

## " WE CAN CONQUER UNEMPLOYMENT "

" Innumerable things cry out to be done, and a very Niagara of fine labour power is running to waste."

This is the theme of the new Liberal policy, and of the pamphlet bearing the title " We can Conquer Unemployment." The statement is true and describes a situation not only tragic but ridiculous. It is all to the good that this scheme has been put forward for at least it has goaded people out of the apathy apparently so general and set them thinking hard. But that said, the question remains: do the proposals provide a cure? It is proposed that some £145 millions be raised as a loan on the security of the Road Fund and directed to the building of a vast network of new roads, widening old ones, building bridges, etc., and that *some of* (!) the higher value of land which results be drawn on to pay for the works. Other things to be provided are: Housing, Electrical Development, Telephone Extension, Land Drainage and Afforestation, and it is confidently claimed that the new demand for labour thus arising will practically abolish unemployment before another year has passed over our heads.

Nobody questions that these things (and for that matter many others) are useful and needed. Nor is it doubted that in this age of marvellous potential production there exists ample ability to provide them. But, that agreed, we do seriously ask to be informed why these needed things are not forthcoming. When we turn to the new pamphlet and read the speeches in support of the policy it is disappointing to find this question neither asked nor answered.

People urgently want and have ability to produce the proposed roads, telephones, electric power, and houses of this scheme. Besides such things they also want and have ability to produce more food, clothing and comforts in general. All the factors of production are there: the needs, the labour, the skill, and the natural resources in plenty on which to exert them. Why, then, are they not forthcoming? There can be but one answer: people cannot pay for them; they have not the necessary purchasing power. The reason for this is that would-be consumers are denuded of purchasing power and until that power is restored to them the problem of unemployment will never be solved. The robbery takes shape in the present system of taxation which is so imposed as to fall upon industry and thus deprive producers of their earnings. It takes shape in business taxes, food taxes, house taxes, transport taxes, excise duties, tariff taxes and the whole gamut of indirect taxation in general. Every one of these taxes impoverish producers, restrict purchasing power, and therefore go to cause unemployment. The robbery also takes shape in the enormous prices demanded for access to land and the speculative withholding of land from use resulting in an over-crowded labour market and a low wage level all round. Production is thus made difficult or even forbidden at its source. In all these ways is buying power lessened and the riddle of ability to produce side by side with want and unemployment explained.

But the new scheme calmly contemplates the continuance of the predatory taxation which reduces purchasing power, and it does nothing whatever to destroy the land monopoly, which obstructs production at its source. With these checks still at work, it merely proposes that the State shall borrow money and extend its activities to public works for which the people lack means to pay.

How can this in any way increase the aggregate volume of employment? It is all a profound delusion!

If employment could thus be increased surely long ago the problem would have been solved, for of recent times Government activities in these directions have vastly grown, as witness the great housing, power, road and drainage schemes they have undertaken. Without borrowing, we might to-day have all the things of the Liberal scheme—and many more. The reason why we do not get them is that we cannot pay for them, and for the State to take money from us to provide them would not alter this fact.

Surely to plain people the first necessary step to more employment is to pull down barriers *against* employment. The way to increase purchasing power and employment in production of useful things is by taxing land values to make it easier for labour and capital to start work and when they have done so to cease robbing them of their rightful reward as we now do through wrongful taxation. This ease in starting to work will be secured when barriers against use of land are demolished. The primary industries which need direct access to land—road-making, building, agriculture, quarrying, mining—will then soon get busy, and in doing so will pass on employment to the secondary industries which finish and distribute their products. Such a situation will come about of its own accord, and purchasing power having reached its natural level, the needed things demanded in the Liberal scheme—and many another—will be brought within our reach.

W. R. L.

## THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION A Notice and a Comment

The *Jewish Guardian* of 1st March noticed with appreciation the generous gift by Mr Louis P. Jacobs creating under Trust Deed the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain. The article is a happily worded tribute to both Mr and Mrs Jacobs. One or two observations, however, on Henry George's teachings showed some lack of understanding, as Mr Jacobs himself pointed out in a letter published by the same journal in its issue of 15th March. We are glad to reprint the article and the necessary comment it occasioned.

### £10,000 FOR LAND REFORM

(JEWISH GUARDIAN, 1st March)

The Henry George gospel for the drastic reform of the Land Laws presents features of Jewish interest. The prophet of the "single tax" found inspiration in the ideals of righteousness and social justice promulgated by the Hebrew prophets. These ideals he linked up with an eloquent and ingenious interpretation of Mosaic land legislation, designed to meet modern problems. It is not surprising that a zealous man, who aspired to improve the condition of the under-dog, should gain faithful Jewish followers. Of this number, Mr Louis P. Jacobs, of Hove, has been for many years a generous and active supporter of the cause. The February issue of *Land & Liberty*, the journal of Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, announces that Mr Jacobs, in order to forward the movement by means of propaganda, has recently created a Trust of £10,000 to establish the "Henry George Foundation of Great Britain."

It is not necessary to be a believer in the Georgian panacea for unemployment and poverty to admire the strength of conviction which moves a man to such action. Furthermore, such support, coming from a serious and successful man of business and affairs, compels respectful consideration to a movement which,