

## THE LIBERAL WAY

At the Annual Conference of the National Liberal Federation in Bournemouth, 2nd to 4th May, a number of resolutions were adopted that had some sort of reference to land values. In the first place, the Conference unanimously and without discussion endorsed the Liberal *Address to the Nation*, which embodies a policy, as already noticed and criticized in our columns, of a tax on land values that would exempt the value of agricultural land. It proposed the purchase of agricultural land for the creation of family farms, small holdings and the rest. The Liberal Party by that pronouncement commits itself not only to a vast endowment of the land monopoly but to public expenditure that will but intensify the land speculation which is the prime cause of the depopulation of the countryside to-day.

The other resolutions adopted at the Conference are contained in the "fuller statement of Liberal policy," which is called *The Liberal Way*. Various amendments were accepted with the object of making it clear that a tax on land values and not merely an increment tax was intended; but the pamphlet as revised is still somewhat ambiguous on this point.

The Conference also considered a brief declaration of policy entitled "Fundamental Issues." In this there was no mention of land values. In the paragraph relating to Unemployment, plans of national development were advocated. The Hendon Liberal Association got a rider added (after the platform had substituted "site values" for "land values") reading: "The Liberal Party's policy to impose a tax on site values will immensely facilitate the carrying out of these projects and will make them financially productive to the State."

The Birkenhead Association managed to persuade the platform that the words "idle land" should be incorporated in the rhetorical question in "The Fundamental Issues": "Are we content that . . . more than two millions . . . should live on a bare pittance . . . or should we use idle labour and idle capital to improve the nation's well-being and strengthen its equipment?"

While these skirmishes with the platform took place, a valuable and effective piece of propaganda was carried out among the body of the delegates. A letter signed by eight representative Liberals (four ex-M.P.s and four ex-candidates) was put in the hands of every person present ably stating the case for land value taxation and enclosing with it a copy of Mr Chancellor's pamphlet *The Only Way out of Unemployment*, published by the United Committee, of which a special edition had been printed containing notable statements from the declarations of Liberal leaders in the past.

A correspondent who was present writes: "The distribution of the pamphlet and the letter made the impression we desired. There is no doubt about the increased support the question is receiving among the rank and file. Liberals from all parts of England and Wales have agreed to help with propaganda work in their own Associations."