

OUR PRESIDENT'S TOUR Of U.S.A. and Canada

Most gratifying is the report received from Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, of the success attending the lecture tour by the Hon. F. A. W. Lucas, Q.C., President of our International Union, during his recent visit to the United States and Canada. The tour was arranged and sponsored by the Foundation with the helpful co-operation of the Henry George School extensions along the line of route. Judge Lucas arrived in New York from England on September 24, and departed from there on his way home to the Transvaal on December 18, and within that period he undertook a far-travelled and most strenuous campaign, frequently keeping several speaking appointments on one day. At each centre, besides the public engagements, there were meetings with the local branches of the Henry George School. Starting from New York, Judge Lucas spent a week in Canada at Ottawa and Montreal with Sherbrooke in Quebec also visited; then to Washington D.C. for three days; after return to New York and Newark, N.J., on to Chicago; to Dayton in Ohio; to California (three weeks stay) for numerous meetings in Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego; then to St. Louis in Missouri; and on the way back, breaking journey at Chicago for six days further campaigning there. Finally, before departure from New York, there was the week spent in Boston, Mass.

Very important among the groups addressed—and exceedingly satisfying because so influential—were the students and faculty members of no fewer than seventeen universities and colleges; at the Columbia in New York, for example, before an audience of 1,000. Making up the service rendered by this eminent advocate of Henry George's Social Philosophy and vindicator of its practical application was the advantage he took of the opportunity given to address, from place to place, as many as 65 assemblies, including business clubs, church congregations, municipal and professional groups, the Forums as in Washington and San Diego, and other institutions. Six times he gave broadcasts on the radio and five times he appeared on television programmes.

In especial, Judge Lucas was in great demand by American audiences eager to have a first-hand explanation of the tense situation in South Africa which has been created by the widely-criticised policy of race segregation called the "apartheid." He gave a clear picture of how this policy had grown out of the fears held by those of European origin of being displaced by the non-whites who make the great majority of the population. He insisted that there is room and opportunity for all in South Africa's expanding economy, and he pleaded for a change that would free the land and encourage co-operation between peoples, regardless of colour.

At a dinner given in honour of Judge Lucas by the Henry George School in New York on December 3, Mr. Ezra Cohen, presiding, voiced the sentiments of all present by the tribute he paid to their guest for the captivating and effective manner in which he had enabled so many of their fellow countrymen to appreciate more fully the wisdom and the justice embodied in the teachings of Henry George. An illuminated scroll, commemorating Judge Lucas's visit to the Western Hemisphere was presented to him by Miss V. G. Peterson on behalf of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

From Mr. J. Rupert Mason in San Francisco and from a number of correspondents elsewhere we have had letters attesting the welcome given to Judge Lucas by his audiences. As for the newspaper publicity, most notable was the exten-

sive report appearing from the pen of Mr. Harlan Trott in the *Christian Science Monitor* of December 27. It stated faithfully the speaker's views in his address to an influential business group in San Francisco; and in that there was good education for a mighty host of readers, so widespread is the circulation of the *C.S.M.* all over the world. "What Constitutes a Sound Tax System," was the subject discussed. Judge Lucas, it was remarked, had "gained a certain international reputation for helping to install some tax reforms in Johannesburg and other cities of the Transvaal which have been taxing land values at the same time exempting buildings and improvements since 1918." The philosophy behind the Johannesburg plan was that there were two ways of raising public revenue: either by taxes that restrict or by taxes that encourage private enterprise. "Land has value," the speaker was reported to explain, "because of the presence of population and because of its inherent qualities; land produces nothing by itself, its value is made entirely by the community; the holder may make improvements, but he does not make the value of land; the value which the community contributes should be used for the support of government." Interestingly, what is called the "Pittsburgh Plan," which observes the principle although it goes but half way in exempting buildings from the city taxes, was mentioned—interestingly, because San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency is being asked to consider that plan in improving a blighted area south of Mission Street in downtown San Francisco. And Mr. Harlan Trott observes how timely Judge Lucas's talk has been, for since then "the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has asked to see the contract forms and other details worked out in connection with the renaissance of downtown Pittsburgh, where whoever erects a new building knows in advance that the city will halve the tax on the building." (In other words, the city taxes in Pittsburgh are so levied that the rate of tax on the building value is half the rate of tax on the land value of each property.) "This means that more of the cost of government is charged against the value of the site, a value which the community creates by wearing out the sidewalks throughout the Golden Triangle of the shining new Pittsburgh."

NEW DANISH LEGISLATION

Legislation "For Valuation and State Taxation of Landed Property" is proposed in the Bill under that title presented in Parliament on January 19 by Mr. Kampmann, the Finance Minister. The Bill would consolidate the existing Acts incorporating in them the following new provisions:—

1. *The Land Valuation.* The periodic general valuation to take place once every four years instead of quinquennially as under present law.
2. *The Tax on Buildings.* No further taxation to be imposed on buildings and improvements. Present amount of tax on existing buildings to be frozen and to be abated by 10 per cent every fourth year until it is finally eliminated. This means that all buildings and improvements erected or made after the passing of the Act would automatically be exempt from taxation. (Observe that the foregoing refers to *National* taxation with which specifically this Bill deals. *Local* taxation comes under separate legislation. A Bill relating thereto and taking similar action as to local rates on buildings and improvements may be expected.)
3. *The Increment Tax.* To be widened in scope by embracing the whole amount by which the assessed land value of any land is seen to have increased at each periodic