Sr.,—Before offering any general remarks on the
above scheme, it is necessary to state very broadly
and distinctly the point of view from which one
approaches the consideration of such subject. How-
ever much many of us may not only admire, but sympa-
thies with, the arduous labours of able philosophical
minds, we must be careful not to confound the
views and opinions put forward by men of such
calibre and nobility with what are really the practi-
cal aspects of questions coming forward constantly
for consideration and actual treatment in our own
day and generation. Much in the scheme before me,
therefore, I may broadly say, may be worthy
of serious practical comment and consideration a genera-
tion hence; but it has no claim to be put forward
within the scope of practical politics in our own
time, and therefore must be regarded with suspicion
and distrust if pushed by philosophical thinkers into
the arena of public discussion. A thing out of date
is like a six-months child; it has no chance of life,
because the functions which should have brought it
forth at maturity have not been properly fulfilled.
I have always (at least, of late years, after much
philosophic study) regarded practical and progressive
politics—the Liberal politics of our day—as the ex-
pression of the growth of the nation, following out its own instinct and genius in gradual and natural development, and expressing such in law when ripe for such expression. The difference between the instincts of a people and the people themselves is only that the former are the greater minds of the people, and are seen and appreciated and known and admitted sooner than the many what are the wants and requirements of each succeeding age. Those who are ashamed of their age are the philosophers; those who are behind are the Tories.

Upon the general merits of this comprehensive scheme, therefore, from a philosophical point of view, I do not propose to enter. But its proponents must not think, as a consequence, that I have no sympathy with their prospective appreciation of what society may eventually come to. Still, on practical grounds, viewed in the light and reason of our own age and day, the scheme has one grave defect. It starts from an abstract and philosophical basis, and has no relation whatever to existing circumstances, laws, or conditions of society in Great Britain or elsewhere. My view is that we shall arrive at these higher grounds of civilization naturally in due time, without outsourcing to get there by the aid of a balloon. Neither has the scheme, therefore, as a necessary consequence from what I have just said, any relation to "the lines of the Constitution" which has governed England in a rough and ready manner for so many centuries. I have elsewhere shown in print that I believe this Constitution to be philosophically sound, whatever modifications or improvements or reforming alterations it may have in the process of time to undergo. It therefore follows that, from my own point of view, and as the result of my own studies, I cannot regard this scheme as sound in itself, apart from the fact that it is impracticable. I believe the working out of these problems is the old-fashioned English method of reform, however slow and clumsy and difficult such process may be. To be so slow and difficult only proves that it is the expression of actual life, plus as much of the intelligence of each age as can be worked into it.

Turning now to the more practical aspects of the politics of our day, I must be allowed to express a hope that our reformers will not coerce with this scheme of nationalisation. To do so would only be to retard healthy and sound reform for several years, and also give occasion for those oratorical and denunciatory addresses which the Tories furnish the country with when any speculative mode of reform is advanced. It would also be an unwise and unpatriotic step, as those that have at heart the welfare of their country, and also give occasion for those oratorical and denunciatory addresses which the Tories furnish the country with when any speculative mode of reform is advanced. It would also be an unwise and unpatriotic step, as those that have at heart the welfare of their country, would not entertain the scheme. With-out discounting its details, therefore, I must be allowed to let it pass.

The views which are advocated by the Farmers Alliance seem to me those which are most likely to commend themselves to the country. They are practical, and they follow the "lines of the Constitution." If I may be allowed to quote a commonplace historic incident, exactly as the barons of old forced their Sovereign to sign their liberties, so will the farmers of England shortly force Parliament to sign their enfranchisement from obsolete laws and rules and conditions of tenure of land. The growth of public opinion as to the necessity of agricultural reform, the movement among the farmers themselves for better and sound conditions of tenure; the wants of the community generally, in the way of an increased supply of food, and therefore, a corresponding sympathy in the improved condition of the agricultural classes—clearly prove that some important and national reform is close upon us, so far as the landed interest is concerned. Many conscientious men of the farming class are, however, experience shows, holding back; not because they do not heartily approve of and believe in such movement, but because on party grounds they think they will be leaving their old friends—who, however, are not really their friends, but their enemies, and of the nation generally, as witness the speeches and views of many gentlemen of the Tory type of late, who seem not to have the faintest realisation of the great social and political changes necessary to the interests of the farming class, and through them of the whole community. The question of party, therefore, as to which farmers must support, settles itself. They must support the party of progress, whatever political name they or the party may be known by. This is, indeed, a national question; the two strands (Liberal and Conservative) must be woven into one rope, in order to pull forward, "with a long pull and a strong pull and a pull altogether," the work of the State.

It is not actually necessary that a Labourers' Bill go hand in hand with the Farmers' Alliance Bill. The labourers will be certain of their enfranchisement in getting their votes; and a short measure might subsequently be passed giving them a legal right to a small quantity of land for cultivation; and money might be advanced to them (on principles inculcating thrift, which Mr. Fawcett would be admirably qualified for working out) to buy their homes and gardens when and where desirous of doing so. But the greater measure would then remain to be passed; viz, a measure dealing with all the higher aspects of the land question, such as renovation, entail, settlement and appropriation. A Bill of this kind must necessarily proceed from the Government; it should not be the work of a class, or of legitimate and constitutional agitation to promote it, though these may be actually necessary to secure its success.—T. B. Woodward, Hardwick Bank, near Tewkesbury.