

act *only* by restriction; that they can aid production only by removing restrictions imposed by others; and that they never do this unless forced by the people to do so.

"Some years ago, when I was Leader of the London County Council, I recognised in our land system the basic restriction-law of our society, the law which enables parasites to monopolise the first essential to all production. But now the instinct of the politician warns me to keep quiet about a reform which at one stroke could so simplify government that you could dispense with all but an insignificant number of politicians, officials and their vast army of hangers-on.

"I told you, working men, that you could expect no more doles from 'squeezing the incomes of the rich.' I did not enlarge upon the ignoble principle of either robbing them of what they have truly earned, or making you a sharer in ill-gotten gains. I told you the chief tax-

collector had already taken all he could from the rich. I did not tell you that he had consistently overlooked that vast source of revenue which is truly yours by right of creation: the rent of your native land. How much rent would there be if all the population consisted of landlords and officials? You, Englishmen, are born heirs to the rent of your country, as you are born heirs to its glory and traditions. Each man must, in justice, pay rent for his holding, but each must, in justice, participate in the whole. Demand this, your property, for public revenue and demand the removal of all those dishonest taxes which maintain armies of parasites and constitute the real impediment to production! But you must do this for yourselves, not expect politicians to do it for you. God gave them no more wisdom or virtue than other men, and he gave them no immunity from the corruption which inevitably attends power!"

F. D. P.

## WHERE DENMARK LEADS

THE adherents of the land values and free trade movement in Denmark have a platform and a sounding board, as well as an influence, by which they are to be envied. It consists in the independent political party, the *Justice Union*, which proclaims the policy of the "just State" based on the freedom of the individual and his equal rights, the removal of all obstructions on trade and industry, the full appropriation of the rent of land as the community's revenue and the abolition of taxation on the work of man's hands. Its three representatives in Parliament are Dr. Viggo Starcke, Mr. Knud Tholstrup and Mr. Sören Olesen, and the party has its active branches in all parts of the country. The growth of its membership, the flow of youth to its standard, the ready and considerable attendance at its meetings, the increasing circulation of its periodicals are the marks of its progress which have been particularly noteworthy during the past twelve months. Public support was tested at the recent elections for the Upper House when the votes given for the Party were three times as many as on the previous occasion; and this, although the franchise for the Upper House is limited to persons of 35 years or over. There is no doubt that when the next election for the Lower House takes place, the young also exercising the vote, the *Justice Union* will record a still more striking gain. The party has the advantage of the uncompromising stand it takes against restrictionism in all its forms, for certainly the popular revolt against the controls and regulations is steadily growing and the people are beginning to apprehend that the "planned economy" is a delusion and a snare, working towards economic and financial disaster. The reply to all that is equal freedom and equal opportunity, and in this nation-wide debate the "Georgeists," as they are familiarly called, are winning recognition and respect for the principles they advocate.

The forerunner of this well-revived agitation was that which led to the passage of the Acts of 1922 and 1926 by the coalition government of Radical Liberals and Social Democrats, providing for the periodic valuation of all land separately from buildings and improvements as well as some measure of land value taxation for both national and local purposes—sound beginnings, the details of which have been repeatedly described in *LAND & LIBERTY*. The legislation on which to build further stands to the credit of these parties. They still have land-value taxation as a "plank of their platform"—the Moderate Liberals are also genial in their attitude—but performance not keeping

step with promise, the *Justice Union* took shape and entered politics on its own account. And the Danes have a system of proportional representation, not perfect, if you like, but yet efficient enough to make representation correspond with the number of the votes that are cast. On that score, talking of the difficulties that attend the formation of new parties in this country a franchise system rendered still more iniquitous by the £150 deposit, I found it a matter of astonishment to the Danes that we could have in our Parliament a party with an overwhelming majority of the seats and yet a minority of the votes at the election. It could not happen there and to them it was a travesty of democracy.

The parent organisation of the Danish movement is the long-established Henry George Union, serving the propaganda without any party-political associations and claiming the support of all who believe in its aims and objects—its position the same as that of the United Committee, the International Union and the Leagues for Land Value Taxation in this country. Its contribution to the advance of the cause has been immense and its work goes on, as necessary as ever, for the making of opinion among all sections of the people. To-day its president is Mr. P. C. Pedersen, its secretary is Mr. Dan Björner, and Mr. F. Folke is the editor of its journal, *Grundskyld* (the Land-Due). On the purely educational side is the Ecotechnical School, teaching the Henry George social philosophy, under the directorship of Mrs. Caroline Björner, which ran some 60 classes last year and is now preparing its autumn and winter sessions. The *Justice Union* has four periodicals, the weekly *Vejen Frem* (the Way Forward), the monthly *Ret og Frihed* (Justice and Freedom) and the journals of its "working-men" and youth sections, and one is to be established for the women's section. A large band of writers and speakers is engaged in this intense activity which, with meetings in all parts, includes the sale and circulation of much literature.

### NEXT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

A fortnight's stay in Denmark during June gave me exceptional opportunities to learn more of all this work and join in it by the kindness and courtesy of many friends, met at a number of gatherings and individually. A main object of the journey was to consult with them on the prospects of the next International Conference and to report that in much correspondence reaching the office, Denmark was the chosen country. That recommendation was received with enthusiasm everywhere I went, and its

fulfilment was looked for at the earliest possible date. The Henry George Union and the International Union would be the joint organisers. A special meeting of the Committee of the former was held in Copenhagen, June 22nd, to consider the possibility of holding the Conference in Copenhagen in 1948; but with that agreement, it was decided also that before any date for the Conference could be announced, the International Union should communicate with its members the world over to ascertain how many could promise attendance. The Union is acting accordingly.

An outstanding event in my visit was the Summer Conference in Aarhus, June 15th, of the branches of the Justice Union in the four Mid-Jutland counties. The morning and afternoon sessions, attended by 200 delegates, were followed in the evening by an impressive public demonstration, at which the speakers were Dr. Viggo Starcke, M.P., Mr. Knud Tholstrup, M.P., Mr. Kai Larsen, chairman of the Youth Section in Odense, and myself. Whether people in Denmark usually pay for admission to public meetings I do not know, but there, at any rate, the 600 to 700 persons present were glad to pay the 1s. per head to hear what the Justice Union stands for, and I am told that many of its public meetings, especially where Dr. Starcke is the announced speaker, are financed the same way—a very gratifying feature of their agitation! Among other incidents of this interesting sojourn were the well-attended social gather-

ings in Copenhagen, June 30th, and in Esbjerg, July 1st, where much was discussed affecting the movement both at home and abroad, and the prospects of the International Conference in particular; the stay at Silkeborg and Skanderborg in the lovely lake district and some evenings spent in home circles; the visit to Mr. Uffe Grosen's People's High School at Vallekilde, and to Mr. Troels Sams's farm nearby; and in Copenhagen, a round of visits in "Georgeist" company all the way, including that to the Central Valuation Board to gain from its chief, Mr. K. J. Kristensen, fresh information on the technique of the valuation methods and procedure. Part of that technique, as is known, is the publication of the land value maps for every town and district, as one of the instruments for controlling the valuation, and these maps (or atlases, as they are) are on sale to the public. Already some of these have begun to appear in connection with the latest valuation, and the office of the International Union is supplied with copies. At this interview Mr. Ole Wang of Norway, a vice-president of the International Union, who had come specially to Copenhagen, was present. The description of the Danish Land Valuation system is given by Mr. Kristensen himself in the paper he presented to the International Conference in 1939, of which a new and revised edition is now available. And here, in the practical application of the land value policy, is one of the most instructive lessons which Danish experience has to teach.

A. W. MADSEN.

## TRUE FREE TRADE AND LAISSEZ-FAIRE

(By the late W. R. Lester, Paper presented at the London 1936 International Conference on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade.)

IF we were trying to express current opinion on fiscal policy we should say that though, as a principle, free trade cannot be controverted, it is out of the question for one country to adopt it so long as others refuse. Most protectionists go thus far towards free trade and very many free traders go thus far towards protection.

But no man can have fully grasped the free trade argument who does not know that even were every country but one to maintain its barriers it would richly pay that one to demolish its own. No man has mastered the free trade case who does not see that. Trade benefits both buyer and seller. If every party but one labours under the delusion that this is not so and chooses to deprive himself of the benefit by tariffs, quotas or prohibitions, is that any reason why the remaining party, not similarly illusioned, should do likewise? If all countries but one restrict the wealth-bringing stream of imports, is that any reason why the one that remains should do the same?

Only an unreasoning superstition, based on the belief that imports are injurious, makes us believe that no one country can demolish its barriers so long as others maintain theirs, and the fact may as well be faced that free trade will have small chance of acceptance so long as this superstition prevails. It is then our bounden duty to ask why this and many other demonstrably absurd notions regarding commerce are so widely credited. There must be some reason why we accept as true such ridiculous notions as that a people gets rich by sending things away, and poor by bringing them in; that it is better for things to be made within a country than for them to be bought outside even though they can be bought outside more cheaply; that the foreigner who sends us the things we want is depriving us of our livelihood; that to accept goods made by the cheap labour of Japan, for instance, must bring wages in England down to the Japanese level.

Why do such illusions survive despite all free trade argument? It is surely possible to find the reason for this fallacy and we believe it to be that the true free trade case is seldom stated in its entirety.

If it is to be advocated with full force, freedom cannot be split up into compartments and presented in bits. Yet that is just what has been done in presenting the free trade case. The doctrine of freedom as advocated by orthodox free traders is seldom applied beyond the sphere of external commerce. Trade has been dealt with as if it were quite independent of production. It has been assumed that fiscal freedom would be fully attained if tariffs and other hindrances to foreign trade were swept away, while the much greater burdens now imposed on productive industry have been completely ignored. Yet trade is indissolubly bound up with production, so that every penalty imposed on production must produce its effect on trade. A tax on the making of a motor-car or the building of a house at home is as flagrant a violation of free trade principles as a tax on goods imported from abroad. Were foreign trade delivered from every tariff, quota and restriction, full economic freedom would still be unattained if the burdens and penalties now imposed on production were allowed to remain.

Production is the necessary antecedent of exchange, so that any restriction imposed on production must find its expression in restricted exchanges. Yet it is a fact that the greater part of present taxation, both national and local, is levied in such a way as to penalize production.

Free traders must know that there is not the slightest need to continue raising revenue on present lines. They must be aware that there exists a public fund which comes into existence as a result of the associated wealth-producing efforts of the citizens and of the services performed by government, and that this fund could be drawn