

## A WELCOME TO DENMARK

### Introductory Address at the Opening Session of the Conference

By F. FOLKE

(Chairman of the Danish Joint Land Values Committee.)

In the name of the Conveners I have the honour and the privilege of welcoming to this meeting the members of the Third International Conference to Promote the Taxation of Land Values, who assemble here in this Palace of Christiansborg, the Danish National Seat of Government, where under one roof are located the supreme representatives of the Administration, the Legislature and the Judiciary of our country.

I extend also a special welcome to the visitors to the Conference—the representatives from the foreign legations of the countries to which our members belong and the representatives of our own Government and Parliament. I thank you that you have so cordially responded to our invitation.

Again in the name of the Conference I express to the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. Hauge, to Dr. Kragh, Member of Parliament and to Mr. Ove Rode, Member of Parliament, our gratification that they have accepted positions as Honorary Vice Presidents and in so doing have testified that our people in Denmark begin to comprehend the cause that has brought this Conference together—the cause of economic liberation.

This Conference is named the Third but we may regard it as the Fourth International Conference for the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade, if we take into account the Conference held in Paris in 1888 attended by representatives from various countries and addressed by Henry George himself. But the original Conference definitely convened and organized in international sense to promote the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade was that held in Ronda, Spain, in 1913. Its successor was the brilliant and epoch-making International Conference in Oxford in 1923. The question of the next International Conference—now named the Third—was considered at Oxford and it was Señor Antonio Albendin, who is with us to-day, who proposed that Copenhagen should be the place of assembly. That proposal was welcomed with the same enthusiasm among us here in Denmark as it had received when carried at the Oxford Conference.

The Danish Land Values Committee, a body composed of members of all parties and groups that are interested in promoting Land Value Taxation, undertook in association with the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values to convene and organize the Conference. We have to-day the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing that call answered by the presence of a gathering which, notwithstanding the severe times we are passing through, is represented by the Land Value movement in the farthest corners of the world and is attended in greater numbers than we here at the outset dared to anticipate.

Our Conference is a Conference of the members themselves. It is their own Conference. We meet here all as free and independent persons having no mandate or obligation whatever, except that imposed upon us by devotion to our great and common cause.

We have managed to join in fellowship despite the hard times. Rightly speaking, we have come and have our missions here just *because of* the hard times that bear on the people more and more harshly. We are here not to offer palliatives for but to uproot the cause of hard

times. We have gathered our forces in the conviction that the troubles afflicting us nationally and internationally have a common deep-seated origin in the social and economic system that denies to all their equal right to life and to the values of land, the indispensable basis of our existence.

In this conviction we strive for a state of Justice in harmony with the modern material development that has long ago outgrown the framework of the primitive society where our still existing rules of law belong. It is for us to make plain the way in which each shall keep what is his of right, and the community shall get what is justly due to the community, no more and no less.

We welcome those who have travelled many miles over sea and land to join in working for this object. We welcome them because they have chosen our country for their convention. We greet them as our friends—friends of justice, friends of Denmark.

Let me at this stage give place to Mr. P. Larsen, one of Henry George's first disciples in our country and translator into Danish of Henry George's *Protection or Free Trade and Social Problems*. We are glad to have Mr. Larsen give expression to our greeting in his own words. (Mr. Larsen here read his verses specially written for the occasion: "Welcome to Denmark.")

It is now my duty to hand over to you, the members of the Conference, the responsibility shouldered by the United Committee and the Danish Land Values Committee when they issued the invitations and made preparations for the event. It is for the Conference itself now to assume charge of the proceedings.

When the two Committees had to consider where they should look for the supreme direction of the Conference, where they should find its President, they agreed that this high office should be entrusted to a citizen of the great nation that had the good fortune to nurture such champions of human rights as Benjamin Franklin and Henry George. We urged the Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, Henry George's tried and trusted friend, the tireless advocate of our cause during more than 40 years, to accept the position of Honorary President of the Conference. Our choice has already been upheld by the fact that the Grand Committee of the Conference has elected Mr. Hennessy as its Chairman.

I express to you, Mr. Hennessy, in behalf of the Conference our pleasure and satisfaction that you have consented to our choice. We also seek to do honour to your country which gave birth to our great master. We pay humble tribute to all who have spent their lives in service to the cause with which we link our hopes that we can bestow upon our children whatever is precious in modern civilization.

When the printer Dr. Benjamin Franklin, envoy of the North American Colonies at the French Court, attended the French Academy, the famous mathematician d'Alembert saluted him with the Latin quotation: "Eripuit coelo fulmen, septrumque tyrannis"—He snatched the thunderbolt from heaven and the sceptre from tyrants.

When the glad day dawns that we can erect the Liberty Memorial to the memory of Henry George, there will be chiselled on its plinth these words; "He gave the land back to the people." In the earnest desire that this Conference may be a step on the road to that goal and in the name of the Conference I call upon Mr. Hennessy to take the Chair as our President. I ask all present to rise and acclaim the Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy.