

"PROGRESS AND POVERTY" FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

(Special Session of the International Conference in Edinburgh on Tuesday, 30th July.)

A full session of the Edinburgh International Conference was held in the large Conference Assembly Hall on Tuesday, 30th July, the feature of the occasion being to celebrate at a Social Gathering the Fiftieth Anniversary of the publication of Henry George's epoch-making work *Progress and Poverty*. Besides members of the Conference, many visitors attended making a company of 400 persons.

Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, President of the Conference, presided, and on his right sat Mrs Anna George de Mille, daughter of Henry George and the guest of the evening. Musical items in the way of orchestral pieces, solos and quartets were rendered by the St. Cuthbert's Co-operative Orchestral Society under the leadership of Mr Steel. The company also joined in community singing. Light refreshments were served in the Rainy Hall, and in the interval the various halls and rooms of the well-equipped building placed at the disposal of the Conference gave opportunity to each and all for the informal conversation and discussion that helped to make this social gathering a memorable event.

The President, introducing the guest of the evening, said: "We are to be entertained and edified to-night, I believe, by voices from many parts of the world. It occurred to me to quote just one or two words, unremembered words perhaps, of the great leader and prophet whose philosophy and whose religion has bound us together here.

"Some time ago I was going over some newspaper clippings and some extracts from the newspaper which Henry George published, *The Standard*, with the idea on behalf of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation of bringing together a volume of the unpublished writings of Henry George. I was amazed and gratified to find how rich the literature of Henry George is that has not been published between the covers of a book. I recall that, after the campaign in which I had a small part in 1887 in the State of New York, Henry George addressed a great meeting of his followers in Cooper Union, some of them discouraged by the fact that they had recorded a small vote in that election. Henry George said:—

"We are seeking to educate people, and in that respect the movement is going on all the faster and all the better. I have been pleased at the expressions in the letters that have come to me from all parts of the State and all parts of the Union and the sentiments I have heard from all our districts. I have yet to meet a man who looked upon the result with repining. I have yet to meet the man who felt discouraged. On the contrary, this defeat has served us. It has strengthened us. We know our numbers now, and we have no reason to be ashamed of the 73,000 men who in this State last Tuesday, against every influence that could be exerted and for a candidate who could not be elected, polled a vote that meant simple adherence to a great principle; 73,000 men in this State alone. How many men are there then between the Atlantic and the Pacific?"

"When we count our numbers in this Conference I am conscious of the fact that hundreds of thousands of men and women are attached to the cause which we espouse here. (Applause.)

"Henry George further said:—

"We might further disband this party. We might give up the anti-poverty society." (Cries of 'No,

never.') 'We one and all might cease our efforts and still the struggle would go on. Others would take our places in the fight that we shirk and ultimately the victory would be won. The victory must be won. (Applause.) It is within the power of each of us, the weakest, the humblest, to help this movement forward a little. It is not in the power of all of us to stop it or to stay it. When a truth like this comes into the world, when it gets as far as this has done, then the future is secure. Through strife, through defeat, through treachery, through opposition, the great cause will go on.'

"That is the message I wish to bring to you to-night. I call upon that follower of Henry George, his worthy daughter Anna George de Mille, to address you." (Applause.)

Mrs Anna George de Mille: "I have had two days of the most extraordinary enthusiasm. It is not only meeting you all, the meeting with people who are making such a gorgeous fight all over wherever they might happen to be stationed, but the way it is being conducted. All this literature is amazing to me, the way it has all been done so beautifully, the editing of it, the printing of it, the reading of proofs, the translations, and all else.

"Mr Hennessy has almost taken my own text, because I wished to quote from Henry George a year before Mr Hennessy's quotation. He said, 'We have begun a movement that defeated and defeated and defeated must still go on.' Thus said Henry George on the night of the election in 1886. This was a year before Mr Hennessy's quotation of the election of 1887. He said this after he had made a difficult and exhausting campaign for the Mayoralty of New York, which had ended when the Tammany candidate, representing the very powers he was hoping to destroy, had been conceded the victory. Henry George made this declaration, showing his own dauntless spirit, at the moment of personal loss. But years before he had written in a letter to his mother, 'Talent and energy can always convert defeats into victories.' This was his own slogan to which he shaped the conduct of his life—the *will to surmount*. It carried him through all the difficult crises of the fight that started when he first attempted to explain and expound the scientific laws he had discovered.

"Fifty years have passed since then, but we in this movement to-day know that though defeated and defeated and defeated we must still go on. 'This is the power of truth.' 'It will not let one rest.' Once having accepted the challenge of truth, one is bound to its service; responsibility drives one on. Fifty years seems an endless time if one looks forward, but it is a short span when one looks into the beginningless past and counts how long the really great achievements have taken in the making. And when one gets too despairful over the slowness of mankind's awakening to our simple, self-evident cure for the horrors of poverty, when it seems as though Justice and Order were as far away as ever, it is well to take a peep at some records of the past.

"We are attempting to construct an economic system that cannot be brought into existence overnight like an Aladdin's palace, nor yet with the speed of a New York skyscraper. We are trying to build a cathedral. It is slow and wearying work. It seems at times to be thankless work and demands crucifying patience.



ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

the promise of the song that would one day flood the great edifice. But he knew he would not live to see it finished; he knew so great a task must take more time than the span of one man's life. But what other cause has moved so far in 50 years?

"Our progress has been astounding, our accomplishment enormous, when compared with the progress of other causes. Our growth now is not easy to keep track of: it is not focussed as it was during the life of Henry George. It is spread all over the world. He saw this coming long before he died when he told his son Richard: 'It no longer depends upon one man. It is no longer a "Henry George movement"—a one man movement. It is the movement of many men, in many lands.' Progress now is so often below the surface. Understanding is seeking into dark corners and deep crevices. It is cropping out in surprising places. We have reason for the greatest rejoicing, and those brave toilers, who are working down in the foundations of our cathedral—all you who through the weary years have carried on with only Henry George's promise of rainbow lighted arches and vaulted ceilings, you, I believe, are soon to be ravished by seeing the accomplishment of your task. And so I make my toast to those dauntless builders, who working to the plan of the great architect (whose memory we are honouring to-night) have, though defeated and defeated and defeated, still gone on." (Loud applause, followed by the singing of "She's a jolly good fellow" and cheers.)

John Paul, called upon by the President, said: "I am very pleased to be here and to be associated with so many colleagues and co-workers from other lands. We are having a great Conference. A great deal of work has been put into it, and I am satisfied that when the official report of the Conference comes to be placed before our people, it will stand in their estimation for one of the most progressive episodes in the history of the movement.

"The best way to celebrate the anniversary of *Progress and Poverty* is to introduce it to some person whom one thinks may prove a promising recruit. If your judgment proves correct, and you have found a person with a receptive mind, the effort will be worth while. I have not finished yet with the reading of *Progress and Poverty*; I still read the book at times and I am always discovering further beauties, fresh thoughts and, above all, a new inspiration from its pages. I believe I shall continue to find inspiration from *Progress and Poverty*, and from the other works of Henry George as well."

The President: "The Committee has designed that this evening we should hear a few words, necessarily

We must break down old prejudices, old traditions, before we can begin to re-educate.

"The master architect who planned this cathedral was able to endure the toil, to bear taunts and conquer unbelief, because he saw with his mind's eye not only the symmetry of the structure that was to be—the vaulted beauty of perfectly balanced stone—but also the glory that would later come with sunlight glowing through jewelled windows. In his heart he carried

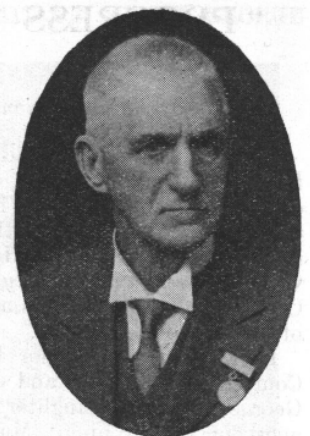
because of the limitations of time only a few words, from a number of delegates to the Conference. I call on Mr Byron W. Holt of New York, a distinguished financial writer of that city who has been associated with literary movements and with this great movement for as many years as I can remember."

Mr Byron Holt: "I participated in the Mayoralty election in 1886, in the State election of 1887 and in the Mayoralty election again of 1897. In 1897 I was manager of one of the assembled districts. I, of course, came close to Henry George and met him a great many times. I saw him under all kinds of circumstances. I saw him on his bicycle, I saw him at his home when I was in college. In my work I reviewed about 25 critics of Henry George. I met him and spent an hour in a dark room going over pamphlets and books giving me what he considered the best critics. I will only say that after reviewing those critics I became more firmly a Single Taxer than I was before. It is not easy for me to be a hero worshipper. However, Henry George is the man that I think more of than any man who ever lived. He was a modest democratic man always. I was at his funeral and was a pall bearer and I have been following ever since, and the Single Tax is the only religion I have and the only one I need."

The President: "I don't know whether I ought to call our next speaker a distinguished Englishman or a distinguished Australian, because he has distinguished himself in both parts of the British Empire as an expositor of the philosophy of Henry George; and he has given not only himself but he has given generously of his resources and his latest gesture has been to found a Henry George foundation of Great Britain—Louis P. Jacobs."

Mr Louis P. Jacobs: "I can assure you under such an introduction as that, I am sailing under false colours in being called on at such an early stage and with such a highly eulogistic introduction. To be gathered together as we are 50 years after the publication of that remarkable book in such strength and spirit and numbers as we are, with the gifted daughter of that remarkable genius present whom we all revere and honour, gives a touch to my mind almost of romance to our cause. There are many movements about the world in which men and women are associated, but I doubt if there is a single movement in the world which has gathered strength and gone from strength to strength as we have, banded together as we are in a cause which threatens the greatest interest in the world. You will find philosophical movements and religious movements of all kinds, but I doubt if there is any movement which has grown as ours has in the face of the most bitter opposition, in the face of scorn, sneers and scoffing such as we were subjected to.

"I ask a little latitude to express very briefly my gratitude here to a man whose name is known to most of you and who was the man who caused in my life the joy I have experienced ever since he converted me, not in a very direct and conscious way, to the idea that unites us. I refer to Mr Max Hirsch. Henry George



BYRON H. HOLT



LOUIS P. JACOBS

said, and said truly, that there would be men who would die for this cause. It is literally true that Max Hirsch worked himself to death for this cause. It is not a matter for lament in his case because he had a joyous life. Every minute of his life he enjoyed in the knowledge that he was working for something worth while, but a touch of sentiment is added to the gathering by the fact that Max Hirsch's favourite niece has come from Berlin to see the devotion there is from

all parts of the world towards the cause to which her uncle devoted his life. The lady is Dr Marie Hendel of Berlin. (Applause.)

"It seems to me that Henry George's teaching is to be compared to a great art masterpiece, some great classic, whether it be music or painting, which the ordinary man in the street has to go to several times before he can grasp its whole beauty. So I have come to think after many conversations I have had with intelligent people on the subject of our movement."

The President : "More than 30 years ago there was put into the hands of a young man in a small city in Spain a French translation of *Progress and Poverty*, and when he read it he became inspired with a great faith that would not let him rest until he felt that he could do something for it; the thing that he was moved most to do at the time was to leave his business and his associations at home and cross the Atlantic Ocean into a country strange to him to meet the author of this great book and pay his tribute to him and be inspired by his presence. Alas, he arrived in the City of New York on the day after the author of this great book passed away. We will now listen to a few words from our dear friend, one of the most loving personalities I know in the world, Antonio Albendin."

Mr Antonio Albendin : "I was astonished that what had happened to me in reading this book does not happen to everybody. I felt that I must go to offer myself to the author of this book. On learning that he was dead, I felt it was my duty to dedicate all my strength and my means and all I could do and all the rest of my life to this great cause, and I thought I must fulfil that until the last moment of my life. Then I began my work as well as I could. I never have been a writer. I never have been a reader, but the power of this man's book has made of me a writer, publisher, manager, all kinds of things. That is the power of this great book, and I am very glad that my work is not lost, for in Spain there is a great mass of opinion that some time will revive, and in the meantime in South America there has grown a powerful movement which very soon will show you and all the world how the idea for which we stand takes root not only in the public opinion of South America but in practical politics."

The President : "From the far prairies of America, the great City of Chicago, I summon Mr Andrew P. Canning to say a few words to us."

Mr Andrew P. Canning : "I got my first lesson in political economy in the coal mines of Lanarkshire, and left there for America as a lad of 15. We are

busy with other things in Scotland at 15, but I did read over the Declaration of Independence. I did not know whether it was true or not, but it sounded good to me. I thought if it was not true it ought to be true. I read of the equality of men, equal rights to all, and the notion that I obtained from that early reading I have never had to change. I noticed in the admirable Address of the President of this Convention that there were only two men whose names fell on my ear. He must have men-



ANTONIO ALBENDIN

tioned many, but you will notice that he reached his climax with the aspiring thought that the thing he was working for was to bring about a realization of the dream of that great Scotsman of the brotherhood of man, and it is remarkable how those lines fitted in. That was what made so easy an introduction to George's writings, because that same hatred of injustice that animated the breast of George was also what brought immortality to the great Scotsman from Ayr. The explanation of the place which Burns holds in the affections of mankind is not to be explained by the lyrical excellence of his writings, no more than is the place which Lincoln holds in the affections of mankind based on the literary excellence of the Gettysburg speech. It is not the form but the content of the message of Lincoln and Burns and George that gives them their place in the affections of mankind.

"Henry George only wrote his book 50 years ago, and the followers of Henry George have no reason to despair. 'It is,' he said, 'sad reading the lives of the men who would have done something for their fellows; to Socrates they gave the hemlock; the Gracchi they killed with sticks and stones; and One, greatest of all, they crucified.'"

Among the other speakers were Mr K. J. Kristensen of Denmark, Mr E. Schulze of Germany, and Dr Mark Millikin of Ohio.

Mr K. J. Kristensen said: "Some weeks ago there was a delegation from Germany in Copenhagen under the leadership of Dr Karutz—in fact, I have a message of greeting to this Conference from Dr Karutz—and he came to Denmark first with a delegation of prominent leaders of the Agricultural Workers' Association in Germany, and then with 16 Social Democratic Members of the Prussian and German Parliaments. They spent an evening in the discussion of Land Valuation and they were most interested in that subject. Another event to me was the statement of Mr MacLaren to this Conference showing that in Great Britain the Labour Party is realizing the truth that Henry George has set forth. Parties of these two big countries—and we in Denmark are always looking to these two countries for new thoughts and mending them to suit the Danish mind—we are longing for a blast of freedom from these two countries. I think all over the world if we can reconcile the Labour Parties with the philosophy of Henry George, then this year will be a true year of jubilee to the movement of Henry George that we are celebrating this evening."

Mr Eduard Schulze said: "*Progress and Poverty* has been translated several times into German. In one of these translations the preface has been written by the

leader of the German Land Reformers, Dr Adolf Damaschke. It may be considered as a recent success of our efforts that after overcoming big financial difficulties which seemed to frustrate our beginnings we have finally succeeded in getting a new monthly journal, *The Ground Rent*, copies of which will be distributed to the Conference this week. By this Journal we seek to draw the public attention in Germany to the subjects this Conference deals with and we hope the Conference itself will foster our propaganda work for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade as taught by Henry George."

Dr Mark Millikin said: "What are some of the requisites of our reforms? In the first place, people must have a sense of humour, and in the second place they must have patience. Of course, the Single Tax is making progress. If we can 'put over,' as the slang is, just the one thought, that you shall pay taxes according to benefits received, we have done a great thing. The Single Tax appeals to me because it is simple, and the simple things are best. I want to touch upon one great law which is very simple. It is a good thing for reformers to remember. It is to this effect, 'Act so that your action may be of universal application.' I certainly find sanction in that doctrine for adherence to the Single Tax. You find very little sanction for some of the iniquities that are perpetrated to-day in the name of Government. I would leave that thought with you, that in your actions try to promulgate the doctrine that Henry George so wonderfully expounded—realize that your law is of universal application."

THE CONFERENCE AND THE PRESS

Elsewhere we refer to the excellent Press publicity given to the International Conference in the reports of proceedings and other notices. In addition, a number of newspapers published leading articles. That appearing in the *Manchester Guardian* is here reprinted in full, and extracts are given from the lengthy editorials other papers devoted to the Conference and its objects.

Henry George

The followers of Henry George remain as numerous and enthusiastic as ever. Yesterday they gathered in their hundreds at Edinburgh, coming from twenty-three nations and several continents to testify to their undiminished faith in the taxation of land values and in Free Trade. Henry George has been dead more than thirty years, and exactly fifty years have passed since the publication of *Progress and Poverty* in England. While subtler economists and more elegant stylists have been forgotten, Henry George's influence, powerful immediately, seems rather to spread than to decline. Nor is that difficult to explain. For though Henry George was a man of one idea, it was a good idea, and it was founded on a truth he had observed for himself and which everyone else could observe when it was pointed out. Of course there was no novelty in declaring that the land naturally belonged to the people, and that part at least of the rent which it afforded should be paid into the common exchequer. Nor was Henry George alone in arguing that all other taxes should be gradually abolished in favour of a single land tax. But his thesis was put forward at a time when the truth contained in his doctrine was singularly evident, and the process by which men grow rich at the public expense through their good fortune in owning conveniently situated land has become increasingly apparent as industrial development has spread. His doctrine was accepted by many Liberals, and became part of Socialist thought, and much of his argument has become incorporated in the text-books of orthodoxy. He was a man who

found a truth, and if he and his followers have tended too much to put forward his remedy as a universal panacea, the remedy possessed real value and was not a quack nostrum.—*Manchester Guardian*, 30th July.

The People and the Land

It is taking the world a long while to realize the irrefutable truths that lie in the principles enunciated by Henry George, but there are signs that the pace is quickening. The Conference that is meeting in Edinburgh this week, therefore, will be listened to with a patience which was not particularly discernible when the author of *Progress and Poverty* was himself alive. It is a great opportunity to make a worth-while contribution towards the solution of the international problems of to-day, and the Conference President, the Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, of New York, gave a brilliant lead yesterday in his address from the chair. . . . To make the world swallow the complete pill of the taxation of land values may not be so easy, however. But by all the laws of equity it must come to pass some day. There is nothing but the old feudal respect for the landed proprietor to say against it; there is certainly no argument in logic with which to defend the present system. It is of some moment to remember that both Labour and Liberals in this country are pledged to the taxation of land values. They may not achieve the full reform at the moment, but they would be failing in their faith if they did not use their chances to educate the people a little more towards this great ideal.—*Edinburgh Evening News*, 30th July.

Single Tax after 50 years

Half a century has elapsed since a San Francisco man, a printer at the case, who occasionally tried his hand at editing, put forth a book on the land question, with the paradoxical title, *Progress and Poverty*. The name of Henry George at that time was little known. He had written somewhat for obscure publications, and occasionally had spoken in meetings of labouring men. But neither as author nor orator had he attained any wide reputation. He had neither money nor influence wherewith to force his book upon the attention of the public. Indeed, when he endeavoured to obtain its publication, he found publishers doubtful of the value of a work on economics, and unwilling to issue it unless he would pay the cost of making the plates.

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After a prolonged search, he found a man willing to assist him in meeting the latter essential, but it is interesting now to recall the fact that so slight were the means with which the two embarked upon the undertaking that the author himself went back to the case and stick and set a very considerable portion of his own book. It was not long after he thus turned again to the tools of his trade that his name as an economist and propagandist was known in every quarter of the globe; more than 3,000,000 copies of his book had been issued, and it was translated into almost every known tongue. And last Monday, after the lapse of fifty years, Single Taxers from all parts of the world met at Edinburgh to celebrate this semi-centenary and to honour the name of Henry George. . . . The impression made by Henry George upon the consciousness of mankind is a striking illustration of the power of thought, backed by a good purpose. . . . That his followers are animated to so great an extent by a like devotion to the economic panacea which he preached shows impressively the enduring power of a devoted and self-sacrificing ideal.—*Christian Science Monitor*, 1st August.

A Notable Conference

The International Conference on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade has met in Edinburgh at a time when many people interested are on holiday. . . . Eyes are again directed to Parliament in the hope that the People's Chamber will be worthy of its name, and be not merely the bodyguard of Ministerial or Opposition chiefs. The people urgently need help. The great mass of them is disturbed by the persistence of unemployment, which has not been well handled by the State or its servants.

Such vital principles as Free Trade and the taxation of the unimproved value of land advocated by Henry George will benefit by a great increase of propaganda. The principles received insufficient attention at the last election by reason of the discussion of unemployment and possible immediate remedies. The British electorate must get back to fundamental principles. The idea has prevailed at the Conference that Mr Philip Snowden in his next Budget will link up with Mr Lloyd George's ever-memorable Budget of 1909, when land taxation was the central issue. Doubtless the Labour Chancellor will profit by the Liberal Chancellor's experience, and go right out for a national tax on land values.

Mr Snowden, more than any other Minister, holds the key to democratic finance and control, and we may be sure that if the course of general politics permits there will be an arresting, epoch-making Budget. There will be abundance of criticism from vested interests, but it would be well if there is now a genuine attempt to support the general principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. The De-Rating Acts have provided us with financial puzzles; nor is their operation entirely equitable; but there is simple, direct action in a national tax on land values, which in its working should tap large stores of wealth for the common good.—*Edinburgh Evening News*, 1st August.

The Prophet and his followers

. . . The delegates to the fourth International Conference on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, who are meeting this week in Edinburgh, are whole-hearted supporters of the doctrines of Henry George, and are anxious to persuade the world (especially the countries where the rising tide of industrialism is rapidly submerging the rural areas) that only through taxing land values adequately can justice be done. . . . So long as private landowners are able by raising rents to hold the nation to ransom, so long will poverty continue and pro-

gress be hindered. . . . Relieve industries and individuals from the unfair burden of rates and taxes which at present bears them down, and at once you liberate energy, encourage enterprise, increase purchasing power, and bring new prosperity to the country.—*South Wales Argus*, 2nd August.

Unemployment Schemes and Land Values

The principle of the taxation of land values . . . has made progress, and it may be taken that the present Labour Government in the main are committed to a far-reaching scheme of land reform which will do something to restore to the nation for common purposes the wealth which now is diverted into private pockets.

Let us think of those great new trunk roads constructed in the neighbourhood of London, driven through pure rural country, and let us ask ourselves whether it is just that because the community (either through a town council or county council, or through a State Department) have spent money to improve the means of transport the landowners who have frontages on those roads should secure the great wealth due to public improvement. The time has come when we must look at this question from the point of view of common rights and the public interest. If for the good of the nation it is necessary to lend or spend money to improve railways, docks, roads, bridges, recreation grounds or the like, we ought to secure that the collateral gains shall go to those who create them—that is, to the community as a whole. Sincerely we hope that the present Government will tackle the question in earnest. The taxation and rating of land values will mean not only revenue for the nation and the municipalities, but will make it so expensive for landowners to hold up land for the rise in value that towns will grow naturally, and there will not be the old temptation to crowd houses upon the land, while land immediately outside is lying idle.—*South Wales Argus*, 5th August.

Taxation of Land Values

The value of persistent and consistent propaganda by men and women who believe implicitly in what they advocate was illustrated in the proceedings of the Land Value Taxation Conference which has just concluded at Edinburgh. It seems only yesterday since Henry George's panacea for all the ills of mankind was first announced to an astonished world. . . . Gradually the number of adherents of the reform increased, and at the Conference just closed there were representatives, whose names are known far and near, from the principal countries of the world. Any problem affecting the land has a special interest for Irishmen, and it was not surprising to find that a good percentage of the delegates were either born in Ireland or the sons of Irish parents. . . . There is not a village in the whole of Ireland without its concrete proof of the injustice of the land laws. Landowners in almost countless numbers have amassed wealth without lifting a little finger, but simply through the concentration of people in and around their land. Belfast also can provide numerous examples even during the past thirty to forty years when ground which was not worth more than a few pounds per acre became extremely valuable by the development of the city's boundaries.

The advocates of land value taxation have made great progress with their crusade, but they have a big task in front of them before they realize the object of their ambition. Vested interests are hard to move, and a bloodless revolution—such as the taxation of land values would be—is not carried out in a night.—*Irish News*, 7th August, and *Irish Weekly*, 10th August.