

## LIBERAL PARTY DECLARATIONS

### National Federation

At the Annual Conference in Blackpool, 23rd to 25th May, there was an amendment from Hendon to make the following addition to the main resolution on unemployment which, referring to the "New Deal," said, "it is intolerable that unemployed labour, idle land and unused capital should be allowed to run to waste":—

To ensure that the Nation shall reap the full benefit of this effort at National Development, this Council reaffirms its intention to press forward the policy it adopted at Nottingham on 25th February, 1921, that a uniform national tax should be imposed on the capital site value of the whole country.

This was moved by Mr F. W. T. Krohn and seconded (on behalf of the Executive) by Mr Milner Grey and carried with one dissident. It is important to point out that the mover of the resolution clearly explained what was meant by site value as comprising the unimproved value of all land, whether urban or rural.

### The Women's Federation

At the Annual Conference in Blackpool, 21st and 22nd May, a resolution on "the bearing of the taxation of land values on the New Deal" was carried unanimously, declaring that:—

This Council of the Women's National Liberal Federation, convinced that the land monopoly is a contributory cause to the prevailing widespread poverty and unemployment, urges the Liberal Party to press with vigour for the drastic reform of our system of land rating and taxation.

The resolution was moved on behalf of the Rhyl Association by Mr Gomer Owen and seconded by Mrs Bayfield, of Manchester.

The policy was well stated in the speeches made at these meetings.

### Scottish Liberals

After almost three hours of lively proceedings the "Simonites" were defeated by 87 votes to 17 at the meeting of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal Federation in Edinburgh on 30th April. The question was whether the Annual Report for 1934-35 adopted by the Executive should be approved. Mr James Scott (ex-M.P.) moved it, seconded by Capt Arthur R. MacDougal, Liberal candidate for Selkirk and Roxburgh. The opposition was led by Mr J. Henderson Stewart, the National Liberal M.P. for East Fife.

The main paragraphs of interest to our readers in the Report now confirmed are that

The domestic policy of the Liberal Party includes . . . relief of unemployment, sound national finance, breaking the power of land monopoly and the imposition of land values taxation, developing our national resources and the remission of food taxes.

It is vital to Liberalism to urge that as a preliminary to the great scheme of national work proposed for the unemployed the taxation of land values shall be made statutory, as otherwise the schemes, when carried out, will deprive the community of their due reward and the profit will accrue to the benefit of the landowners.

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At the annual conference of the Scottish League of Young Liberals on 11th May at Selkirk, a resolution, moved by Mr A. Steel of Selkirk and seconded by Councillor Mrs Selby of Camlachie, was unanimously adopted declaring in favour of the reversal of the

Government's policy of trade restrictions; and a wide measure for the taxation of land values allied to a co-ordinated scheme of national development providing extensive and productive employment.

At this conference Capt A. R. MacDougal said: If the people wished their rule to continue and to be effective they would have to do the thinking themselves. Dictatorships which had sprung up all over Europe were symptoms of a desire in many people's minds to have their thinking done for them, or of apathy which was sure to end in their losing the power to rule or control their rulers. "Give us liberty to trade and liberty to use the land and our troubles, now desperate, will vanish."

## JOSEPH FELS

By George Lansbury

*(The following passages extracted from Mr Lansbury's "Fifty Years of London," recently appearing in "The Star," 14th May, will be read with particular interest by those who recall the notable assistance given by Mr Fels to the land-values movement in this and many countries.)*

"Another well-known Jew, the late Joseph Fels, with his wife, did a very great deal to make me honour Jewry. Keir Hardie brought us together over the land question. I was a great admirer of Henry George then, and believed very firmly in the taxation of land values, as indeed I still do, though I think we shall gain our end by national ownership of all land.

"Joseph Fels was a friend of Henry George, and had spent big sums of money helping to spread the Single Tax gospel, but he was a practical-minded business man, and wanted to do something concrete, so in America he started the Vacant Land Cultivation Society, the object of which was to take waste land in towns and allow the unemployed to turn these wastes into vegetables, fruit and potato plots.

"This little man travelled Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark, interviewing kings, princes, premiers, cabinet ministers, bishops and the clergy, pouring out his money like water, lending it in large and small sums to Governments and local authorities, free of interest for stated periods, so that land could be bought or hired for the use of the unemployed.

"There never lived a finer or more selfless man. Simple, unassuming and absolutely catholic in his outlook on life, he helped thousands of lame dogs over stiles, assisted struggling artists of all kinds, and never asked thanks or publicity.

"Joseph Fels had a typical Jewish characteristic in his view of money. He always insisted that money must not be wasted. When the Russian Social Democrats, chased across Europe by reactionary Governments, finally landed penniless in London, it was Joseph Fels who, out of sheer love of humanity, put down the money they needed. This money was repaid by Lenin immediately the Bolsheviks secured power.

"He knew and preached the truth that labour and land were the source of all wealth. He believed in individuals and individualism, and had no faith in 'paternalism.' He was a lover of peace, and once, going round a cathedral with me, he said: 'George, do you realize that the stones are soaked and cemented with the blood of martyrs?' There was a tremor in his voice, as if he had seen the long roll of Jewish, Protestant and Catholic martyrs, sacrificed for bigotry.

"If ever it could be said of anyone, 'He loved his fellow men,' it could with absolute truth be said of Fels. His was the friendship of a brother which never failed, however much his friends might disappoint him."