

LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

THE ACTIVITIES of the League are proceeding with undiminished vigour, membership is increasing, creating an atmosphere of revivalism among the Liberal rank and file, and the sphere of our influence is extending.

Writing of the "great need for such a body," a recent recruit from Croydon stressed the need "to promote economic truths of Liberalism"—"that simultaneous and immediate warfare against all forms of monopoly should be carried on which will result in a new and radical diffusion of property and ownership among all classes, so that a truly free and independent nation, of a stature at present undreamed of, shall emerge."

A public meeting was held at Park Hotel, Cardiff, on 9th March, attended by members in South Wales and adjoining counties. Mr. Elfyn David, LL.B., presided, other speakers were Mr. Atholl Robertson, Mr. Ashley Mitchell and Mr. A. W. Madsen, B.Sc., Many present expressed thankfulness at being able to come to a Liberal meeting and spoke plainly, hitting out at the incursions on liberty which had taken place before the war.

In his opening remarks as question master at the Good Society Brains Trust, held at the National Liberal Club on 10th March, Mr. Atholl Robertson said that the purpose of the Liberal Liberty League was to work strictly within the Party and its constitution, to assist in deliberations on economic issues, and the formulation of guiding political principles. Members forming the panel were: Mr. A. Mitchell, who explained the intricacies of world trade and contended that its smooth running was only possible if the objective criteria of the free and competitive market was the guiding principles; Mr. A. W. Madsen, who explained that the annual and unimproved value of the land was the real and only basis on which all taxation should be assessed; Mr. S. Martin, who, in answer to a question: "What did we intend to do for the young men when they came back," asked "What did the young men themselves intend to do." Would they come back determined to join in the fight against false economic premise, against arbitrary privilege, and to see that the Good Society was created and maintained?; and Mr. W. C. Woodroffe, who contended that it was only in the liberal doctrine that true freedom was to be found, and not in the State control advocated by the Labour Party and Sir Richard Acland's Common Wealth Party.

Remaining questions were dealt with on Thursday, 30th March, also at the club, when Mr. Wilfrid Harrison and Mr. F. Dupuis joined the panel on another Brains Trust. Questions were asked on a State-enforced minimum wage, the advantage of Free Trade for Great Britain in the face of tariffs and restrictions imposed by other countries, the unsoundness of the proposals of the Uthwatt Committee on land purchase by the State, the electoral truce,

the solution to the mining problem, and others.

A meeting of the Executive of the League was held on 30th March in London, when progress was reported on meetings in preparation for a nationwide appeal, publicity and finance. It was decided that, in view of the unsound policy appended to the subjects on the ten-point policy questionnaire recently circulated by the L.P.O., to recommend members to cross out all except the headings when making the form. The agenda for the Liberal Party Assembly, which is being held on 18th, 19th and 20th May, was considered, and a sub-committee was appointed to submit amendments to official resolutions and draw up a substantive resolution declaratory of Liberal policy. Delegates were appointed to the Assembly, and the

following were nominated for election to the Council of the L.P.O.: Messrs. Ashley Mitchell, Wilfrid Harrison, S. Martin, Vivian Carter, W. C. Woodroffe, G. H. Winder and L. G. Bowman.

Forthcoming meetings: Houldsworth Hall, Manchester, 28th April, at 7 p.m.; Liverpool, 2nd May, Everton Room, Exchange Hotel, 7-30 p.m. Speakers will include Councillor S. Needoff and Messrs. Ashley Mitchell and A. W. Madsen. General meeting in London on the eve of the Assembly.

Mr. S. Martin, Press secretary, would be glad to receive items of interest for publication. Write to Liberal Liberty League, 4 Great Smith Street, S.W. 1. The League invites membership, minimum subscription 5s. yearly free-will donations to help the campaign will be appreciated.

NOTES AND NEWS

Mr. Andrew Maclaren (Burslem, Independent), speaking in the Housing debate, 15th March, said that the three causes of bad housing were low wages, our penalising rating system and land speculation. In the Civil Estimates of last year the housing grants were £14,622,000, and £14,479,000 in the year before. Year after year they had been shovelling out those subsidies, but by squandering millions of public money they had not even touched the fringe of the problem. If a madman had been recruited and asked to devise some policy that would make housing an impossibility he could not have devised a better scheme than our present rating system. Ministries were literally packed with architects as if the problem was an architect's problem or even a civil engineer's problem; it was nothing of the kind, it was an economic problem. He appealed to the House to take this opportunity to deal drastically now with the effects of land speculation and of the rating system; to take those rates off the houses of the people rather than run along the prodigal path of subsidies.

In the debate, 1st March, in the Manchester City Council, which we briefly mentioned and commented upon last month, Councillor S. Needoff took a prominent part. He argued strongly and, we think, convincingly against the interim report of the special committee (of which he is himself a member) which had recommended in favour of the proposals of the Uthwatt Committee and had done scant justice to the rating of land values, although it had been instructed to deal specifically with that matter. He took exception to the statement of the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Nally, that the terms of reference had permitted the Committee only to make a historical survey of the Rating of Land Values movement, instead of treating it as an alternative method of meeting the compensation and betterment problems. Land value rating had been urged by hosts of local authorities throughout the country as the most effective means of securing for the community the com-

munal values which they created, of squeezing out the speculative elements in the value of land and of reducing rents and rates of houses and shops. The Uthwatt Report would inevitably fail to do these things because it refused to recognise the radical defects of the existing system. It was an attempt, which would prove futile, to reconcile the irreconcilable in relation to land, namely, the interests of the people and the interests of land monopoly which were opposed to them. He looked forward to the next report of the Committee dealing more adequately with the subject.

In the same debate, Sir Miles Mitchell, ex-Mayor, who is chairman of the general purposes committee of the Association of Municipal Corporations, said he was in favour of the Council obtaining powers to rate land values, it being a principle he had supported on previous occasions. A tremendous revenue, he said, had been lost to the city by not having powers to levy rates upon land values.

The "Henry George," one of the new Liberty Ships, received a beautiful framed picture of the economist, after whom it was named, when it arrived in New York recently.

Mrs. Anna George DeMille (President of the Board of Trustees of the Henry George School of Social Science) made the presentation of the portrait of her father, which hangs in the main lounge, and copies of books and speeches by George are available now in the ship's library. The ship is owned and operated by the War Shipping Administration.—Henry George News, New York, September, 1943.

Dorothy Thompson, in her "Voice of America" column in the *Sunday Chronicle*, 13th February, wrote:—

"Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, in recommending his favourite Republican candidate, General MacArthur, announced that the General always carries a copy of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in his pocket.

"It is recalled that Alexander Hamilton did the same—he got a copy fresh