

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## DENMARK

Further progress with Land Value Taxation in Denmark seems to be promised in the notable declaration made by the Prime Minister, Mr Stauning, speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Journalists' Association on 13th December. Parliament had just closed its session at which the bank rate had been increased, a matter that had caused much heart-burning among the commercial interests affected. The Government is a coalition of Social Democrats and Radicals (Mr Dahlgaard, Radical, is Minister for Home Affairs) and since the elections for the Upper House now has a majority in both Houses of Parliament. If, therefore, it means to go on with a development of the land value policy, the prospects are bright for legislation without obstruction.

Mr Stauning said: When we had brisk trade, there was a great demand for money to make purchases and that brought about an increase in the so-called discount rate. At the same time, other interested groups maintained that what we needed was a reduction in the rate of interest, and that claim has its justification. The opposing claims cannot be reconciled. We have to find ways and means that hitherto have not had so much attention. Taxation is a remedy in the manifold process of distribution, and it can be used as a regulator for the raising and lowering of bank discount rates. We must certainly give more and more attention to the ground taxes as they have been applied in the form of land value taxation. That remedy can bring relief for some and a justifiably increased burden for others; and after our experience trying to adjust rates of interest, we must keep in mind the application of the land value tax system. It is not a panacea that would make all else superfluous; nor is it a means for securing instantaneous justice, because we have always to remember that we live under the private capitalistic system. Therefore all we can do in the meantime is to get as near to justice as possible.

The speech is an earnest of a determined policy "toward justice." If other European Prime Ministers were talking in the same terms, the peoples might lift up their hearts. Not here need we stop to discuss with Mr Stauning his observations on the "private capitalistic system." Let us rightly define our terms and we will find that the basic cause of poverty and unemployment is land monopoly and taxation oppressing trade and production. Denmark can give a practical demonstration that this point of view is not mistaken.

## SPAIN

## The Land System to Blame

A correspondent, Mr H. M. Conacher of London, wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* of 5th December, giving information taken from the book *The Agrarian Problem in Spain*, written in 1915 by Visconde de Eza, a member of the Cortes. Mr Conacher's letter is long for our space so that we can only give the following particulars taken from the Senor de Eza's survey of the Spanish provinces. They are striking enough:

The great curse of Spain was that landowners had far more land than they had the capital to develop. Hence great areas of the "latifundios" lay in bare, unimproved pasture.

The provinces of Extremadura, Badajoz and Caceres were among the worst in this respect. Thus, apart from hopeless land, Badajoz had 28 per cent. cultivated and 63 per cent. uncultivated. For Caceres the figures were 24 per cent. and 69 per cent. In each case half of the uncultivated land might be cultivated and yet the livestock industry not suffer.

Of Caceres he says: "This is the typical region of great ranches, belonging to individuals who live away from them and concern themselves only with getting their returns. It is a stock-raising district with an excellent climate and good soil; 'artificial' meadows are unknown; land which might yield 1,100 pesetas the hectare only returns 11."

In Toledo and Ciudad Real things were not so bad, but great improvements might be made. What was wanted was to bring labour on to the land.

In Albacete nearly 800,000 hectares (a hectare = 2½ acres) were uncultivated; half of this might be made into rational agricultural holdings.

Of Cordova he writes: "Population occupying a huge, rich, and fertile territory perish miserably, not being able to exploit the wealth that surrounds them."

Seville, of course, was something of a scandal, because great tracts of level country were used for grazing blood stock (bulls for the arena), as well as other cattle and horses. These lands, especially those by the river, could support thousands of families.

Of Jaen he writes: "I believe that the unexploited wealth of the province is enormous. Great areas could be used for vines and olives, field crops, and forage crops. Enormous estates await the labour of man to yield harvests that nobody asks of them. Under this primitive husbandry the peasants can merely get work at a series of seasonal operations, paid at low rates of wages, and they often have to seek work far from their villages."

And Mr Conacher himself says:

"Anyone who has gone east from Granada and got on to the line going north from Almeria must have wondered into what strange and ghostly region he has plunged as he looks out from the train on to the leagues and leagues of desolate landscape, hardly a house or a tree in sight, as he descends the almost endless slope down to the upper Guadalquivir. That is the province of Jaen."

"The basic law of agricultural reform enacted provisionally by the new Government in September, 1932, singled out Andalusia, the provinces of Ciudad Real, Toledo, and Albacete in New Castile, the south-west frontier region of Extremadura, all south of Madrid, and even Salamanca in the north-west as the regions to which the law should apply at once, as regards peasant settlements. Unfortunately, a year later a new Cortes was elected of a 'Right' and 'Centre' complexion, and the application of the law was held up."

And now Spain is riven by civil war!

## UNITED STATES

## The Cincinnati Congress

Dr Mark Milliken, in a letter with his impressions of the Eleventh Annual Henry George Congress held in Cincinnati, Ohio, 12th to 14th November, writes:

The meeting was opened by an address of welcome by Mayor Russel Wilson. While he did not declare himself unequivocally for the single tax, he advocated its partial application. This is encouraging. Except for the realtors, our modern sophists, who tell the little home-owners that taxes should be taken off of real estate, and at the same time deceive them by ignoring the duality in a building and lot, there are thousands who think as Mayor Wilson.

More than a century ago, when Cincinnati had a population of perhaps 20,000, a tract of land embracing about 16 blocks fell into the hands of Josiah Warren, known as America's first anarchist. He pondered over the potentialities of such holdings, and, visualizing the unearned riches that would come to him, decided that it would be unethical to retain this property. He therefore went to the man from whom he had obtained it and gave it back. The Netherland Plaza Hotel, in which this Congress was held, bordered this tract of land. The site was previously occupied by a building known as the "Nasty Corner." Its owners held it 23 years and then sold it to be torn down to make place for this hotel, now one of the most magnificent hostleries in the United States. They made a profit on their sale of \$100 per day for 23 years, or \$339,500.

During the week of our meeting there was presented at the Cox Theatre that remarkable play, "Tobacco Road." It is a most terrible arraignment of our land policy, especially in the South. The Administration's meddlesomeness in "ploughing under" and curtailing crops, acts

of almost incredible stupidity when faced by the fact that half the world is hungry, have put the southern sharecroppers in a deplorable position.

Much of the discussion at this Convention was on the subject of the Henry George schools over the land. They are the analogue of the little red school-houses once so common in pioneer days. From such humble institutions of learning went many ambitious boys and girls to our numerous colleges. It is my hope that the followers of Henry George may yet form a college in which every member of the faculty is by avocation a single taxer. One of our ilk can easily imagine what profound social teachings would emanate from such a place where the land question was known and shown to be the basis of culture.

Looking over the assembly one was aware of quite a number of single tax pioneers, that is, men who had known and heard Henry George. Like the apostles of old, they went forth giving, lending and talking *Progress and Poverty*. In those days, with fewer intellectual and social distractions, their teachings were not crowded out. People read Bellamy and Henry George. They also read Herbert Spencer and articles on evolution and evangelical religion. It was an era of intense, though not distracted, intellectual activity. To-day the youngsters, as did their elders, react to their environment. Because they discuss P.R., socialization of natural monopolies, unemployment, pensions, doles, security acts, minimum wages and governmental alphabetic trios and quartettes, is no sign of their mental inferiority. This fact leads me to believe that in the future single taxers will not be the products of individual preceptors, but rather the products of faculties wherein are discussed and studied all these social questions.

Joseph Dana Miller, Editor of *Land and Freedom*, was the author of two resolutions, one on the death of Charles O'Connor Hennessy, and the other on our appreciation of the great propaganda work for the single tax by Mayor Wm. N. McNair of Pittsburgh. We were told by a Pittsburgh member that no city in the United States was so tax-conscious as Pittsburgh; and he attributed this to the constant activities of teacher McNair.

Prof Harry Gunnison Brown spoke over the radio, though not the most important one broadcasting from Cincinnati. Still, some must have heard him and have had their curiosity stimulated.

British attendants of the Edinburgh Congress in 1929 will, of course, remember Herbert S. Bigelow who preached in a people's church in your Scottish metropolis. Mr Bigelow is at present a member of the Cincinnati Council, into which body he was floated on the wave of a P.R. election. At present he is a member-elect of the United States Congress and will resign from Council and take his seat in Washington 1st January, 1937. Personally, I am sorry to see him enter that maelstrom. He is too much of a politico-economic heavyweight to be wafted away on the gales and typhoons of Washington politics.

Of course, I never feel that any congress such as this is complete without some sort of manifesto. What is submitted is what was left after a committee ploughed under some of my verbiage. The only virtue of this document is that it concerns present-day problems of a meddling and muddled Government.

#### RESOLUTIONS

1. We believe in democracy in contradistinction to communism, fascism and dictatorship under any form of government.
2. We believe in capitalism under conditions of freedom. We are opposed to all forms of private monopoly.
3. We believe that unemployment will cease when men have access to land suitable for use.
4. We believe that the untaxing of buildings, and an increased tax on urban lands would cure the slum evil.
5. We believe in voluntary co-operation by people living under conditions of individual freedom.
6. We believe that the sales tax is a most pernicious form of taxation because it falls especially on the poor.
7. We believe that business men should favour the single tax because it would increase the purchasing power of their customers; that tenant farmers should favour it because

agricultural landowners will then not hold more land than they can use profitably and thus tenant farmers will be able to obtain land at a low price; that all artisans should endorse it because it will make jobs and increase wages.

### Charles O'Connor Hennessy

A meeting in memory of Charles O'Connor Hennessy was held at the Henry George School, 211 West 79th Street, New York, on 11th December. There was a representative gathering. Mrs Anna George de Mille presided and among the letters and telegrams she read were messages from the United Committee and the International Union and from Mr Bue Björner, the President of the Union. Addresses of respect and gratitude to Mr Hennessy for his life-long work were given by Mr Philip Cornick, Vice-President of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; Mr R. B. MacIntyre, a director of the Franklin Society; Mr F. P. Lenbuscher and the Hon Lawson Purdy, who both recalled incidents in stirring campaigns they and Mr Hennessy had taken part in over a long series of years.

No more faithful tribute has been paid to the character of Mr Hennessy than that in the *Herald News* (Passaic, N.J.), which with a life-sketch said: "He was every inch a man—solid, sincere, earnest, powerful and sweet. As a friend he was steadfast and true. As a companion he was superb. His acquaintance with the best in literature was intimate, and his native Irish wit was a boundless delight."

### CANADA

At the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Single Tax Association (Toronto) held since news of the death of Hon. Mr Hennessy reached us, held on 27th November, the following resolution was recorded on the Minutes:

"That the Single Tax Association of Canada are at one with the Georgeists of the world in deeply regretting the death of Charles O'Connor Hennessy, one of that admirable group who aided Henry George during his lifetime and continued afterwards in proclaiming the principles of economic justice to mankind.

"That this Association cherish the hope that the achievements of this distinguished man may be an example inciting many others, according to their ability, to aid in the great work of delivering mankind from servitude to liberty, and from privation to abundance."

### FRANCE AND BELGIUM

A valuable summary of the history of the land reform movement in France and Belgium (*La Reforme Foncière en France et en Belgique*) is published by *Terre et Liberté*, 18, avenue de la Criolla, Suresnes (Seine), at the price of 1 franc. It is written by Messrs. A. Daudé-Bancel and Sam Meyer and appeared originally in *La Grande Revue*, September, 1936. An account is given of Baron Colins and his followers, and of Léon Walras, Professor of Political Economy at Lausanne University, both of whom saw the importance of the land question. Another was Professor Charles Gide, who was struck off the list of contributors to the *Journal des Economistes* for expressing some very mild views on land reform, and who founded the *Revue d'Economie politique* as a vehicle for less conservative opinions.

Then we come to Henry George and those who accepted his proposals of whom the most distinguished were Albert Maximilien Toubeau, who had independently evolved a less perfect plan of taxation based on area of land, and in more recent years the late Georges Darien, and now the authors of this pamphlet, the present leaders of the movement in France and Belgium.

We warmly commend this interesting pamphlet.

TORONTO, ONTARIO. Herewith subscription for your wonderful paper, which I consider to be one of the best of its type published in the world. You are fighting, in a death struggle, the battle of Privilege v. Democracy, and it is indeed a hard and desperate struggle.