

VISIT OF ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

Reception and Dinner, July 9th

Mrs. Anna George de Mille, daughter of Henry George, and her two daughters, Agnes and Margaret, were the guests of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, the English League, and the Henry George Club, at a Dinner given in their honour at the Victoria Mansions Restaurant on Thursday, 9th July.

Mr. W. R. Lester, M.A., presided over a representative gathering of 90 supporters and friends identified with the name and the teaching of Henry George. The reception, which was mainly given over to introductions and conversations, made each and all realize it was a real family gathering, brought together to welcome Henry George's daughter, and to register once more their attachment in the movement. Many old friendships were renewed, precious memories of former meetings recalled, and absent friends kindly remembered.

In response to the toast of the evening, Mrs. de Mille delivered an inspiring Address well calculated to make all present feel that Henry George's spirit was in the room. In a charming manner she brought her father before us as she knew him, and retold the story of his last fight in the New York Mayoralty campaign of 1897. She was by her father's side in that memorable campaign, and in a dramatic way gave a recital of his last stand on earth for the principle and policy he formulated in *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* and its related literature.

After dinner Mr. Madsen tendered apologies received among others from Richard McGhee, Mrs. Joseph Fels, Col. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., Andrew MacLaren, M.P., Alderman J. R. Firth, Sir Arthur Holland, George Lamb, Charles Baldwin, Jabez Crabtree, Miss Eva Walsh, Mrs. Edward McHugh, Miss McHugh, J. H. McGuigan, G. B. Waddell, Harold Rylett, Rev. M. J. Stewart and Frank Geary. Among those present were: United States—Chester C. Platt, Lawrence E. Towe, J. H. Scully; Denmark—C. Trautman; Siam—Mr. Piyamedhi.

Mr. W. R. Lester, rising to propose the toast of the evening, said he had to offer a very warm and hearty welcome to one who needed no introduction to the company—Mrs. Anna George de Mille, not forgetting her two daughters. He was delighted, as he was sure all of them were, that she had given them the privilege of letting her know of their affection and respect.

Mrs. de Mille was in the fighting line in California. She had been upholding the flag there for a long time now, but worthy of special mention was the great service she had done to the movement in having published an abridgment of *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*. This could not have been an easy thing to do; the book was so crammed full of truths and good words at every page that it must have been a great task to pick and choose.

The Henry George movement in England flattered itself that it was more in the limelight on the Parliamentary stage than anywhere else in the world. Was there any other country where it could be said that an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had actually moved the rejection of the Budget on the ground that the Taxation of Land Values was not provided for in the Budget of the year? They need not be at all discouraged. He believed that the reform must come. It may be as some thought that it would come through the agency of the Conservative Government.

What struck him when he first read *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* was the lofty idealism embodied in the principle, but he was even more attracted by its extreme practicability. They were all under an enormous debt of gratitude to Henry George. It was due to his name that the company had assembled that night, and it was with great pleasure that in their name he welcomed the guest of the evening.

Mrs. de Mille said that it was in great humbleness that she stood before them that evening, because she knew that she would not have been invited to speak if any others of her family had been left. She was the last one. She was very humble, because she recognized that the mantle of genius was not an hereditary garment; she was humbler even than most daughters of geniuses, because she was also a disciple. As a matter of fact, the only two things she had inherited from her father were his ability to forget names and to consume ice cream, which was, as they knew, invented in Philadelphia. She would not have lived in vain if someone, someday, somewhere, would say of her that she had lighted her candle at her father's torch. It was as a disciple of Henry George that she first wanted to speak to them, because although possibly a creed or dogma could be handed down from father to child—the child was apt to swallow it whole without study—religion each soul had to find for itself, and their great fiscal principle, which they knew by its fiscal advantages, was her religion. She had had to work to find it, and to study and seek just like all other disciples.

The only thing they should be intolerant about was inertia. There were people who were perfectly willing to sit and yowl with rage at conditions, and not do anything to change them. We should be intolerant of those people. They reminded her of the story of an old negro on the roadside with a dog sitting beside him just howling. "What's the matter with your dog?" asked a passer-by. "Oh, nothing; there ain't nothing wrong with him, boss," replied the old man. "He's only lazy."

"But he must be suffering," protested the other, "or he would not be yowling like that."

"Oh, no, boss," replied the negro. "He ain't sick, nor nothin'; he's only lazy—he's setting on a thistle."

Referring to the "Abridgment," Mrs. de Mille said it was the combined work of Mr. Louis F. Post and herself. She would not have dared to do it without Mr. Post's help and guidance. It seemed sacrilege in a way, and she had wept many times while the work was in progress. The whole book seemed so wonderful that it was a very difficult thing indeed to condense it; but it was done with all reverence, she assured them. There was a question of leaving the last book out of the Abridgment, but if that part had been left out, Mrs. de Mille thought it would be like sending out the book with its body, but not its soul. (Applause.) She was glad they felt like that about it too. It had to be there.

Mrs. de Mille then gave a vivid and intimate description of the last days of her father, of his first illness, in his campaign for the Mayoralty of New York. Her speech was received by all present with marked sympathy and understanding.

Mrs. Eustace Davies sang the "Land Song" in her usual captivating manner, with Miss Margaret Calder at the piano.

Sir Edgar Harper, F.S.I., said he felt almost an intruder to break in on the atmosphere which Mrs. de Mille had created in that room. He hoped they would all carry away with them the wonderful picture she had drawn of the last days of her father. It was a great honour to be present at their meeting and to have had this experience.

Sir Edgar recollected how at one meeting which Henry George in his last days addressed, he was invited to speak as the friend and supporter of a certain section. Henry George did speak, but finished his remarks with the grand declaration: "I believe in equal opportunities for all and special privilege for none." If there was a more inclusive delightful definition of the gospel of liberty, the speaker would be glad to hear of it.

The glorious gospel preached in PROGRESS AND POVERTY was their creed. They were placed on this planet by the Almighty. From Mother Earth they drew everything; without her they died. They had allowed Mother Earth to be monopolized by a few hundreds of thousands of men, and these had thousands of millions at their mercy. Henry George pointed that out, and said in effect to the whole people of the world: "How foolish you are to allow the gift of the Almighty to be monopolized by a few"; and yet many didn't seem capable of seeing it. They saw it for a time, they saw it in this country in 1906, and again in 1910, but somehow they didn't keep on seeing it. They had got to make them keep on seeing it.

He could not sit down without expressing what a great pleasure it had been to be present and to have met the daughter of Henry George and his two granddaughters.

Mr. P. Wilson Raffan said it was a sheer delight to all of them to have the opportunity of meeting Henry George's daughter and granddaughters. They would all go from the meeting that night feeling enriched in their experience, not merely of Henry George as a teacher, but a knowledge of Henry George as a man. He was sure in the years to come many similar meetings would be held to advocate the principles of Henry George, but they would ever remember the gathering that night with what he might call its sacred associations.

Mrs. de Mille had at least one hereditary quality, and that was her father's courage. Nobody but a most courageous person would have ventured upon the Bible of the movement and issue an Abridgment of it.

Henry George believed that our common Father had given to all His children an opportunity of securing all that might make life worth living. He stood for the common people, and for the abolition of poverty, but he never uttered the words "equality for all men." Henry George was a seer and a great thinker, and never did he think in a world constituted like this, with men of varying abilities and varying qualities, and varying demands, they could secure equality. But he did stand for equality of opportunity. He believed that if they secured equality of opportunity, then poverty would vanish as a mist vanished before the rising sun.

If they tried in their day and generation to carry on his teaching and hand down the torch to those who were to come after, then there would be a brighter and better future for the human race.

Mr. Louis P. Jacobs said he thought most of them there thought that the writings of Henry George constituted a religious message. Speaking for himself, who was perhaps of a different religious denomination from most of them, he confessed that were it not for the hope that he derived from his understanding of Henry George he would become—in spite of his religion—a pessimist. In fact, at the time he got to know of George's teachings he was becoming a pessimist. He was now an optimist, thanks to Henry George.

Mrs. de Mille had shown great bravery in regard to putting in more condensed form Henry George's greatest work. He was sure they all agreed that not only had she shown the inheritance of bravery for which her father was so distinguished in having condensed that book, but also by reason of the speech she had made to them that night—in being able to speak to them of those intimate and sacred memories which she cherished. It was one of the bravest speeches he had ever heard in his life. He thought while she was speaking that something of the spirit of Henry George was in the room.

Mr. Jacobs referred to his experience in Algiers when he was stricken down with a bad attack of pneumonia. The doctor who attended him asked if he (Mr. Jacobs) would like any message to be given to his friends

and relations in the event of his passing away. He replied that the only message he would like to leave was that he hoped his family would do their utmost to uphold the teachings of Henry George.

Mr. H. G. Chancellor said that he had seldom been moved as he had been at that meeting. Mrs. de Mille had made Henry George live with them again. He was certain that those who had taken part in their ceremony that evening would feel inspired. In spite of the clouds that seemed so dark just now their movement was making its way in all sorts of parties, in all circles of society.

Mr. John Paul said they were there that night united as friends of the movement, friends of the truth that Henry George proclaimed. It was this that kept them together in unity, strength and inspiration. They could all be proud of the success the movement had achieved. He cordially joined with all who had spoken so highly of Mrs. de Mille's informing and charming speech.

Mr. Lester in the name of the company presented Mrs. de Mille with a memento of the delightful evening in the form of an artistic booklet in which all present had inscribed their names.

Mrs. de Mille in accepting the gift said she would always treasure it among her priceless possessions.

After a few words from Mr. Charles C. Platt of Wisconsin, the formal part of the proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman on the motion of Mr. A. W. Madsen.

A PHOSPHATE ISLAND

In his recent book, *LAND TRAVEL AND SEAFARING* (Hutchinson & Co., 1924), Mr. H. R. McClure, Resident Commissioner, Ellbert and Ellice Islands Colony, in the Pacific, says of Ocean Island, one of the group, which has immense stores of valuable phosphate, that the community of some four hundred natives own the island and derive considerable benefits from the leases of the phosphate lands and the royalties on the phosphate taken from them, and that the amounts are invested "and the income derived is utilized for the benefit of the community as a whole in the construction of cisterns and the like, or the pecuniary relief of the old and feeble." (Pp. 168-9.)

An excellent example of Land Value Policy in the far Pacific!

J. D. W.

Speaking at the second annual Keir Hardie commemoration meeting held at Cumnoek, 27th June, Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, M.P., said Keir Hardie saw as few men did that material wealth came as the result of men's labour combined with the natural resources of the land. Mine after mine in the country was closing down because the management could not make ends meet. It was strange, however, that mine after mine could show an annual profit of 17s. 6d. per £1 invested. When God created the coal by many natural processes He did not do so with the Duke of Northumberland of 1925 in view.

Mr. Robert Smillie, M.P., at the same meeting, referring to the coal crisis, asked: If there must be sacrifice, why could it not come in respect of the land owners' royalties?

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