

to £300,000 for an airport, whereas the real cost ought to have been 50 or 60 per cent below that figure. That is an intolerable position. Is it to be allowed to continue? I want to ask when this kind of thing is going to stop? We have taken steps to restrict the profits of the armament manufacturers, not very satisfactorily from our point of view. If we are to restrict the profits of a certain section of industry, it is not fair to the nation to allow land owners to get away with the swag to the extent that they have done during the past few years. I want those observations to be placed on record so that the Minister can reply to them and hon. Members can have an opportunity of considering what we have been paying for land.

Mr BURGIN: The hon. Member for Stoke (Mr E. Smith) has special knowledge on these matters, and I have listened to his observations with great interest. I have power to acquire land under these transfer powers for any of the purposes of the Ministry of Supply, and I quite appreciate the importance of buying in secret and at a fair price, and of not having the fact that the Government are in the market blazoned abroad. I would ask the hon. Member to counsel some of his friends to enable me to negotiate sometimes not in the full glare of publicity, because if I am questioned as to exactly where land that I am about to acquire is, what is its acreage, who is the vendor, and what is the price, it does not tend to render my actions of a secret character or to make it easy to carry them to a successful conclusion.

Mr R. R. STOKES (*Labour—Ipswich*): Will the right hon. gentleman state on what basis he is going to make such purchases.

Mr BURGIN: Not in advance. I intend to buy in the open market as far as possible, without revealing the fact that the purchaser is a Government Department, and I have very little doubt but that, with capable assistance I shall be able to acquire land at fair prices ruling in the neighbourhood and without the occurrence of those more extravagant instances which have occurred in the past.

UNIVERSITY LIBERALS

The annual conference of the Union of University Liberal Associations held its Annual Conference in Edinburgh, 4th to 6th July. One of the sessions, Mr Ivor Davies presiding, was devoted to the Taxation of Land Values, introduced with an address by Mr A. W. Madsen, B.Sc. The following resolution was adopted unanimously:—

"This Conference advocates the taxation and rating of land values not only to secure for public revenue that which arises from the presence and activity of all the people, namely, the value attaching to land apart from buildings and other improvements; but also to reform the present unjust rating system and to get rid of taxes direct and indirect including tariffs and trade barriers which penalize production and add to the cost of living;

"The Conference is confirmed in support of this policy having regard to its social and economic effects through the liberation of the people from the exactions both of the land monopolists and the tax gatherers, without which it is difficult to see any solution of the problems of poverty and unemployment;

"And the Conference commends this its resolution to the leaders of the Liberal party and to everyone who would represent the people in the parliamentary and in the local government of the country."

The Conference had a remarkably good "Press" in the *Scotsman*, from day to day, the discussion on Land Value Taxation being particularly well reported.

"Free Capitalism or Lapse Into Totalitarianism" is the burden of a message issued and apparently widely circulated by the Benjamin Franklin Research Society, Inc., Room 405, 339 Carondelet Street, New Orleans. It is a large and finely printed document, explaining that the Society, non-political and non-profit, has been incorporated to encourage research in Land Value Taxation and appealing for membership and financial co-operation. The Secretary, Mr William E. Clement, can be congratulated on the able statement showing how important this study is.

REV THOMAS DAWSON

IT WAS to his friend the Rev Thomas Dawson, of Glencree, Ireland, that Henry George wrote in 1883 the letter touching his religious faith which was never seen by any eye but Father Dawson's till death had claimed the author; the letter saying what impelled him to write *Progress and Poverty* and his gratitude that night when the work was finished; and how (a matter of which he did not like to speak and had never before told anyone) "once, in daylight, and in a city street, there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it what name you please. But every nerve quivered. And there and then I made a vow. Through evil and through good, whatever I have done and whatever I have left undone, to that I have been true."

Father Dawson, the close personal friend of Henry George and of the family from the early 'eighties, died at the age of 90 on 17th July. He had been on a visit from Dublin to Liverpool and fell ill there, being taken to the Holy Cross Presbytery. He was born at Tallow, County Carlow. He ministered at different times at Glencree, Holy Cross, in Liverpool, Rock Ferry in Cheshire, Sickinghall in Yorkshire, and in West Kilburn, London. For about the last ten years he served at the House of Retreat, Inchicore, Dublin. He knew Mrs Anna George de Mille as a little girl with her father in Dublin and maintained correspondence with her since Henry George's death (1897). On her visits to this country they would make special journeys to see and speak with one another. So also the late Charles O'Connor Hennessy, one of his many devoted friends from those earlier years, who called upon him in September, 1936, during the last trip to his own native Ireland.

Father Dawson wrote frequently in the Catholic weekly Press and in Irish newspapers generally over the pen name "An Irish Priest." While ministering in Liverpool (1908-9) he conducted a *Progress and Poverty* Class. He spoke several times of there being one Sunday in the year—I forget which—when he was able to let himself go all out from the pulpit. One member of the class, who was in difficulty as to reconciling his acceptance of the justice of Land Value Taxation with the fact that the Catholic Church held so much land, asked whether the teacher favoured taxing Church lands, to which Father Dawson replied: "When you have decided to whom land values properly belong you will be able to answer the question yourself." Asked why so few Catholic priests stood for the truths of *Progress and Poverty*, he replied: "When a man gets four square meals a day, everything seems right in the world." He added that in the seminaries economic principles were not taught and that when a priest was attached to a parish he came under the influence of the squire in a rural district or of the well-to-do in a town. His advice was always to answer patiently all honest objections and take no notice of men's stupidities.

Father Dawson treasured his friendship with Henry George. He was a man, kindly and gentle spoken.

"Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity."

E. J. McMANUS.

The value of this paper does not end with YOUR reading it. Your business associate, your neighbour or your fellow worker may not have seen it. . . .