

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN AND SINGLE TAX.

Speaking to his constituents at Bridgeton on Oct. 15, Sir George Trevelyan, referring to the question of monopoly, said he would give a case which would interest people who had studied the question of the taxation of ground values. At a railway arbitration then going on in London there was a property rated on an annual assessment of very few thousand pounds for which £400,000 was claimed. Let the Single Tax Association consider that. But that was not all. This sum included licenses for public houses, which were valued at £40,000. Here were licenses which professed to be granted annually to individuals on their good behavior and it was reckoned so certain that the house and not the individual would get them, not for one year, but for ever, that the ground landlord claimed more than £40,000 for surrendering the soil to the railway company. That was the state of things which was supposed to be in agreement with the laws of natural justice under the administration by which the country was at present governed. That was the state of things which would never be altered by a House of Commons elected on a limited suffrage for the many, and an unlimited suffrage for the few, by a House of Lords which did not go through the process of election at all. That was a system of privilege and partiality against some forms of which the Liberal party this year, however much outnumbered, had protested, and on some occasions had not protested in vain. (Cheers.) And where their efforts were not crowned with success they were honestly and sternously made.

In reply to a question as to whether he would tax vacant land, Sir George said that Glasgow and the great cities got nothing under the Agricultural Rating Bill. But there was a class of land which would get something even within the boundaries of Glasgow—that is the land called agricultural land, and the agricultural land within the boundaries of the burgh was land which was being kept until by the industry of the burghal community and by the taxes taken from the people who live and worked there, that land had attained a fancy value. In the meanwhile it was rated at agricultural value and would have half its rates paid. He would cut the difficulty by taxing that and all other lands on their value as land.

There are over 70 candidates standing for the 75 seats pledged to the taxation of land values.

R. C. Munro Ferguson, M.P., writes: "No one can wish you more success than I do in your efforts to secure that buildings lands be taxed upon their values. It is the more necessary to keep the subject before the country now because of the commission appointed to inquire into the incidence of local taxation."—Glasgow Single Tax for November.

RECORD OF SUICIDES.

The records of the Registrar of Vital Statistics of the city of New York on suicides in 1895, show that 376 persons disposed of themselves, as against 331 in 1894 and 314 in 1893. This is an increase of 13.6 per cent. over 1894, and is by far the highest number ever recorded in the city, and is more than 45 per cent. higher than the annual average of the previous ten years.

This rapid increase, the Registrar says, is undoubtedly due to the existing financial depression. One suicide every day in the year on the average, and they still continue to increase. Not a day goes by without hearing of similar occurrences. One need only read the papers of our large cities and there find instances day after day, of people suffering all the miseries of involuntary poverty. Is it any wonder that men and women kill themselves to escape life's tortures?

Rev. Russell H. Conwell, Philadelphia, says: "If this world belongs to God, and if, as all men in their hearts agree, we are all his children, then, of course, in his garden everyone has an equal right to share in the land which the Father hath given unto mankind. But you will say it is not equal now. No; and the parties of this Republic do not advocate that it should be equal, either.



PAT. CORRIGAN.—"Here's a new wan fer ye Mickie. If taxin' bldins and sich like makes them dear, and taxin' land makes it cheap, how high must the tax on bldins be before you can git them fer nothin'?"

DAN. MCCORKAN.—"Nt, but can yus tell me this; if labor-savin' machinery redooses the price of goods an' makes thim cheap, an' I can't git any of thim, how much should the 'other fellow' git who don't do nothin' at all?"

PAT.—"Ah, go wan—give us somethin' say."

He was a go-ahead youngman. But because his parents were poor he had missed an education, except a few weeks in the winter, and as a result at twenty-one he was only a day laborer. He wanted a home, and so he tried himself into an "anti-poverty society of one," and began to save his wages. At the end of the first year he had \$50 in the bank drawing 4 per cent. This he continued to do year after year with patient perseverance, never running into debt or spending money foolishly, until at the end of ten years he had just \$750. At that rate the home seemed as far off as ever, so he determined to buy a lot, and with what was left start the house and give a mortgage on the whole to get the money to complete it. But while he had been working and saving others had done the same thing. The town had grown and the value of land had increased.

Across the street was the lot he had set his mind on having, and he went to buy it. The price was a thousand dollars. For the last ten years he couldn't remember that even a cow had pastured there; the boys had used it to play ball on Saturday, and that was all.

"Why," said he, "ten years ago I could have bought that lot for a hundred dollars from you."

"More fool that you didn't," said the owner. "It's worth a thousand now."

And so it was. He ought to have purchased then, only he had no money in those days.

"Well, I'll have to find a cheaper lot," he said to himself, and wandered from one real estate office to another, till at last way out on the edge of the town, far from his work, in a sparsely settled neighborhood, he found a lot that he valued at seventy-five dollars would buy. He could have got cheaper ones further on, only they were so far he couldn't reach his work mornings, so he bought this—half his savings gone. He begins his house, borrows \$500, gives the mortgage, and at last has a lot worth \$375 and a house worth \$850, or \$1,025 in all. Now, at last, says he, I have a home, and the fifty dollars a year I save will pay the interest of thirty dollars and a little on the principal. Then the assessor comes along and assesses him on the house as worth a thousand dollars, while the six vacant lots next to his place, for which \$375 a piece is asked, are assessed as worth only \$250 in all. The mortgage is a bill of sale to the man he borrowed a lot of his house and lot, yet he himself pays the taxes on it all. He can only work six days in the week, while the mortgage works all the time, nights and Sundays. The burden of debt and taxes is eating him up, and the little "anti-poverty society of one" is in danger of foreclosure.

A copy of "Progress and Poverty" falls into his hands, and in the evening, when not too tired, and perhaps a Sunday afternoon, he studies that wonderful book, until at last the light breaks in upon him, and he begins to see why it is so hard for a poor man to get a home or anything else

in the world, and next we hear him discussing it with his nearest neighbor.

"You see," he says, "I thought I was saving \$50 a year, but I wasn't. I was only giving it to a fellow that hasn't done anything but wait. The man that sold me this lot just now for \$375 would have sold it ten years ago for \$25, so I have been saving \$35 a year to give to this man who has done nothing for it. It's because we have been working here and the boss using his capital and building up trade and business that the land has risen in value, and it seems to me that if we make the value that land gets the land ought to pay the taxes, and it seems to me, too, that if I had only to pay taxes on the value of my lot and not on my house I wouldn't have much taxes to pay, and they'd make up the loss by assessing those six empty lots alongside of me just the same as they assess my lot, and that fellow would pay taxes on \$2,250 instead of on \$250, which is what his lots are valued at now. I guess I'll vote the single tax ticket when I get a chance." "And you can count me with you," says his friend.

Co-operation upon a voluntary basis, both among business men and employees, is certainly more commendable than any other plan proposed to better their conditions. As a weapon in the commercial field and properly managed, it would relieve much of the discontent heard on all sides and would most effectively cure the irrational discussion of departmental store opponents. The Morning World, of the 9th, referring to this subject, says: "To further meet the opposition of the big stores, the retailers in different lines of business are advised to co-operate by taking adjoining stores in the same block and then connecting them during business hours by doors opening into each other. A co-operative delivery run in connection with such a scheme would help to make the system complete." I am glad to have my opinion and views in the matter coincided with by The World. Not many months ago I was discussing the departmental store question with a gentleman who was deploring the position of the small retailers, and I then expressed precisely the same plan as outlined above. I feel quite sure that the co-operative plan is the best that could be devised under the circumstances, and the sooner it is acted upon the better it will be for the discontented merchants.

The Church Reformer: The Bishop of Rochester, speaking in the discussion on "Private Property in Land," at the Rochester Diocesan Conference, said he had been a little startled to find the newness to this meeting of the principles which had been having a larger circulation in England than almost any other doctrines of our time during the last ten years. Whether they liked them or not, they ought to know them and be familiar with them. He did not know how many of them had read Mr. George's books. He was sorry for those who had not.