

What Happened in Denmark?

DENMARK, too, had an election in November—and the results are not calculated to strike joy in the hearts of Georgists. The Justice party (*Retsforbund*), which stands for Georgist principles, lost all its nine seats in Parliament. The new government will be minus the three Georgist cabinet members it had before.

Knud Tholstrup, a Justice party leader who recently visited the U.S., said the greatest handicap was that the big parties had plenty of money to spend on propaganda, whereas the smaller and poorer Justice party did not have the same means of reaching the people. The large newspapers (run by the other parties) did not open their pages to the Justice party, and indeed launched attacks against it. The Conservative party, which does not like land value taxation, fought the Justice party especially bitterly. (This diagnosis was confirmed by Engelhard Harremoes, another leader of the Justice party and recent Danish delegate to the U.N.

As it was, the *Retsforbund* got 53,000 votes, enough for four seats—but under the new constitution, a minimum of five seats (60,000 votes) is needed for any party. The Social Democrats came out on top and Viggo Kampmann remains Premier.

The surprise of the election was the rise of Aksel Larsen's new Socialist People's party, which won eleven seats. This is a sort of "Titoist" party—communistic but anti-Moscow. Mr. Tholstrup said that Mr. Larsen broke his leg shortly before the election and so received many sympathy votes! "That's the way Danes are," he added. But he doubted that Larsen's party would have any influence.

After the election, many voters ex-

pressed dismay over the Justice party's defeat. "We did not want you out," they said. "If we had known how it would turn out, we would have voted for you." Many Justice members also reproached themselves for not working harder for votes.

But there are some positive aspects to the picture. Most of the leading parties are in favor of land value taxation (somewhat passively, perhaps; the Justice party is the only one actively promoting it). Premier Kampmann has been praised by Viggo Starcke as a man who understands land value taxation. Some solid advances have been made, including 1960 legislation which imposes a four per cent annual tax on the increment in land values.

The Justice party can be proud of the record of its achievements during its three years in power. It promoted not only land value taxation but free-economy principles in general, sometimes against large opposition. During these years, Denmark attained its greatest period of prosperity, there was no unemployment, production and construction rose to new levels, inflation was stopped, prices remained stable, international trade increased, the budget was balanced, and the deficit was turned into a surplus. Unfortunately, the people did not know how much of this was due to the Justice party. But at least they did witness the great rise in land values and so they see the need for land value taxation.

The Justice party will go on. It will work more vigorously to promote its ideas and to prepare for the next election. Long live the Justice party!

—Robert Clancy