

England Reacts Against *Socialism*



ASHLEY MITCHELL of Huddersfield, England, speaking at the Henry George School conference banquet in Detroit in July, brought hearty greetings from British friends and said he had met men he'd been wanting to meet for years. Mr. Mitchell is secretary of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. He is often referred to as "the flying Yorkshireman" because of many flights abroad.

He emphasized that we had met together not merely in the interests of tax reform, but in the cause of liberty. If the unfortunate countries now under foreign rule could be relieved of the force that keeps them down they would jump for freedom, he said. One of the best ways in which we could send aid to distressed countries would be to suggest that we can't send aid unless they establish land value taxation, but "we can't do that because we don't have it ourselves."

Quoting Frank A. W. Lucas, late president of the International Union and former Supreme Court Justice of South Africa, he said, "the freedom lovers are always losing ground. Though we may be gaining the world materially, we are losing our souls." The danger to English speaking countries is not from outside, but from within. The freedom of the democracies, Mr. Mitchell believes, is something the people may lose if they don't watch out, for it is being steadily undermined. We are ridden by fear at

the crossroads, and unless we take the right steps we may go down the slippery slope.

Where people are afraid, they are in the dangerous position of listening to proposals which are a further invasion of their rights to freedom. Speaking of England he said unfortunate war conditions made people open to suggestions they wouldn't have considered before. "We didn't get rid of the controls, instead we got increased controls and became half slave and half free." Are people free when they are trespassers in their own land? That's the situation with us, he continued. People have to pay tribute to be allowed to use the earth.

Himself an exporter of woolen materials, and a business man of experience and character, he spoke with the utmost authority when he said the high price of land and the tax on land make it necessary to speed business up to the highest efficiency. This vicious efficiency, amounting almost to brutality in business, is all contrary to nature. We've gotten to the pitch where a small craftsman whose only wish is to do an honest job cannot live decently. In such a vicious, unnatural time many people are deprived of opportunity.

The advertisements ask for young men to go into these organizations promising that at the end of their career there will be a comfortable pension, he said. Think of a young man looking forward to a pension! And

what a swindle it is, considering how much the currency will have depreciated when he reaches the age of sixty-five.

Capitalists of late years have been taking foolish steps, the speaker ventured. They've laid the plans for Communists to take over. Labor union members in Britain were brought up on radical socialism and they're soaked in it, with the result that England has as much socialism as it can carry, "if we had any more we'd be broken down."

Speaking of education he said there were many varieties and it was very intensified. However in adult education there was, as in the U.S., little interest in citizenship, but more pre-occupation with leisure pursuits. During the last century people were having a hard time, with restrictions on almost everything. England was little better than a police state. When they got free ports the conditions were improved. Since then they've gone in for all kinds of gadgets and of course, automobiles on the installment plan, with, however, hardly any increase in the road service.

There is now a reaction that has come from a maximum of socialization. The intellectuals, seeing that the country doesn't want any more nationalization, want to modify it. The La-

bor party, Mr. Mitchell believes, is discredited and confused. Even the newspapers are now urging adoption of the Liberal party platform, to which this outspoken supporter is loyally committed, although he admits it is not "all that we would like."

Nobody dared mention the land question back in 1832, he recalled, and he wondered whether Henry George could have worked for reform against the Tories who later got into paternalism and "all the nonsense we have now." Free trade and open ports were maintained for nearly 70 years, he stated, then the war came and smashed everything.

"I believe there is time yet to put things right," Mr. Mitchell affirmed. He was cheered by the fact that lots of young men went into the campaigns last year as Liberal party members. They were the products of the Henry George School and fought a gallant fight in the elections. He was "full of hope that we can gather up the same spirit and desire for freedom that was used to liberate the slaves". With an assuring smile he concluded, "we've got to liberate the present slaves of their native land." So long as Britain can boast one orator with the strength and courage of Ashley Mitchell there can be little doubt that "there'll always be an England."

Appeal to the Heart As Well As the Mind

In speaking to people in general, we cannot rely too much on didactic logic. We must never forget that the heart plays a great part in forming opinions. Cold logic may reach a few people, but the great majority must first be convinced of the basic justice and fundamental morality of our cause. When we have laid this foundation then the thinkers can make the practical application which is so necessary to reach the ultimate goal. Even though the great majority of the people may never understand all the refined ramifications of our tax reform, they will follow as they have always done when they intuitively feel that the cause is just.

Henry George's proposal will bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth through the natural operation of economic laws, and as George Mason wrote, "The laws of nature are the laws of God."—John R. Fuchs