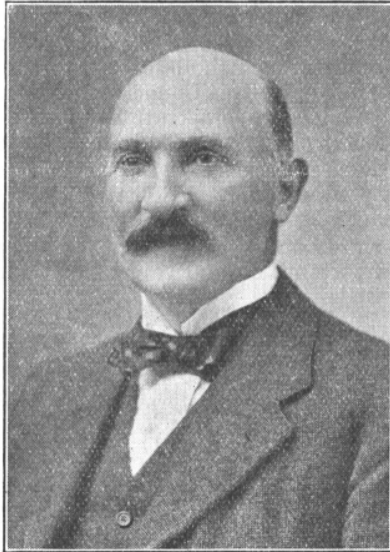


WHAT THE LEAGUES ARE DOING

ENGLISH LEAGUE : Frederick Verinder, General Secretary, 376 and 377, Strand, W.C.2.



T. ATHOLL ROBERTSON, EX-M.P.

The Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the League was held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday, 6th May. There was a large and representative attendance, those present including the retiring President, Mr. T. Atholl Robertson; the new President, Col. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P.; Mr. T. W. Stamford, M.P.; Mr. P. Wilson Raffan; Alderman J. R. Firth, of Sydney, N.S.W.; Alderman F. C. R. Douglas; Councillor Rupert East; Mr. H. G. Chancellor; Mr. George Crosoer; and others. Apologies for absence were received from a number of friends, including Sir Edgar Harper and Mr. L. P. Jacobs.

The following resolution, moved by Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, seconded by Mr. T. W. Stamford, M.P., and supported by Alderman J. R. Firth, was unanimously adopted:—

That the effective cure for our present economic distresses is the recognition of the equal rights of the people in the land of their birth; that these rights can be fully secured by the taking of economic rent for public purposes; and that the first step towards this end is the taxation and rating of all land values, rural as well as urban.

MR. T. ATHOLL ROBERTSON, in his opening address and review of the year's work, said he was delighted to see such a large gathering. They had all received the printed annual report and he hoped it would be carefully studied in view of what was said about finance. Death had claimed many of the League's pioneers and supporters and the difficulty was to get others to take their place. Their hopes for a tax on land values in this year's Budget, based on Mr. Snowden's very definite promises, had been disappointed by the overthrow of the Labour Government, and he thought that the occasion as well as the result of the General Election was primarily due to the fact that the Labour Government, like other Governments, did not understand the importance of the land question. A magnificent opportunity had been missed. In the fight that was bound to come in the future, he urged that all who were for our ideas should march together no matter what their party politics were. They should hold fast to the principle of a national tax on all land values, both urban and rural. Let them carry and apply that

fundamental principle first and then they could deal in a practical and simple way with the rating of land values for local purposes and with the relations of local and national taxation. Referring to Col. Wedgwood as his successor, he said that the author of *ESSAYS AND ADVENTURES OF A LABOUR M.P.* was just "the man for this job." He would come in to give that vitalizing punch that was necessary at the moment and would worthily fulfil the Presidential chair.

MR. HERBERT A. BERENS, Hon. Treasurer, moving the adoption of the Annual Financial Statement, said they ended the year with a deficit of £168 18s., as compared with a deficit of £226 6s. 6d. at the end of the previous year. The statement showed revenue £1,081 0s. 10d. and expenditure £1,023 12s. 8d., but the revenue included a considerable sum in response to a very special appeal. It was gratifying to notice the increase in the sales of literature, which were £84 as compared with £50 in the year previous. The Finance Committee had met many times and considered ways and means. One method was open to the payers of income tax, namely, to put aside for the League at least part of the relief they were getting under Mr. Churchill's Budget.

The accounts were adopted after Mr. Berens had been seconded by Mr. George Crosoer, who said a great deal of effort and sacrifice had been made by League officers and members, and he knew that economy had been studied very closely.

COUNCILLOR RUPERT EAST (Aylesbury) proposed the election of office-bearers named on the list as printed. The office-bearers were unanimously elected with Col. Josiah C. Wedgwood as the new President and with Mr. Gates on the Executive in place of Mr. Plummer, who was unable to serve.

COL. JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD then took the chair as President and said he appreciated sincerely the honour they had done him. He was the first member of the Labour Party to act as President of the League, although he had already held that responsible post a number of years ago before he was a member of the Labour Party. They had, he said, to convince every thinking man and woman that the land question was at the root of the unemployment question and their job was to show that the only way of successfully tackling the matter was by the Taxation and Rating of Land Values. Their policy was not merely a method of getting revenue; its aim was to obtain for the people that which the community had created and to make land cheaper than it was to-day. That was their object—to cheapen land—and that was why he was glad to be President once more of the English League. He hoped that during the coming year they would all put their backs into the work. In the course of his speech, Col. Wedgwood announced that the Labour Party and the Trade Union Executive meeting jointly had just published two pamphlets on the land question written by himself.

MR. P. WILSON RAFFAN, Ex-M.P., moving the resolution as printed above, congratulated the League on the election of Col. Wedgwood, with whom he had himself been long associated in Parliament. He was glad to see so many present, which he hoped was an indication that they were on the eve of a renewed and vigorous agitation. It was a great encouragement to their work to see what had been done in many countries to advance the principles of Henry George, and there was no room for pessimism but only for more and more persistence and determination.

MR. T. W. STAMFORD, M.P., seconding the resolution, said that like the President of the League his political associations and connections were with the Labour

Party. He was more than pleased that in a meeting of that character he could feel he was associating himself with the terms of the resolution before the meeting. He did not say, of course, that the educational work on this matter had been fully done even inside the British Labour Party, but the attitude of the Labour Party on the question of the Taxation of Land Values, an attitude as indicated in successive Conference resolutions, was becoming more and more plain and more and more definite. None of the great outstanding social problems of the moment, the problem of housing, of inequality in the distribution of wealth, unemployment and all the various problems of personal and individual freedom, could be solved so long as the present land monopoly existed in this country.

They could go to the ordinary man and assure him—as politicians did assure him at election times—that he was a perfectly free and independent citizen, but as long as that man remained divorced from the land that was absolutely essential to his labour and equally essential to his life, he was just as much a bondservant of the landlord as if he still wore a collar round his neck. The land monopoly was not the only monopoly, but it was the condition out of which other harassing and embarrassing monopolies arose, and out of which they derived their power over the community. He was quite thoroughly and completely convinced that the reform for which the English League stood was the one reform of more importance than any other.

ALDERMAN J. R. FIRTH, to whom the Chairman extended a cordial welcome, expressed his pleasure at being present with so many co-workers in the movement at their Annual Meeting. He was listened to with rapt interest as he described how the system of land value rating had been adopted in New South Wales and Queensland, with special reference to its remarkably beneficial effects in Sydney. He gave us some revelations also, with a fine spice of humour, of the workings of Protection in Australia. After his speech there was an eager succession of questions, to which he replied in the most captivating and convincing manner. Mr. Firth was the guest of the United Committee, the League and the Henry George Club at Dinner on 12th May, and for all the valuable information he has given us we refer our readers to the report of his speech on that occasion.

Votes of thanks to the Chairman and the speakers concluded the proceedings.

ANNUAL REPORT OF EXECUTIVE FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1925

The financial position of the League is slightly better than a year ago, but still causes very grave anxiety to the Executive. Before the last Annual Meeting—held on 7th May, 1924: the fortieth anniversary of Mr. Verinder's first election as General Secretary—an appeal had been made on behalf of our esteemed Secretary, then on the verge of a complete breakdown owing to the stress of the past ten years. The response to the appeal exceeded all expectations, and was a fitting testimony from the members and friends of the League to the regard in which they all hold Mr. Verinder; with the result that we were able to present him with a cheque for £454.

One of the more pleasing features of the financial report is the increase in the sale of literature. It will, however, be necessary in the future to show a very considerable increase in the amount of Annual Subscriptions, if the activities of the League are to go on unimpaired. Mr. Verinder very generously wrote off a sum of £200 in which the League was indebted to him. But such sacrifices cannot be expected in the future, and it is felt that the financial support from

those who believe in the Cause for which the League stands, should at least be equal to the expenditure, which is kept at the very lowest.

The position of our Assistant Secretary, who has been an able and faithful servant of the League for more than 35 years, is giving the Executive much anxiety. Naturally, every one connected with the League desires to retain Mr. Munn's valued services, but it will become imperative, unless our income can be made to cover expenditure, to dispense with them. We sincerely hope that some friends of the League will come forward and guarantee Mr. Munn's salary for the coming year, as has been done by one or two valued friends for the half-year ending in June next.

At last year's Annual Meeting, when Mr. T. Atholl Robertson, M.P., was re-elected President, a Resolution was passed welcoming Mr. Snowden's Budget proposal to restore the Land Valuation Department with a view to the Taxation of Land Values; and Mr. Raffan reported that the Land Values Parliamentary Group had had a very satisfactory interview with Mr. Snowden on the afternoon of that day.

After a review of the action taken by the League during the General Election and the L.C.C. Election, the Report proceeds:—

The Executive issued a number of new leaflets before this election: on "London Land Values and London Rates," "The Woman Voter and the Land Question," "Holding and Withholding," "What we all want and How to get it." These were widely circulated among London electors. Another leaflet, specially addressed "To Co-operators" was sent, with a circular letter, to nearly 2,000 Co-operative Societies and Guilds. A new list of Publications (4 pp.) was also issued. The Executive again call attention to Dr. Dundas White's most valuable book (2s.) on LAND VALUE POLICY. Col. Wedgwood's entertaining ESSAYS AND ADVENTURES OF A LABOUR M.P. (3s. 6d.) contain some very valuable chapters on Land Values. Mr. Frank Geary, B.Sc., has ready for almost immediate publication a book on LAND TENURE AND UNEMPLOYMENT (10s. 6d.). These books can be supplied from the League office.

The total number of meetings addressed during the year was very large. The President has never slackened in his platform work for our Cause. Mr. Chas. Bevan has addressed over 120 meetings, chiefly in the London area: Messrs. H. G. Chancellor, J. E. Grant, C. H. Smithson, and other members of the Executive, have lost no opportunity of speaking for us. The General Secretary has lectured in London and elsewhere 36 times. The members of the League who have been candidates at Parliamentary and Municipal Elections, and other members who took part in the Elections, have been responsible for a very extensive propaganda, of which details did not reach the office.

The losses of the League by death, especially among its older members, continue heavy. Among those who have passed away during the past year are the Rev. Stewart Headlam, Mr. Joseph Rowntree and Major Roache. Mr. Headlam was one of the little band of students of PROGRESS AND POVERTY who founded the League in 1883. It is not often that a public man is so widely mourned. The children of Bethnal Green and the Archbishop of Canterbury joined with the League and many others to do honour to his memory, and 40 organizations are represented on the Committee which is preparing a Memorial to a great citizen and servant of London. The Executive is informed that a legacy of £100 is to come to the League under his will. It should serve as a challenge to a determined effort to clear the League of debt.

The Executive desire to express their sympathy with the members of the young "Ligue pour la Réforme

Foncière" (Belgium) in the loss of M. Albert Cauwel, to whose unwearied efforts the new movement in Belgium owes its initiation. He was in the closest touch with the English League during the past two or three years.

The Rt. Hon. Col. J. C. Wedgwood (our President in 1908-9) has kindly permitted the Executive to nominate him as President for the coming year. The remembrance of the services which he has rendered to our Cause, as Member of Parliament and Minister in the late Government, as a persistent and fearless advocate of our principles for many years, should ensure for the League in full measure the moral and financial support which will enable it, under his leadership, to face the difficult tasks that lie before it during the next few years of Tory domination. To those who believe that the cure for Unemployment, for the House Famine, for the crushing burdens of Rates and Taxes, lies in the break-up of Land Monopoly, the Executive appeal for prompt and generous help. The cure of these terrible evils is worth the expenditure of every ounce of energy and of every Treasury note that can possibly be spared by those who wish well to their country.

[The Report in full was sent to every member of the League before the Annual Meeting. Copies can still be obtained from the League office.]

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: William Reid, Secretary, 67, West Nile Street, Glasgow.

We are looking forward to the visit of Alderman J. R. Firth, who is due to visit Glasgow on Thursday, 4th, and Friday, 5th June. In the afternoon of Thursday, 4th June, Alderman Firth has been invited to address a meeting of the Business Men's Club in the Cádoro Restaurant, and on the evening of the same day the members of the Scottish League have been invited to meet him. This meeting is also to be held in the Cádoro Restaurant, Union Street, Glasgow.

On Friday, 5th June, Alderman Firth will address a meeting of members of Ward Committees and others interested in the Rating question. The meeting will be held in the Central Hall, Bath Street, and it is hoped that there will be a good attendance. Anyone who learns of either of these meetings through the medium of LAND & LIBERTY is cordially invited should no other invitation have come their way.

At a meeting of the Executive on 11th May, a resolution was adopted, as reported in the RECORD AND MAIL, the EVENING CITIZEN, and other papers of 14th, pointing out that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had turned his back upon his declarations in favour of land value taxation, and registering an emphatic protest against the Budget, as it provided for an increase of wasteful expenditure, placed further burdens upon industry, created fresh barriers against commerce, and threatened to aggravate rather than remove unemployment.

The League is trying the experiment of holding weekly meetings in the Rooms, 67, West Nile Street, in June, and we are promised a number of new and interested visitors.

The debate which I announced was to take place between Mr. Ignatius Maynes, M.A., and Mr. J. O'D. Derrick duly came off. Mr. Maynes has since written to the IRISH WEEKLY giving his views on the currency question and the land question.

The debate was a one-sided affair in which all the points were made by Mr. Derrick. No discussion by the audience was permitted, which was a pity, as the Secretary would have liked to reply, on the spot, to some statements which are too far-fetched to drag in at this late date. Among other letters to the Press are one or two to the GLASGOW NEWS and the GLASGOW EVENING TIMES. These related to the position of the question

in the Glasgow Town Council and Mr. Derrick, Mr. Alexander Campbell, and the Secretary contributed to the discussion.

WELSH LEAGUE: Eustace A. Davies, Hon. Secretary, 14, Pembroke Terrace, Cardiff.

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the League was held in the Friends' Meeting House, 25th April, Captain F. Saw presiding. After tea, kindly provided by Mr. David Davies, of Penarth, letters of greeting and apologies for absence were carried over to the ensuing public meeting. The reports submitted by the Secretary and Treasurer were adopted and office bearers elected. President, Dr. D. G. Taylor; Chairman, Captain F. Saw; Hon. Treasurer, Councillor John T. Jones; Hon. Secretary, Eustace A. Davies; along with an executive of twenty.

A vote of thanks to the office bearers for the past year was approved, and a Resolution in the following terms moved by Captain Saw, and seconded by Mr. Ashley Mitchell was passed unanimously:

This Meeting unhesitatingly condemns the existing system of land tenure and taxation with its inherent denial of the rights of the people to the fullest participation in the bounties of nature, which were manifestly intended as a treasure house for the people and not as a pleasure ground for the privileged; affirms its conviction that the present poverty-stricken condition of the people in relation to employment, house famine and poverty prevailing in both town and country are directly traceable to withholding of land in the interests of privilege and monopoly; demands as an immediate reform a national tax on the value of all land apart from improvements whether the land is used or not, and that local rates be levied on the value of land with the corresponding removal of penalizing rates upon houses and improvements; and calls upon all men of goodwill and upon all Societies and Organizations concerned with industry and progress to support this demand for the taxation and rating of Land Values as the policy that would put an end to land monopoly, bring fertile land into the hands of the cultivators, encourage production and raise the general standard of comfort.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report submitted by the Hon. Secretary reviewed at length the work of the League which had been faithfully recorded each month in LAND & LIBERTY. Reference was made to the outcome of the General Election and the consequent loss of Mr. Snowden's land value policy. At the General Election, 25,000 leaflets were circulated in the Cardiff constituencies and much literature and questions were submitted to candidates in Wales and Monmouthshire. The SOUTH WALES NEWS and the WESTERN MAIL were generous in the space they gave to this special publicity. Much notice was taken of the published replies received from the various candidates.

The League officially supported Mr. Barnett Janner, a member of the executive, who contested the Cardiff Central Ward at the Municipal Election.

The principal speakers at meetings during the year were Captain Saw, Mr. C. A. Gardner, Mr. Barnett Janner, Mr. T. E. Davies, Mr. T. C. Morris, Dr. Black Jones and the Hon. Secretary. Press correspondence has been well maintained and in this connection the names of Captain Saw, Mr. T. E. Davies, and Mr. C. A. Gardner call for special mention. We have pursued the usual practice with our explanatory literature. A special leaflet emphasizing the position of the political