

## NEW ZEALAND

LAST MONTH we reported that Rotorua was the latest of the Boroughs to decide in favour of levying all local rates on the value of land apart from improvements. The poll of ratepayers took place on March 6. The *Commonweal of New Zealand* devotes a couple of columns to the campaign preceding this victory. Leading advocates for the change were Mr. P. A. Kusabs, the Mayor of Rotorua; Mr. L. Wright, the Town Clerk; Mr. W. C. E. George, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. John Mitchell, who has been a keen supporter of Land Value Rating for many years. Mr. T. E. MacMillan, Editor of the *Commonweal of New Zealand*, assisted by distributing explanatory literature.

The Asburton Borough Council submitted evidence before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government urging the system of Land Value Rating; also that all rating for river protection, soil conservation and drainage should be on the unimproved value.

### FREE TRADE OR PROTECTION?

New Zealand has a Labour government with full power and it is interesting in more than an academic way to note the effect of their policy of import restrictions upon the export policy of the new British government. At a public meeting in Manchester on July 24, Mr. C. W. Bridgen, a director of Ferranti, Ltd., said that New Zealand's Act of Import Selection prevented the import into New Zealand of articles which could be manufactured inside the country, and in many instances it meant that the New Zealander had to be content with inferior products. There was practically nothing for either household or personal use that was on the free list. There was absolute prohibition of such things as electric cookers, heaters and radio sets, and most of the New Zealand articles manufactured in their place compared very unfavourably with the English article. Mr. Bridgen said that many of these import restrictions would have to be lifted.

At the same time as Mr. Bridgen's speech the *Manchester Guardian* had a report on discussions in New Zealand and the general recognition of Britain's need for maximum exports and the duty of assisting the process. When Mr. Nash, Finance Minister in N.Z., referred to the fact that the British market took 90 per cent. of their primary produce, and pledged the Government not to bolster up uneconomic secondary industries, no Member of Parliament championed any particular industry. Free-traders in New Zealand include the farmers generally, who are demanding the right to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market, says the *Manchester Guardian*, in order to enable them to compete in the British markets against all-comers. A multitude of importing firms and agents are seeking the abandonment of import control in order to serve the consumers' market in New Zealand, which is now short of goods. The National party sup-

ports the Free-traders and the Labour party supports the local secondary industry. The argument for the retention of import control is the danger of inflation and the swamping of the consumers' market. New Zealand sterling funds in London total some £60,000,000, which must cover heavy debt commitments as well as pay for British goods exported to New Zealand. The fear is that an orgy of orders by New Zealand importers to supply their consumers might extinguish this sterling exchange. Memories of such a crisis in 1938 lend weight to these fears, but there are other ways round the difficulty than to make the consumer suffer; there is, for example, the United Nations Economic Council with powers for just such eventualities. Neither in New Zealand nor in Great Britain is a permanent import restriction policy justified by fears of inflation which is but the result of dislocations caused by the abandonment of economic freedom.

## GERMAN LAND REFORMERS

MR. RUDOLF SCHMIDT writes from Berlin to the Editor of *Land & Liberty*:

Perhaps you will remember our correspondence from 1939, when I lived in Norway and sent the *Bodenreform* to you as long as it was possible to do so. Then came the German occupation of Norway and one year later I was banished from Norway by the Reichskommissar on account of my political convictions.

Approximately at the same time my father (Dr. Kurt Schmidt, the successor of Adolf Damaschke) was prohibited from publishing the *Bodenreform*. The journal was stopped, but the work of the Land Reform Union was continued during the whole war as well as possible. But you understand that it was very difficult, because the Nazis didn't like the Bund deutscher Bodenreformer.

To-day my father has the complete list of all members of the Bund and as soon as postal services in Germany will admit it he will begin the work again. But during the war we had no opportunity to learn what has been happening in other countries. Therefore I should be very glad if you would help us to get the information which is necessary for the renewal of our work. Perhaps you can send to my address LAND & LIBERTY and other international journals as many as you can. Moreover, it will be interesting for your readers to hear that the Bund deutscher Bodenreformer is by no means dead, but on the contrary stands before a new and—I hope—successful life.

We will do our work not only for Germany's but also for the world's peace. We need the aid and the good will of a great international public. You, Mr. Editor, are the first who hears from us and the first who can help us.

[This letter has given us great pleasure and a letter in reply has been sent promising Mr. Rudolf Schmidt the publications he asks for as soon as facilities are available for sending them.—Editor, L. & L.]

## NOTES AND NEWS

### THE GENERAL ELECTION

The final state of the Parties was: Labour, 385; Conservatives and Nationals, 213; Liberals, 12; Others (including 3 Independent Labour Party), 8; Independents, 14—total 640. Three of the seats were uncontested and 12 belonged to the Universities, where P.R. is in operation. Excluding these, the elected Members and the votes cast in the 625 contested elections were: Labour, 385 with 11,814,464; Conservatives, 209 with 9,938,579; Liberals, 11 with 2,282,197; and others and Independents, 16 with 804,665 votes. On these figures as well as on the incomplete returns we gave last month, we stand corrected by several correspondents who have pointed out that it was not correct to say that the Labour Party's victory rested upon a decisive majority of the votes cast. The Labour Party, with 48 per cent. of the votes, secured 62 per cent. of the seats. What was in the mind of the writer was the relative position of the Conservative and Labour Parties, that is, of the two Parties likely to form an alternative government and between whom the verdict was overwhelmingly decisive, although it must be said of course that the seats obtained by the Liberals were altogether out of proportion with the votes their candidates secured. As for the "vagaries of our electoral system," we have carried the comparison further by examining the figures in the 277 constituencies where there were three-cornered contests and where therefore the Labour, Conservative and Liberal votes can be more precisely identified and segregated. The irrational nature of our electoral system is disclosed in the fact that with 4,923,700 votes Labour got 143 seats, Conservatives with 4,700,530 had 132, and Liberals with 1,921,783 secured only two seats. On this showing, the votes per seat were: Labour 34,430, Conservative 35,610, and Liberal 960,891. There were also 45 Independent candidates in the 277 Divisions. Their aggregate vote was 64,129, and none was elected.

C.E.C., Worcester, whom we have previously reported as celebrating thanksgiving days with a special donation to the United Committee, has taken advantage of the further opportunity in token of August 19th. He writes, "I have much pleasure in enclosing cheque for thanksgiving day—£5 from myself and £1 from 'sympathiser.' I hope you have a number of others, for I don't think there is a better way of showing gratitude for our victory than in helping to support the only way to prevent another war and build a Peace combined with Justice to the individual; more power to your elbow."

The Hon. Treasurer also acknowledged with much appreciation the numerous donations to the United Committee which came in sympathy with the special contribution from the correspondent (in North Ireland) who was helping the Committee to make good its expenditures during the General Election.

The Town Clerk and Borough Treasurer were present at a meeting of the Stockport Rotary Club addressed by Mr. A. H. Weller, Secretary of the Manchester Land Values League, on July 25th, his subject being "A new Rating system." The address was well received and excellent reports were printed in the *Stockport Express* and the *Stockport Advertiser*. On August 19th, Mr. Weller spoke to the Manchester Adult School on "Land Ownership." The address was followed by an unusually long and thoughtful discussion.

The land values movement has lost a devoted and successful worker by the death of John Haworth of Clitheroe at his home on August 20th, aged 82 years.