

LAND & LIBERTY

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THE GOVERNMENT'S PEACE AIMS.

AT A CONFERENCE of the British and Allied Governments held in London on 12th June a declaration was adopted pledging them to continue the struggle until victory was won and free peoples released from coercion and affirming "that the only true basis of enduring peace is the willing co-operation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security; and that it is their intention to work together, and with other free peoples, both in war and peace to this end."

This declaration is worded in terms of extreme generality and vagueness and much must depend upon the way in which it is interpreted, but it is welcome and encouraging. Some light on the meaning put upon it by our own government may be gathered from the speech of Mr Eden, the Foreign Secretary, at the Mansion House on 29th May. He said that social security would be our policy at home and abroad. "It will be our wish to work with others to prevent the starvation of the post-armistice period, the currency disorders throughout Europe, and the wide fluctuations of employment, markets and prices which were the cause of so much misery in the twenty years between the two wars. We shall seek to achieve this in ways which will interfere as little as possible with the proper liberty of each country over its own economic fortunes."

Referring to conditions immediately after the war Mr Eden said: "Continental Europe will end this war starved and bankrupt of all the foods and raw materials which she was accustomed to obtain from the rest of the world. . . . Wasteful war-time cultivations in many lands will leave agriculture almost as weak as industry." He referred to the storage of stocks of food and materials overseas which were being accumulated to help the transition to peaceful activities, and indicated the permanent objective in these words: "When peace comes we shall make such relaxations of our war-time financial arrangements as will permit the revival of international trade on the widest possible basis. We shall hope to see the development of a system of international exchange in which the trading of goods and services will be the central feature."

After referring to the economic resources commanded by the free nations of America, the Dominions and ourselves, he added: "What is perhaps more important, these nations clearly have the will and the intention to evolve a post-war order which seeks no selfish national advantage; an order where each member of the family shall realize its own character and perfect its own gifts in liberty of conscience and person. We have learnt the lesson of the interregnum between the two wars. We know that no escape can be found from the curse which has been lying on Europe except by creating and preserving economic health in every country."

This is a notable statement, finely expressed. Unless

its meaning is whittled away by captious interpretation it is a declaration in favour of freedom of trade between nations, in favour of the abolition of the tariffs, quotas, and exchange restrictions which have destroyed the unity of the world, have turned national frontiers into trade barriers, and have set nation against nation. Liberally interpreted it should mean more than that. The argument implicit in it is that the natural resources of the world should be made equally available for all mankind, and that not merely by throwing down the hindrances to trade which obstruct the transfer of raw materials and manufactured goods from place to place but by breaking down the barriers which prevent men from gaining access upon equal terms to the land from which those materials alone can be produced. It is not enough to say to men: you can freely exchange goods, unless we also say that no man shall hold up against the needs of other men the land which is the only means of producing them.

In breaking down land monopoly within each country we shall alone complete that economic freedom of which free trade is part. Whatever the obstacles and difficulties, that is the object which must be held in view and striven for. Without it freedom of trade is not likely to be attained, for the state needs revenue to carry on its functions; if it ceases to obtain revenue from protective tariffs and other oppressive taxation it must find revenue elsewhere; and the taking of the economic rent of land for public purposes will at the same time provide the revenue which the state requires and break down the barriers of land monopoly which obstruct and prevent the production of wealth.

Although the struggle is far from ended, the more clearly it is expressed that we have no selfish end in view but only the liberty and welfare of the common man in every land, the more surely shall we rally to our cause men of good will everywhere and not least in those lands which are groaning under tyranny and oppression.

The destruction of our former offices necessitated the suspension of our June issue, and the present one is a double number for June-July.

The evils that begin to appear spring from the fact that the application of intelligence to social affairs has not kept pace with the application of intelligence to individual needs and material ends. Natural science strides forward but political science lags. With all our progress in the arts which produce wealth, we have made no progress in securing its equitable distribution.

HENRY GEORGE in *Social Problems*.

The progress of civilization requires that more and more intelligence be devoted to social affairs, and this not the intelligence of the few, but that of the many. We cannot safely leave politics to politicians, or political economy to college professors. The people themselves must think, because the people alone can act.

HENRY GEORGE in *Social Problems*.

Work is not an end but a means; manifestly, there can be no real scarcity of work, which is but the means of satisfying material wants, until human wants are all satisfied.

HENRY GEORGE in *Social Problems*.

A SPECIAL REQUEST

Our loss in the recent disaster included the back numbers of "Land & Liberty." Readers who can spare their copies will do a great service by sending them to us. Specially wanted are the issues of recent months. Note our new address: 4, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1. Telephone: Abbey 6665.