

DR NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER At the American Club, Paris

In our September-October number we gave a brief report of Dr Butler's reference to Henry George, in his address to Business Men at the American Club, Paris, 19th June. We are indebted to the *Fairhope Courier* who, in turn, was indebted to the *New York Times* for a fuller report of the address:—

"The world is suffering as it has never suffered in history from a lack of competent and courageous leadership.

"We need personalities who are not anxious, like a jockey, to keep their seats in politics, but who are anxious to tell the people the truth and guide them toward a constructive, liberal and progressive solution of the vast problems.

"The universal answer of the office-holding class is Wait.' Gentlemen, if we wait too long somebody may come forward with a solution that we may not like.

"Let me call your attention to the fact that the characteristic feature of the experiment in Russia, to my mind, is not that it is communistic, but that it is being carried on according to a plan in the face of planless opposition.

"A man with a plan, however much we may dislike it, has a vast advantage over a group sauntering down the road, complaining of the economic weather and wondering when the rain is going to stop.

"It was better to try to answer and be wrong than to sit negligently and make no effort to stem the tide of dissatisfaction, unrest and want which was sweeping over the world.

"There are those apt in social and economic diagnoses who are quick with their answers," he continued. "They say this is just one more of those recurrent economic recessions and depressions with which different countries have been from time to time familiar, and with which Americans in particular have had some four or five experiences within the lifetime of two long generations. I dissent from that view.

In explanation of his refusal to accept this popular view, Dr Butler asserted that we were passing through one of those revolutionary periods in the history of the race which come at long intervals and are the result of the operation of forces long accumulating, finally bringing themselves to bear upon the policies of men and nations.

"The period through which we are passing," he went on, "is a period like the fall of the Roman Empire, like the Renaissance, like the beginning of the political and social revolutions in England and France—it is different from them all, is more powerful than them all, and holds the world more in its grip than any of them, but it resembles them in its epoch-making character."

Referring to the problem of debts and reparations, Dr Butler said:—

"The first thing we tried to do was to try to find out whether somebody could pay the cost of the Great War. *You might just as well try to make somebody pay the cost of the sunset.* It cannot be done, gentlemen. That destruction was accomplished once and for all, and the costs cannot be repaid. *It has got to be marked up to profit and loss.*

"Then, having attempted to pay the cost of the war, each nation has said to every other nation, 'Don't come near me with your goods.'

"We have been children playing with marbles, and now, when we have occupied ourselves with that childish amusement for some 15 years, we are more or less astonished to find that we are in the midst of a severe economic crisis.

"Now, gentlemen, I am not one of those persons who worry about more wars. *Any more wars would come to an end so soon and there would be so many persons who would not know that a war had begun before it had come to an end, that that does not very much concern me.*

"But I have great concern for the man with a competing social and economic system if we don't demonstrate the supremacy that is ours."

As we reported in our previous report of this arresting speech Dr Butler began his address by saying that when asked to speak he had replied by taking the title of Henry George's famous book, now fifty years old, *Progress and*

Poverty. This work, he explained, offers material for a great many speeches.

"BARRIERS TO PROSPERITY" By Byron Holt

(In an address to the Women Bankers of Atlantic City, New York City, 6th October.)

Many millions of human beings live on the crust of this little sphere, floating through illimitable space. Their problem is how to make the best use of their opportunities on this planet. Are tariffs not anti-social and harmful to humanity as a whole? What fools these mortals be to erect tariff walls to deprive themselves of the cheap products of other nations? Do cheap products make cheap men? Or do wise men welcome cheap products? Women are not afraid of cheapness. Watch our bargain counters!

The moral argument for free trade is as sound as is the economic argument. Protection is unneighbourly and produces ill will and jealousy and leads to war.

The United States is the most prosperous nation in the world. Why? Largely because it is the greatest free trade country. There are no tariff walls around any of its 48 States and its 120,000,000 people, living in the different climates, exchange their products freely. Is there more reason for a tariff wall between New York and Canada than between New York and Massachusetts?

But goods cannot be exchanged until they are produced. They cannot be produced without land. The monopoly of land is the great cause of unemployment. Where labour has access to land, unemployment is almost inconceivable.

If land values were taken for public purposes land would be cheap and easily accessible to all. There would then be no land held idle speculatively. All valuable land would then be put to proper use, either for agricultural purposes or for building sites.

It is a crime not to tax land values. It is a crime to tax man-made values when publicly-created values are not taken for public purposes.

This, then, is the road to prosperity—free land and free trade. I do not think there is any other road to permanent and universal prosperity.

WALTER COATES

We deeply regret to record the death of Walter Coates which took place at his home at East Hendred, Berks, on 8th September. As secretary to Joseph Fels, Mr Coates was well known to a very large public interested in the Single Tax movement. He was a strong supporter of the Labour Party, and was incessant in the effort to bring before his numerous friends and associates in the Labour ranks the urgency of Land Value Taxation.

In its obituary notice the *Daily Herald* observed that Mr Coates took part in forming the Independent Labour Party, and assisted very materially in the establishment of that journal.

He did his work quietly and effectively apart altogether from the strife incident to the activities of a political party. He did not figure and never sought to figure in the front of the stage, never at any time, as all who knew him and worked with him would gladly acknowledge.

Mr Coates was at one with Joseph Fels and Mary Fels in all their brilliant and unforgettable efforts to promote the cause.

The *Fairhope Courier*, Alabama, 13th August, publishes a letter bearing on the Land Value Finance Act from Mr Coates to the Colony Secretary, from which we quote: "I am pleased with and proud of my old country. It looks as if she is going to take the lead in real Land Value Taxation on a large scale. It looks like being a great fight between the Lords and the Commons. There won't be any side-stepping this time."

Mr Coates had been in ill-health for a number of years, very often confined to his room, and this past public word of his on the land value policy goes to show his unalterable belief in its inherent power to open the way to the solution of economic and industrial problems.

We extend to Mrs Coates sincerest sympathy in her bereavement.

J. P.