

## 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

terms, were swept away, a substitute for the revenues which tariffs provided would have to be found. This alternative revenue should not come from the sort of oppressive taxation we had to-day but from taxation so levied as to encourage industry and production, the best and most economic tax being that upon the value of the land which was due entirely to the presence and activity of the community. That method of taxation should also be used in respect of local revenues, and land value rating should take the place of the present system. Mr Douglas went on to deal with the Report of the (Justice Uthwatt) Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment. The *Western Mail* which gave the Conference considerable notice reported the part of his speech in which he said that the Report recognized that one of the great obstacles to re-planning was the high price which had to be paid for land, but made no recommendation going to the root of the trouble. The committee put forward a proposal for taking part of the future increase of site values, but there was no proposal for levying a rate or tax upon existing value and, in particular, for obtaining a contribution from vacant land. The committee also referred to existing planning legislation as being negative or restrictive, but did not make any positive proposal for encouraging development. It was a pity that the committee did not deal with the deterrent effect of the present system of rating, which penalised the erection of buildings. They did not suggest any relief from this such as could have been obtained by the rating of site values.

Mr A. W. MADSEN, B.S.C., devoted particular attention to that part of the resolution which spoke of land value as public revenue, explaining with a number of illustrations and specific examples, such as in real estate advertisements was often most clearly revealed, what was meant by the value or rent of land and why it was truly the property of all the people in their corporate capacity. Land value was like the shadow which Peter Schlemihl parted with in Chamisso's story, and it was because the people did not retain it that there was so much distress and misery; it was a shadow to be recovered for the good of all without thought of compensation to those who had made themselves possessed of it.

Question time brought a flow of questions which were answered as they were put and one prompted another. Discussion followed and among those who took part were Mrs Saunders (Swansea), Mr Bowler (Bristol), Mr Ginders (Hereford), Mr W. E. Fox (London) and the following from Cardiff and District: Councillor Capt Jas. Griffiths (Lord Mayor Elect), Councillor A. J. Williams, Capt F. Saw, Messrs Mackintosh, I. T. Rees, A. R. Barnes, D. Davies, J. Edwards, H. Dubow, C. A. Gardner, J. M. Hopkins and Rev D. J. Evans. Votes of thanks were accorded to the chief speakers on the motion of Mr J. Emlyn-Jones seconded by Mr F. J. Wright; and by acclamation, on the motion of Mr Douglas, the Conference paid its tribute to the Chairman who had so excellently conducted the proceedings and to Mr. I. T. Rees who had volunteered and had so ably carried out the organizing work as Conference secretary. In the responses the co-operation of the United Committee was gratefully recognized.

The Company, as guests of the League, were entertained to tea and general discussion continued for a further hour during which a number of projects were considered for new and extended activities on the part of the League. The literature stall was in charge of Mr W. H. Roberts and there were good sales from the large assortment of books and pamphlets. New members were enrolled and new readers obtained for *Land & Liberty*. The Conference was in all respects a resounding success. Many had sent messages regretting inability to attend, these including among others, Mr John Bush, the President

of the Midland League, Alderman A. E. Gough, Councillors G. F. Ferguson and G. E. B. Frewer, D. R. Grenfell, M.P., Kenneth Spence, Dr J. Gilchrist and Rev W. H. John. The *South Wales Argus* carried an extensive report.

When the notices were issued for the Conference, those for the members of the Cardiff City Council included (by special request of a donor) two extra pieces of literature, namely, Mr Douglas's new pamphlet *Rating and Taxation in the Housing Scene* and the pamphlet *Cities Held to Ransom*.

The Hon Treasurer, Mr C. A. Gardner, addresses himself to all the members of the League and to all who have been associated with the Conference, in recognition of the good work it has done, to give the League all possible help financially for the sake of its future work. Will members whose subscriptions are renewable take special note of this invitation? The expenses of the Conference have already been met by special donation. It is the future we are looking to. Contributions may be sent to the Hon Treasurer, Welsh League, 27 Park Place, Cardiff.

**YORKSHIRE AND NORTHERN LEAGUE:**  
F. Skirrow, Secretary, 129 Skipton Road, Leeds.

Correspondence during the past month includes letters by J. W. Booth in the *Yorkshire Observer* and the *Keighley News*, by the Secretary in the same papers, by P. V. Olver in the *Yorkshire Observer*, by R. Colnett Wright in the *Northern Echo* and by G. L. Binns in the *Middlesex County Times*.

By the death of William Thomson, J.P., on 10th September, the League has sustained a grievous loss. For over half a century he was a faithful and able advocate of the cause for which we stand. Up to about four weeks ago he was a visitor to this office two or three times a week, ever ready to write a letter to the press or address a meeting. The secretary will greatly miss his valued co-operation. He was a member of the Society of Friends and for many years had been one of the leading figures in the Co-operative life of Keighley. From 1901 to 1904 he was a member of the Keighley Town Council and had been a magistrate since 1908. A service was held at the Friends' Meeting House and at the funeral the League was represented by Jabez Crabtree, W. J. Johns, Ernest Roper and the Secretary. The *Keighley News* published a long obituary notice and reported many tributes paid to William Thomson's memory, as by the Mayor both at the Keighley Borough Court and at the Town Council meeting. To the bereaved family we convey on behalf of the League and of the United Committee our sincere sympathy.

A correspondent, grateful to William Thomson for all he has done and mourning the loss, adds to his letter: "I am sorry I have not sent my subscription sooner . . . The death of the man who converted me to the Henry George philosophy has decided me that Keighley shall not lose two subscribers."

**MANCHESTER LEAGUE:** Arthur H. Weller, J.P., Secretary, Pytchley, Bean Leach Road, Offerton, Stockport.

In addition to the affiliations recorded in your last issue, the Sale Labour Party has now become affiliated to the League. In forwarding the subscription to the Secretary, Aldermen William Plant added a similar sum from himself and sent his good wishes. For many years Aldermen Plant has been a reader of *Land & Liberty*.

The good impression made on the guests by what they saw and heard at the recent Garden Party at Park Hall has been exploited by Mrs Duthie whose subsequent sales of *Progress and Poverty* and distribution of literature have carried the League's message into new circles.

In a recent issue of the *Prestatyn Weekly* letters were printed from Messrs G. A. Goodwin and L. G. Buckle of Hull.

**LIVERPOOL LEAGUE:** Acting Hon. Secretary, Mrs Alex. Maclean, 6 Darley Drive, Liverpool 12.

Mr Frank Jones has been lecturing to the West Derby "Forward March" group. Starting from an examination of their own aims, he got round to our viewpoint. Three gave in their names to join an economic class when it can be fixed up. He also addressed the Bromborough (Wirral) branch of the same group and again several wished that an economic class should be started. Making good use of the bare quarter of an hour which was available in the guard's van of a crowded train, Mr Jones got into conversation with a Cambridge University man who has since become a subscriber to *Land & Liberty* and taken a number of pamphlets.

#### ST ANDREWS

The members of the St Andrews group held a very successful meeting on 27th August, Mr James T. Haxton being the leading speaker. He gave an outline of the effects which would follow the taxation of land values. In a brief description of the science of Political Economy he drew attention to the fundamental part that was played by economic rent in the production and distribution of wealth. Keen questions followed and members put forward various difficulties which were ably answered and cleared up. It was decided to have another meeting at an early date, to examine and criticize proposals that for nationalizing the land by purchase.

Letters from Mr A. J. Mace in the *Daily Record and Mail* and the *Stirling Observer* are noted.

#### ADDRESSES

The English League for the Taxation of Land Values; Fredk. Verinder, Secretary, 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1: Telephone: Abbey 6665. At same address:

The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade; Ashley Mitchell, Hon Treasurer. The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, publishing department. The Henry George School of Social Science.

Midland Land Values League: John Bush, President, 20 Cannon Street, Birmingham, 2.

Portsmouth League for the Taxation of Land Values; H. R. Lee, Hon Secretary, 13 Lawrence Road, Southsea.

Crosby Henry George Fellowship; C. C. Paton, Hon Secretary, 11 Tudor Road, Liverpool, 23.

Derby League for the Taxation of Land Values; George Musson, 29 Denby Lane, Codnor, Derbyshire.

Henry George Freedom League; Wm. Reid, Secretary, 9 Woodside Crescent, Glasgow, C.3. (Phone: Douglas 5599)

Edinburgh Taxation of Land Values League; W. N. Alexander, Hon. Secretary, 63 Baronscourt Terrace, Edinburgh, 8. (Phone: 75306)

Highland League for the Taxation of Land Values; Isaac Mackenzie, Hon Secretary, Queensgate Arcade, Inverness.

**One Penny Each. THE ONLY WAY OUT OF UNEMPLOYMENT**, by H. G. Chancellor; **WHAT IS LAND VALUE TAXATION?** by W. R. Lester, M.A.; **CITIES HELD TO RANSOM**, by M.; **THE FUTURE IS TO THE GANGSTER—UNLESS**; **NOTES FOR SPEAKERS**, a pocket folder; and the following Lectures and Addresses by Henry George: **JUSTICE THE OBJECT, TAXATION THE MEANS**; **LAND AND TAXATION**; **THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE**; **THE REAL MEANING OF FREE TRADE**; **THE STUDY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY**; **WHY THE LANDOWNER CANNOT SHIFT THE TAX ON LAND VALUES**.

**6d. A BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY GEORGE**. By Professor George R. Geiger.