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# AFFORESTATION.

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## THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE LAND.

— BY —

T. SUMMERBELL, M.P.



**ONE PENNY.**

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PUBLISHED BY THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY, 23 BRIDE LANE,  
FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

**This pamphlet is issued with the endorsement of the Council of the Independent Labour Party, but for the opinions expressed the Author is responsible.**

# AFFORESTATION

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## THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE LAND.

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**W**HEN I consider the Land question, and its possibilities from an unemployed standpoint, has not received that attention which is due to it. It is, therefore, with the object of calling attention to a few important particulars appertaining thereto that this pamphlet is written, not so much as to the Agricultural side of the matter, as to the one of afforestation. Of course to the Socialist there can be no complete solution of this question apart from the abolition of private ownership, and the restoration of the land to the people. In the words of J. A. Froude: "Land is not, and cannot be, property in the sense in which movable things are property. Every human being born into this planet must live upon the land if he lives at all. He did not ask to be born, and, being born, room must be found for him. The land in any country is really the property of the nation which occupies it." Let that be our ideal, but in the meantime it is our duty to lay hold of each and every reform that will carry us to the goal we have in view.

To enable the reader to grasp how important it is that something should at once be done in the direction of putting the land to its proper use, a few general facts may not be out of place.

It is estimated that there are about 77,000,000 acres of land in the United Kingdom, of which about 35,000,000 acres are considered as cultivatable. That nothing like this quantity is cultivated goes without saying, the total arable land in 1907 being below fifteen million acres. In fact during the past 30 years a reduction has proceeded, with comparatively slight yearly fluctuations, at the rate of about one million acres per decade. Wheat, green crops, afforestation, and the raising of cattle all show a decline. The cultivator of the soil, with his wife and family, has had to give way to the gamekeeper and the stray shepherd. The breeding of game, in order that pleasure may be afforded the rich, is considered of greater importance by those in authority than the one of the cultivation of food. In 1860 nearly three-fourths of the wheat consumed in the United Kingdom was home-grown, but in 1886 it

had dropped down to little more than one-third, and that in spite of an increase in population of eight millions. As stated above, this decline has continued, the worst feature of all being that compared to 1861 it is estimated that there are about one million less men employed on the land at present than at that time in England and Wales alone. The number of agricultural labourers in 1861 was 2,100,000, whereas the number now stands at about 1,311,000, the decline having taken place in every county except Anglesea and Flint. In 1907 as compared to 1906 there were 89,423 acres less under cultivation for wheat, barley, and oats, the total average being 6,460,437, the lowest on record. There was a decrease also in regard to potatoes, turnips, carrots, hops, and timber, but an increase as to cabbages, onions, and fruit. Land laid down to grass increased by 33,150 acres, making the total under this head 17,277,884 acres, being the largest figure ever reached.

Under this head alone, we have a crushing indictment against private ownership of land, and the strongest possible argument in favour of State action. The landed aristocracy have failed miserably, and stand condemned in the eyes of the people, no matter from what standpoint we view the question. In order that the reader may have some idea as to the justification for the latter sentence, allow me to quote a passage from Prince Kropotkin's excellent book "Fields, Factories, and Workshops." Under the head of the possibilities of Agriculture, he points out that (1) if the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated only as it was thirty-five years ago, 24,000,000 people, instead of 17,000,000, could live on home-grown food; and that culture, while giving occupation to an additional 750,000 men, would give nearly 3,000,000 wealthy home customers to British manufactures. (2) If the cultivatable area of the United Kingdom were cultivated as the soil is cultivated on the average in Belgium, the United Kingdom would have food for at least 37,000,000 inhabitants, and it might export agricultural produce without ceasing to manufacture, so as freely to supply all the needs of a wealthy population, and finally (3) if the population of this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing the food for 80,000,000 inhabitants, would be to cultivate the soil as it is cultivated in the best farms of Lombardy and in Flanders.

The cause of this downward movement is self-evident. It is the desertion, the abandonment of the land. Each crop requiring human labour has had its area reduced, and agricultural labourers have been sent away to reinforce the ranks of the unemployed in our cities and towns, so that far from being over populated, the fields of Britain are starved of human labour. As James Laird used to say, "The British nation does not work on her soil, she is prevented from doing so, and the would-be economists complain that the soil will not nourish its inhabitants."

To every land reformer, particularly the men and women in the Socialist movement, these words will appeal strongly. Think of it, about one million men, with their wives and families divorced from the land, about equal to the number of our unemployed at the present moment. On every hand we are faced with great stretches of barren wastes, instead of which, had the nation's welfare been the first consideration, we might have had smiling fields of grain and woodland, and millions of the population living a pure and healthy life. Thousands who have drifted into our towns from the rural areas are to-day living under miserable and degrading conditions, and would gladly return to the land if reasonable opportunity presented itself. The opportunity must be given, and that before long; but the time of its advent rests with the working-class voters of the country. The composition of the House of Commons will have to be changed by the sending of more representatives from the ranks of the people, and fewer of the wealthy land-owning class. By the aid of the parliamentary machine the latter have robbed the people of their birth-right, and the same machine will have again to be used to restore the land again to the people. That we cannot hope for much from the land-owning class is evidenced from their constant cry to be still further relieved from taxation. In 1896, the Right Honorable Mr Chaplin said: "In our opinion the condition of agriculture throughout the country is such that the relief from the burdens placed upon it will not brook more delay . . . . . the unfair proportion, as we think, in which the land is taxed, especially when compared with its ability to bear such taxation." That the land-owning class have used this cry to their own advantage, and to the detriment of the working class, is easily demonstrated. At the beginning of the last century land paid 3/- in the £, but in 1896 it was down as low as 9d. in the £. In 1817 the total amount of rates borne by land amounted to £6,730,000, and house and other property paid £3,370,000, but in 1868 land only contributed £5,500,000, as against £11,000,000 by other property. And when we get up to 1891 we find the difference still greater in favour of land, the totals being house and other property £23,560,000, as against a paltry £4,260,000 from land. To grasp more clearly how the idle lauded aristocracy have shifted the incidence of taxation off their own shoulders on to the shoulders of the people in towns, I may say that house and other property in 1891 bore 84'69 per cent. of the whole, whereas in 1817 it was land 66'66 per cent., and house and other property 33'33 per cent. In face of these figures it is audacious that these people should still cry out for more, especially when it is borne in mind that they were granted relief in regard to the Poor Rate a few years ago to the extent of £2,000,000 per annum. When we claim a larger share of the Parliamentary representation, we are often reminded by our opponents that we are fighting for class legislation, which in their opinion is wrong. Is the above not class legislation with a vengeance, to be condemned

by every right thinking man and woman. The object of such a cry is patent to any one, but it will have no effect in checking the demand for more democratic land legislation.

Let me further call attention to two other particulars. For over a century the landowners have been asking to be relieved of taxation, in order that through the agency of such relief they might be enabled to cultivate the land with advantage to themselves from a paying standpoint. As indicated, they have been relieved to an outrageous extent, yet this important fact remains, that more land year by year has gone out of cultivation. The inference, therefore, to be drawn is, that if the land was more heavily taxed—as it should undoubtedly be—more of it would be under cultivation. That there would be more used for the growing of food and timber, and less used for the cultivation of deer and game for sport. Let me therefore ask the reader to assist the Independent Labour Party in resisting any further concessions to the landed interest, and to help in bringing about Land Nationalisation, which is the only effective way of grappling with the question. The landlord class earns nothing, and reaps where they have not sown. They give no service to the community, and yet they take over £100,000,000 per annum in the shape of rent out of the industry of the country. The old Book says: "The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." It is a good text, and cannot be too often quoted, especially to those religious people who are so loud in their condemnation of Socialism.

It is generally accepted by a large number of people that the land of this country is not of a character suitable for cultivation to the same extent as it is cultivated in other countries. The weight of evidence, however, is in direct opposition to such a contention, either from the standpoint of soil and climate, or crops per acre that could be secured if an earnest effort was put forth in regard to the question. Within 10 miles of London, with its 5,000,000 people, there is practically nothing but meadowland, yet London is supplied with Flemish and Jersey potatoes, French salads, and Canadian apples. If this land were in the hands of Paris gardeners it is estimated that 2,000 people at least could be employed on this land, and that vegetables to the value of from £50 to £300 per acre could be got from it. Of the total area of France, 57 per cent. is under crops; in this country we have but 25 per cent. Only 12 per cent. of the land of France is in meadow and permanent pasture; in Britain we have considerably more acres in meadow, pasture, and grazing land than are devoted to the same purposes in France; but notwithstanding, France supports 8,250,000 dairy cows to our 2,750,000; and 7,500,000 pigs to our 2,500,000. A comparison with Germany also puts us in an equally unfavourable light, the latter country having half her area under crops, 15 per cent. meadow and pasture, and 25 per cent. forests. These are facts which claim our



serious consideration, and demand an explanation from those who now own the land. Now, as to crops. According to the best authorities on land cultivation, it is estimated that French crops yield on an average 17 bushels to the acre, Belgium crops 27 bushels to the acre, whereas British crops yield on an average 28 bushels to the acre. The same satisfactory results could be achieved as to the growing of timber, in regard to which I will deal more fully in the following pages. If other nations, with no better soil or natural conditions, can get more from the land than we are doing, then we must confess to either a colossal ignorance of agriculture, or a wilful neglect of developing this great potential wealth. In my opinion the latter assertion is the more correct one.

At the present moment, however, there is evidence of an awakening in regard to this great problem, and it is for the men and women of the Socialist movement to see to it that the nation does not again fall asleep over it. We have got the Small Holdings Act, a Commission has recently issued a report as to Afforestation in Ireland, and a Commission is now sitting as to the same question in England, Scotland, and Wales. Resolutions in favour of State action in regard to Forestry have been passed by many authorities, the Association of Municipal Corporations having passed a resolution to the effect "That the time has now arrived when the question of Afforestation should be seriously considered by the Government, and that the Law Committee take steps to urge upon the Government the necessity for initiating Afforestation schemes." Arising out of this, a representative gathering, under the auspices of the Board of Agriculture, was held in London, when with unanimity it was declared that the time had arrived for action in regard to the matter. In fact all the bodies that have at all gone into the question have arrived at the same conclusion. Opinions vary as to the volume of labour afforestation would call into being, but in considering this aspect of the question many things have to be taken into account. The appalling extent of rural depopulation I have already indicated, and our efforts ought to be focussed with a view in the first place to check this depopulation. The great evil in regard to our rural life to-day is the want of continuous employment. Such labour as now exists only provides a few months' work in the year, and therefore any scheme that lends itself to the provision of a few months' additional work per year will be in the direction of checking this rural exodus. Afforestation would provide employment at a time of year—November, December, January, and February—when very little labour is required on the farms, in planting and preparing the land for timber growing. Should the latter be taken in hand by the Government, and the workmen be granted facilities to acquire small holdings, something like continuous employment would thus be placed within the reach of the major portion of our agricultural population. The gradual flow of

the people from our rural areas to our great towns and cities would in a great measure be thus checked. This I know is a small matter in so far as grappling with the great unemployed army, but yet it is a point worth bearing in mind. When looked at from a national standpoint, however, greater possibilities present themselves, and we are better able to grasp the amount of additional labour that would be required for a State scheme of Sylviculture.

In spite of the enormous increase in the manufacture of steel and iron, and the prediction that steel and iron would take the place of timber in many ways, there is an increasing use of timber the world over. The use of timber for a multitude of purposes in industry and art has brought a timber famine within measureable distance, while in this country little or nothing has been done to provide against it. Timber has risen rapidly in value during recent years, and is still rising, with every prospect of it continuing to do so. The home production of timber probably does not exceed two million tons, and we import more than ten million tons. The increase in our imports since 1864 has been at the rate of about 190,000 tons a year, and we have got to ask ourselves—presuming we are going to sit still and do nothing—as to whether we can rely for any length of time on getting the necessary timber we require. Prof. Schlich, one of the best known authorities on afforestation, is of the opinion that we cannot. Most of the European countries import, and but a few export timber. The countries that import timber to-day are:—Great Britain and Ireland, Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Greece, and Servia. The exporting countries are:—Roumania, Norway, Austria-Hungary, Sweden, and Russia. In fact, if we draw the balance for the whole of Europe, we find an annual deficiency of 2,620,000 tons. Europe has not been able for many years to supply, from within its own limits, the timber required by the several nations. This deficiency is on the increase, and goes to prove that prices will be higher in the future than they have been in the past. Our main supplies come from the Baltic, Canada, and the United States of America, and it is estimated that the latter country is at present consuming five times more timber than she is producing. Mr James Wilson, the Secretary of the Agricultural Department of Washington, in a pamphlet entitled the "Timber Supply of the United States," points out that the area of all forests in the United States is about 700,000,000 acres. The annual cutting is 400,000,000 tons, which is equal to the increment of three years. As only one-fifth of the area belongs to the Government, and four-fifths are private property, the result is that the pressure for supplying the United States is increasing every year, and they must more and more fall back upon imports from Canada. This will seriously affect us in this country, and is to my mind conclusive proof as to the growing scarcity of timber, and the high prices that

will have to be paid. During the years 1890 to 1896 there has been an increase in price equal to 17 per cent., and if we take coniferous woods only, the increase is equal to 30 per cent. during the same period. In fact, so far as timber is concerned, the world has been living greatly on its capital, and not upon its production alone. Vast areas of forests have been destroyed, or their produce converted into timber, and countries which have been large exporters are finding themselves to be in danger of shortage for their own requirements.

According to the Report on Irish Forestry, the area under timber in 1907 in England was equal to 5·3 per cent., Scotland 4·6 per cent., Wales 3·9 per cent., and Ireland only 1·5 per cent. Whereas in Austria the area under timber was equal to 32 per cent., Hungary 27 per cent., France 17 per cent., Belgium 17 per cent., Germany 26 per cent., Holland 8 per cent., and Denmark 7 per cent. Compared with other countries we occupy an unenviable position, a continuance of which cannot be justified.

Of the timber we import at the present time, 87 per cent. are pine and fir, 3 per cent. oak, and 10 per cent. teak, mahogany, and other furniture woods. Hence 90 per cent., or nine million tons, are material which can be produced in this country by the afforestation of six or seven million acres of land. The total value of our imports to-day cannot be far short of 30 million pounds. The expenditure of only a reasonable sum of this money at home on afforestation would mean employment for a considerable number of our unemployed in digging, trenching, planting, &c. Some experts are of opinion that every 1,000 acres of added forest would provide work for about 16 men, representing a population of 80 persons. This is without taking into account those that would ultimately be employed in the transport of the produce, and in the various industries—chair making, cartwrighting, coach building, furniture making, packing box making, the making of bobbins, spools, tool handles, and timber for building trades and railway companies—which regularly managed woodlands generally give rise to. It is estimated that 2,500 acres of sheep land are looked after by one shepherd, whereas under forestry one man to about 100 acres would be employed, or in other words, 20 men in place of one. The estimates do not vary to any great extent, and all go to prove that forestry on an adequate scale will provide a great deal of employment, and that is one of its principal advantages to a country.

Up to this point several important particulars have been brought home to us. First, that land in this country under all heads is going out of cultivation, and that we are far behind other European countries in this respect; second, that we are threatened with a timber famine, and, therefore, a steady increase in the price of the timber we require; and, third, that afforestation, especially in conjunction with a scheme of small holdings, would provide labour

for a large number of those at present unemployed. In regard to these three points there will be practical agreement, and what we have now to prove is as to whether there is sufficient land for a State scheme of afforestation, whether such land could be profitably used for the purpose, and next, as to whether the unemployed could with beneficial results be employed upon it.

As to how much land there is available for afforestation, the agricultural returns for 1906 give the following information:—England has 2,371,000 acres of mountain and heath land used for grazing, Wales 1,288,000 acres, Scotland 9,088,000 acres, and Ireland 2,244,000 acres, giving a grand total of 14,922,000 acres available for the purpose. In addition to this there is an additional area in Ireland of bog, marsh, and barren mountain land, waste, &c., of over 2,000,000 acres, fully one-third of which might be profitably used for the purpose of timber growing. Great quantities of similar land in England, Wales, and Scotland also exist. The land, therefore, abounds in plenty, and seeing that much of it is at present let for sums varying from 1/- to 2/6 per acre, it will not be seriously argued that it could not be more profitably put to a better use.

As to the financial aspect of the question, much valuable information exists to guide us in regard to this point. Whatever might be said as to our climate in other respects, it is all right for the growing of timber, and, therefore, what other countries have achieved, we could equally do. In 1904 the capital value of the forests in Saxony, the land, and the timber standing upon it, came to £19,070,606, and calculated according to the outlay, with compound interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., it comes to £48 8s. 0d. per acre. Taking the forests of Saxony all round, good, bad, and indifferent, there is a return equal to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the present capital value. Owing to the difference in climate, however, the production of timber in these islands will be more rapid than in Saxony, so that if we take into consideration, by way of a comparison, that we can produce timber crops more rapidly, and possibly of more valuable kinds, we might safely count on a return of from 3 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The State or Crown forests of Hesse Darmstadt cover an area of 175,700 acres, and the yield of timber per acre is only 17 cubic feet, and the firewood represents 46 cubic feet per acre per annum. The actual receipts per acre are £1 3s. 6d., and when  $\frac{5}{3}$  is deducted for preparation, you have a net receipt from wood alone of  $18/3$  per acre. Though these returns are satisfactory, much better results, as indicated above, could be achieved in this country. Dr. Schlich, at a conference on afforestation, in London, on June 25th, 1907, gave particulars of a larch wood of 208 acres belonging to Sir Herbert Lewis. The wood was cut down some years ago, the locality being a very steep hill side, and the soil light sandy loam, but not deep. The rental value of the locality was originally given

at 5/- per acre per annum. At 30 years' purchase the value of the soil comes to £7 10s. 0d. per acre. The actual returns were as follows:—From thinnings, £4,500; from final fellings at the age of 50 years, £14,500. Throwing the thinnings together with the final yield, the total receipts came to £19,000, or £91 per acre at the age of 50 years. Putting the cost of planting at £5 per acre, which, according to Sir Herbert, is more than it did cost, the result is that this plantation has given all round compound interest at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Take two other examples by Mr Elwes. The first example is as follows:—The value of the land is £8 per acre; cost of planting larch, fencing, &c., £7 10s. 0d. per acre; annual expenses,  $\frac{7}{6}$  per acre throughout. The returns from thinnings at 25 years, £10; thinnings at 40 years, £30; thinnings at 60 years, £60; and the final yield at 100 years was £150. Assuming that the capital was taken out of investments which yielded 3 per cent., the result is that this wood would have yielded compound interest at the rate of  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. In the second example the value of the land is £6 per acre; the cost of planting, £7 10s. 0d. an acre; annual expenses,  $\frac{7}{6}$  an acre during the first 25 years, and afterwards  $\frac{2}{6}$ , owing to receipts from shooting. The returns are:—Thinnings at 25 years, £10 an acre; thinnings at 40 years, £20 an acre; and the final yield at 60 years, £100 an acre. The result is that the plantation gives compound interest at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

We have next the example given by Mr W. B. Havelock, who is well known as an authority. The return is of a wood 18 acres in extent actually cut down, and the land value of which he estimates at £7 10s. 0d. an acre, because as soon as the wood was cut, gorse and other shrubs made their appearance. The cost of planting that wood, including fencing, &c., came to £8 an acre. The value of the thinnings is not known, but the old woodman asserts that several hundred pounds' worth have been taken out for sale and estate purposes. The value of the shooting is not given, but it might easily be put at cost of looking after the wood. The age of that wood when cut was between 75 and 80 years, and it gave the following results:—There were 1,328 larch trees, 262 Scotch pine, 74 oak, 116 beech, 35 birch, 12 spruce, and 120 ash. The net receipts, after deducting all expenses of harvesting, selling, &c., were £2,835 3s. 10d., which is equal to £157 10s. 0d. per acre. Taking the mean between 75 and 80 years as the age of the wood, and allowing compound interest, it will be found that this wood has yielded to the proprietor  $3\frac{5}{6}$  per cent., or a little over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. If the value of the thinnings were known, and included, the rate of interest would certainly have been not less than 4 per cent.

Mr Fraser Story, of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, in an interesting article to the "Manchester Guardian," points out that the actual experience of Western Europe is that

afforestation may be highly remunerative. The Hartz Mountains yield a revenue of 14/- per acre, while the Giant Mountains in Silesia—a wild district—give a return of about £1 per acre. The woods belonging to the town of Zurich, in Switzerland, yield a net revenue of 30/- per acre, and goes to demonstrate what can be done under favourable conditions. Taking together, both the good and the bad, the State woods of Germany, extending over 10,000,000 acres of land, produce 11/- per acre of profit each year, and they give employment to nearly 100,000 people. Experiments are being conducted by this gentleman in Derbyshire on 50 acres of land, the elevation of which ranges from 950 to 1,250 feet above sea level. The land is rough pasture, consisting of grass and extensive patches of gorse, and is used for the grazing of Welsh mountain sheep. 115,000 plants are required for the area, which it is intended to raise in their own nursery. He states:—There are many ways of bringing about improvements in British forestry, but surely nothing is more certain to inspire confidence in modern methods than actual tests with the trees themselves. We might reasonably insist that better timber, and more of it per acre, could be raised than is usual under existing treatment. Practical investigation into forestry is urgently needed in all parts of the country, and it is earnestly hoped that County Councils, other public bodies, and Government itself will recognise the fact.

The State Forests of Germany in 1905 yielded the following results:—

	Area of Forests*	Nett Return per acre. Shillings.
	Acres.	
1—Prussia.....	7,130,912.....	10·0
2—Bavaria .....	2,315,252.....	10·4
3—Württemberg .....	483,437.....	25·3
4—Saxony .....	443,312.....	21·2
5—Alsace-Lorraine .....	380,649.....	12·0
6—Baden .....	234,455.....	19·9
7—Brunswick .....	210,338.....	11·3
8—Hesse Darmstadt .....	178,801.....	10·3
9—Saxe-Weimar.....	114,349.....	17·7
10—Saxe-Meiningen .....	109,878.....	21·3
11—Anhalt.....	71,563.....	16·6
12—Waldeck-Pyrmont .....	67,330.....	6·2
13—Oldenburg .....	64,474.....	7·8
14—Schwarzburg .....	94,599.....	18·1

The results financially, both at home and abroad, are, therefore, of a most satisfactory character, and go far to remove any doubt existing under this head. In fact, generally speaking, it is estimated that on land for which £1 per acre was paid there would

\*Including some bare ground.

be a return of 4 per cent.; £2 per acre, 3'9 per cent.; £4 per acre, 3'65 per cent.; £6 per acre, 3'5 per cent.; £8 per acre, 3'3 per cent.; £10 per acre, 3'1 per cent.; £15 per acre, 2'9 per cent.; £20 per acre, 2'65 per cent.; £25 per acre, 2'45 per cent.; and £30 per acre, 2'23 per cent. No one anticipates that forests would yield a bigger percentage than agriculture, but it will give an exceedingly steady revenue, and will not change anything like the revenue from cultivated fields, or even so much as the revenue to be derived from British Consols.

One is not surprised, therefore, at the report of the Irish Committee, who recommend a national scheme of afforestation. The area available for woodland they put at one million acres, and they suggest as a start the planting of 200,000 acres. The expenses are put, including the purchase of land required, at £44,525 per annum in the first decade, to £66,725 in the second decade, to £74,600 in the third, to £67,100 in the fourth, and to £32,600 in the fifth. After this period the scheme provides a surplus over purchase annuities and working and administrative expenses, eventually yielding a return of 4½ per cent. on the total capital invested. They state further:—In presenting our report, we desire to express in the strongest way our sense of the obligation which lies upon the State to act immediately in this matter. Grievous mischief, loss, and waste are going on, and ought to be checked without delay.

The Government have started upon a scheme of afforestation in Scotland. They have purchased an estate in Argyllshire for some £30,000, and it will shortly be planted with trees for the production of commercial timber. The area of the estate is 12,000 acres, and the ground is merely rough heather and moor. It is practically uninhabited, and treeless, but in a few years there will be a great change. It can safely be assumed that under systematic forest treatment ten men will find employment permanently to every one man hitherto engaged on this estate, while the profit will be at least from five to six times greater than before. The Office of Woods and Forests have also one or two small plantations, and although they are only of a timorous character, they have been quite successful. Again, there are 34 local authorities in England and Wales who own or lease 90,000 acres, and eight schemes of afforestation are actually at work, or have been attempted in some form or other by the authorities. Of the 90,000 acres, 2,000 acres are in woodland. Liverpool possesses the largest tract of actual forest or potential land, owning 22,000 acres in Montgomery, of which 606 acres are in woodland. Leeds has 11,778 acres of watershed, and 239 in process of development for afforestation purposes. Birmingham has about 5,000 acres, 410 in woodland; Bradford, 7,000 acres, but no woodland; and Manchester has 11,000 acres in Cumberland, but there are not many acres in the

condition of forestry. We have, therefore, in the hands of Municipalities already a great quantity of land that might be used for the purposes of afforestation.

When we come to ask ourselves the question as to what we can do with the unemployed in regard to this matter, arguments and prejudices to the contrary have got to be met and dealt with. In the case of each of the examples quoted on previous pages, apart from Municipal effort, the work has been performed by men trained and accustomed to rural life. And having this in mind, many people at once conclude that it is out of the question to think of setting the unemployed to work at afforestation. They will tell you of a Municipality that has made the attempt with unemployed labour, and as settling the matter once for all, point out that the work cost anything from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. more than would have been the case had men accustomed to the work been employed thereon instead. This is the type of opponent with which we have to deal, and our endeavour ought to be to convince him that his view is an unjust one, and not at all businesslike.

The unemployed man, with a wife and family, who is in poverty, has to be kept, and it is estimated that the cost of keeping a pauper in London amounts to 14/- per week. In the end the man is still a pauper, and the nation has in no way been recompensed for the money spent on him. From an economic standpoint, the longer a man is out of work the more costly will the solution of the problem become. His wife and children and himself will all deteriorate. Our opponents must, therefore, fix that 14/- per week in their minds when considering the question of cost. What are the facts of the case, however, as to the supposed failures in dealing with the unemployed on this and work of a similar character on the land? Take the man who has been some time out of work, and whose wage when in work did not amount to more than 20/- or 25/- per week, and out of which he had a wife and family to support. Out of such a wage he could not possibly put anything away for the time of necessity, and do justice to himself and family. After a fortnight's unemployment the position of such a man is most precarious, and after a few months is most appalling. Tea and bread, and that not regular, takes the place of somewhat substantial and regular meals. The inevitable result is that deterioration, both physical and moral, takes place, and he naturally becomes quite unable to perform the work he originally did. Evidence from every town can be adduced as proof of this. One case out of many from my own town (Sunderland), however, will probably suffice. It is as follows:—"A man in appealing for cast-off clothing or boots, goes on to say that he and his wife had stripped themselves and their three children for food, and the beds also. The cause of poverty is only want of work. This is 15 weeks since we had a penny. I have pledged everything we had before asking



for help." Councillor Swan, Ex-Mayor, who investigated the case, said they were a very respectable family, and that the house had been almost stripped in order to keep the rent paid up to date. They had been tenants in their present house for 11 years. There were sacks on the beds for covering, with the exception of a quilt which had been given them, &c. The man is a dock labourer, and has been a soldier. It was a most pathetic case, and quite genuine.

Can any person in reason expect a man like this to turn out and do work equal with that performed by a man who has been well fed, housed, and having a contented mind? Yet that is what we have been doing, and because he has failed many people argue that it is quite impossible to grapple with the unemployed problem. All those who have had any experience whatever in regard to such schemes agree that if the unemployed were given a chance in regard to good food and housing for but a week or two, that they would give quite satisfactory results in comparison with the work performed by men constantly employed.

There are, however, some thousands of men who have migrated from the rural areas, and who would return to the country if the opportunity presented itself. With a central Government department in touch with all the unemployed agencies in the country, this class of labour could be first got together and set to work on afforestation. If this were done, success financially would attend it from the start. As to the town-bred unemployed workman, all that is wanted is willingness on his part to do the work, and on the part of the promoters to give him a week or two, with good food and housing accommodation, and even he would do this class of work all right.

The possibilities in regard to this question are greater than some people imagine. Why even the spoil banks of the black country are being made pleasing to the eye by the planting of trees on them. This is being done by an Association, who pay the unemployed 18/- per week for such work, and who go as far as to say that they anticipate a return of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. These hideous spoil heaps exist all over the country, and inasmuch as trees will grow on them, why not have them used for that purpose? The landscape would be all the better for it.

Mr Chiozza Money, M.P., in that excellent book of his, "Riches and Poverty," writes:—"Forestry is almost an unknown art in the United Kingdom. Landowners do not understand it; their agents do not understand it. Yet its possibilities are enormous, and might be realised. There need be no acre of the 77,000,000 not useful or not beautiful. Millions of acres of land now termed waste may be clothed in verdure to yield a steady and certain income, and make us largely independent of imported timber . . . Every acre afforested would require



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about £2 worth of labour. After planting each acre would need only about five days' labour a year, but that means 30,000,000 days of work. The timber grown and cut, there would be the transport, lumbering, and allied industries calling for labour. Dr. Schlich estimates that 500,000 men, or say 2,500,000 people, would find employment through the afforestation of say six million acres, and the estimate is based upon solid foundations. A business which does not begin to yield income for some 15 years is not for the average private landowner. But the people, who have waited so long for the right to tread their own soil, can wait these 15 years, and other 15 if need be. Given the overlordship of area, the establishment of a permanent Land and Housing Commission, the nationalization of the means of transport, the establishment of well-endowed schools of agriculture and forestry, and a generation of well-born children, what possibilities open out before us. Is this idea too large for a race which talks of Empire"?

I have attempted to prove that afforestation schemes on a large scale can be put into operation with advantage by the State in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

If the reader is of the same opinion, then I would ask him to join the Independent Labour Party, in order that next election may see a larger number of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, pledged and prepared to tackle this problem. The landed interest, my friends, have monopolised the Commons of England too long.

Much more might be said, but space will not permit, and anyone desiring of still further considering the question cannot do better than read Dr. Schlich's book on "Forestry," Prince Kropotkin's "Fields, Factories, and Workshops," and Mr Blatchford's "Britain for the British," in addition to the book last quoted.

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