

DANISH ELECTIONS — GAINS FOR JUSTICE PARTY

Membership of the Danish Upper House is appointed by the indirect method of electoral colleges, that is to say by 'electors' who for the purpose are themselves chosen under the general popular franchise. Periodically a portion of the House falls to be thus re-elected and last month there was such an election in three of the large 'Upper House' electoral divisions, namely Copenhagen, Funen and North Jutland, comprising among them 56 constituencies. In Copenhagen and Funen the previous election was held in 1939 and in North Jutland it was held in 1945.

The Georgeist 'Justice Party,' yet small but a healthy and promising youngster in the Danish political world, gained gratifying support both relatively and absolutely. In Copenhagen and Funen its vote went up from 2,829 to 10,784 giving 13 'electors' as compared with one on the previous occasion. In North Jutland, in the two years, its votes increased from 3,104 to 7,563 and the 'electors' from 4 to 15. In the three divisions taken together the results (previous occasions in brackets) attained by each of the parties were: Social Democrats 885 (858), Radicals 116 (184), Conservatives 278 (366), Moderate Liberals 532 (431), Justice Party 28 (5), Communists 177 (58), and the fascist 'Danish Union' 6 (7). The Communists had by far the greater part of their success in Copenhagen but in North Jutland they fell away. The Moderate Liberals also won heavily in Copenhagen where Radicals and Conservatives suffered a set-back and Social Democrats (with 462 'electors') were much in the same position as before.

It is interesting to look at the results after excluding Copenhagen and the larger provincial towns in the divisions: Odense, Aalborg and Randers. We can thereby judge the political sentiment of what we may call the country people. Among

them, counting the number of 'electors' at the 1947 and the previous elections, the parties were thus supported (previous elections in brackets): Social Democrats 325 (268), Radicals 93 (109), Conservatives 88 (104), Moderate Liberals 443 (415), Justice Party 15 (5), Communists 13 (17), and 'Danish Union' 0 (2).

The Justice Party conducted a strenuous campaign for Georgeism and a free economic society, condemning out of hand the subsidies and the State controls of trade and industry, demanding a free commerce irrespective of what other countries may do, public revenues to come from land rent (taxation of land values) and taxes on buildings and improvements as well as on individual earnings *from work* to be abolished. The many eager meetings, the speeches, the literature, the radio talks as by Dr. Viggo Starcke and other Justice Party leaders were popular education of first class order. The fallacies and evils of what goes under the name of the 'planned economy' were abundantly exposed. In Denmark and for the rest of the world, if its rays could but penetrate that far, a very bright light shines from the lamps of this movement. The election gave remarkable opportunities to spread the truth such as, in Danish fashion, the joint meetings of parties for public debate, but especially do we envy the chance given for the Radio talks so magnificently grasped—and the fact of *even three* such Parliamentary men as they have in Denmark to stand independently and fearlessly 'at bay' against Statism and Monopolism in all its forms.

The great surprise of the election, said *Information*, Copenhagen's leading independent daily, was the progress of the Justice Party which could be explained without much discussion—the lead it gave with regard to trade restrictions and also Starcke's excellent and eloquent radio address.

NEW ZEALAND LAND VALUATION

AN important amendment to the Valuation of Land Act, 1925, a part of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1946, deals with the valuation of land. Section 27 of this Act provides that, where the Valuer-General revises a district valuation roll after the 31st March, 1947, a further revision must be made within five years of the date of valuation unless a special Order-in-Council postpones the date to a date which must be specified in the said Order-in-Council. Such Order-in-Council may be made by the Governor-General if, in his opinion, it is impracticable or undesirable to make that revision.

The effect of this Section is to provide quinquennial valuations. Up till the present time there has been no statutory interval between valuations and valuations have been made at the discretion of the Valuer-General. This is an important reform and it was urged by the New Zealand Taxation of Land Values League in giving evidence before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government. That Committee did not see fit to embody this reform in its recommendations; nevertheless it has found its way on to the Statute Book. In the long run the effect will be to strengthen and improve the Valuation Department itself, which has become the Cinderella among Government Departments, and it will remove the obstacle to the extension of rating on the Unimproved Value. In some areas changing from annual rating to unimproved value rating means using a valuation roll hopelessly out of date. At present this is the position in Nelson, where, if the poll to adopt site-value rating is successful, it will be necessary for a year at least to rate on the unimproved value using a valuation roll last revised in 1928.

The New Zealand League reports a victory for Site Value Rating in the Borough of Patea. Formerly the rates were levied on the annual value of land and buildings taken together. The reform was promoted by the Borough Council and the poll to

shift the rates upon site values only was carried by a large majority. At Howick also there was a victory.

Site-value rating polls are now pending in a number of places including Christchurch, Nelson, Akaroa, Waitemata County and Mt. Albert.

Recent publications of the League include the four pamphlets: *Ten Good Reasons, Rating on Unimproved Values—How to get it in Your Local Body Area, Why Unimproved Value should be Mandatory and Common Objections to Unimproved Value Rating and their Answers.*

VICTORIA

MR. E. F. HALKYARD writes: 'The Victorian Parliament will shortly consider a Bill to set up a Valuer-General's Department (such as was established in N.S.W. a number of years ago) with district valuers to make a complete valuation of Victoria and of bare land values only. The Victorian League is behind it and passage through the Lower House is probable but we have an Upper House of restricted franchise (modelled on the House of Lords) which has nullified our past efforts. But for this Upper House, Victoria, would have been a long way ahead—[that is, in the matter of appropriating the value of land for public purposes and removing taxation from buildings and improvements].

Progress, Melbourne, in its January issue reported that Frankston Shire Council have resolved in favour of site value rating, urged thereto by the recommendation of their valuer, Mr. Kerr, who some months before contrasted the 'old' with the 'new' system in a special address to the Council on the subject. The next step will be to send statements to the ratepayers showing how each will be placed under either system, followed if necessary by a poll if dissatisfied ratepayers demand it.

Polls for the adoption of site value rating are in preparation in Heidelberg, Kew, Brighton, Malvern and the Shire of Lilydale.