

Dinner to Charlotte O. Schetter and Grace Isabel Colbron

ON Monday, November 15, a dinner was tendered by the Commonwealth Land Party of this city to Miss Charlotte Schetter and Miss Grace Colbron at the Town Hall Club in this city. It was a notable occasion graced by the presence of Mrs. Anna George deMille, Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, Frederic Cyrus Leubuscher and Mrs. Robert Schalkenbach.

Miss Schetter and Miss Colbron were delegates to the Third International Single Tax Conference at Copenhagen, and the dinner was called for the purpose of hearing them recount their experiences. The dinner was largely attended, and it was gratifying to see among those present so many who are not members of the party but have chosen other ways of popularizing the great truth. It is well that those who differ as to methods should meet and confer in this way, and so learn from one another the important lesson of toleration for opposing views.

Mr. Lawrence W. Tracy acted as toastmaster.

SPEECH OF MR. TRACY

Mr. Tracy began his address by explaining what the Commonwealth Land Party stands for, and why, and in that connection called attention to the fact that the problem of man's relation to the source of his physical existence, which is the earth, has been a factor in the world's thought for several thousand years. There are records showing that in China in the 23rd century before Jesus was born, there was at least an elementary appreciation that the rent of land was a public value and should be used for public purposes, but whatever method was used at that time in the effort to give effect to that principle must have been, as all other efforts since have been, partial and unwise, and so nothing was accomplished.

In the 14th and 15th centuries some Spanish monks made statements of economic truth that were fine as far as they went, and in the latter part of the 18th century there was a group of French philosophers known as the Physiocrats, who further developed that earlier thought.

In connection with the work of the Physiocrats, it now seems safe to say that if their recommendations to the French King had been adopted, there would probably have been no French Revolution, and the whole course of world history from that time would have been very different.

In 1850, a Scotchman, Patrick Edward Dove, published simultaneously in London and Edinburgh, a book entitled, "The Theory of Human Progression," which marshalled the sciences in their rational sequence and gave prominence to the science of economics with clear and incisive comment on its prime importance in human affairs. That

was a scholastic treatment of the subject, however, and it remained for Henry George, with his fine mind, great heart and indomitable courage, to state this matter more fully, and to present it in simple, convincing and interesting form to all who could be reached by printed matter.

Some of those whose first impetus was received from Henry George and his associates, and who had worked for many years in various ways, finally became convinced of the superior opportunities open to those who would organize for political action, and in 1910 they organized the "Single Tax Party," which at its National Convention in New York City in February, 1923, changed its name to The Commonwealth Land Party, because of the growing appreciation of the inconsistency and confusion of thought resulting from the use of the word "Tax" in the title of an organization which strives to interest people in the study of economic science so that they may come to realize that all taxation is robbery. The fact that our co-workers in England had already adopted the name "Commonwealth Land Party" was an added incentive for using that name here in America.

Mr. Tracy emphasized the fact that the Party's work is educational and that political activity enables the Party to carry on this work of education much more extensively than it can be done by any other method.

Stating his own conception of the Party's purpose, Mr. Tracy said that it stands for the full measure of JUSTICE which can only be attained by the collection of all the people's rent for the people's use and by the abolition of all taxes; that this should be done all at once and as soon as possible; that the step by step method will not work in any aspect except the development of the public understanding of economic facts and the growth of sufficient political influence to make the necessary changes in our laws in a perfectly orderly and constitutional manner.

And so the Party should be forever true to that fine exhortation of Henry George, "The advocates of a great principle should have no thought of Compromise. They should proclaim it in all its fullness and should point to its complete attainment as their goal." This purpose is expressed in the Party's slogan, which is "The earth is the birthright of all mankind. The rent of land belongs to the people. The first duty of government is to collect it for public expenses and to abolish all taxes."

In the physical realm there is no right way to possess physical wealth except it be produced by one's own labor. The same law applies in the mental realm. There is no way to possess mental wealth, which is wisdom, except by doing our own mental labor. This is an old, old thought

and one of the forms in which it is best known to all of us is the saying that "there is no royal road to knowledge."

As long as rent remains private property by law, every increase in rent makes life harder and more barren for every one, rich and poor alike; but as soon as our laws recognize that rent is the social value created by all of us together in spite of anything that we can do, and therefore is our natural automatic public revenue (since it is the only social value there is) and as soon as our laws require that every exclusive occupant of any portion of the earth shall compensate all others who have relinquished their equal right, by paying into the public treasury the value of his exclusive privilege, which is rent, a greater fund for the common use becomes available, and so under these circumstances, the inevitable increase of rent benefits everyone.

He maintained that economic science is the most important subject and its study is, next to keeping ourselves alive somehow, as honestly as our present laws permit, the first duty of us all because everything that would normally improve human conditions tends to raise rent, the use value of bare land. This fact is true whether the improvement is in personal qualities such as knowledge, skill, industry, endurance, responsibility, or whether the improvement is in the equipment and methods involved in production and transportation of wealth, or in communication.

Concluding, Mr. Tracy said that the present gathering was for the purpose of hearing from some who had been in personal attendance at two important events in the progress of organized effort to stimulate public interest in economic thought. The first of these events was the Third International Conference to Promote the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade at Copenhagen, Denmark, last July. The second was the Henry George Congress, in Philadelphia, last September.

SPEECH OF MISS SCHETTER

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening, to meet old friends, to welcome strangers to the Commonwealth Land Party, and to tell you of my experiences at Copenhagen.

I shall speak only of a few aspects of the Conference, and advise all who have not already done so to read the full accounts in *LAND AND FREEDOM*, *Land and Liberty* and *The Commonweal*. It was delightful to travel by sea and land to Denmark, to which Single Taxers have looked hopefully in recent years as the country most advanced toward economic justice. Certainly it is the country where the name and philosophy of Henry George are most widely known and appreciated.

It was inspiring to meet in the Joint Sessions Hall of the beautiful Parliament House the delegates from seventeen different countries. Every preparation for their reception and comfort had been carefully planned, a work in-

volving weeks and months of labor on the part of the English and Danish conveners of the conference. The Danish authorities as well as the people gave us the warmest welcome and we were delightfully entertained in some of the Danish homes.

It was gratifying to have an American chosen as chairman of the conference, an office Mr. Hennessy filled with ability and unflinching tact.

Having been in Europe for ten months, I rejoiced to meet American friends, and felt very proud to be remembered and greeted by Mr. Hennessy whom I had rarely met since the years when we labored for legislature tax reform at Trenton.

The Danish Parliament has shown itself in sympathy with progressive economic measures, and the remarkable teacher Grundvig in founding the Folks High Schools (where people of all ages are able to study in the intervals of their work) prepared the whole peasant and working class for the acceptance of progressive action.

As Miss Colbron knows intimately the Danish land and people, she can give you a better account of the economic situation there than I can; therefore although I could talk at length of the impressive outdoor meetings in Copenhagen as well as the interesting trips to Elsinore and other places, I will turn to a matter very near my heart.

In Europe, as elsewhere, Single Taxers were true to form, absolutely agreed as to their goal, but differing widely as to the best method of converting the world to this truth. The bond which unites all followers of Henry George seems to me so strong and precious, I can never feel that differences in methods to attain our goal can weaken this bond of fellowship.

Before going to Denmark I spent six weeks in England and was delighted to find in both countries sympathizers with the Commonwealth Land Party of which I have been a member for some years. I also visited the headquarters of the United Committee in London. Mr. Paul gave me a very kind reception and I conceived a great admiration and liking for him, although he strove in vain to draw me away from the Commonwealth Land Party.

It seemed to me that the conveners of the conference feared that any discussion of the different methods of working for our cause would give an impression of disunion to the outside world; and I believe that the effort to ignore our group in the sessions, which seemed to us unfair, was really the result of conscientious convictions.

Great changes have taken place since I was present at the yearly meetings of the United Committee in London in 1903 and 1904. Leading democratic governments, as England and the United States, are adopting ever more and more socialistic methods to remedy the results of injustice; while countries that had had liberal representative institutions are now ruled by dictators. While Europeans really believe that all Americans are prosperous and many of our own fellow citizens have abandoned welfare work