

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Fourth Henry George Congress

(Pittsburgh, 23rd-25th September, 1929)

The Conference held under the auspices of the Henry George Foundation of the United States assembled according to programme at the William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, 23rd September. We quote from the Report issued for the Press by the Foundation, received as we go to press :—

Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, the three-day Henry George Memorial Congress was convened to-day at the William Penn Hotel under the auspices of the Henry George Foundation of America whose executive headquarters are in this city. The Convention was welcomed by Carl D. Smith, prominent Pittsburgh attorney. A brief address in response was made by Mrs Anna George De Mille, honorary vice president of the Henry George Foundation and daughter of Henry George.

The Convention brings together a distinguished group of Single Taxers from the United States and Canada; including delegates who attended the International Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland, Charles O'Connor Hennessy, President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, and Peter Witt, Democratic leader of Ohio and probable candidate for Governor next year.

The Pittsburgh tax plan was explained by Thomas C. Mahaon, chief city assessor, who declared that after a fair trial he was convinced that the plan is a great aid in the promotion of progress but that the full effect of the plan will not have been attained until a fuller use is made of all the land within the city.

Honourable Charles O'Connor Hennessy, President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, discussing "The International Georgeist Movement," referred to the great progress made, in European countries particularly, in the publication of the philosophy and economics of Henry George.

His books, Mr Hennessy said, had been translated into most of the European languages, and were now influencing the public thought and political action as never before. This was particularly true, he said, in Denmark, where the Finance Minister, Mr Bramsnaes, is an outspoken follower of the American philosopher. Georgeist principles are taught in the Danish High Schools, and progressive and increasing taxation of land values and the demand for free trade are policies of the most numerous organized group of the Danish people—the small farmers.

In Great Britain, Mr Hennessy declared, Henry George's proposals had reached the arena of practical politics, and the Labour Party, now in power, is pledged to a beginning in the direction of destroying land monopoly, by progressive taxes and establishing world-wide freedom of trade. Philip Snowden, the popular Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Hennessy said, has recently publicly recommended a reading of George's classic *Protection or Free Trade*.

Peter Witt, former member of the City Council of Cleveland, speaking of the outstanding significance of the recent British Labour victory, declared that the land question is becoming the vital issue in British politics. Mr Witt has just returned from a tour of Europe on which he studied the British election campaign at close range. He sees in the Labour Party victory

not only an English Single Tax triumph, but also a material advancement of the world-wide Henry George cause.

Spencer M. De Golier, for twelve years mayor of Bradford, Pa., told of the rising favour toward the adoption of the Pittsburgh Graded Tax Law in the Pennsylvania cities of the Third Class. The League of Third Class Cities, meeting at New Castle, Pa., last summer, adopted Mayor De Golier's resolution endorsing the graded tax plan for the 42 Third Class Cities of Pennsylvania.

Denouncing the prostitution of the American Public schools and universities in the interests of private monopoly and exploitation, Emil O. Jorgensen of Chicago, secretary of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Federal Tax League, told of the winning fight being waged against text-books controlled by the power and landlord interests.

Free Trade and the taxation of the full value of the land was urged by Will Atkinson, son-in-law of Henry George and noted Single Tax crusader, as the solution of the great economic and social problems confronting America and the people of the whole world.

Professor John Dewey and a New Political Party

The Times of 10th September published the following interesting communication from its correspondent in New York :—

"With the avowed object of building up a new national political party comparable with the British Labour Party and equally opposed to Republicans and Democrats, representatives of 'progressive' opinion in the United States have formed a League for Independent Political Action, under the chairmanship of Professor John Dewey, of Columbia University. Mr James Maurer, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labour; Mr Paul H. Douglas, Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Chicago; Mr De Vere Allen, editor of the *World To-morrow*; and Mr W. E. Dubois, the negro educator, are among the officials of the League.

"The founders of the new organization believe that the greatest political need of the United States to-day is a genuine and critical opposition party, since the Democrats are no longer distinguished from the Republicans by any fundamental economic issue and it is impossible to persuade either party machine to adopt any new progressive economic policy.

"The programme of the new movement includes the public ownership of public services, with special reference to the generation and transmission of power; the public ownership and democratic management of the coal industry; a high progressive taxation on incomes and land values; and high death duties. With regard to

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labour, the League advocates a legal minimum wage system, employment and health insurance, old age pensions, extended recognition of the rights of organized labour, the abolition of the use of the injunction in labour disputes, and removal of the restrictions upon the negro and immigrant labour suffrage. Its policy on farm relief takes the form of a reduction of the tariff on manufactured goods. The League further proposes the independence of the Philippines, and 'a determined effort to eliminate the economic, psychological, and political causes of war.'

This assuredly is the result of the failure of the Democratic Party to proceed along the radical line of land value taxation and free trade. The new League comes into being to deal with problems that never need have arisen if the Republic had been true to its immeasurable economic opportunity.

CALIFORNIA

We are indebted to "M. J. S." for calling our attention to the article by Mr Edward P. E. Troy in *Land & Freedom* (New York), July-August issue. Here it is mentioned that at the request of the Modesto Irrigation District, the Californian Legislature passed its Bill to pay for cost of irrigation and water supply by means of land value taxation. In the same issue Mr George Cartwright has a letter from San Francisco saying that the Modesto Irrigation District has its own electric light and power system which was set up under the slogan "Public Ownership and Service at Cost." But as soon as some large holders of land began to get active, a movement took shape for making Modesto a "tax free" irrigation district, namely, to use the revenue from power and light to meet the charges for irrigation; in other words, shifting taxation from land values to the consumption of power and light. This is what is being done now. The farmers' irrigation tax is being lowered and Modesto City people are paying something like 80 per cent of power and light bills. The public ownership movement is being operated for the benefit of land speculators. And Mr Cartwright properly asks, how much progress in liberty do we make when we kill power-company-monopoly to establish public ownership as a revenue raiser to subsidize land monopoly?

A parallel of this exploitation of "public ownership" is found in New Zealand where the late Conservative Cabinet made a serious attack on the local rating of land values by levying an impost on petrol toward Road Fund grants, thus relieving land from taxation and making a gift of public revenue to landowners.

Public ownership is justified if it is operated at cost. If it is operated at a profit, it is simply an indirect tax on the consumer and, like the petrol tax, it makes a present to the landowner of the land value that should be taken in taxation for the common good.

NEW YORK

Prize Essay Competition

We are indebted to Hon. Edward Polak for a copy of the printed "Report of the Dr Mary D. Hussey Prize Essay Contest in New York City High Schools on the Economic Laws as Expounded by Henry George." This encouraging document states that the essay contests were conducted under the auspices of the Board of Education and the Principals of the High Schools of the Greater City of New York. More than 1,500 essays were submitted, and appropriately inscribed copies of *Significant Paragraphs from Progress and Poverty* were presented to a number of students.

The rules of the competition provided that all

contestants were to read *Progress and Poverty* (abridged or unabridged) or *Significant Paragraphs*. Over 800 copies of these books, as well as a considerable quantity of other Single Tax literature, were supplied to the students, and during the course of the contest Single Tax speakers were allowed to give explanatory addresses to classes in the schools. The project received favourable publicity in the daily newspapers.

To have obtained the co-operation of the Board of Education and its officials was an important achievement. Without this the scheme would have been seriously handicapped. The first step was taken by Mr Polak himself, who as Chairman of the Dr Mary D. Hussey Fund Prize Essay Committee approached the Superintendent of Public Schools, New York City, giving full details of the project. The report mentions that Hon. William J. Weber, a member of the Board of Education, was largely instrumental in obtaining the Board's consent.

The total value of the prizes was 1,000 dollars, comprising five first prizes at 100 dollars, three second prizes at 75 dollars, three third prizes at 50 dollars, and five Honourable Mention prizes at 25 dollars each. Students belonging to 23 New York schools took part in the contest. Each of the 37 high schools in the city was supplied with a complete set of the works of Henry George and other writers on economics.

The scheme was made possible under the will of Dr Mary D. Hussey, a former resident of New Jersey, who was a devoted follower of Henry George and worked hard for the Single Tax cause during her life.

FREDERICK H. MONROE

We regret to announce the passing away on 26th August of Frederick H. Monroe, president of the Henry George Lecture Association of Chicago, which he founded 25 years ago. Mr Monroe was taken ill last June while on his Eastern tour and had been failing since that time. He was 64 years old. Services were held at Lain Chapel, Chicago, on 28th August, attended by many friends including John Z. White, Geo. A. Schilling, G. C. Olcott, Otto Cullman, Andrew P. Canning, J. Foerster, H. Hardinge, P. Kelliher, G. Strachan, Emil O. Jorgensen and H. L. T. Tideman. The Rev. U. M. Maguire, editor of the *Baptist*, officiated and ex-Alderman W. Wright Mills paid an affectionate tribute to Mr Monroe's more than a quarter-century devotion to the Henry George cause.

After a youth and young manhood spent in Kansas and Colorado, Mr Monroe moved to Chicago in 1895. He was active in the old Chicago Single Tax Club, becoming its president in 1898 and 1899. The Henry George Lecture Association, with Mr Monroe as its president, then was formed to extend Single Tax educational work in and around Chicago. In 1904 it was organized as a nation-wide basis with Mr John Z. White as official lecturer. Travelling becoming too strenuous for Mr White in 1927 the lecture field was covered by Hon. George H. Duncan, for 10 years a member of the New Hampshire legislature.

The Association has its offices at 538, South Dearborn Street, Chicago. Announcement has been made that its educational programme will be continued by John Lawrence Monroe who during the past five months has been actively engaged, with his father accompanying him, in the East and later making the annual trip through Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Mr Monroe is survived by his widow, his two sons and niece. To Mrs Monroe and family we extend our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement.