

ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

Guest of Honour in London, 10th September

Under the auspices of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Mrs. Anna George de Mille was entertained at a dinner party in her honour, held in the St. Ermin's Restaurant, Westminster, on 10th September. A large company attended to greet Mrs. de Mille and wish her and her daughters Agnes and Margaret a safe journey home from their visit to Europe, which had been made with the special object of attending the International Conference in Copenhagen. Apologies for inability to be present were received from a number of friends, including Ex-Bailie Peter Burt, J.P., Mrs. Lewis H. Berens, Mrs. C. A. Warburton, Major and Mrs. C. J. Vasey, and Messrs. John Archer, J. F. Muirhead and J. D. Gates.

MR. H. A. BERENS, B.A., Hon. Treasurer of the English League, presided and gave the toast of Mrs. Anna George de Mille. He said he valued the pleasure and privilege of being asked to welcome their guest, and felt all the more proud of that duty as the son of Lewis H. Berens, who had been one of the early standard-bearers of the movement both in Australia and in England. His father had been one of those who were instrumental in organizing Henry George's campaign in Australia. Henry George and Mrs. George had stayed at their home in Adelaide and he (the Chairman) had been asked by his mother (Mrs. L. H. Berens) to convey this message in a letter, in which she expressed deep regret that she could not be present: "Henry George told us it was to his wife's affection, solicitude and great unselfishness that he owed so much of what he had succeeded in accomplishing. During the too short time she stayed with us in Adelaide we felt we had with us a very sweet, kindly woman who came through the fire of life unscathed only to make her more sympathetic with others. Anna was the apple of her eye." He (the Chairman) said how their guest had won the hearts of all in Copenhagen with her natural simplicity, her understanding and her sympathy. She had the gift of getting into direct touch with her audiences and it was especially charming to see how she got the confidence and responded to the enthusiasm of the young men and women of the Danish Henry George movement. By coming to the Conference she had helped more than she knew. They wished her and her daughters God-speed on their voyage home and they looked forward to their return to this side at an early date.

MRS. ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE said that the whole Denmark experience was a perfectly amazing one to her. It was not only meeting old and new friends, not only the old spirit, but a new spirit of re-dedication. They had to get together from time to time and by personal conversations re-inspire each other; and that certainly happened in Denmark. Perhaps the greatest thrill she had was the experience at the Liberty Memorial, when it was her privilege to carry a wreath in the name of Henry George from the friends of Henry George and place it at the foot of the Memorial. Another thing never to be forgotten was her experience of meeting with the young people of Denmark. She emphasized the importance of getting young people into the movement.

She attached the greatest importance to the International Union. It would form a great circle, a great commanding movement all round the world. It was going to make for a greater understanding than ever they had yet had.

In America they looked to Great Britain, as the

Mother Country, to keep on leading them and guiding them. Their British fellow workers had a big responsibility.

MR. A. W. MADSEN said he had been asked to repeat the majestic oration that Mr. Ove Rode had delivered at the Liberty Memorial ceremony to which reference had been made. He read the speech in English translation from the text published in September *Land & Liberty*.

MR. RICHARD MCGHEE, ex-M.P., said the only justification that the Chairman could have for asking him to address the meeting was that he was probably the oldest living personal friend of their guest and her late lamented father. If there was one act in his life that he looked back to with more delight and pleasure than another it was that he was the instrument of bringing Mr. George to deliver his first two speeches in Great Britain. He met Mr. George 45 years ago in Ireland where he had come on a mission of investigation, and with him of course investigation also meant propaganda. He had originally come to know Henry George through an Englishman in Leeds, an intimate personal friend, who for a period of 40 years before that had been the greatest teacher that the temperance movement had produced (Dr. F. R. Lees).

The first meeting that Henry George addressed in Great Britain was at the Glasgow City Hall, and the second meeting he addressed was in the Wellington Palace, Glasgow. John Ferguson took the chair at the first meeting and he (Mr. McGhee) had the ever memorable honour to be in the chair at the second meeting. That was in 1882. Mr. George very soon became known on the British platform and he was sure there were some there to-night—Mr. Verinder would be amongst them—who would remember his very early meetings at the Memorial Hall here in the latter part of 1884. Then an organization was formed for bringing him over to this side and have a campaign.

It would, he thought, be a very good piece of work if we could organize a new campaign to be led by his daughter. It was just such an enthusiasm as he was sure she was able to awaken in this country that was necessary to get hold of the younger men and women to whom she had been referring.

SIR EDGAR HARPER said that he for one would never first time on reading *Progress and Poverty*. It was very encouraging to be present at a gathering like that and hear so much of what had just been done in that wonderful land of Denmark and to realize how great the enthusiasm must have been in Copenhagen, and how they went to the root of the matter at the foot of the statue of Liberty; because if there was one thing above everything else that Henry George stood for it was for the liberty of his fellow men and fellow women.

When things appear to be at the worst then they begin to mend. So long as organizations like the United Committee and the English and Scottish Leagues for the Taxation of Land Values continued their steadfast efforts to spread the light there could be no doubt whatever that in the long run they would see the fruits of their labours translated into an act of Parliament that would not be a laughing stock for their opponents as in 1909-1910, but be a workable measure on the lines (perhaps with emendations) of the measure that had just been carried through the Danish Parliament and which had been so admirably celebrated in the International gathering at Copenhagen.

MR. JOHH PAUL said he had just received a telegram from Glasgow that all present would like to hear read. It was in the following terms:—

"At to-day's meeting of the Glasgow Town Council

the recommendation of the Committee on the Taxation of Land Values was unanimously adopted. This means that the Town Clerk (Sir John Lindsay) will invite 115 Town Councils, 33 County Councils, and 874 Parish Councils in Scotland to the national conference in the Glasgow City Chambers on 18th November. The object of the conference is 'to consider the advisability of making combined representation to the Government in favour of legislation to enable local authorities to collect revenue by imposing a tax on land values.'

Councillor Peter Burt and other Glasgow stalwarts could be congratulated on this municipal advance. This Glasgow Conference was an opening for much-needed propaganda in municipal circles.

When it was known that their guest, Mrs. Anna George de Mille, intended visiting London on her way home from Copenhagen, members of the Conference thought at once of presenting her with a Danish flagstaff

similar to those presented to Mr. Hennessy and Mrs. Leubuscher last month. They had been disappointed; the flagstaff had not yet arrived from Denmark. It would bear the following inscription: "Presented to Anna George de Mille by members of the International Conference to Promote Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, Copenhagen, 1926." He was sorry Mrs. de Mille could not have this memento to-night; it would reach her in due time at her home across the Atlantic.

Mrs. de Mille suitably acknowledged the token of friendship and goodwill and said she would never forget their kindness.

Mr. Chester C. Platt (Florida), Mr. Jørgen Pedersen (Denmark) and Mr. J. Darge having also addressed the gathering, a vote of thanks to the Chairman was moved and seconded in admirable speeches by Mr. Ashley Mitchell (Huddersfield) and Mr. Tideman (Chicago) and was heartily accorded.

THE WORK OF HENRY GEORGE REFERENCES IN THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

(Official Report 26th and 27th May)

SENATOR GRANT: I ask the Minister for Home and Territories if, in view of the magnificent success following the adoption of the land values taxation system at Canberra, (the new Federal Capital of Australia) as set out in Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*—

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT: The honorable Senator will not be in order in making a statement under cover of asking a question.

SENATOR GRANT: Is it the intention of the Government to erect a statue to the late Henry George between the provisional and the site of the proposed permanent Houses of Parliament in the Federal capital?

SENATOR PEARCE: The Government has no present intention of doing what is suggested by the honorable Senator.

Speaking on the Northern Territory Administration Bill, on 26th May, Dr. MALONEY said: "No man of modern times has studied the values of land more than did Henry George, and when a monument to his memory is erected it will tower in company with the monuments of those who have most benefited this world."

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON, speaking the same day, stated: "Land nationalization was the ideal of Alfred Russell Wallace. Henry George has shown that there are several weaknesses in that system. In one of his chapters dealing with the land question, he has pointed out that it does not matter very greatly whether you have leasehold or freehold. In effect, he says: 'Why bother about leaseholds; why not continue to attempt to sell and bequeath land in the same way as we are doing at the present time? There is no harm in doing that. If it makes it easier to put land to its best use, it is as good a principle as any other, provided the privately unearned increment is preserved for the community which owns the land.' Why bother about the shell so long as you retain the kernel? If a system of freehold tenure will bring about closer settlement and the cultivation of the land by giving to those who are using the land a greater sense of security, the experience is worth trying, provided we adopt Henry George's principle of conserving the rights of the people in the land by taking the fair annual rental for it."

MR. FENTON: Is the Government likely to do that?

SIR ELLIOT JOHNSON: I understand that that is what is proposed. Further, in carrying out the

principles of Henry George, the Government should concurrently remove taxes from the production of the people on the land. That is the essential basis of Henry George's doctrine. He does not advocate taking the rental value of the land for public purposes, and in addition, taxing the product of the man on the land; but his proposal is to relieve the producer of all taxes except the obligation to pay to the community the fair rental value of the land which should provide the fund for the Government in lieu of taxation on commerce and industry.

MR. GREEN: That is to say, the full economic rent. The leasehold system provides for that.

SIR ELLIOT JOHNSON: Yes, partially; but unfortunately our leasehold system carries with it the disadvantage that the primary producers have to pay numerous burdensome taxes on the things they need for production. That is what Henry George opposes, and I think he is right in opposing it. Unfortunately, we have become obsessed with the idea that the only way to prosperity is to take money out of one pocket and put it in another.

On 27th May, speaking on the Customs Tariff Bill, in reply to this interjection by Senator Sir Henry Barwell: "Does not the honorable Senator regard the income tax as a fair tax?" SENATOR GRANT said: "I regard it as the most objectionable, out-of-date and mischievous form of taxation. It is entirely wrong in its application, and the idea that it is a proper system was exploded long ago by Henry George in his book *Progress and Poverty*. I recommend Senator Barwell to read that book and try to understand it, because evidently his views are entirely out of date. Income taxation is only one stage worse than taxation through the Customs house. I can imagine nothing more silly than taxing a man in proportion to the services he renders to the community, while taking good care to permit people who own the country to escape taxation. But that is the policy of honorable Senators opposite, and it is my purpose to tear aside the veil and expose their hypocrisy."—Reprinted from "*Progress*," Melbourne, July.

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