

for peasant proprietorship of the land, but it does make for the creation of a class of small capitalist farmers, who will almost inevitably become hard reactionaries just in proportion to their blighting "success." There is no defender of the *status quo* and the rights of property so bitter or so bigoted as the small capitalist, especially if he be mortgaged to the neck.

With a Liberal Government adopting public ownership of Irish land, repudiating the peasant proprietorship of the Wyndham Act, stopping the sale of Crown Lands, and actually buying a Lincolnshire estate for experimental purposes, the idea of Collectivist farming is brought sensibly nearer. Already Glasgow makes municipal farming pay on a fairly large scale, Bradford city discusses the advisability of starting dairy farming, and a number of Poor Law and Asylum authorities are proving that farming may be made to pay without the "magic of ownership" and even with the not specially suitable labour of paupers and the mildly insane. All this, I repeat, is in the true line of agrarian evolution as opposed to dog-in-the-manger taxing—a spirit which seeks to shun responsibility for the management of the land while still claiming a share of the fruits of other people's management.

This spirit of Individualistic aloofness would find itself defeated by its own success. If it succeeded in imposing the taxation it contemplates, the land would be thrown upon its hands, and a Single-Tax Administration would have to administer the land whether it would or no. This is not the Georgite idea, some of whose exponents have declared (Louis Post in the official journal, *The Standard*, for one) that they would wish to leave the land in the hands of the present owners, allowing them a moiety of the rent to compensate them for their administration of it. But the owners do not administer it. All the larger and many of the smaller estates are managed by agents, with a staff of clerks, and the owners would mostly have neither the ability nor the industry for estate administration. Anyhow, Mr. Outhwaite declares that he is for 20s. in the £ of taxation upon the land.

All this is pure Impossibilism, a waste of time, and an abandonment of the only lines upon which progress with the land question can be made. In spite of the schemes of purchase already mentioned, the land question is really a question of local government. In Germany the great test of the goodness or otherwise of local government is the extent to which the local authority acquires land. Since the time of Goethe at least that has been the watchword in German civic life. In private we ask: Is So-and-so doing any good? By which we mean is he acquiring money or property. That is a better test for the community than it is for the individual. It has operated