

THE LIBERAL PARTY ORGANIZATION

THE ANNUAL REPORT of the Liberal Party Organization prints the text of the resolution on the Rating of Land Values which was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 17th June, on the motion of Mr Ashley Mitchell, seconded by Mr A. S. Comyns Carr: "This Council urges upon the Government the necessity of altering the existing system of rating so that local rates shall be levied upon the site value of land for the purpose of (a) derating houses and improvements, (b) securing that the public shall benefit from the land values which arise from the presence and activities of the community, and (c) facilitating the acquisition of land, the provision of houses and the making of public improvements."

The foregoing motion was on the agenda of the Annual Assembly of the party, which took place in London on 4th and 5th September, but like a number of resolutions which were not reached owing to lack of time it was referred to the next meeting of the Assembly.

The Agenda had an amendment to the "Liberal Goal" resolution by which the Scottish Liberal Federation proposed to add: "In particular, being firmly convinced that the equal rights with which all men are born can only be secured by free access to land, it stands for the abolition of land monopoly by the rating and taxation of land values and the gradual removal of all rates and taxes on the products of labour and capital." This was moved by Mr Douglas Macdonald and seconded by Mr H. G. Rae but at

the prompting of the Executive speaker in charge of the main resolution, who maintained that this was a matter of detail in policy and was out of place in a general declaration, the amendment was rejected. Another land values motion did not reach discussion. It was a proposed amendment (by Mr F. W. T. Krohn on behalf of the Hendon Liberal Association) to add to the main resolution on "Freedom of Enterprise" the following words: "As a first step towards breaking the land monopoly it urges the immediate resumption of the valuation of the site value of all land in the British Isles with a view to the taxation-rating of land values." The same speaker from the Executive had said that the Executive would agree to the inclusion of these words at that place; but the main resolution on which, on another point, there was much conflict of opinion was referred back to the Executive together with all the amendments that were on the agenda paper.

SCOTTISH LIBERAL FEDERATION

AT THE Autumn Conference in Glasgow, 25th September, of the Scottish Liberal Federation, resolution as follows moved by Mr Douglas Macdonald and seconded by Mr H. G. Rae, was carried unanimously:

"This Council recommends the Government, to enable it to implement pledges in the Atlantic Charter, of equal opportunity to all men; to secure as the first step, equal access to land (the storehouse of opportunity) by breaking down Land

Monopoly, by the Taxation of Land Values. The Council once more affirms that Land Values are the creation and property of all the people, and not of any one individual, and that the continuance of the present system (a) denies the most elementary human rights; (b) creates a basic vested interest in Land Monopoly, which is the parent of all Monopolies; (c) encourages the withholding of valuable Land from use until the needs of the community force prices to ransom figures; (d) by imposing Taxes on improvements instead of on Land Values, increases the price, and reduces the value of all improvements, creates unemployment and encourages scarcity and Monopoly Values; (e) tends to absorb a large part of the value of all social services, scientific and industrial advancement in Ground Rents."

In a resolution dealing with housing, an amendment moved by Capt. A. R. McDougal was accepted, adding the words: "We declare that no housing scheme can succeed nor can private building proceed unless houses are derated and the money required to replace the lost rates be raised by a tax on land or site values."

"It is too often forgotten that the land of this country is individually owned, and that the demand for the artificial maintenance of war-time values or compensation for their loss is, in fact, a demand for a gigantic subvention to the owners of landed property—an extraordinary piece of special pleading under the excuse of Duty Done."—*The Economist*, 29th August.

THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES LTD., 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1. Hon. Treasurer, W. R. Lester; Secretary, A. W. Madsen; Assistant Secretary, F. C. R. Douglas. (Telephone: Abbey 6665.)

Numerous applications for the Essay Prospectus have been received in single numbers and in quantities, and the demand for the books shows that many are intending to take part in the Competition. Branches of the Workers' Educational Association requesting copies of the Prospectus to circulate include Cambridge, Kendal, Frome, Manchester, Haverfordwest, Glasgow, Ayr and district. The Swansea District of the W.E.A. write for 100 or more copies and in their letter ask if arrangements could be made to send speakers on the land question who could tour throughout West Wales addressing meetings at their main centres. Various public libraries as in Cardiff and in High Wycombe—many have yet to be approached—are posting the Prospectus on notice boards, as the Students' Union Society of the South Wales University College is doing. The Birmingham Co-operative Society, the Council of Clergy and Ministers for Common Ownership and the Llanishen & Lisvane Youth Centre are among the bodies interested. In general, the announcements of the Competition wherever they have appeared have evoked a considerable correspondence, particularly with new contacts. The further co-operation of *Land & Liberty* readers will be greatly appreciated—to give names to approach that are really worth while. Most useful will be to see the chief librarian of the local public libraries and principals of schools and colleges asking them to post the Prospectus on notice boards. Any suggestions for making the Competition known will be welcome.

SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE IN CARDIFF

WELSH LEAGUE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES: Eustace A. Davies, Hon. Secretary, 27 Park Place, Cardiff. (Telephone: 1563.) Conference Hon. Secretary, I. T. Rees, 2 Southey Street, Cardiff.

The fourth of the series of Regional Conferences held this summer took place in the Park Hotel, Cardiff, on Saturday, 19th September. Preceding Conferences were those in Leeds on 30th May, in London on 23rd July and in Birmingham on 22nd August. Each was a gratifying success as has been reported in *Land & Liberty*, and we are assured by those who attended the whole series that Cardiff could be given the prize in attendance and in interest evoked. We at any rate are satisfied that this is the best and most encouraging meeting for which the League has been responsible in a number of years. Even in peace-time such a meeting would be matter for congratulation. The room was crowded. More than two-thirds of the audience consisted of the general public not yet attached by membership to the League. They had come in response to the invitations issued, which in themselves did much valuable educational work because of the explanatory literature that was enclosed. After the opening speeches, questions and discussion were at once engaged and so many took part that busiest man of all was the Chairman as he genially and successfully ordered the procedure. The audience had come to confer, to elicit points, to have difficulties dealt with and objections answered. They did so and the time was well allotted for the purpose.

Dr D. G. TAYLOR, M.A., D.S.C., the President of the League, presided and formally moved

the resolution as follows which was afterwards carried unanimously: "That post-war reconstruction necessitates a greater production and fairer distribution of wealth; that the monopoly of land which obstructs production and the tariffs and other restrictions which obstruct exchange must be abolished; that an essential means of securing this is to do away with the taxes which fall upon commodities and labour, and to take for public revenue the land value which is created by the presence and activities of the whole community, thereby throwing open to labour the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man." Dr Taylor said that such people as educational administrators, factory managers, fairly highly placed civil servants and bank officials had expressed to him the sentiment that when the war was over the common man must not be robbed of the fruits of victory as he was last time. It was a widespread sentiment and it should be focussed upon an appropriate objective. There was none so suitable as that of the organisers of this Conference which aimed at loosening the grip of land monopoly and ending a system which levied a toll on every commercial enterprise, held up the natural development of our towns and cities and handicapped us as a trading community in our relations with other countries. Land value taxation was widely accepted as a practical policy; not one statesmanlike argument had been entered against it. It had been nibbled at in the past, but this time "let there be an honest bite."

Mr F. C. R. DOUGLAS, L.C.C., M.P., supporting the resolution said this country should take the lead in showing how to carry out the principles of the Atlantic Charter. When barriers such as tariffs, which prevented trade with other countries on free and equal