

of July, except that, where there is not time to reach those coming from across the seas, the papers will be delivered at our offices when the members pass through London, or in Oxford when they arrive there. The papers will include a special guide to Oxford and souvenir of the Conference, particulars as to place of residence and arrangements for afternoon excursions, and other relevant information.

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The invitation to attend the Conference is cordially conveyed in these lines to all supporters of our policy. Will every reader of *LAND & LIBERTY* take this invitation as personal and particular to himself or herself? No final date is fixed for sending in names, but those who contemplate the visit to Oxford should let us know at the earliest possible moment, and in their own interest, in view of the necessity of reserving rooms beforehand. They will thus facilitate very considerably the work of the Accommodation Committee, whose convener, Mrs. Warburton, has kindly undertaken to give the matter her personal attention, so that suitable and convenient arrangements may be made for all without their being troubled with any correspondence. Board and lodging is available at very moderate inclusive terms, averaging about £3 3s. for the week.

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The membership fee is 10s. per member, and may be remitted now or at any time before 13th August. An invitation has also been made to all friends to become members of the Conference even although they cannot attend. We have had a most gratifying response to this appeal, showing that two things are appreciated: first, the proposal to be associated by name with the Conference, and secondly, a desire to supplement the revenues that are needed to meet the expenses. These non-attending members have each and all sent the membership fee, and some have added a special donation. In one case £10 was subscribed. The funds of the Conference are open for further good assistance of the kind.

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Another letter comes from a life-long supporter, and in quoting it we have to record with the deepest regret that the writer has suddenly passed away. In this, his last message and greeting to us, ardently expressing the hope that if he fortunately grew stronger he might venture to cross the ocean, Mr. John J. Hopper, of New York, wrote: "I know you will have preliminary expenses, printing, etc., that must be met, so I am enclosing a cheque for fifty dollars as my contribution to the Conference. In 1889 I attended the Single Tax Conference at Paris, when Henry George and all the leading lights of the movement were present. I remember the presiding officer, who was a professor of French at Oxford. He appeared to know every language under the sun, and translated every speech into English and French for the audience."

We get the sad news of Mr. Hopper's demise as we go to press. He was with Henry George at the beginning of the active campaign in New York, and has been one of the foremost protagonists of the cause during a generation. He will be sorely missed by the colleagues with whom he did very much quiet and effective spade-work.

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The copy of an eloquent "call to the International Conference" reaches us from Philadelphia, where Single Taxers have issued a circular letter under a special letter-head, endorsing our invitation. The letter urges every Single Taxer to exert himself, or herself, to be present at Oxford, and goes on to say that the American liner "Manchurian" has been chartered to carry the big delegation from the United States. This well-equipped 14,000-ton one-cabin steamer sails from New York on 2nd August, landing its passengers in ample time for the Conference.

It is for the British Single Taxers to come forward also in large numbers to join in offering a most hearty welcome to their co-workers from other countries, by whom the Conference is welcomed as a "grand committee meeting" of our world-movement.

THE FATHER OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Bi-Centenary of Adam Smith (1723-1790)

Adam Smith was born in Kirkcaldy on 5th June, 1723. His bi-centenary has been celebrated in numerous commemoration lectures and in specially contributed articles in most of the newspapers. These tributes rightly place Adam Smith among the immortals, but they talk generalities and withhold discussion of his radical views on questions that are now in the forefront of politics. His commentators have not given the philosopher and reformer a hearing.

The *WEALTH OF NATIONS* appeared in 1776. Political Economy was formulated for the first time as an exact science, that is, as a body of knowledge dependent upon and derived from general truths. The book not only established the system of natural liberty as opposed to the scheme of artificial regulations that check trade and commerce; it also explained the nature of wealth and sought to discover the laws of cause and effect that govern both production and distribution. None of the political economists, with the exception of Henry George, followed in Adam Smith's footsteps, or, seeing the light he had thrown on the natural order, tried to develop his doctrines. His grand conception was not revived till *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* took the world by storm. But in the schools and universities where the unrelated series of propositions called "economics" is taught, that message was not received, and there the Political Economy founded by Adam Smith has no position. It is, unfortunately, the concern of modern "economics" to contend that nothing in human affairs can be deduced from general principles and to deny that natural laws exist outside the physical universe. So it happens that the student is generally informed that the *WEALTH OF NATIONS* is long ago out of date, that it is of historic interest only as a contribution to anti-protectionist polemics presenting an examination of the case against the "mercantile theory," but as a textbook applying to present-day economic conditions it is of little value. The eulogists of Adam Smith who have recently filled columns in the public Press venture no farther in praising his achievements as the Father of (a now defunct) Political Economy.

The bi-centenary has passed and the conspiracy of silence in defence of existing privileges has been well stage-managed. The readers of the newspapers and the students in the lecture room are left in ignorance of the views expressed in the *WEALTH OF NATIONS* on the rent of land and its peculiar suitability as a source of public revenue. It is as if the conspirators had said: "There is a modern theory closely related to these views and flowing naturally from them; we shall not let Adam Smith advertise it even by suggestion; let it fend for itself." We would make good this deficiency (or fear) and pay our tribute to Adam Smith by quoting a few extracts from much that is mentioned in the *WEALTH OF NATIONS* on the subject:

As soon as the land of any country has all become private property, the landlords, like all other men, love to reap where they never sowed, and demand a rent even for its natural produce. The wood of the forest, the grass of the field, and all the natural fruits of the earth, which, when land was in common, cost the labourer only the trouble of gathering them, come, even to him, to have an additional price fixed upon them. He must then pay for the licence to gather them; and must give up to the landlord a portion of what his labour either collects or produces. This portion, or, what comes to the same thing, the price of this portion, constitutes the rent of land.—(*Book I, Chap. VI.*)

The rent of land, therefore, considered as the price paid for the use of the land, is naturally a monopoly price. It is not at all proportioned to what the landlord may have laid out upon the improvement of the land, or to what he can afford to take; but to what the farmer can afford to give.—(*Book I, Chap. XI.*)

The rent of land not only varies with its fertility, whatever be its produce, but with its situation, whatever be its fertility. Land in the neighbourhood of a town gives a greater rent than land equally fertile in a distant part of the country.—(*Book I, Chap. XI, Part 1.*)

Every improvement in the circumstances of the society tends either directly or indirectly to raise the real rent of land, to increase the real wealth of the landlord, his power of purchasing the labour, or the produce of the labour of other people.—(*Book I, Chap. XI, Conclusion.*)

Ground rents, so far as they exceed the ordinary rent of land,* are altogether owing to the good government of the sovereign. . . . Nothing can be more reasonable than that a fund which owes its existence to the good government of the State, should be taxed peculiarly, or should contribute something more than the greater part of other funds, towards the support of that government.—(*Book V, Chap. II, Part II, Art. 1.*)

Students, writers and speakers who would understand how and why the Political Economy that Adam Smith established and expounded was forsaken in favour of what is known to-day as "economics" can be commended to Henry George's historical examination of the subject in Book II of his *SCIENCE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY*.

A. W. M.

IN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW

The editor of a Scottish evening paper, in a leader on the Skye Crofters who were recently jailed, compared them to those who steal watches, and, he added, their action "was worse than theft." There seems no analogy between the two things. Deprive a man of access to sufficient land to live on and he dies, but steal a watch and the wrong done ends there, the person robbed is not deprived of access to God's bounties in the soil from which he can obtain the means of life. "Bootagh-Aughagower" cut in with a reply to the editor of *GLASGOW CITIZEN*, who inserted the letter in full which justified the acts of the crofters. The following is culled from the letter:—

"I admit that 'upon obedience to the law and to the Courts all civilization depends,' but I submit man's laws should be in conformity with God's, and I affirm no man has the moral right to withhold land from use and leave others in a half-starved state by trying to prevent them getting access to God's bounties in the soil. I draw your attention to the opinions of Sir William Blackstone in *COMMENTARIES*, book 11, chapter 1, page 3:—

"The ground was in common and no part of it was the permanent property of any man in particular; yet whoever was in occupation of any determined spot of it, for rest, for shade or the like, acquired for the time a sort of ownership, from which it would have been unjust and contrary to the law of nature to have driven him by force; but the instant that he quitted the use or occupation of it, another might seize it without injustice."

"In that quotation you have a justification of the crofters from a great English authority, who was Solicitor-General and who was made a Justice of the Common Pleas in England."

"Scenes like those which happened in Skye and in Edinburgh are a sad commentary on British statesmanship. Men should not require to seize land, the State ought by taxation to penalize all who keep valuable land idle. Why should men have to act like those crofters to get bits of land that were not in use? Why should hundreds of

*Adam Smith on the same page says of the "ordinary rent of land" that it "is, in many cases, owing partly at least to the attention and good management of the landlord." The term really covers interest on improvements, and means what is popularly known as house rent, which is to be distinguished from the economic rent of the land alone.

Highlanders have to emigrate to Canada to get access to land when a Royal Commission reported in 1892 that there were 1,782,785 acres in the crofting counties suitable for holdings which were used for purposes of sport?—*The IRISH WEEKLY*, 16th June.

THE FRUITS OF INJUSTICE

It is reported in a Manchester religious magazine that there has been an increase in the population of Strangeways Prison during the last year. "Many of the prisoners are there for minor offences," we are informed, "and the continued unemployment has been given as a reason for much of the prevailing petty crime." The same journal records various ameliorative activities, including a prison mission, homes, shelters, and other evidences of care for the souls and bodies of the poor. But there is no sign of recognition of the fact that poverty is the result of injustice. The same lack of perception, or of courage, is shown in an advertisement for a children's home. Under the heading "Their Missing Birthright," the advertisement reads: "A fair chance is the least that is due to every boy and girl born into the world. Yet there are thousands in our land to whom this birthright has been denied—whose chance of winning in the battle of life is anything but a fair one." This is followed by an appeal for funds to provide the 4,000 poor children in the home with "a fair start."

Neither the poor children inside nor those outside the home can regain their birthright in a world where God's provision for their needs (the land) is treated as the private property of a privileged few. The Creator has provided the human family with enough room for all, work for all, and plenty for all, as Henry George pointed out, and the true remedy for poverty and destitution can only be found in the conforming of human institutions to the eternal laws of right. Charity cannot take the place of justice.

A. H. W.

BY-ELECTION AT MORPETH

A by-election took place in the Morpeth Division on 21st June. The result was as follows:—

Robert Smillie (Labour)	20,053
F. C. Thornborough (Liberal)	13,085

Mr. Fred. Skirrow, Secretary of the Yorkshire and Northern League, spent about a fortnight in the constituency, engaged in a neutral and independent campaign to bring the Taxation of Land Values before the electors. He addressed numerous open-air meetings and with local assistance, and in companionship with Mr. A. W. Dakers of Newcastle, Mr. Wm. Forster of Kirkwhelpington, and Mr. F. Simpson of Morpeth, distributed many thousand copies of the leaflet "How to Raise Wages." Very useful propaganda was done.

One correspondent, a resident and voter in the constituency, writes:—

"Mr. Skirrow spoke in the Market Place in Morpeth on 10th June and twice on the 13th. On the 14th he went to Pegswood, a neighbouring colliery village, and there we collected a small but very interested company to whom the true remedy of most of our industrial ills was explained. The success of this effort was considerably helped by the skill with which the speaker dealt with the questions and objections of an extreme Socialist."

"Mr. Skirrow was at Ashington, a hot-bed of Socialists, on the 16th, and on the 18th spoke to the quarry-men at Knowesgate. We now feel less isolated here and the new recruits, whose names I give, should be a source of strength. They are all picked men who should be kept supplied with pamphlets and other literature."

Mr. F. C. Thornborough stated in his election address that he urged the taxation and rating of land values. Mr. R. Smillie's election address did not mention the subject.