

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE THE TAXATION AND RATING OF LAND VALUES

To be held in the Town Hall, Heanor, on Saturday, 8th November, 1930, at 3 and 6.30 p.m.

As announced in our last issue, a Regional Conference to Promote the Taxation and Rating of Land Values will be held at Heanor, Nottingham, under the auspices of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Ltd. The Chairman of the Heanor Urban District Council will be present to give an official welcome to delegates.

At the afternoon session the Conference will discuss the Rating of Land Values. The evening session will deal with a resolution calling upon the Government to expedite the passage of the Valuation Bill into law and to transfer national taxes to the value of land as a means of raising wages and solving the unemployment problem.

The rating resolution will be proposed by Mr George Hardie, M.P., and seconded by Councillor A. H. Weller, J.P.; the evening resolution will be moved and seconded respectively by Councillor Andrew MacLaren, M.P., and Councillor G. F. Sawyer, M.P.

The circular letter convening the Conference, issued by the United Committee, contains two useful statements on the Municipal Demand for Land Value Rating and Land Value Rating in Practice. The former gives a list of local authorities in Great Britain that have recently resolved in favour of the necessary legislation: the latter briefly describe the progress of the land value policy in other countries.

The Conference is non-party. The object is to embrace all sections of opinion in directing public attention to the urgency of the land value policy in relation to both national and local finance, and as a means of dealing with the problems of unemployment, housing and municipal expansion.

Councils or Societies to be represented at the Conference are invited to send, as delegates' fees, 1s. for each delegate appointed, 2s. for two delegates, or 2s. 6d. for any number up to six.

Names and addresses of delegates should be forwarded not later than 5th November to Councillor Leonard Shipley, District Conference Secretary, 10, Ella Bank Road, Heanor, Nottingham.

Mr S. R. Daniels, prospective Liberal candidate for Bath, advocated the Rating of Land Values at an open-air meeting held in his division. (*Bath-Wilts Chronicle*, 2nd October). As population increased, he said, the value of land was continually rising without any effort on the part of the owner. A man might buy land for a song and sit doing nothing until it was worth millions. Moreover, every pound spent by the community in adding to social amenities, new roads, tubes, lighting, sanitation, a new park, sometimes even a new bus service added to the value of the sites in the area they served. If rates were taken off buildings and laid on the market value of the site, land speculation would be checked, congestion relieved, and the housing problem largely solved.

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Councillor William Noble continues his series of weekly articles in the *Stockport Express* under the heading "As a Labour Man Sees It." His remarks are always bright and interesting, and often incisive.

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The September issue of the *Commonwealth* makes the following editorial comment of the Land Valuation Bill: "This measure is a step in the right direction."

## "ON EVERYONE'S LIPS"

Just now, when the taxation of land values is again being discussed, the name of Henry George is on everyone's lips; but not all those who discuss him have read his works. A convenient opportunity to repair the omission is offered by the publication of a cheap edition of *Progress and Poverty*, his greatest and most controversial book. Henry George made genuine contributions to the science of economics, and no thinking person can peruse *Progress and Poverty* without agreeing that there is a lot to be said for his contention that millions of hands which our economic system keeps idle might add to the world's material wealth instead of merely consuming it if only the means of production could be made available for them. The capacity of healthy men to work is in itself a potential form of wealth, and there is something rotten in the economic system that wastes this wealth by leaving the unemployed without the land, raw materials or other means which they require to become productive. On the other hand, it appears to us that George vastly exaggerated the importance which land might play in the reconstruction of the social fabric; there is even something faintly ludicrous in his faith in land as the cure of society's ills. The passage of fifty years since the publication of the book is perhaps partly responsible for this effect; it would be only a very simple pastoral people whose social problems could be ameliorated so easily, and the desire of the Western peoples to be either simple or pastoral has steadily decreased since Henry George's day. Another point which Henry George overlooked was that a great deal of property in land is the result of honest saving throughout a lifetime and that there is no reason why the man who has adopted this particular form of prudence should be brutally treated more than any other. Nevertheless, *Progress and Poverty* is one of the most interesting books on social problems written in any country or century, and it is a great mistake for any student of such problems to leave it unread. The new edition is published by the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, price one shilling.—*Estates Gazette* (London), 11th October.

## "THE CANDLEMAKERS' PETITION"

The country endured, for long, a tax on home-made candles, which was only removed a century ago. It amounted to 1d. per lb., which yielded £400,000 a year. The agitation against the Candle Tax dates from a sitting in Grantown-on-Spey of the Excise Court exactly a hundred years ago, when a number of persons were cited for having in their possession candle-moulds or home-made candles on which duty had not been paid. The Excise officers had made a raid on the district and brought up between 40 and 50 cases, and had seized 32 stones of candles. In cases where more than one candle was found a "mitigated" penalty of £25 was imposed. The "doused glims" set the heather ablaze. The Highlanders attacked the authorities, in correspondence, like a bike of angry bees, and the following year the tax was erased from the Statute Book.—*Glasgow Herald*, 21st February.

### UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LAND

By W. R. Lester, M.A.

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