

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER IN NEW YORK TO HON. CHARLES O'CONNOR HENNESSY AND MRS ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

The most distinguished gathering of followers of Henry George that has come together for many years in New York did honour on 28th October to Senator Charles O'Connor Hennessy and Mrs Anna George de Mille at a banquet held in the Hotel Belmont. The two guests of the evening were entertained in recognition of their work at the Copenhagen Conference and their service in helping to form the new International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, of which Mr Hennessy is the President.

Mr FREDERIC C. LEUBUSCHER acted as toastmaster, and with him were associated on the invitation and organizing committee Judge Samuel Seabury (of the New Jersey Supreme Court), Senator George L. Record, the Hon. Lawson Purdy and Mr Amos Pinchot.

The guests numbered 152, the hall being filled to overflowing. Many who had made late application for tickets unfortunately could not be accommodated but they filed in after the dinner to hear the speeches. Every one present received as a memento of the occasion an elegantly bound and inscribed copy of Professor Harry Gunnison Brown's "Comments on Some Current Criticisms of Land Value Taxation," a pamphlet that may be had from our offices, and is one that should be in the hands of all students of the question. The presentation copy at the dinner contained the portraits of the two honoured guests.

Regrets at inability to attend were received from Mr Louis F. Post, Major G. H. Putnam (President of the American Free Trade League), and Messrs H. S. Buttenheim, Hamlin Garland, Bolton Hall, George L. Rusby and others. A message of greeting by cable from the United Committee and the International Union in London, with an accompanying compliment from *Grundskylld* in Copenhagen, was cordially welcomed.

The report of the proceedings occupies thirteen pages of the November-December number of *Land and Freedom* (150, Nassau Street, New York), which remarks: "It was a tribute worthy of the occasion. It was gratifying to see so many familiar faces, undoubtedly brought together by the prospect of renewed activity for the great cause. It so happened that this night was the anniversary of the death of Henry George, which occurred early Friday morning, 29th October, 1897."

The speaking continued till a late hour of the evening, the chief guests being called on at the end after many complimentary references to them. Our limited space permits us only to give comparatively brief extracts from the extensive report in *Land and Freedom*.

The TOASTMASTER (Mr Leubuscher) recalled the dinner to Tom L. Johnson in 1910 upon his return from Europe. It was a like occasion, and he (Mr Leubuscher) had acted as toastmaster then, too. He spoke enthusiastically of the Third International Conference in Copenhagen, of its inspiration and its work, including the striking Address to the League of Nations in favour of absolute and unqualified free trade. He said:—

"The question of the land for the people, the question of free land and free trade, are being discussed in the world as never before as a possible remedy for after-war ills. Now, to my mind, the greatest event of the year 1926 was this International Conference at Copenhagen in July. After going through a fine programme lasting about a week, the Conference, representing many nations,

decided to form an International Union for the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade. It is no longer a local or even a national movement, but an active international organization, and as such has increased and is increasing the respect of mankind for the philosophy of Henry George."

The Message of Henry George

The Hon. SAMUEL SEABURY, who as a young man was a member of Henry George's Campaign Committee in the New York Mayoral election of 1897, in the course of a stirring address, said:—

"Henry George taught the lesson of brotherhood among the peoples, and we have seen nations divided into armed camps intent upon bringing about the destruction of one another. Henry George taught that the people of the world must co-operate in the spirit of goodwill, and we have seen the peoples priding themselves upon their isolation from one another. Henry George taught the rule of the people, and we have witnessed a very different thing—the rule of great states oppressive of the personalities of their own citizens within them and grasping and blatant towards other states without. Henry George taught that freedom of trade and exchange among peoples led to the welfare and the happiness of all; we have witnessed the erection of tariff barriers and the establishment of governmental restrictions upon the right of one people to deal with another. He taught that economic freedom was as essential as political freedom. We have witnessed the unprecedented growth of private monopoly and economic imperialism. Henry George taught that individual freedom could not exist coincident with the monopoly of natural resources. We have passed laws which, while they fulminate against monopoly, leave unrepealed upon our statute books laws which of necessity create and protect private monopoly. Henry George taught the lesson of tolerance and freedom of opinion. We have been passing through an era of bigotry and intolerance, under which the restraint both of public opinion and of law prevent the free expression of individual opinion. Henry George taught that the expenses of Government should be borne by the taxation of socially created values. These great values which the community creates we have donated to a privileged class, while burdening and harassing the producers of wealth by a great multitude of inquisitorial, unequal and unjust taxes.

"Is it not time to try to change these practices and policies which have resulted in injustice and in war? Is it not time that we should try other and different policies and practices? We have tried isolation. Is it not time to try co-operation? We have tried economic imperialism and aggressive nationalism. Is it not time to try the abolition of economic imperialism, and the

NATURAL LAW IN SOCIAL LIFE

By W. R. Lester, M.A.

Special reprint in pamphlet form of the author's address at the Copenhagen Conference

Published by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values

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monopoly of natural resources, the root from which they spring? We have tried jealousy and hate in international relations. Is it not time to try fraternity? We have tried intolerance and the suppression of opinion. Is it not time to try tolerance and the freedom of opinion? We have tried allowing the state to limit and to restrict the individual in a thousand unnecessary, meddling ways. Is it not time for the individual man and woman within the community to restrict the State and to curtail its powers of meddlingness and interference with personal rights?

"There is no short, no easy way. If we would aid towards laying the foundations of social justice, we must abandon the practice and the policies which, wherever applied, have led to injustice and wars among people. We must try to remove the obstacles to free co-operation among the people of the world—insist that the state shall perform its primary state function of securing equality of opportunity by the destruction or the abolition of the private monopoly of natural resources."

Mr Hennessy's Public Career

The HON. LAWSON PURDY, former President of the New York Department of Taxes and Assessments, gave some reminiscences of the Mayoral campaign of 1897, and the part Mr Hennessy played in securing a successful nomination for Henry George. He said:—

"If our leader had lived" (he died on the eve of the poll) "his vote would have been very, very great. No man knows how much it would have been. After that campaign Mr Hennessy went right on working in good causes until to-day. He has found time to serve the State of New Jersey in the Senate and do good work there, and so spread the gospel of correct economics. And then the United States was honoured by having him elected to preside over our International Conference at Copenhagen. Hennessy deserves well of us and of the City of New York where he labours, and of the State of New Jersey for his legislative services to it, and of the United States now that he represents our country as president of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade."

The HON. GEORGE L. RECORD spoke of the political conditions in New Jersey and how those who had been active in reform movements there had very grateful reason to know Senator Hennessy. "He came with his great intelligence and his disinterested love of the people, and with his clear power of statement. Within a very short time he was the intellectual, dominating figure of that legislature when it came to any question of real public interest. Our state profited immensely by his service, and those who were in contact with him then are glad to come here and join you in rendering him the honour his distinguished services here and abroad have brought to him."

Concluding, Mr Record said:—

"For the moment we are passing through a wave of reaction. The brilliant ideas that were set up and held out in such wonderful language by Woodrow Wilson have proved such an utter absurdity in their results that there is a tremendous wave of reaction and of despair and hopelessness that now spreads over the mass of the people of the whole world. But that is the time for those who see clearly and who understand the truth to hold fast until the tide turns, because if this universe is organized upon moral laws, the tide must turn."

MR FRED C. HOWE contributed an address which well sustained the oratory of the evening. His closing words were:—

"A wondrous thing about Henry George to me was

not alone the brilliancy of his style, the marvels of his political and economic insight, but the profundity of his scientific knowledge, a profundity which squares with that of the biological researcher. I have gone through life thirty years since I first read his great book and still find that it squares with every truth. Our mission is to continue to see the truth and tell it to the world."

Response of Anna George de Mille

MRS ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE said: "Believe me, I do understand the honour that is paid me to-night is not to me at all but to, and I will use the Danish words, 'Henry George's Datter.' It is Henry George's Datter, I know, that you honour to-night, and I am myself very, very humble. They have a curious way over there (in Denmark) of asking you to make a speech without any warning whatever, and I learned those words, 'Henry George's Datter,' to my consternation very often. I had to learn how to look intelligent in five languages. As intelligent as I could look, for the ability to make speeches in three or four languages was not unusual with some of the delegates, and a never-ending surprise to me."

Mrs de Mille recounted the events of the Conference which had left on her a profound and lasting impression, and how in particular she had been thrilled by the ceremony of laying the wreath at the base of the Liberty Memorial in Copenhagen. "It was a truly inspiring affair. I have laid wreaths at my father's grave in Greenwood and there I felt very differently. But in laying the wreath at Copenhagen there was something like a feeling of tremendous victory, a feeling of triumph that our cause, for which Henry George had died, had gone very far indeed."

"At a gathering of a group of young people in the 'Tivoli,' the charming amusement park of Copenhagen, I had, I think, possibly the biggest of my experiences. It had been an evening of gaiety and play—when a quiet moment came and brought with it a spontaneous expression in little speeches from the young Danes, of friendship for us, who had come from over the sea; a sincere and eloquent picturing of their concept of our vision, and a dedication to the great ideal that had brought us all together in the Henry George Conference. It was so deeply stirring that when it was over, I could not speak for a moment. There seemed nothing to say and we all drank silently. It was like a sacrament."

Having spoken of the Conference and its message and the formation of the new International Union, Mrs de Mille ended with these words:—

"I plead that we all band together in support of this new Union for the advancement of the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade—a union that shall bind not only the seventeen countries represented at the Copenhagen Conference, but shall take in many other countries until it reaches around the world—forming a scientific structure for the Brotherhood of Man. And

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so to-night, which happens to be the anniversary of Henry George's death, I am going to ask that we all re-dedicate ourselves to our cause, and to follow in the footsteps of the disciples who have blazed the trail that we hope some day will be a great wide roadway to freedom for mankind."

Response of Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy

Introducing Mr Hennessy, the genial TOASTMASTER quoted two references to their guest, one from *Land & Liberty* and one from *Grundskyld*, the organ of the Danish Henry George Union. The latter read: "Little wonder that it is wished especially to honour that man whose ability, tact, and humour contributed in such high degree to the success of the World Conference. We Danes are present in thoughts while we rejoice over the homage paid to him."

The HON. CHARLES O'CONNOR HENNESSY expressed his grateful appreciation of the personal compliment implied in the presence of the gathering, and he valued the occasion as an opportunity to say something that might serve to advance Henry George's cause of social regeneration. After adverting to interesting topics in preceding speeches, he surveyed the International Conference, giving a clear and inspiring picture of one event after the other as he saw it and lived through that memorable week in Copenhagen. The address could not have failed to encourage and uplift all present.

"There is a scrap book here," he said, "containing scores of columns of news reports and editorials dealing with our work, indicating that this gathering of the Georgeists of the world was regarded by the editors of Denmark as an event of real international importance.

"If I were asked as to the important results of the conference beyond the bringing together for common counsel these men and women from many parts of the world and binding them anew in a common enthusiasm for a great cause, I would say that I believe the widespread publicity given to that address of the Conference to the League of Nations, appealing for free trade as a means of ending international strife, has already had far-reaching effects in Europe. When I went to Germany, I was told of a book of German press clippings almost as large as that you see here. Many of the important newspapers there gave considerable space to the Conference, and featured this appeal to the statesmen at Geneva as well as the declaration that if governments would establish peace, contentment, and prosperity at home, they must give equal access to natural opportunities, and abolish legal and artificial restrictions that impede the right of men freely to produce wealth, freely to exchange it, and freely to enjoy the results of their labour."

The International Union: Its Appeal and Its Mission

Mr Hennessy continued:—

"The final and vital act of the Conference was the resolution providing for the organization of a permanent International Union for the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade. That Union is now in being, and has active adherents in many parts of the world. The great honour came to me to be named as its provisional president. The word 'provisional' was used because it is our desire that the permanent form of the organization of the Union be determined at the next international conference in 1928, which I hope all of you will attend. The support and extension of the work of this international body is the great work before us to-day, and I join with Mrs de Mille in earnestly pleading for it. It seems to have come into being at a time when economic

education respecting the production and distribution of wealth is needed as never before in the world. The remarkable manifesto that was published in all the countries a short time ago, coming from the international bankers and industrialists of the world, and demanding the destruction of the economic barriers that impede freedom of production and exchange, shows how very greatly needed is this Union of ours, aiming to organize and disseminate the views of Henry George for the establishment of real free trade throughout the world.

"The work the Union has to do requires not large money means, perhaps, but considerable expenditures, nevertheless, if the work which we plan is to be done efficiently and effectively. Every day there comes to us some letter from distant places telling us something that ought to be done in the way of spreading the gospel. We need translations of the works of Henry George in many places. Old translations are out of date or out of print. All countries want literature and groups now organizing themselves into branches of the International Union, want support of one sort or another. We are trying, therefore, to get all of you who believe in an international union for the promotion of land values taxation and free trade; who believe we ought to organize and bind together the glorious men and women in all parts of the world who see this philosophy and would advance it, to help us do it. I can see where we could spend \$50,000 within the next two years if we could only see where we could get that amount of money. I can say in all earnestness that there is no cause to which you could contribute money in which you are likely to find more glorious reward than this to which I, for one, have dedicated my small means and abilities for the rest of my life.

"Until the League of Nations examines the fundamental causes that underlie the discords and hostilities that keep friendly peoples from co-operating for their common interest, it will never become the great peace-making agency that Woodrow Wilson aimed to make it when his noble efforts first brought it into being. Speaking of this great man, whose friendship I had the honour to enjoy, it was recalled to me in this Danish Conference by Mr Vedel, an eloquent Dane, who spoke upon free trade, that in his statement of the Fourteen Points preliminary to the establishment of world peace, Woodrow Wilson stressed, in his third point, the necessity for economic reforms that would break down the barriers that impeded trade between the peoples of the world so far as it was possible to attain it. But it seems that in this matter, as in other matters at Versailles, Mr Wilson was obliged to yield to the politicians gathered there, who elevated politics and selfish national interest as things more important than economics. The splendid thing about the League of Nations, however, is that it has brought fifty-five nations together to take common counsel about the common welfare of their peoples, and of the world, and counsel must be taken before action is taken. I firmly believe that out of this spirit of common counsel about world affairs will ultimately come decisions based upon justice, that will set the whole world free at last. It will be a fine thing if we may be permitted to help and participate in this great consummation."

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