

## LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

THE LEAGUE has to thank the weekly bulletin *Views*, Press and Radio Critic, published by Mr. V. R. Kimmitt at 2a Copthall Court, E.C.2, for the following publicity which has brought new and valuable support from some who noticed it:

"The Liberal Party overlords, who sadly assembled at the post-mortem of what they held to be official liberalism at Beaver Hall on September 9, would have been rudely awakened had they attended the meeting of the Liberal Liberty League at Kingsway Hall, London, on November 23. Of the many political meetings which we have attended in the past two years, this was the first which convinced us that the spirit of true liberalism is alive and active.

"It has been held, by the official Liberal Party, that the reason for their failure at the general election was the fact that they could not put sufficient candidates in the field to form a government, even if all were elected. The truth of the matter is that the Party election programme was so far from Liberalism, and so close to Socialism, that they merely served to strengthen the Labour Party case.

"Be that as it may. It is vital to this country that the basic Liberal principles, founded on justice, morality and truth, shall not be allowed to die. From the uncompromising tones of the speakers at the Kingsway Hall it was quite obvious that this is just the policy of the Liberal Liberty League. Two points were most significant throughout the meeting. First, the fighting enthusiasm of the speakers, and the fundamental simplicity of their statements; second, the intensive nature of the discussion carried on for nearly three hours."

Minimum membership fee is 5s. yearly and the appeal is for the best possible financial support by way of additional donation. The Hon. Treasurer reminds present members of the renewal of their contributions due for the ensuing year.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Livingstone Hall, Broadway, Westminster, London, on the evening of Thursday, February 28, followed by a Public Meeting, of which particulars will be announced later.

Advertisements of the League's Purpose and Policy with full text of the Statement already published in *Land & Liberty* were placed in the *British Weekly*, the *Christian World* and the *Methodist Recorder*, resulting in new enrolments and many enquiries. The literature of the League, especially the Statement as above and the Declaration on Full Opportunity for Employment, is in request and the volume of correspondence steadily grows.

The next Public Meeting of the League will be held on Saturday, January 26, at 3 p.m., in the Large Hall of the Friendly Societies Club, Camden Road, Tunbridge Wells. Arrangements are being made in association with Mr. C. E. Colyer, who is recruiting all possible local support. Prominent members of the League will be among the speakers.

The Southall Old Age Pensioners' Association, who are much interested in the League's principles and its stand for freedom, have invited a speaker to address their meeting on January 18.

Greatly appreciated is the action of members of the Yorkshire Liberal Federation which in a publication has criticised the report on the transport industry issued by a Liberal Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Seebohm Rowntree. "Throughout the report," the Yorkshire declaration states, "there are a number of entirely unsupported utterances which show that this committee has a deep and profound faith in controlling bodies if they are removed from the spur of competition." It ends by saying that "this report, if implemented, would strengthen the powers of patronage and of corruption of any Government, would lay a dead hand of chill restraint upon a vast enterprise and would choke the energies of thousands of small people." Among the signatories are Mr. Ronald F. Walker, Mr. D. W. Wade, a number of prospective Liberal candidates in Yorkshire and fourteen presidents of Liberal constituency associations.

*The Liberal Liberty League, 4, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1. Chairman, Ashley Mitchell; Vice-Chairman, T. Atholl Robertson; Hon. Treasurer, Wilfrid Harrison; Hon. Secretaries, C. H. Batty, F. Dupuis and S. Martin.*

## PRINCE OF LETTER WRITERS

WE REGRET to learn from Mrs. Gertrude E. Mackenzie, Washington, of the death of Hugo W. Noren. He was a brilliant, devoted and tireless advocate of the Henry George social philosophy. As Mrs. Mackenzie says in her letter, "We have lost our champion letter writer and it will be difficult to find anyone with his information and courage to fill his place. He certainly made things interesting for editors, government officials, and others who deserved censure and enlightenment." He was a loyal supporter and constant reader of *Land & Liberty* and many times we have been indebted to him for his writings. As an instance of his close watch on the sayings and doings of others, we recall the jolt he gave to the late Professor Shield Nicholson, professor of Political Economy in the University of Edinburgh.

Professor Nicholson had in 1921 written in his book, *The Revival of Marxism*: "Henry George tried to make out that rent absorbed all the surplus values created by labour. Hence Progress meant Poverty. George's theory was shattered as soon as it was analysed and stripped of its rhetoric. It was also shown by glaring elementary statistics that rent only absorbed a fraction of the progressive wealth of society. But the emotional effect of the Georgian theory remained long after the theory was shattered. . . . Henry George is partly to blame for the shortage of houses—he provided some of the emotional force that moved the politicians."

Mr. Noren, seeing this quoted in *Land & Liberty*, wrote thus to the Professor: "You are quoted as having said that Henry George's theory was shattered as soon as it was analysed and stripped of its rhetoric.

"Would you please shatter it again and show us how to do it?"

"We are vitally interested, for here in Pittsburgh the George men put one over on us.

[In 1915 the City of Pittsburgh adopted its "graded tax plan," by which in progressive stages the local taxation, for city purposes, was altered so as to make the tax on buildings and improvements half as much as that levied on the value of the land alone.]

"We suffer under what is known as the Graded Tax Law, and under this law land values just simply refuse to advance.

"Due to this law the tax rate on land values is increased 10 per cent. every third year; and the tax rate on buildings is reduced 10 per cent. every third year. We don't know how to 'shatter' it and this law is playing havoc with things as they used to be.

"We have what is known as the Schenley Estate, a hundred years old. This estate is all land. It is estimated that the Schenleys, who live in London, draw rents from their Pittsburgh land about \$3,000 a day. Yet the Schenleys have started to sell their 3,000 dollars a day gold mine. It is so, that this law of ours is not only making it unhealthy to hold land vacant, by the additional taxes, but it brings the vacant land into competition with what is already occupied. If this confounded thing isn't 'shattered' we can see the day approaching when none of this money will go to London.

"And the worst is yet to come. Note by the enclosed circular that the Allied Boards of Trade propose to take all the taxes off building values and put them all on land values. These are the tradesmen and the lower classes and the very men who put it over on us before. These people figure that by thus shifting the tax burdens there will be twenty-five millions annually for the lower classes to spend, and the tradesmen will do holiday business the year around; the greedy fellows.

"So for heaven's sake show us how to 'shatter' the Henry George theory. The damned thing works here."

3s. 6d. A PERPLE-ED PHILOSOPHER. Ethics of the Land Question and examination of Herbert Spencer's recantation of his earlier views. By Henry George.

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