

stow. The present resolution supplements the previous Assembly's reaffirmation (Torquay 1958) that the Liberal Party stands for the taxation and rating of land values.

"NOT OUR PARTY"

THE general secretary of the Rating Reform Campaign sent a letter as follows on 4th October to the editor of the *Liberal News*. It had not appeared when this issue went to press, nor had the local government resolution been reported.

"Sir, — It is both gratifying and embarrassing to find the Rating Reform Campaign listed in *This Is Your Party* under "Liberal Groups and Recognised Units". We are honoured by having Mr. Arthur Holt and Mr. Donald Wade among our sponsors and many of our members as well as some of our sixty local representatives are Liberals. As an organised body, however, we are strictly non-party, membership being open to all who support our objects, viz: to secure legislation so that local rates are taken off all buildings and improvements and levied solely on the site value of the land.

"The Campaign will be pleased to provide literature or to address interested associations and will welcome financial and other support."

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

THE Labour Party conference at Scarborough did not discuss any motions on the land and local government finance. There was schism enough on the issue of defence and nuclear disarmament — *and party unity!* — without delegates dividing three ways into land value taxers, land nationalists and "don't knows." The motions are remitted to the national executive.

The party remains dedicated to its unpopular, irrelevant and mistaken socialist tenets. It wants further nationalisation. This, together with the growing public disquiet about trades unions, the bitter recriminations now being bandied about, and the unbridgeable cleavage between those who wish Britain to abandon the H-bomb unilaterally and the rest practically ensures that Labour will lose the next election.

One resolution is worth noting. Moved by Miss Alice Bacon, M.P. for the national executive, and adopted with noisy unanimity, it condemned the Government's policy of restoring a free market in (some) rented property. It demanded emergency legislation to end all further decontrol and restore security of tenure to tenants of property already decontrolled, and demanded legislation to protect all tenants of decontrolled property from unreasonable rents, by empowering rent tribunals to fix rents whenever the landlord or tenant appealed to them. This is anti-democratic. Competing owners and competing tenants should be free to determine rent levels. Rents fixed by tribunals are necessarily capricious, arbitrary and inequitable. Miss Bacon said that Labour did not regard the provision of a home

as a commercial proposition. It was the basis of happy and contented family life, as important to social well-being as health, pensions and education.

That sounds fine. No doubt it is kindly meant and sincerely held. Yet it is a basic cause of the housing shortage and the intolerable living conditions which hundreds of thousands or more are condemned to endure. Until housing is regarded as a commercial proposition, and becomes one, widespread, needless suffering will continue.

TRADE TEASERS

WHILE sightseers gape at the mounted horseguards across the road, civil servants in the palatial offices of the Board to Restrict Trade (our little joke stands constant reiteration) have been considering some weighty problems.

Should they refund anti-dumping duty charged on polymethylsiloxane fluids (silicone fluids) produced by the Société des Usines Chimiques Rhône-Poulenc when these are re-exported in the same state as they were in at the time of importation? Reader: What do you think?

Should they allow leather scrap not suitable for the manufacture of articles of leather and bones, etc. (not cut to shape) and osseine to come into the U.K. tax free? They have been asked to do so.

Ought they to grant an application for drawback (i.e. refund) of duty on certain photo-copying machines imported for re-export?

With a Royal visit to Denmark in prospect can they yield to the request that an anti-dumping duty be imposed on crushed oyster shell sent here from Denmark?

And what about Vinyl acetate (monomer) imported from Italy and Switzerland? Some British interests have alleged that it is being "dumped" in Britain to their detriment and want an anti-dumping duty imposed. Interested parties have been invited by the Board of Trade to lodge representations.

These are teasers indeed. Another perplexing problem is whether imported goods of the following description should be required to bear an indication of origin at the time of importation and sale and exposure for sale in the U.K.:

Heat insulating bricks, blocks, tiles of infusorial earths, of siliceous fossil meal or of similar siliceous earth.

Of course no one really wants to know where they come from but marking, if required, ought to make them more expensive and that would gladden the hearts of British manufacturers. In all solemnity the Standing Committee appointed by the Board will hold a public enquiry in the Board's offices on Wednesday, November 2 at 10.30 a.m.

Another question has been resolved to the Board's complete satisfaction. Rice, millet and buckwheat starch was indeed being dumped here by the West Germans.