'R.L.O'. Dundas White became Parliamentary Private Secretary to T. McKinnon Wood, Secretary of State for Scotland in 1912. The latter was a well known land taxer once on the L.C.C.

109. See his replies to a letter from Wilson Raffan, leader of the L.V.G. in Land Values, Feb. 1914. The by-election contest for Ure's old seat had resulted in an increased Liberal majority - against the current trends.

other huge sums, were poured into the campaign. Resolutions were sent to the government urging it to remedy the omission from the Bedford speech in a way reminiscent of 1909.

It is difficult to understand why Hemmerde, the "fanatical single-taxer" on the Enquiry (and perhaps Winfrey too) did not raise an outcry if it was intended to omit land values taxation from the Liberal programme. Baron de Forest, realised that nationalisation would be ignored and took the opportunity of compiling a separate memorandum advocating it, and presumably Hemmerde could have done the same on behalf of the Georgeites. Yet there is no evidence that he considered this, and he was not prominent in the agitation of 1913. It seems almost certain that had the Chancellor intended to introduce the subject, Hemmerde would have been used as a means of conveying this to the United Committee, as Wedgwood had been earlier. It is just possible that the agitation was prompted from above as it had been once before, but the sequence of events, and the Chancellor's behaviour, suggest that this is highly improbable.

Lloyd George's meeting was repeatedly cancelled and did not take place until February 1914. The official reason given was that there was a pressure of government business due to the naval question, but it was generally believed in radical circles that a threatened revolt of the Scottish Liberal Association was the cause.¹¹⁰ This in turn was the result of the U.C's campaign.

On 28th January 1914 the Scottish Liberal Association was reported to have passed a resolution warning the government that

110. e.g. Morning Post 26th and 27th Feb. 1914. Land Values. Feb. 1914.

no statement from the Chancellor that did not include the taxation of land values, would be acceptable to it. Outhwaite openly applauded the move and strongly urged the Scots to threaten to split the Party north of the Border. The text of the resolution was never published, but it seems almost certain that the government was held up to ransom. It must have been clear that the Liberals were fighting shy of land taxation for some reason, but they could not afford to alienate the Scots. Since 1910 the government had relied on the Celtic fringe for its majority and the single-taxers were strongly entrenched in positions of power in the Liberal movement in Scotland. They believed that they along "had kept Scotland solid for the Liberal Party .. and so provided the government with a majority".¹¹¹ They were understandably alarmed at the Chancellor's flouting of their ideas at Bedford and Swindon, and at the fact that the Central Land and Housing Council, the body set up by the Liberals to sponsor the land campaign, had already begun issuing pamphlets and propaganda. The Annual Report of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, 1907, gives an indication of their strength.¹¹²

League members were:

"for the most part", it was reported, "actively associated in the Liberal Association, where the policy of taxing land values is carried regularly by resolutions at meetings and conferences of the Party. The President ¹¹³and several Vice-Presidents, the secretary¹¹⁴ and many others occupy representative positions in the Scottish Liberal organisation".

111. Land Values Dec. 1911

112. Appdx. to U.C.T.L.V. Ann.Rep. 1907

113. James Fairlie (Falkirk). Other Presidents after the S.L.'s reorganisation included W.R.Lester (1905), Alex McKendrick and William D.Hamilton (1906)

114. James Busby, who took over after John Paul

Lloyd George finally gave his speech at Glasgow on 4th February 1914, and did make some concessions to the land taxers. He must have been influenced by the Scottish revolt and by two recent by-elections in which C.F.G. Masterman had lost a Liberal seat after a contest fought entirely on the issues involved in the Insurance Act, and M. Smith lost Leith Burghs after a controversy over some unpopular deportations the South African government had ordered.¹¹⁵ The Chancellor was reported to have been ill at ease at first and was heckled by irate single-taxers until he dealt with their topic in terms like those used in 1909 - 10:

"Now the Government", he said, "already through their chief accepted the principles of rating of site values, and they intend to give effect to it by legislation".

"We shall see in the future", he went on, "that the Duke contributed towards the rates on the basis of the value which he himself assigns".

Nothing very definite was proposed, and the Chancellor resorted once more to asking the single-taxers to wait - but this time with great success, probably to his great surprise. After saying that: "You must make land contribute to public expenditure on the basis of its real value", he went on, in a passage which gives the lie to the government's attitude:

"some desire the whole burden of the rates to be transferred from the structure to the site - while others ..object to any part of the rate being put on the site... Frankly, having regard to the vested interests that have grown up, I regard the first as impracticable, and the second as pusillanimous ... There are several alternative methods within

115. Masterman lost at South Bethnal Green when he sought re-election after being made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Later he fought at Ipswich and was defeated again by a Unionist. Since Nov. 1913 the Unionists had taken over three Liberal seats!

116. Land Values. March 1914.

these two limits which we could apply ... whichever of these courses you take, you must have a national valuation. That will be ready next year ... when that is done we hope to work out a practical scheme". ¹¹⁷

What the Chancellor's speech amounted to was the vaguest of hints that something might be done for the single-taxers - if they waited for the valuation, as they had ^{not} been prepared to wait in the past. The press generally saw the speech as one prevaricating and giving little away. The Times said the proposals were not "epoch making" as Sir William Robertson, Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Association, had promised the conference they would be, and nothing was said about taxing - only rating land values. In other words reform would be localised, and of the proposals under this head The Times said they were "even more vague than the others". ¹¹⁸ "One certainty emerges", another paper wrote, "Henry Georgeism will play but a minor part in the government's land campaign", ¹¹⁹ while The Morning Post asked: "What has he (the Chancellor) offered ..? A certain number of sympathetic platitudes, a gooddeal of dis-
ingenuous evasion, and a definite promise of further enquiry". ¹²⁰
Journals like The Daily Chronicle, The Manchester Guardian and The Star, welcomed the proposals as they stood, probably thankful they were so innocuous.

The single-taxers were overjoyed with the Chancellor's speech, and this remains one of the oddest things about the land

117. Ibid.

118. The Times. 6th Feb. 1914

119. Everyman. 13th Feb. 1914 quoted Land Values March 1914

120. 5th Feb. 1914.

taxation movement in Britain. For years they had been played off with vague promises, but in 1913 the last in the series was welcomed enthusiastically. The Daily News¹²¹ purported to see Lloyd George's announcement as a great victory, and Land Values enthusiastically quoted from an article by J.W.Graeme Peace that disingenuously said that, "Liberals (were) not taking up land reform ... at the bidding of an insistent section of the community ... but as a matter vital to the welfare of the whole community".¹²² To offset that, James Busby said that Lloyd George had stopped a revolt of the Scottish Liberals and had "carried our people with him",¹²³ and the United Committee called his statement "a triumph for Scottish liberalism" and said the Chancellor had "restored the taxation of land values to its proper place in Liberal politics" and had given "a new impetus to the movement".¹²⁴ A special resolution said the U.C. "hails with satisfaction the declaration that the Government is not only pledged to the rating of land values, but also that it intends to give effect to the principle in legislation".¹²⁵ The English Leagues all held meetings to pledge their support to Lloyd George, and as hardened a Georgeite as Peter Burt said he was "quite satisfied".¹²⁶ Outhwaite put the strict single case

121. 5th Feb.1914.

122. Liberal Monthly. Feb.1914.

123. Land Values March 1914

124. U.C.T.L.V. Ann.Rep.

125. Land Values April 1914

126. Ibid. March 1914

succinctly when he accepted the Liberal's pledge as an "instalment".¹²⁷ "If of the £40 million at present annually levied on improvements the Government impose £20 million on site values, they will have won the support of all land values taxers", he wrote in March.

The Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation appeared in the following month and coincided with the second part of the Land Enquiry.¹²⁸ A minority report was signed by six out of the thirteen members, all of whom were noted land taxers. They rejected any suggestion of Chiozza Money's local income tax, as was to be expected, and recommended "a moderate separate rate on site values". "One tenth of the amount required out of the rates by each spending authority", they considered, "should be levied on site value, and the remaining nine tenths on the basis of assessable value as at present". Half of any additional amounts should also come from site value, and rural areas should be included in any new scheme.

The Local Taxation Committee's report was of less importance than the Land Enquiry's, because the government had not promised to accept its findings. The Enquiry dealt with the possibility of a national tax on land values and recognised it "as an instrument for raising national revenue", but went on to state that it was "unable to recommend its immediate adoption". The reasons were summarised thus:

127. Ibid. Times 6th Feb.1914

128. Final Report Departmental Committee on Local Taxation.
cd. 7316.

"A careful review ... leads us to the conclusion that the arguments in favour of the principle of a national site tax as one of the sources of revenue, are unanswerable. But the question assumes a different aspect when we leave its justification to consider ¹²⁹ the question of its immediate applicability ...".

The difficulties involved in legislating for a land tax had been stressed by Lloyd George at Glasgow, but the Report made some practical proposals. "While we are unable, with the limited information at present at our disposal, to make any recommendations for the immediate imposition of a national tax on site values", it was said, there should be a rate levied to meet future increases in local expenditure chargeable on the rates. This would be coupled with a large increase in grants from the central government. The valuation should be made every five years, and there was a suggestion that existing expenditure should be met by a penny rate on capital site values.

The Enquiry differentiated between strict "Henry Georgeism" and the demand for a small land values tax, and finally condemned the "no compensation" attitude. A land values tax would be justified in a new community raising revenue for the first time it was agreed, but the Liberals had to deal with twentieth century Britain. Land values were created by communal effort, as George had said, but the law had for centuries recognised the right of individuals to deal in them. It would be unjust now to penalise the man who had invested in land and leave others unharmed:

"If a man has wished ... to leave each of his three daughters a thousand pounds, and bought a thousand pounds of consols for one, a thousand pounds of debentures for another, and a thousand pounds worth of land for the third, in the eyes

129. Liberal Land Enquiry. Vol. 2 (Urban)

of the law all three investments are equally legitimate. Though it may be true that the value of the land ... has been made by the efforts of the community, and though this may furnish a legitimate argument for differential treatment in the matter of taxation of land ... it would be manifestly unjust to single out land and appropriate its entire value, leaving others forms of investment untouched".¹³⁰

This was of course an argument that had been levelled at single-taxers by people like Harold Cox since the 'eighties. It had caused the early disputes with the L.N.S. but had never been satisfactorily answered. The claim that the person investing in land was gambling, and that a gambler could not complain if his bet failed to pay off, was never generally accepted.

The Liberal Land Enquiry effectively crippled the land taxation movement in Britain. It was a sound move to emphasise the practical difficulties involved in producing a scheme,¹³¹ and promising a limited amount of reform satisfied many, or most of the land taxers. When the hard core took stock they realised how little had been gained and decided to hold yet another campaign. For years they had protested against any increased grants to local authorities on the grounds that they were simply alternatives to land taxes, but now, in a spirit of most unusual reasonableness, they accepted the Enquiry's proposal to increase subventions by about £5 millions. All that was asked was that they should replace the Assigned Revenues and be allocated "on some rational principle", and accompanied by a national land tax "of, say, 1/2d in the £." which would be sufficient, although "a grant of ten millions and a penny tax"

¹³⁰. Ibid. P.563.

¹³¹ Reports on the Departmental Committee and the second part of the Enquiry in Land Values supplement May 1914.

would be preferred.¹³² The combination of a rate and a national tax, however, was "the minimum which can be acceptable". Without a land values tax the new subventions would simply amount to landlord relief.¹³³ These arguments and proposals were to form the basis for the new campaign.

The Chancellor's Budget statement in 1914 contained a promise that he intended to embark upon the new Liberal land programme as soon as possible. The valuation was to be amended by a Valuation and Revenue Bill in the way the single-taxers demanded, and was to be extended to include all land devoid of improvements. This would enable the government to know the needs and requirements of local authorities and allow it to distribute the huge new grants "on a rational principle". Until then they were to be of a temporary nature. Lloyd George also promised a Rating Bill for the next session and the rating of site values would then become, he said, "an integral part of the system of local taxation" - a rather surprising statement as hitherto he had talked of waiting until the next Parliament, and of course the Enquiry's policy was meant to be implemented after the next Liberal victory at a general election.¹³⁴

Land Values welcomed the proposed Valuation and Revenue Bill which it said "would provide for the first time ... a value suitable for putting into operation the rating and taxation of land values", and most land reformers were equally enthusiastic.

¹³² ?
133. Ibid.

134. Ibid. June 1914.

The Budget however contained proposals that were "unrating improvements while leaving land untaxed as ever", and Josiah Wedgwood, fearing that once again Lloyd George was playing for time, and basing his fears on an article to that effect in The Daily News,¹³⁵ threatened that unless local authorities were given "home rule in taxation" the single-taxers would block legislation. It is clear that Wedgwood was not speaking for the Land Values Group as a whole, but the Chancellor's proposals were not to reach the Statute Book in the way he had wanted. War broke out in August and the grants to local authorities and the Revenue Bill were dropped, it was said, until next session. The Rating Bill was never introduced and it is impossible to say whether it was a genuine promise or not. The projected autumn land campaign was also dropped, and "snowed under four years of carnage, taxation and debt".¹³⁶

The war dealt a heavy blow at the single-tax movement. The mass of its moderate support had been taken away by the Chancellor's promises, and in February 1914 its major source of funds went when Joseph Fels died. His death which "presented quite a new problem in financing the (United) Committee's operations"¹³⁷ was a severe threat, but it is doubtful whether even his money could have revived interest in land taxation in 1914. The mass of Liberal supporters were willing to wait for reform, and wait also until after the next general election

135. 7th May 1914. For Wedgwood's views at this time see Josiah and Ethel Wedgwood The Road to Freedom (1913), a book written to prove the complete Georgeite case that "modern civilization is built upon slave labour", and "that land monopoly is the cause.."

136. Winfrey. Leaves from My Life. op.cit. P.204

137. U.C.T.L.V. Ann. Rep. 1914.

which would have certainly been fought on the land question.¹³⁸ Only incredible folly by the government - which now seemed to have perfected the way of playing off the single-taxers at last - could have produced the hostility of 1909 or even 1913, and here the question of whether or not it was really intended to introduce a Rating Bill in 1915 raises interesting possibilities. The projected land tax campaign was also "snowed under" by the war, and the land taxation movements at last entered a period of steady decline. A great many battles had been fought since the appearance of Progress and Poverty, and the course of politics had often been altered. At times success had seemed almost within the grasp of the Georgeites, but the possibility never became a reality. In 1914 the meagre provisions of the People's Budget were the only tangible results of thirty years of agitation, and they were not to remain untouched after the war.

138. It is interesting to note that the organisations set up to train speakers for the Liberal land campaign - notably the Central Land and Housing Council - did not include land values taxation as one of the topics. Gilbert Slater and C. Roden Buxton were prominent in this work. Land Values April 1914.

XI Epilogue. The Years of Futility 1914-60.

The land reform movements remained in existence throughout the war, although little was heard of most of them. After it was over only the single-tax organisations had a history of any great significance, and in their case it is a record of a "noble failure".

The Land Nationalisation Society's activity was practically at a standstill for most of the war years. A number of conferences kept the organisation nominally in being, but on 11th May 1918 an attempt was made to recreate the Society on a sound footing. Members pledged themselves to the gradual principles of the old "Tax and Buy Bill" and stepped up their propaganda efforts.¹ A campaign was organised jointly with sections of the Labour movement, the highlight of which was a "National Land Day" in September 1919 and a big demonstration in Hyde Park, while scores of meetings were held in the provinces.

Before the war the L.N.S. had gone into decline because its proposals had in reality moved outside the sphere of controversy on the left of politics. It was generally agreed by Liberals and Socialists^{alike} that the general compulsory purchase powers asked for by the Society were reasonable, and that land nationalisation at that time was impossible. After the war, however, the Liberal party was shattered and the Labour party, for the first time, began to consider land nationalisation ser-

1. See Verinder's attack from the single-tax point of view, Methods of Land Nationalisation. A brief critical examination of some of the proposals of the Land Nationalisation Society. (1918)

iously. The election of 1918 had been fought on a programme that included land nationalisation² and a resolution at the annual conference in 1920 instructed the executive committee to work out "a full and detailed Parliamentary programme", that included "the socialisation of the land!"³ At the same time the L.N.S. publicised a Bill of its own, and in 1921 it appeared in Parliament.

The Bill stood no chance of success. Labour was a small and ineffective opposition and Lloyd George's coalition was still entrenched in power. The Bill provided for the creation of a Ministry of Land to which all land not already the property of the Crown or any other public authority, would be transferred. Former owners would be compensated by National Land Stock redeemable at par after thirty years, and the amount of compensation would be "such as would provide an annual income equal to the present net letting value of the land transferred, such value being calculated as the reasonable rent of the land for the purposes for which it was used at the time of the transfer".⁴ The Bill was ordered to be read a second time but never was, and it met the same fate in 1922 and '23. Only John Hodge of the M.P.s down to introduce it had had any connection with the land reform movements in their hey day.

The L.N.S. did not long survive the defeat of Labour's Bill. With the party taking over its proposals its raison d'être had gone.

2. Labour and the New Social Order (Sidney Webb)

3. For the Labour party's resolution on land nationalisation in 1918 at the conference endorsing 'Labour and the New Social Order', see G.D.H. Cole A History of the Labour Party from 1914. Chap. 1. Appdx. 1.

4. J.E.R. Marriott Economics and Ethics P. 122. Marriott was a Unionist member of this Parliament.

The Land Nationaliser ceased publication in 1921, and in 1923 the Society altered its name to the Land Nationalisation Federation. Hyder was still secretary, but after about twelve months as a small and ineffective organisation it disappeared and the Annuals and Year Books make no further mention of it. By the time Labour came to power the post war slump had developed and the party were more concerned with holding on to living standards and a reasonable level of employment, than with wide schemes of social reform. Land nationalisation was in effect discarded and has never been seriously considered since the 'twenties.⁵

The Land Nationalisation Society's old enemy the Rural League also continued in existence during the war. It refrained from any land reform activity between 1914 and 1918, however, and devoted itself first to recruiting campaigns and later to abortive attempts to recreate village industry. It came to life for a short time during the disputes over the Land Settlement (Facilities) Bill and was successful in agitating against a clause which insisted on a 20 per cent deposit for prospective owners. This was the kind of clause which it purported to believe had wrecked all earlier legislation and with the passing of the Bill announced its work was done and disbanded at the end of 1919.⁶

The single-taxers however had not been prepared to lie low during the war - which they realised from the outset might set a

5. See e.g. Lord Addison's A Policy for British Agriculture published in 1939, where land nationalisation is not considered. See G.D.H.Cole op.cit. P.213 for a description of 'Labour and the Nation' and the manifesto dropping all but mines nationalisation in 1928.

6. Collings and Green op.cit. P.300 et.seq.

Chancellor off seeking finance in directions they disapproved of. Public opinion though, as in the Boer war, had little time for them and they were severely limited by a shortage of funds. The United Committee was unable to disburse more than a fraction of the sums it had given away when Fels was alive, and the balance sheets of the English League, for instance, show a decline in gifts from £270 in 1913-14, and £250 in 1914-15, to only £196 in 1916. In the latter year only 39 "public lectures" were delivered.⁷

The Land Values Parliamentary Group found its activities restricted by the "party truce" declared on the outbreak of hostilities. Single-taxers, as such, were banned from Liberal platforms and their ideas were prescribed and shelved for the duration. The Central Land and Housing Council, the organisation that was to have directed the Liberal land campaign, was disbanded, and the L.V.G. was weakened by the enlistment of many of its members in the forces. Those that were left soon found themselves forced to defend what little had been achieved in the past.

In March 1915 Land Values stated hopefully that it thought the party truce was coming to an end and "the Government itself is partly responsible", it said, "by bringing forward its aniline dye scheme". It was a false alarm, but within a few months the single-taxers had to organize themselves to resist a major onslaught on pre-war legislation that certainly was a breach of the truce.

7. E.L.T.L.V. Ann. Rep. 1915-16

In July 1915 Sir Frederick Banbury led a Conservative attack on the land valuation. The Land Values Group resisted it by representing the attack as a breach of the agreement between the parties,⁸ but the war did what Banbury and his colleagues failed to do. The valuation staff was continually reduced, and by 1916 it was completely ineffective. Resisting Banbury was the last occasion on which the L.V.G. effectively worked together. When Asquith fell from power the ensuing Liberal schism set erstwhile colleagues against each other and ruined their party. After the war the Group was reconstituted, but was a shadow of its former self.

The land taxers at first chose to represent the war as a "landlord's war", but later came to regard it as the thin end of a protectionist wedge. As early as October 1914 they expressed fears of an impending attack on free trade, and Land Values prophesied that: "Protectionism will be strengthened and encouraged to raise the tariff barriers still higher", while "by way of public debts and indirect taxes, labour, and all the products of labour will pay all the enormous costs and indemnities of war". As the conflict went on the Georgeites, while still attacking the war began to suggest that a land values tax would be a way of financing it! R.L.Outhwaite is a typical example of someone doing this. He refused to accept the party truce and justified his attitude on the somewhat strange ground that neither did Harold Cox, who was not an M.P. His article The Ghosts of the Slain in the August 1915 edition of Land Values is anti-war, while in the same month he was writing in another journal and

8. Land Values. July and August 1915

suggesting land taxation as a means of obtaining war finance.⁹
Mary Fels was another who wrote in this vein.¹⁰

The government heeded neither the suggestions on how to raise war finance, nor the appeals to avoid protectionist policies. In September 1915 Land Values admitted that "wartime is not an auspicious period for any reform" - although it said that was "not the fault of the advocates of land reform". The following month it had to record that McKenna, an old enemy, was yet another Liberal and a professing free trader who had abandoned his principles. At about the same time the Land Values Group had cause to "profoundly regret the action of the Government in including in the Budget import duties which contravene the principles of Free Trade... and urge(d) the Government to impose a tax on land values". After this the single-taxers realised that their cause was lost - at least for the duration. "What about our case, the case for the Taxation of Land Values?" they demanded, "we have ... been defeated and flouted".¹¹ Little more was heard of their proposals either in Parliament or in the country and they looked where they could for a possibility of keeping them alive. In 1917, when their fortunes were at their lowest, an early Moslem patriach was called upon to lend his weighty arguments to those of Henry George. Ali-ibn-abi-Salib, it was reported, was a single taxpayer who had urged that "land values should be assessed according to the nearness and distance of the land from the market places and drinking places in the river".¹²

9. The Herald. 14th August 1915.

10. How to pay for the war, by Mary Fels. Land Values Feb. 1915.

11. Land Values. Oct. 1915.

12. Ibid. Jan. 1917.

By 1916 the single-taxers had come to realise that little more could be expected from the Liberal party and they turned hopefully towards Labour in considerable numbers. The Socialists had joined the wartime coalition and observed the party truce, but kept their organisations intact. Annual conferences were held at which topics subject to the truce were discussed, and resolutions repeatedly pledged the party to the taxation of land values. In February 1916 the I.L.P., which had always favoured the idea, was responsible for a conference resolution which called for land values taxation as part of a wider scheme of social reform, and Land Values in the same year "heartily congratulate(d) the Labour Party conference on having put on record ... unanimously its support of the taxation of land values".¹³ The following year the party again pledged itself, and again the single-taxers were enthusiastic :

"The adoption of these "resolutions"; they declared, "marks an epoch in the history of the Labour Party and of the reform movement in this country. We look forward hopefully to a determined and continuous agitation on the part of the Parliamentary Labour Party to carry these principles into effect".¹⁴

This activity on the part of the Labour party led to a number of intellectuals and radicals leaving the Liberals and joining forces with the Socialists, a trend even more marked after the end of the war and the disastrous election of 1918 which left many

13. Ibid. March 1916

14. Ibid. Feb. 1917.

high and dry.¹⁵ The reason for the movement is usually said to be disgust at pre-war secret diplomacy and a desire for the kind of foreign policy Labour was demanding. A number of people undoubtedly joined for these reasons and C.R.Buxton and Norman Angell¹⁶ are two examples¹⁷ whose transition was made easy through the Union of

15. A study of the election results of 1918 shows first that many of the old members of the Land Values Group did not stand, and secondly the way in which erstwhile colleagues had completely fallen out and fought each other, and Labour, under different labels. Obviously political differences made a re-emergence of a united single-tax element in the Commons impossible. For instance, Henry George Chancellor, standing as a Liberal (L) lost; Snowden (Lab) lost; P.Wilson Raffan, Coalition Lib. (Co.L.) won at Leigh; Wedgwood (Co.L.) was unopposed; R.L.Outhwaite, Independent Lib.(Ind.Lib) was beaten by J.A. Seddon (Co.Lib) at Hanley; J.H.Whiteley (Co.L) won at Halifax; Sidney Arnold (Lib) won at Pennistone; G N.Barnes fought another Labour candidate and won in the Gorbals; J. Henry Dalziel (Co.Lib) was unopposed in Kirkcaldy; J.F.L. Brunner (Lib) lost at Northwich; Jas.Rowlands (Co.Lib) won at Dartford; Dundas White (Lib) was beaten by both a Coalition Unionist and Socialist at Tradeston; T.McKinnon Wood (Lib) was bottom of the poll for another Glasgow seat losing to both Unionist and Labour; Dr.MacNamara (Co.L) won N.W.Bermondsey; and C.P.Trevelyan (Ind.Lib) the sitting member, was bottom of the poll at Elland, below a Unionist, and Liberal and Labour candidates. Dalziel, one of the most vocal of the pre-war land taxers, was particularly closely associated with pre-war land taxers, was particularly closely associated with Lloyd George from 1916, when the break with Asquith took place. He was originally a journalist when he entered Parliament (1892) and became a newspaper proprietor. His great success was in taking over Reynolds News and making it a Sunday journal. After the war he helped Lloyd George buy the Daily Chronicle and was for a time chairman and political director of it. He resigned in 1921 and was raised to the Peerage as Baron Dalziel of Kirkcaldy. He died in 1935. Obituary Times. 16th July
16. V. de Bunsen. C.R.Buxton. A Memoir. (1948) P.76. N.Angell After All. (1951) P.227
17. C.P.Trevelyan in his autobiographical book From Liberalism to Labour (1921) gives this as his reason. See a review of the book by A.Ponsonby in Labour Leader 7th April 1921 where he also equates socialism with a good foreign policy, and Trevelyan's preface to F.Seymour Cock's The Secret Treaties and Understandings (Union of Democratic Control, London 1918)

Democratic Control.¹⁸ It must be remembered, however, that the Liberal party must have appeared a spent force to many and the Labour party, the group with a future, offering most to ambitious politicians - certainly to those who were single-taxers. There does seem to be more than a possibility that personal ambition, plus a hope that the Labour party would become an instrument for obtaining land taxation, motivated many of them in the move from Liberal to Labour. Statements from several bear this out, and subsequent events proved them to be right. Wedgwood specifically said that he left the Liberals when Asquith threw over the taxation of land values¹⁹ and Outhwaite joined the I.L.P. at the same time:

".. experience has shown me", he wrote, "that were the leaders of the I.L.P. given a Parliamentary opportunity to strike a blow at the land monopoly that the Liberal leaders were given", they would take it. ²⁰

Dundas White was another who joined the I.L.P. which seemed to be becoming a happy hunting ground for all kinds of cranks and disillusioned Liberals. The party became alarmed, and, commenting on White said that:

"great dissillusionment will be his if he imagines the I.L.P is only a haven of rest for Liberals who seek preservation of Peace and Free Trade and who favour the taxation of land values". ²¹

18. H.M.Swanwick Builders of Peace (1938) gives the U.D.C's aims P.31 The Committee was formed in 1914.

19. Wedgwood joined in 1919 and represented Hanley until 1942. He became a member of the first Labour Cabinet in 1924.

Memoirs of a Fighting Life. op.cit.Chap.IX.

20. Labour Leader 16 Jan.1919

21. Forward. 20th Sept. 1919.

And later:

"It is time that it was frankly stated that there is great uneasiness in I.L.P. circles about the manner in which Liberal politicians are being received in our ranks without any public acknowledgement of their conversion to socialism".²²

There can be no doubt from these statements that at least a number of Liberals joined the Socialist party because of a belief that it could be turned into an instrument for obtaining some measure of land taxation. The Labour movement was dedicated to free trade, an essential to the Georgeites, and the presence of Philip Snowden, a fanatical believer in free trade and a future Chancellor, must have made it even more attractive to them. Perhaps it was not clear to contemporaries that the Liberal party had been destroyed, but it must have been clear to people like Outhwaite and Wedgwood - for so long an embarrassment to their Leaders - that their possibilities of advancement had. When the Georgeites' violent and bitter hostility to socialism before the war is born in mind, and it is too much to believe that this had been genuinely thrown over,²³ these 'conversions' are clearly stamped as interested movements by astute politicians, who were not, and never would be, socialists.

Labour left the coalition at the end of the war and declared itself the official opposition after the "Coupon election" of 1918. Lloyd George headed a coalition of his own followers and Conservatives, but his presence no longer meant that land reform would be a prominent part of the government's

22. Labour Leader 18th Sept. 1919. E. Wertheimer Remembering My Good Friends (1929) P. 14. These remarks concerning the I.L.P. are valid as it constituted at that time practically the only constituency organisation of the Labour movement. The Labour party as such did not decide to create local party groups everywhere until 1918.

23. See e.g. Beren's remarks Chap. 10. f.n. 5.

programme - or even that the pre-war enactments would be left alone. In July 1920 Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor, wound up the valuation and repealed almost all the land taxes of 1909. He contemptuously ignored Liberal and Labour threats of a renewed land tax campaign and allowed only the Mineral Rights Duty to remain on the Statute Book. All the duty collected from the other three since their imposition was to be returned.²⁴

Lloyd George's coalition fell in October 1922 and a Unionist administration took its place. A year later it resigned and the first British Labour government took office, but without an absolute majority and dependent on the votes of the Liberals. Philip Snowden was Chancellor, and he announced that he would introduce a land tax, but the government fell before any progress was made. Nevertheless, Snowden had established himself as the hope of the single-taxers.

Five years later Ramsay MacDonald formed the second British Labour government, and on this occasion land values taxation did figure prominently in its legislation. Snowden was again Chancellor and his Budget announcement in 1930 contained a pledge that both valuation and taxation Bills would be introduced. Britain was in the depths of a slump and Snowden's proposals had all the appearance of a "New Deal". They met with the enthusiastic approval of the single-taxers and were a remarkable contrast with Lloyd George's proposals of 1909.²⁵ The Valuation Bill was published in

24. Lloyd George's Land Taxes. United Committee pamphlet by Sir Edgar Harper F.S.I. Chief valuer to the Board of Inland Revenue. For brief descriptions of the single-tax in Parliament in the 'twenties and 'thirties see Lawrence op.cit. Chap.13 and the chapter by A.W.Madsen in Land Values Taxation Around the World by H.Gunnison Brown.

25. According to Snowden Lloyd George, who at first supported these proposals, told him that his own taxes of 1909 were "too meek/". An Autobiography. op.cit. Vol.II P.907

July and was a simple measure that defined "value" as being what land, devoid of improvements, would fetch in the open market, and provided for renewed valuations every five years. The next year the Budget included a land tax of 1d in the £. on every unit of land in Great Britain, and both the tax and the valuation duly passed into law. Both were accompanied by the usual hostile attacks from the conservative press, and Stanley Baldwin spoke for a unanimous opposition when he declared at Southampton in June 1931 that: "If we get to power, that tax will never see daylight".²⁶

In August MacDonald resigned office and was charged with the formation of a National Government. Snowden remained, a member of his administration and it scored an overwhelming victory at the General Election in October. Neville Chamberlain became the new Chancellor but Snowden's presence was not enough to protect his legislation. Emulating his brother a decade ago, Chamberlain "suspended" the valuation as an "emergency measure" with what seemed almost indecent haste, bearing in mind that four members of the government that created it were his Cabinet colleagues.²⁷ Two years later the tax itself was repealed,

26. Light on the Land Question (1930) publication of the Henry George Foundation. The land tax was to be first charged for the financial year ending March 1934. See also P.Snowden op.cit Vol.2 Chap LXXIII. 'The Taxation of Land Values'. Snowden relates how later in the debates the Liberals opposed the tax on the grounds that it was a double tax - with which Snowden agreed. Owners were already taxed under the Income Tax Schedule 'A'.

27. Lord Sankey, J.H.Thomas, Snowden and MacDonald himself. Snowden did not stand at the election and sat in the Lords as Viscount Snowden of Ickornshaw, and Lord Privy Seal. He resigned office in 1932.

MacDonald doing nothing²⁸ and the delay being due simply to the fact that another "party truce" was in being.

Throughout these years the single-tax organisations gave what support they could to the campaigns in Parliament²⁹ and helped selected Liberal and Labour candidates at elections. Land and Liberty³⁰ continued to be published monthly, although it was but a shadow of its former self. The United Committee remained in existence and what was left of the local Leagues after the war formed themselves into the Land Value Taxation League. The Scottish organisation retained its separate identity, and is still independent. In January 1929 the Henry George Foundation - endowed by a terminable annuity for ten years - was set up to carry on propaganda for the single-tax.

After the National government came into being the possibilities of single-tax legislation were remote in the extreme. The Liberal and Labour parties were minorities with few prospects of regaining power and able to do little more than pay lip service to the idea of land values taxation. Both stated their adherence in conference, and Archibald Sinclair raised the question from the Liberal benches in the Commons,³¹ while Wedgwood did the same from the Socialist side - but opportunities were few and Labour appeared

28. See MacDonald's reply to a letter from the U.C.T.L.V (which one Liberal called "nauseating hypocrisy") explaining the repeal in Snowden op.cit. Vol. 2. Chap. LXXIV. 'A Piece of Sharp Practice'. P. 920

29. Wedgwood tried to introduce Land Taxation Bills right up until 1937 and campaigned from within the Labour party - notably at the annual conference of 1926. Two years later he was left out of MacDonald's second government and he, Trevelyan and Jowett, who had all been making themselves nuisances, refused to sign a pledge of obedience to the Party.

30. Land Values became Land and Liberty in 1919

31. Liberal Party Pledges, Land Values Taxation and Rating U.C.T.L.V Pamphlet No. 205.

more and more lukewarm as the freedom given to members in the early 'twenties was whittled away.

Single tax propaganda in the 'thirties was the same as before. Henry George and Richard Cobden³² were called upon to justify a belief in free trade and land taxation, protectionist tendencies were attacked, and pamphlets still appeared on "Why a landowner cannot shift a land values tax". The international links were retained and the Georgeites added their weight to the discussions on unemployment and were particularly prominent among the groups hostile to Major Douglas's Social Credit scheme.³³ In all this they were able to co-operate amicably with both opposition parties, but the direction in which Labour was moving - intent on regaining power with practical proposals and not wide schemes of reform - caused them consternation.

By the time of the outbreak of the second World War the single taxers had not only lost most of their influence, but many of their most able propagandists also. There were two generations of single-taxers with any influence in Britain, those who knew George in the 'eighties and those prominent in the years just before the 1914 war. Liberal perfidy, Lloyd George, the Great War and Liberal dissensions then destroyed them as a group, and their demands were forgotten. After the war what few were left were at loggerheads over other issues and there was never a possibility of regaining the popularity that land taxation had once enjoyed. Young people did not join them and as the old stalwarts died they were not replaced. In the 'thirties the Henry

32. e.g. New Light on Richard Cobden and the Land Question. Victor Saldji (1955) pamphlet issued by the International Union.

33. see e.g. W.R. Lester's Poverty and Plenty (1935)

George Foundation was able to use only Verinder, James Scott M.P., Dundas White - who was still preparing single-tax Bills for Parliament in 1948³⁴ - and A.W.Madsen as authors who had any great standing as authorities on land taxation, and all of them had gained their reputations before 1914.³⁵

The single-tax organisations survived the 1939 war although they suffered from the effects of enemy action, resulting in the destruction of the United Committee's offices. At the close of hostilities their fortunes were at their lowest ebb and in 1945 only two Labour candidates who were described as being acceptable to them were returned. These were Richard Stokes, a future Cabinet Minister, and F.C.R.Douglas, who between the wars had written pamphlets on agriculture for the Henry George Foundation, and ~~who~~ had edited a popular edition of Progress and Poverty.

The period of Labour rule was a disappointment. Odd members voiced their support for the principles of land values taxation, but the Town and Country Planning Act showed that Labour preferred methods of reform far removed from those advocated by the George-ites. The Leagues registered their disapproval of the Act and hope was placed on a Departmental Committee on Site Value Rating appointed in 1947. Its Minority Report was in fact welcomed, but was ignored by the government and the land taxers were driven to recognise the defeat of their movement. "The spread of social welfare legislation, and the complex industrial organisation of

34. See his Land Value Reform in Theory and Practice. (1948)

35. Madsen did not die until 1957. See W.Lissner In Memoriam: A.W. Madsen 1880-1957. The American Journal of Economics and Sociology. Vol. 16 No. 4 July 1957. Madsen when he died was Principal of the Henry George School of Social Science, London. This was started in 1933 and is responsible for the educational work connected with the U.C.T.L.V. At present it has some half dozen branches in places outside London. Teaching is done by a voluntary staff of tutors.

modern industrial civilisation", it was said, have obscured "the nature and significance of the fundamental "land question" and of its only just, practicable and well proven solution - the taxation of land values".³⁶

Single-tax propaganda since 1945 has consisted largely of attacks on the Town and Country Planning Act (repealed in 1952).³⁷ and the Georgeite analysis is brought to bear on the problems of inflation and other topics. The stress on housing remains³⁸ and the strong international links with the free trade movement are still maintained. The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade is the most notable of the groups of this kind, and the Robert Shalkenbach Foundation of New York, is responsible for distributing single-tax and anti-Communist literature on a large scale. In Britain the United Committee publishes Land and Liberty monthly³⁹ and a great deal of publicity is given to activity in the U.S., Denmark - always a favourite country where the single-tax is still a very live political issue - and various other countries. The tone of the propaganda is almost identical with that of half a century ago, and only the quantity, the expectations and its degree of success have altered. Big property deals regularly attract attention to enormous "unearned increments", but land values taxation as a remedy is rarely considered. Odd successes there are, as in 1959, for instance, when Lord Ellenborough persuaded the National Union of Ratepayer's

36. Land Values and the Labour Party. L.V.T.L.pamphlet July 1954

37. For brief description of the Act see E.Watkins The Cautious Revolution.P.113 et.seq.

38. e.g.the United Committee's series of pamphlets on Land Value Rating in Practice.

39 The Henry George School of Social Science also publish a duplicated Henry George School Magazine of much less consequence.

Associations to consider the taxation of site values,⁴⁰ while more recently the Liberal party has pledged itself anew.⁴¹ These are few and far between, however, and perhaps a recent authority on British pressure groups adequately described the decline in the popularity of Henry Georgeism when he simply mentioned the United Committee's existence, talked of its meagre success in obtaining replies to questionnaires, and of its "perpetual optimism".⁴² With the Liberal party's decline and the move away from free trade, and with Labour's attitude altered from that of a radical to a reformist party, all possibilities for the single-tax in Britain seem to have gone "into the underworld of economics", and "there (George) exists today, almost Messiah, semi-crackpot, and disturbing questioner of the morality of our time",⁴³ - nothing more.

40. Daily Telegraph. 6th July 1959

41. John Walker. Land Taxation (Liberal Publication Dept. 1960)

42. J.D. Stewart British Pressure Groups. P.230-33

43. Heilbroner and Streeter. The Great Economists. P.156.

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