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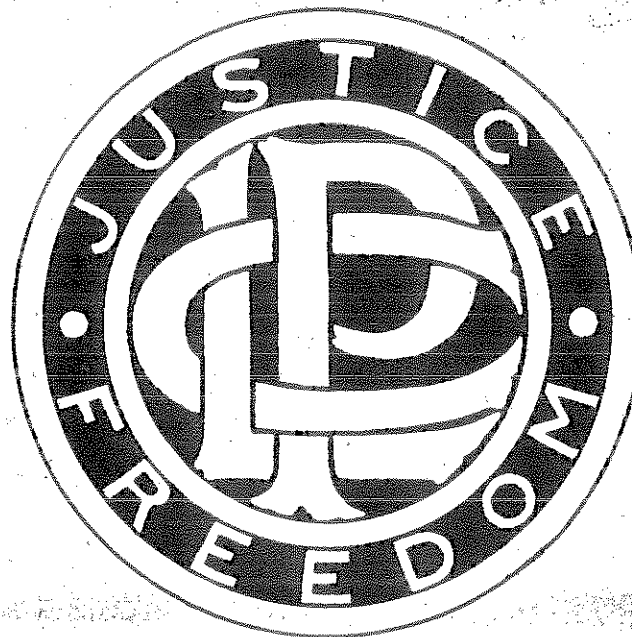
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IDLENESS AND INVOLUNTARY POVERTY

THE



REVIEW COPY.
WITH THE PUBLISHER'S COMPLIMENT

PLAN

by

A. ROWLAND-ENTWISTLE

WITH A FOREWORD BY

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE

10615 | Price: TWO PENCE

Read this First:

The Creed of Freedom

WHEREAS all human beings are born with an inherent equal Right to Life, and

WHEREAS no human being can live apart from natural resources (Land), and

WHEREAS Land is not the product of any human effort, but is the free gift of Nature to all alike, the living and the unborn,

THEREFORE IT FOLLOWS that all human beings have an inherent equal Right freely to use the Earth for the sustenance of Life.

AND WHEREAS some human beings do now claim that they can own Land as their private property, thereby denying the inherent equal Right to Life of the rest of their fellows (involuntary poverty and economic slavery being the common lot of the disinherited), the COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY taking their stand upon JUSTICE and in conformity with the MORAL LAW DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF THE LAND WITHOUT COMPENSATION and with that objective seek by all constitutional means to make public opinion in support of a DECLARATION OF COMMON RIGHT TO THE LAND to be made in the House of Commons that from an APPOINTED DATE the LAND SHALL BE DEEMED TO HAVE BEEN RESTORED TO THE PEOPLE such DECLARATION OF COMMON RIGHT to be followed by a FINANCE BILL (BUDGET) in which NO TAXATION shall be imposed but making provision for the collection from all holders of the Land of the ECONOMIC RENT (full annual rental value) of their holdings as the Natural Revenue of the Whole People and in lieu of ALL TAXATION.

C.L.P. 29

THE C.L.P. PLAN

FOREWORD

In this pamphlet my friend and colleague Rowland Entwistle essays to remove all doubts from the minds of those persons who, fearing the C.L.P. Plan is too good to be true, are sceptical as to its practicability. I think he has succeeded admirably. No person of average intelligence reading these pages, and reflecting as he reads, can fail to grasp the underlying principles of the Plan, and to acquire a perfect understanding of the entirely beneficent consequences of its adoption.

I welcome the pamphlet as a valuable addition to our literature, and commend its study to all students of economic and social problems.

At the Author's request I have added a brief contribution of my own upon the Constitutional Basis, which I hope will be found helpful.

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

The Constitutional Basis

THE LAW OF THE LAND

The central theory of English law has never been changed through the centuries, it is this: the land is the property of the whole people, it is vested in the crown as trustee, and all holders (*there are no owners*) are tenants of the community.

Here are some of the many authorities available for citation in support.

"No laws are binding on the human subject which assault the body or violate the conscience.—*Blackstone*.

"Accurately and strictly speaking, there is no foundation in nature or in natural law why a set of words on parchment should convey the dominion of land. Alodial (absolute) property no subject in England now has; it being a received and now undeniable principle in law that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King."—*Blackstone*, "*Commentaries*."

"The first thing the student has to do is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership. Such an idea is quite unknown in English law. No man in law is absolute owner of his lands. He only owns an estate in them."—*Williams*, "*Real Property*."

"I remember as a law student that the first thing I had to learn was that there was no such thing as private property in land."—*D. Lloyd George.*

"It is commonly supposed that land belongs to its owner, in the same way as money or a watch. This is not the theory of English law since the Norman Conquest, nor has it been so in its full significance at any time. No absolute ownership of land is recognised in our law books, except in the Crown. All lands are supposed to be held immediately or mediately of the Crown, though no rent or service may be payable and no grant from the Crown on record."—*Sir F. Pollock, K.C., "The Land Laws."*

"These (land laws) might be for the general advantage, and if they could be shown to be so, by all means they should be maintained; but if not, does any man, with what he is pleased to call his mind, deny that a state of law under which such mischief could exist, under which the country itself would exist, not for its people, but for a mere handful of them, ought to be instantly and absolutely set aside?"—*Lord Chief Justice Coleridge (1887).*

The right of eminent domain remains. That is to say, the people, at any time they think fit to do so, can resume possession of their land. This was done in many instances during the war years, the pretext being "National necessity." True, compensation was paid, but this was an *ex gratia* payment, and not in recognition of any right.

"What of the Statute of Limitations?" is a question sometimes asked. The answer is found in the legal axiom: "Time doth not run against the King." If his ministers were to advise the King to resume possession of the land by collection of its rent in lieu of taxes, the holder of that office, as a constitutional monarch, would have to obey, or abdicate.

It is said by some that the people have consented to the present system. This most decidedly is not true! The people were never consulted, for there is not a single "law" on the Statute Book affecting the tenure or holding of land which was first submitted to them for approval or otherwise.

They who would assume this consent must be prepared to allow that the people also have the power to refuse consent or even to withdraw it.

So far from consenting, history is full of records of peasant revolts and similar uprisings of the people, and always against the enclosing of their common lands.

When the young king, Richard II, rode out to speak with Wat Tyler and his men at Mile End in 1381, he asked of them: "Good people, what will ye that I should do?" Their answer is upon record: "We will that ye free us, us and our lands; and that we no more be held any man's slaves."

When the Norfolk peasants rose for the second time, in 1549, their complaint was: "The common pastures left by our

predecessors for our relief and our children are taken away. The lands which, in the memory of our fathers, were common, those are ditched and hedged in and made several, the pastures are enclosed, and we are shut out. We desire liberty, and an indifferent (equal) use of all things. This we will have. Otherwise these tumults and our lives shall only be ended together." No. The people have not consented!

Those who claim to "own" land should have regard to the significance of an important judgment of Lord Darling's in the case of Sir Hari Singh, the Indian Prince, who, as "Mr. A.," was the central figure in a notorious scandal in 1924. The issue was as to the ownership of the proceeds of a cheque for £150,000 drawn by Singh.

"Whose money is it?" said Justice Darling. "If it is stolen from him, in my judgment it remains his still. Nobody can give anybody else a title to it, no matter what transactions are gone through with regard to it."

That is our case with regard to the land!

THE POWER OF THE PURSE

"The earliest function of parliament was to provide money for the use of the State, and this is still the most indispensable function of the house of commons," writes Sir C. P. Ilbert, K.C.B., Clerk of the House of Commons, in his "Parliament, its History, Constitution and Practice." He quotes an even greater authority than himself—Sir Erskine May, who said: "The crown, acting with the advice of its responsible ministers, being the executive power, is charged with the management of all the revenues of the country, and with all payments for the public service. The crown therefore, in the first instance, makes known to the commons the pecuniary necessities of the government, and the commons grant such aids and supplies as are required to satisfy these demands, and provide by taxes, and by the appropriation of other sources of the public income, the ways and means to meet the supplies which are granted to them. Thus the crown demands money, the commons grant it, and the lords assent to the grant."

This "power of the purse" has vested solely in the commons ever since 1332 when the knights of the shire are first definitely recorded as sitting apart from the lords and clergy; in the following year they sat with the citizens and burgesses in a separate place. "It is impossible to attach too much importance to this fact," says Ransome ("Rise of Constitutional Government in England"), "as taxes soon came to be voted exclusively by the Commons for the whole of the laity, the House of Lords merely giving their assent to the grant."

This arrangement did not please the Stuart kings, who sought to raise money for their debts without parliamentary sanction. Charles I lost his head and James II his throne, being forced to flee the country at the "Glorious revolution" of 1688.

Parliament invited William of Orange, James's nephew

and husband of his daughter, Mary, to ascend the throne in succession to James, but, before allowing him to do so, they issued the Declaration of Rights, in which "the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons declare:—

"IV. That levying money for or to the use of the crown by pretense of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal."

This declaration was enacted as the Bill of Rights, becoming law on 25th October, 1689. It remained unchallenged for 220 years, until November, 30th, 1909, when the House of Lords, by 350 votes to 75, threw out the Finance Bill (the Lloyd George Budget) of that year. They paid for their unconstitutional action with the Parliament Act, under which a Finance Bill now becomes law within one month of its passing the Commons.

The power of the Commons in matters of finance is admitted in every Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament. The Speech always opens: "My Lords and Members of the House of Commons." When "the financial provisions for the year" is reached the Speech is addressed to "Members of the House of Commons," and the customary "measures will be laid before you" having been read, the Speech once more returns to "My Lords and Members of the House of Commons."

This is an admission that in matters of finance the elected Commons is supreme and the King himself may not interfere. The Lords do not count. This power of the purse is, in the British constitution, the most powerful weapon for effecting revolutionary changes ever forged, and it is by way of a Finance Bill that the Plan of the C.L.P. will go into effect.

Informed public opinion, a majority in the House of Commons, a Declaration of Common Right to the Land, and a Finance Bill in which there will be no taxes, new or old, but providing for the collection of the full annual rent of the land in lieu of all taxation, will suffice to effect the "Most glorious revolution" historians ever will have to record.

J. W. G. P.

A New Political Principle

Sometimes at meetings, members of the audience, hearing the C.L.P. Plan explained for the first time, are heard to ejaculate, "But this is pure Socialism," while others have been known to exclaim, "But this is pure Communism."

The obvious retort to both interjections is that there is nothing pure about either of these schools of political activity, but we will anticipate the jibe that there are no principles in politics by remarking that sneers are the last resort of those who otherwise would be silenced for lack of argument. It is desirable to show clearly how the political principle enunciated by the Commonwealth Land Party divides it radically from both Socialism and Communism.

What is Communism? When asked to explain why the Russian Government had issued an internal loan bearing interest at 10 per cent., a Communist recently asserted that the present system of government in Russia was not Communism, but State Capitalism? He did not explain why Communists in England have been urging us to follow the Russian example, insisting that everything in Russia is as it should be.

Communists make it clear that they have no use for our present system of parliamentary government, or for our democratic electoral methods. They declare that their intention, when they are numerically strong enough, but without waiting for the consent of a majority of the people, is to seize power by means of a general strike or other form of organised revolt, and set up a system of government of their own. Their idea of seizing power is to take possession by force of workshops, mills, factories, stores, public utilities, Government buildings and departments, the Post Office, the B.B.C., banks, newspapers, railways, motor and aerial transport, houses and lands.

In plain language, Communism is the advocacy of theft. Its object is loot. It has no respect for the rights of individuals, but yet has the impudence to aver that its policy is to abolish poverty, achieve prosperity for all, and generally to build a new Jerusalem.

Communists state openly that they are preparing for violence and bloodshed—not for themselves, but for all those who venture to resist them. At the same time they appear to be scared stiff of the police, of the army, and above all of aerial bombardment. In short, like most thieves, they are liars, cowards, and bullies.

Socialism is only different from Communism in that it proposes to achieve the same domination by less drastic means. It aspires to secure a majority of the people to consent to a change from the present system to another in no respect morally

superior, and offers as a bribe material benefits it cannot guarantee.

Because the Commonwealth Land Party proposes the abolition of the present system of State theft and private exploitation, both Communists and Socialists at once jump to the conclusion that we are in favour of wholesale confiscation and State exploitation, like themselves, and accuse us of trying to split the Labour Movement! The cool assumption that the great body of public opinion in this country is prepared to agree to the plunder of private property, the sacrifice of liberty, the overthrow of the Constitution, and to deliver the nation bound hand and foot to bureaucratic control, is indicative of the mentality of the political thief. He thinks everybody else is as dishonest as himself.

Public opinion is not in favour of any extension of the system of State theft in practice to-day. The trend is towards its abolition. That is why we want radically to change the present economic system by divesting Government of the power to impose taxation in any form.

This is a new political principle which has not been enunciated or implied by any other school of political thought. We denounce taxation as State theft and declare it to be as immoral as burglary. We assert that the present system of taxation is the sanction which makes private plunder possible.

We do not want the State, or the Government, or a Dictator to seize anybody's property, or to take anybody's land. Nor do we want the community to buy land, not even by voluntary subscription. We demand that all who hold land to their own use, or who withhold land from use, shall pay the community the full annual value—the rent—of the land so held. This demand is based on the assertion that the earth is the birthright of all mankind, an assertion that does not require proof or call for argument. The fact that man's birthright has been consistently withheld from a majority of the human race does not constitute a valid reason for a continuance of the robbery. Civilisation has no justification unless it restores the earth to the free and equal use of all. If it fails to do this it must perish.

The rent of land is the natural communal revenue. It arises from the presence and activity of population. It is sufficient for all necessary and desirable social services, growing with the increase of population.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the restoration of the land to common ownership by the collection of its rental value, in place of taxation, is not the same thing as the "State ownership" which forms an integral part of the policy of Fascism, Socialism and Communism. These offer us, in exchange for our present economic slavery, an even worse and more intolerable bondage. The C.L.P. Plan offers economic freedom.

Will It Work?

The human race is essentially pragmatical, and the British part is essentially human, using the word *pragmatical* in its proper sense of having respect to material interests. So, when the C.L.P. Plan is propounded to the average man, he does not ask, "Is it right?" and assume that if it is right it must be practical, but he asks, "Will it work?" and if he can be satisfied on this point he is willing then to admit that it is right.

Even when the moral issue inherent in the C.L.P. Plan is presented and compels consent, as it always does, the question, "Will it work?" invariably follows. Having lived in conditions of injustice for so long, Man may be excused for doubting the practicability of justice; he may be forgiven for finding it hard to believe that economic freedom is attainable and not merely a millennial dream.

During the last twenty years such striking changes have taken place throughout the world, that the human mind is becoming prepared for a greater and more radical alteration in the general scheme of things. Even recently, events in both Europe and Asia have upset the calculations of those who strive to hold the world to a course of their own choosing.

What is it that is causing the human race to get so out of hand? Barely a hundred years ago, millions of human beings were chattel slaves. Apparently there are still five million slaves in various parts of the earth. By way of celebrating our comparative freedom from chattel slavery, we are witnessing to-day a resurgence of racial and religious persecution, the violent restriction of human liberty, the conscription of labour, the throttling of the Press, interference with the right of free speech, an increase in armaments, and the attempted militarisation of the civil populace.

The rulers of men are beset with fear. They are acting with a haste begotten of panic. A nameless dread has seized them. They are no longer sure of the power of sword and sceptre, and they are making what many of them must know in their hearts is a last trial of strength, for they are fighting against the growing enlightenment of the human race. The intellectual forces of the world are arraying themselves against tyranny, and the "experts" employed by Government are discredited, recognised as the time-servers they are.

Amidst the welter of confusion the C.L.P. Plan stands out as an unanswered challenge. It is offered throughout the world as a universal plan, based on economic truth, by which a just foundation for human relationships may be established, a foundation upon which economic freedom can be secured for the entire human race, irrespective of border, colour, creed or birth.

The base of the Plan is a Declaration of Common Right to the natural resources of the earth. The reverse side of this

Declaration is the denial that any of those natural resources can be held in private ownership, or that they can be exploited for individual gain at the expense of the community.

This Declaration of Common Right has been voiced right down through all ages of the history of the human race. It is nothing new. What is new is that the number of individuals to-day voicing that Declaration is growing so rapidly that co-operations are being formed all over the world to demand that it be made effective.

The method by which the Declaration of Common Right to the Land can be made effective is contained in the C.L.P. Plan. It is simple enough to be practical, and it is scientific. Because the earth is the birthright of all mankind, it follows that the rent of land belongs to the people. The C.L.P. Plan says simply that the rent of land must be collected for the people by an Administration elected for that purpose, that it must be used to provide all essential and desirable social services, and that taxation must be abolished.

"Will it work?" asks the Man in the Street. This question may be answered in two ways. First, it may be asked, "Does the present system work?" The answer to that is to point to the growing poverty and unemployment of the masses of "civilised" people everywhere in the world where a system of taxation is in operation. The greater and more oppressive the taxation, the greater the poverty and unemployment. In Russia, where the land has been restored theoretically to common ownership, poverty prevails because a system of taxation is in operation. The dictum that taxation must be abolished is an integral part of the C.L.P. Plan.

It is freely admitted that the existing system does not work, that it never has worked so as to provide economic security and equality of opportunity. Then it is reasonable to suggest that the C.L.P. Plan might at least be given a fair trial.

What is it that causes men to hold back from this suggestion? It is the conviction that once the C.L.P. Plan is put into operation it will be impossible to revert to existing conditions. It is the perception that the Plan is completely revolutionary. It needs courage to put it into operation. It is natural that men should desire to see clearly where this Plan will lead them before they commit themselves wholly and unreservedly to it. They realise that it does not admit of compromise with existing conditions, but demands a clean departure from them.

Let us, then, put it into operation so far as our imagination will allow us to do so, and try to see what will happen. We will assume that the Plan has been presented to the electorate of Great Britain and that a substantial majority of members has been elected to Parliament pledged to put the Plan into effect. What would happen next?

The defeated Government would resign and the Leader of the C.L.P. would be sent for by the King, who would formally ask him to assume the office of Prime Minister and form a Government. What kind of Cabinet would the new Prime Minister form?

He would appoint a Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Secretary of State for Home Affairs, for the Dominions and Colonies, for Scotland, for India, and for Foreign Affairs, a Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, a President of the Board of Trade, a Postmaster-General, a Minister of Health, a Lord President of the Council, and a Lord Chancellor. Probably he would leave the remaining portfolios vacant for the time being. The question of creating one or more new departments and of abolishing any existing ones could be settled later.

It would be necessary for the Prime Minister, and perhaps several of his colleagues, to be sworn in as members of the Privy Council, through which a great deal of administrative action is possible. At the first meeting of the Cabinet plans would be formulated for putting into effect the Declaration of Common Right to the Land.

The Declaration would be the first business undertaken by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. On his first appearance after assuming office, immediately after Question Time, he would rise in his place and declare that on a date which he would specify the land of Great Britain is deemed to have been restored to the common ownership of the people of Great Britain. The Declaration might include Northern Ireland, if the Parliament of Northern Ireland were in agreement. Otherwise, Northern Ireland would be omitted from the Declaration.

As soon as possible after the Declaration of Common Right had been made in the British House of Commons, similar Declarations would be made in all the British colonies, and in India in so far as such a Declaration would be possible. The self-governing Dominions would be informed of the Declarations and their Governments would be invited to follow suit.

A convenient date for the Restoration would, of course, be the end of the financial year, March 31st or April 1st, but if the General Election or change of Government which made the Declaration possible occurred any length of time before the end of the financial year, it is possible that the new Government might decide to declare a moratorium and give immediate effect to the Declaration of Common Right. A moratorium is a cancellation or suspension of debts, and is a constitutional expedient that was invoked at the outbreak of the war in 1914. It gave everybody time to adjust themselves to new conditions.

In making the Declaration of Common Right, the Prime Minister would probably make some reference in his pre-

liminary remarks to the various historical precedents which established the validity of his action, or otherwise make it clear that he was acting in strict accordance with the British Constitution. He would be able, for instance, to quote the highest judicial authorities on the question of the right of eminent domain. He would, further, explain that the Restoration involved the abolition of taxation, including local rates, and the collection of the rent of land as the sole public revenue.

No doubt he would point out that in the Department of the Commissioners of Crown Lands the Government was already in possession of the necessary machinery for collecting the Land Rent, and that experienced and highly-trained public officials had been doing for many years on a small scale what they now would be called upon to do in respect of all land.

Local authorities would be assured by the Prime Minister that an ample income, based on population, would be available for local services, while rate collectors, assessors, and other officials employed now by local authorities might be found employment by the Land Rent Department on account of their special knowledge of local land values and other matters.

On the general question of finance, either the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer would probably announce any necessary or desirable changes respecting the issue of currency decided on by the Cabinet. Probably the Government would issue its own currency, as was done during the war, but in this case the currency would be based on the Land Rent Fund, and not, as during the war, on other securities.

As soon as possible after the Declaration the Finance Bill (commonly called the Budget) would be introduced. This is a subject that needs a special chapter to itself. Prompt administrative action would, of course, be taken by the Government to curtail all anti-social activities to which the country might have been committed by the outgoing administration. Public expenditure would be checked, the recruiting of all personnel for the services would be suspended, armament contracts would be cancelled, and arrangements made for the termination of other contractual obligations contrary to the policy of the new Government.

The effect of the abolition of income tax, estate and death duties, customs and excise duties, taxes on capital, cheque and receipt stamps, taxes on petrol, motor and other vehicles, and the abolition of rates on buildings, machinery, and other improvements, would be stupendous. Restrictive legislation affecting trade and employment would be repealed, while other measures might be necessary to facilitate the resumption of employment by the millions now debarred from earning their livelihoods.

A Land Restoration Budget

Over two hundred Tory Members of Parliament have besought the Government to repeal the provisions for land valuation made in the Finance Act of 1931. This attempt to set the clock back will not obstruct a Land Restoration Parliament, because the costly and protracted method of valuing land contained in that Act would not be used.

Immediately after the Declaration of Common Right to the Land is made in the House of Commons the Finance Bill to provide for the collection and administration of the Land Rent Fund would be introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the meantime trade and industry would not have been upset as in previous years by the uncertainty which prevails for months before the annual Budget is introduced. Freed from the terror of increased taxation and with the knowledge of the relief soon to be afforded, producers and distributors would be able to devote themselves to the task of coping with a rapidly increasing demand.

While there would by that time be little or no curiosity as to how the Land Rent would be collected, there would be intense and widespread interest in the proposals to be made for its administration. The method of collection would be simple. Every occupier and holder of land would be furnished with a Land Rent form, a separate form being issued for each parcel or plot. The recipients of these forms would be required to give particulars of the holding, the rent then paid, if any, and a declaration of the estimated annual value.

These forms might be issued and collected through local authorities, former rate assessors and collectors being employed for this purpose and to check the values declared by the holders with known values. On this information a Rent Assessment would be made in respect of each holding, and the occupier or holder would be required to pay the rent to His Majesty's Treasury in half-yearly or quarterly instalments.

Where the land holder's own valuation is accepted, the assessment would be subject to revision, and in cases of undervaluation the full rent would be payable as from the date when it first fell due. Provision would be made to enable a holder to appeal against his rent assessment, as he may now appeal against his income tax or rating assessment, but the right to appeal would be conditional upon the rent having been paid first. If the appeal succeeded any necessary adjustments could be made.

In cases where an occupier, not being a holder, is called on to pay the rent, he would be indemnified against the holder's claim in the same way that a tenant of a house now pays the land lord's income tax in respect of such property and is empowered to deduct it from his next rent payment.

So much for the collection of the rent, a matter which land lords have always found fairly easy and which the community as land lord will certainly not find more difficult, rates and taxes having been abolished. We now come to consideration of how the revenue should be administered. Local authorities will naturally be anxious to know what income they may expect in place of their rate revenue and the various Treasury grants they now receive.

Local expenditure to-day averages £3 13s. 6d. per head of population. A very large proportion of this is absorbed by interest on and redemption of loans. In addition, various Government Departments exercise authority over local administration by means of housing subsidies and grants in aid of education and other services. County Councils receive grants in respect of main roads.

A considerable re-orientation of responsibility as between the central and the local authority would be necessary. The general principle to be established is that the Land Rent Fund should be administered by rather than for the community. Interference by the central authority would not be allowed to masquerade as co-ordination. Education, housing, and all matters dependent on local requirements and conditions, would be handed over to local authorities. Responsibility for main roads and transport generally would be assumed by the central authority.

Grants from the National Exchequer to-day for local and other services amount to £132,000,000, of which all but £22,000,000 are included under the headings of Contributions to Local Revenues, Education, Housing, and Health services.

Taking these items into consideration it would be possible to allocate a sum of £7 per head of population for local services, payment to be made to each local authority on the basis of the last census figures. This would absorb £311,500,000 of the national income. The present rate revenue is about £164,000,000, so that this arrangement would give local authorities an additional £37,500,000 a year to spend on social services—nearly 17s. per head of population extra.

Let us turn now to national expenditure and see what we spend to-day. The figures are illuminating:—

Other Grants	£22,000,000
National Pensions	98,424,000
Insurance	82,539,000
Customs, Excise and Inland Revenue	12,630,000
All Other Services	25,839,000
Road Fund	23,000,000
Total	£264,432,000

All but six millions of the item under Insurance is expended on Unemployment. Under Land Restoration this would be a rapidly diminishing figure, but we propose to leave

it standing in our first Budget, as we shall want to spend money helping people back to work.

Without going into details, but remembering that there would be immediate and substantial savings on administration, it would be possible to reduce the total expenditure by about £40,000,000 the first year, and considerably more in the years to follow. We shall, therefore, need £224,432,000 for national supply, in addition to the £311,500,000 allocated to local services—a total of £536,000,000 in round figures.

Now let us consider what income we may expect. Any surplus made by the Post Office would be left in the hands of that Department, to be applied to paying the higher wages to Post Office workers that they would be able to demand effectively, and to reducing postal rates. We can count of something like £1,750,000 from rents of Crown Lands. The administration of all public lands held by other Departments would, where possible, be handed over to the Crown Lands Office, which with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, would probably be merged into a Ministry of Lands.

Taking the average rental value of the land of Great Britain as only £12 10s. per head of population, which is what it is in New Zealand, the yield would be £556,250,000, leaving a balance of £26,250,000—an ample safety margin.

In all probability the rental income would prove to be at least £100,000,000 more, in which case a supplementary Budget could be introduced—not to impose more taxes or to make cuts in salaries—but to provide new and improved national and local services.

No provision has been made for what are known as the Consolidated Fund Services—otherwise the “National Debt”—amounting in the present year to £234,000,000. This sum is taken by taxation out of the pockets of the public and paid to holders of Government stocks and bonds. A Land Restoration Parliament would have no authority from the people to continue this operation, and obviously no part of the Land Rent Fund could be applied to this purpose.

Similarly £109,000,000 is provided by taxation to-day for the Army, Navy and Air Forces, including ordnance factories. The bulk of this money is spent on administration and experimental preparation for war. As Government would no longer be robbing the people it would not have to arm itself against them, or against the peoples of any other country. Such expenditure being anti-social can only be provided for by taxation, but as both the Central and Local Authorities have been divested of the power to impose taxation by the Declaration of Common Right, these Departments of State would be discontinued. Their liquidation would provide the funds necessary for the disbanding of personnel.

When Taxation Is Abolished

During the present financial year the total sum to be raised by the imposition of rates and taxes is £884,000,000. As the Land Restoration Budget visualises a minimum revenue of £556,250,000, it would appear that there is a difference of nearly £328,000,000.

It may be true that this money is merely transferred from one set of pockets to another, and mainly from the pockets of the poor to the pockets of the rich. It may be argued that the money remains in the country and is expended in the country, but accumulations of wealth in the hands of rich people are not spent on food, clothing, housing, and the amenities of life, except to a small extent. Much of the money which finds its way into the pockets of the rich through the process of taxation is used as an instrument for making a profit from industry. In other words, it is invested in the form of capital in various undertakings, in loans to local authorities for public services, at varying rates of interest, and in this way an accumulating burden is formed.

Another point which has to be considered in examining the effects of the abolition of taxation is what part of the rent of land now collected by Land Lords is taken in taxation. If we assume that the entire Land Rent revenue anticipated in the Land Restoration Budget is to-day assessable to income tax, then only £139,000,000 would be taken, which is one-fifth of the total. This, of course, is far too generous an estimate. The actual figure is about £60,000,000. Nothing is paid to-day by Land Lords in respect of over twelve million acres of idle land, some of it very valuable.

To illustrate the way in which land rent is concealed, one simple example will suffice. An acre of land was sold in Hammersmith recently for £18,000. On this land are slum dwellings with a minus value, which means that the site would be worth more if it were cleared. The land is held on a 99-year lease which expires in 1939, and the present ground rent is £75 per annum. This means that 93 years ago the land was worth £1,500. Its true rental value to-day is about £900 per annum. The holder of the land has received only £75 per annum for it and has paid tax on that income. Now he has sold it for £18,000 and has raked off £16,500 accumulated rental value, on which he pays nothing. Added to this, the slum dwellers on that land have paid high rents for worthless property which should have been pulled down years ago, and which would have been destroyed had the full rent been paid.

In order properly to visualise the effects on the general public of the abolition of taxation, it is better to take examples and show how the community will benefit. It must be pointed

out, however, that the saving of £328,000,000, indicated at the beginning of this article, would provide a living wage at present-day standards to over 3,000,000 people—the visible number of unemployed.

Let us take first the abolition of rates. In the aggregate the rate revenue is £163,603,000, which is paid by about 9,000,000 householders, an average of £17 per annum, or 6s. 6d. per week per head. The abolition of rates would give householders, the vast majority of whom are wage-earners, from 1s. to 10s. or more per week to spend. This money would undoubtedly be spent mainly on necessities of which most householders and their families are now deprived. It would, therefore, operate directly to create additional employment and would probably put over a million people back at work.

These idle people are now costing the community over £50,000,000 a year in relief, and the saving of this sum would again reduce unemployment. The vicious circle now existing, which is causing ever widening rings of poverty and distress, would be broken, and the return to prosperity would be rapid.

Excise duties are estimated to produce £113,000,000 in 1933-4. The bulk of this money comes from duties on beer and spirits, and the balance from licences, patent medicines, table waters, entertainments, and matches. It is, in the main, a contribution to revenue extracted from the pockets of the workers, and, generally speaking, the lower the wage, the greater is the imposition. The abolition of these duties would leave this vast sum in the pockets of the workers, again to be expended on additional food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities. Here, again, there would be an immense increase in effective demand for the primary products of which there is declared by unthinking people to be a glut to-day.

Some people are fearful of the possible effects of removing suddenly the heavy taxes on alcoholic liquors, but in countries where such taxation is light there is less excess than in Great Britain, and the effects could hardly be so harmful as the attempted enforcement of prohibition in the United States of America. It is fair also to assume that the steady decrease in drunkenness in this country is due as much to enlightenment as to taxation. People will not drink themselves to death when for the first time in their existence life has become worth living. Happiness and insobriety do not dwell together, and the former never begets the latter.

The revenue from customs is £168,000,000. The main items affected are tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, wine, spirits, matches, clocks and watches, and tobacco. Other foodstuffs are taxed to-day, and many other staple products. The duties on tobacco amount to about £63,000,000 of the total, a burden borne very generally, and again falling most heavily on the poorest in the community. It is easy to imagine the tremendous

increase in spending power that would follow the entire abolition of these duties.

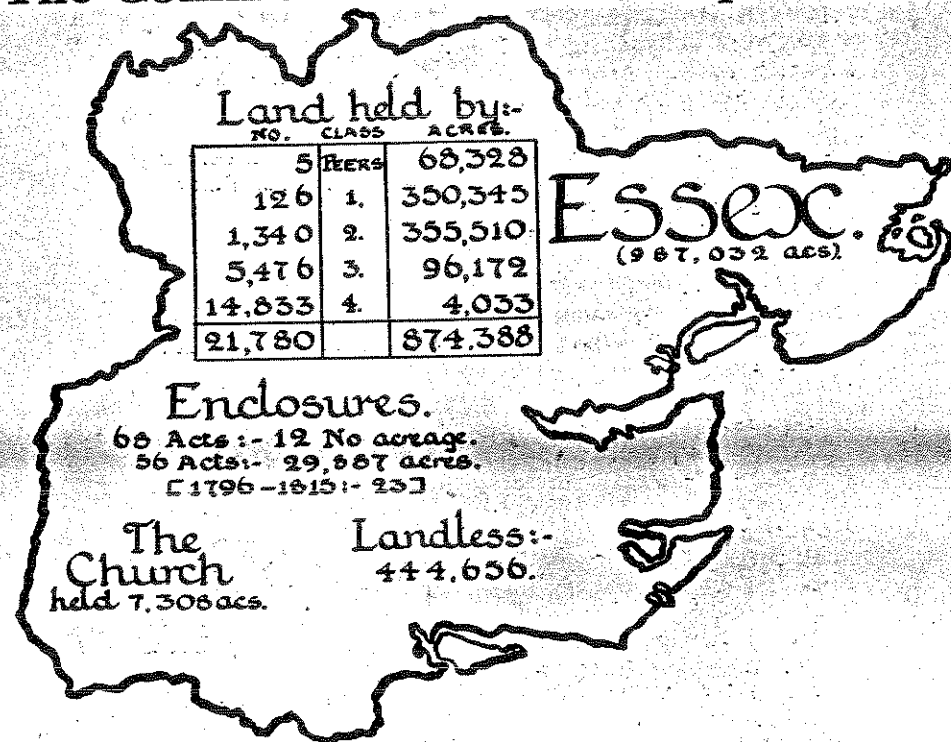
Effective demand would easily outrun present supplies of all staple products, with the result that employment would rapidly increase, while wages would rise. Prices would, of course, rise, too, but not out of proportion to the increase in wages, because freedom to produce and access to natural resources would result in abundance. Home products would be cheaper to buy than imported products where the latter came from countries where taxation was still in force, with the result that the volume of imports would be automatically checked, except perhaps in respect of necessities we could not or did not find it profitable to produce ourselves.

In the commercial world the abolition of the tax on cheques, which is a tax on the payment of money, and receipt stamps, which are a tax on the receipt of payments, would be welcomed. Taxes in the form of stamp duties on negotiable instruments of all kinds and on capital would also be abolished, thus greatly cheapening and facilitating all business transactions. It is estimated that these taxes alone amount to over £1 per head of population.

When we come to income tax, we find again that wage-earners are affected directly and indirectly, because the taxes imposed on industry tend to depress wages. The estimated revenue from income tax during the present year is £240,000,000. The actual income in salaries assessable to income tax is about £900,000,000, and about one-eighth of this sum is stolen from these earned incomes. Incomes from businesses total £1,000,000,000, and a very large proportion of this sum may be regarded as the earnings of small traders and manufacturers. The trading profits of industries, distributing organisations, and the professions amount to another £1,000,000,000, and the taxation on this vast sum would, when released, pour back into general circulation and stimulate production.

There is a limit to what a human being can eat, drink, and wear, while one house suffices for the majority of people. When these needs are fully supplied, as they can so easily be met, there remain to be satisfied all those other desires of the human heart which to millions to-day are in the sphere of wistful dreams. The abolition of taxation would bring them within the reach of all.

The Commonwealth Land Map.—7. Essex.



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Landholding in Essex.

Compiled from the Return of 1876.

Five peers held nearly one-sixteenth of the county.

Class 1. Holders of more than 1,000 acres:—126 persons held over one-third of the county.

Class 2. Holders of 100 to 1,000 acres:—1,340 persons held over one-third.

The above 1,471 persons held over three-quarters of the county.

Class 3. Holders of 1 to 100 acres:—5,476 persons held less than one-tenth.

Class 4. Holders of less than 1 acre:—14,833 persons share between them about one two-hundred-and-forty-fifth part of the county.

Landless:—444,656 others did not possess one square inch of the county.

The figures quoted are extracted from the "Return of Owners of Land," 1876; the only return published since the Domesday Book of 1086.

To-day the population of Essex is not less than 1,500,000; and 98 out of every 100 are landless.