

ARE WE ANTI-PLANNERS?

The Editor, *Land & Liberty*.

SIR,—Some very good points are made in "F. D. P.'s" article in your December issue. The Anti-Planners are certainly leaving a powerful challenge out of their case in failing to attack land monopoly.

Yet I regret that the issue should, as it seems to me, be over-simplified into that of Planners versus Anti-Planners, and that we should be against Planners of any kind.

Agricultural Marketing Boards are taken as typical of "planning." But the word brings to my mind examples of quite different kinds of Government activity. One is the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority. This is a long-term, large-scale regional planning organisation working on the democratic principles of persuasion, consent and participation. It was given compulsory powers for limited purposes only, related to its basic objects. Extreme decentralisation of the administrative machinery is recognised as important to secure that the planning be both democratic and efficient. It seeks the co-operation of existing local authorities and institutions. It maintains a "pool" of experts on diverse subjects, each of such calibre as to be capable of decisions on the spot when called out to solve problems in any part of the territory. Some of its activities may not have much relevance to our circumstances, but some of them do seem to provide a most appropriate and legitimate use of the word "planning," which can mean some very different things. This example seems to me one that should not be left out of any discussion of planning, and if it had opponents I should regret to be thought of their camp.

Another example that occurs to me is that of town and country planning in our own country. The siting of satellite towns, industrial areas, green belts, and the supply of water, light, power and communications seem to me appropriate subjects of a regional plan which could form the skeleton only, within which would still remain wide fields of individual activity.

In *Social Problems* George wrote: "Out of the principle that it is the proper end and purpose of government to secure the natural rights and equal liberty of the individual, grows the principle that it is the business of government to do for the mass of individuals those things which cannot be done, or cannot be so well done, by individual action. As in the development of species, the power of conscious, co-ordinated action of the whole must assume greater and greater relative importance to the automatic action of parts, so it is in the development of society. This is the truth in socialism, which, although it is being forced upon us by industrial progress and social development, we are so slow to recognise."

Yours, etc.,

C. H. J.

Keighley.

PETER BURT

WE REGRET to report the death of Ex-Bailie Peter Burt, J.P., which took place at his home, Holly Bank, Bothwell, Lanarkshire, on 24th January. He was 88 years of age. A serious illness which had afflicted him in June, 1941, was aggravated by an attack of pneumonia, to which he succumbed. Physically incapacitated as he had been for several years, his keen and helpful interest in every day affairs was retained to the last with remarkable vigour of mind and spirit. The *Glasgow Herald* in an obituary notice said: "Mr. Peter Burt was known throughout Scotland as a leader of the Henry George movement for the substitution of a tax on land values for all taxes on improvements." Mr. William Reid writes: "His death severs almost the last link of Scottish personal contact with the author of *Progress and Poverty*. There are only one or two left in the Scottish movement who spoke to or even saw Henry George. Mr. Burt lived to see the single-sleeve engine which he invented installed in heavy bombers, but his life's work for the Taxation of Land Values did not reach fruition in his day. In a broad sense it can be said that he led the British land-values movement. The first Parliamentary Bills were promoted by the Glasgow City Council, and he was primarily responsible for bringing the Council to adopt such procedure. He was elected a town councillor first in November, 1889. Before finally retiring in November, 1930, he had twice retired and later sought and secured re-election. His many friends in the movement and outside of it will sympathise with his son and three daughters in their personal loss and mourn a staunch and unbending critic of the wrongs in human administration. In his closing years he had to mourn the loss of three sons who were associated with him in the engineering business."

No one who knows the history of the movement, and the story of how it was promoted and developed, especially in the municipal sphere, can forget how much it is indebted to Peter Burt for his devotion in all the years as a campaigner. He was rich in the esteem and affection of his colleagues and co-workers. Sincerely we join in tribute to his memory and in sympathy to the bereaved relatives.

By the passing of Miss Florence A. Wood, formerly a colleague of Miss Frances Verinder on the staff of the Home and Colonial Training College, London's educational experts and the English League have lost an honoured helper and the General Secretary and his family a dear friend. Miss Wood died last month in the Cottage Hospital at Blandford, Dorset, of which Miss Agnes Verinder is Matron.

The Welsh League has lost a valued member in the death of W. Gwalchmai James, a regular subscriber and member also of the League's Executive for many years. Another reader of *Land & Liberty* who will be much missed

because of his able and active interest is Mr. George Davey, of Hampstead. A brilliant correspondence in which he was engaged is left incomplete by his sudden death.

The fulness of the agenda at the January meeting of the Cardiff City Council prevented the resolution on land value rating being taken. It will come before the Council at its meeting on 14th February.

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Mr. NOEL BAKER, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport, informed Sir W. JENKINS (House of Commons, 20th October) that at the toll gates on the Cardiff-Penarth Road, which is owned jointly by Mountjoy Ltd. (Marquis of Bute) and Plymouth Estates Ltd., the toll charges per day are: Horse and cart, 4d.; horse and trap, 6d.; lorry, 2s.; private car, 1s.; three-wheeled combination, 6d.; motor-cycle, 3d. To the questions what steps have been taken to remove the toll gate, what extra petrol is being used by tradesmen's vehicles between Cardiff and Penarth by travelling over Leckwith Hill instead of over the toll gate—Mr. Noel Baker made no reply.

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