

former, odious window-tax. Peel's Parliamentary critics never set themselves to answer the question: If public expenditure is to be defrayed by a tax on property, and private property is to be preserved, what is the essential difference between private and public property? The failure of Peel or his critics to face this problem has reduced their once confident world to ruin and virtually destroyed private property. Income tax is now regarded as an almost sacred method of taking from the inevitably over-wealthy to give to the inevitably over-poor; and State manipulation of the whole apparatus of currency, debt, tariffs and taxation is accepted as the highest development of economics, lacking which scarcely anyone would be able to participate in what is regarded as a vital privilege, *i.e.*, the opportunity of being employed by someone else.

By a coincidence, in the very year of Peel's death, appeared Patrick Edward Dove's *Theory of Human Progression*, a book which might have been designed to resolve Peel's difficulty. "In politics there are only two main questions," says Dove, "first, personal liberty;

secondly, natural property." "The earth is the common property of the race; whatever an individual produces by his own labour is the private property of the individual. Common property in the earth can be established only by making the rent of the soil the common property of the nation. All civilised communities must ultimately abolish all revenue restrictions on industry, and draw the whole taxation from the rents of the soil, which are the common produce of the whole labour of the community."

Dove's book was scarcely noticed by the intelligentsia of his time, not at all by the politicians. He knew that reform comes not from Parliament but from the diffusion of knowledge amongst ordinary folk; that truth's one and only advantage over error is that truth is permanent, and a society which persists in disregarding the natural law of property can no more be maintained than a machine designed in violation of the natural law of physics. Recent developments might have been arranged by a committee anxious to mark the centenary of his book by demonstrating the correctness of his prognostications.

F. D. P.

## THE DANISH GENERAL ELECTION

The Danish Lower House of Parliament was dissolved on August 8 and a General Election followed on September 5. Details of the results are shown in the accompanying table, which compares the votes of the two previous elections in 1945 and 1947. There are now 149 seats in the House besides two representing the Faroe Islands, but in those islands the election does not take place till mid-October. Of the 149 seats, 105 are constituency seats (*kreds mandater*) where the election proceeds in normal manner by direct vote, and 44 are supplementary seats (*tillægs mandater*) which, while still preserving constituency representation, are so allocated to the parties as to bring about a distribution of the aggregate number (149) of seats proportionate to the total votes cast in their favour. For this purpose the country is divided into three main

The relative progress of the Justice League, the independent Party whose programme is the full expression of Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, is most marked. In five years it has quadrupled its votes and its representation in Parliament. The Conservatives recovered the position they held in 1945. The Moderate Liberals fared badly, but their losses are in part compensated by the Conservative gains since these two parties are in coalition as an anti-Socialist block. The Radical Liberals gained in strength, having made their opposition to the Atlantic Pact and to the rearmament proposals their main claim for electoral support. The downfall of the Communists is highly significant.

The Social Democrats had managed as a minority government to retain office for the last three years. It

	NUMBER OF VOTES CAST			SEATS SECURED			VOTES IN 1950 PER MEMBER ELECTED
	1945	1947	1950	1945	1947	1950	
Social Democrats .....	671,755	834,089	813,512	48	57	59	13,788
Conservatives .....	373,688	259,324	365,370	26	17	27	13,532
Moderate Liberals .....	479,158	574,895	438,114	38	49	32	13,692
Radical Liberals .....	167,073	144,206	167,923	11	10	12	13,985
Retsforbundet (the Justice League)							
—Henry Georgeist .....	38,459	94,570	168,499	3	6	12	14,041
Communists .....	255,236	141,094	94,468	18	9	7	13,495
Various .....	63,760	35,963	6,407	4	—	—	—
	<u>2,049,129</u>	<u>2,084,141</u>	<u>2,053,879</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>13,784</u>

electoral divisions. Of the 44 supplementary seats 9 are reserved for the Metropolitan area, 14 for the Islands and 21 for Jutland and it is within these respective divisions, not over the whole country as one, that the adjustments by means of the supplementary seats take place. How this method of P.R., which is peculiar to Denmark, works out is also shown in the table. It was amended in the Act of 1948 to give greater exactitude, and if those amended provisions had been in operation in 1947, the results would then have been: Social Democrats 61; Conservatives 19; Moderate Liberals 42; Radical Liberals 10; Justice League 7 and Communists 10. These figures should be observed while comparing the varying fortunes of the parties as given in the table.

resigned when its proposals for stiffly increased taxation and severe import restrictions were rejected. It appealed for but failed to obtain a vote of confidence. The result of the General Election is such a close balancing of the parties that it is a question what Administration can be formed that can last any time. The Social Democratic and the Moderate Liberal-Conservative blocks each have 59 seats, and the Radical Liberals and the Justice League (who on the more immediate issues of the day are not likely to be found in the same camp) each have 12. With the Communists none of the parties will have any traffic. It is a confused situation in which the Radical Liberals, more Fabian now than when they did so much for Land Value Taxation, will be with the Social Demo-

crats in striving to keep the edge of the economy axed off the "Welfare State." For that part of the Justice League's policy which demands tax-relief for trade and industry and drastic cuts in State administration, support would be forthcoming for Liberal-Conservative moves in that direction. But such an alliance would be purely momentary and only tenable if a Liberal-Conservative Government gave pledge in favour of land value taxation and thus promote the rest of the Justice League's policy. On all counts, whichever block would bargain for its support, the Justice League has attained an influential position in Danish politics.

According to Danish custom many of the election meetings, especially in the smaller towns or in the countryside, were held jointly by the competing parties. A local worthy takes the chair and the candidates have their say, one after the other. Questions follow. There is discussion from the floor and the candidates make their replies. Thus the electors can see and hear a representative of each of the parties all at one sitting and arrive at an abler judgment which to support. It is an ideally democratic institution. The radio is used in the same manner, representatives of all the parties coming together to the microphone, and after making their statements they engage in debate which gives the listeners a far clearer view of what they are contending about than would be got from separate party declarations broadcast at different dates. The important Copenhagen daily newspaper *Information*, which is neutral in politics, conducted an extraordinarily interesting "questionnaire" of 9 questions which were answered day by day by appointed representatives of the several parties and each day a whole page was devoted to that. The protagonist for the Justice League was Mr. Knud Tholstrup (re-elected M.P.) whose replies never failed to expound the Georgeist philosophy in the clearest terms. These were agreeable features of the election but less pleasing were the attacks made upon the Justice League which often descended to scurrility and deliberate misrepresentation. The policy of economic freedom carried to its logical conclusion was made the object of scorn, called Utopian by Conservatives and Moderates and denounced by Socialists as the blackest reaction. It was astonishing that the Radical Liberals also gave themselves to these tactics, but the unscrupulous angling for votes paid no dividends.

Dr. Viggo Starcke (re-elected M.P.) in a press interview the day after the election, said that the Justice League had a gratifying success but they had relatively harder conditions to contend with. They had no daily paper and in the newspapers of the other parties there had been no fewer than 3,000 attacks and assaults on the Justice League to which they had been allowed to reply only in 30 cases. That was a big handicap. On the other hand, people themselves have now begun to think and enquire into the truth of what the papers wrote—for example, such as when Socialist papers asserted the League would abolish old age pensions and allow the old to die of hunger. With regard to the negotiations that were proceeding in a deadlocked political situation Dr. Starcke said that in any eventual coalition their attachment would depend entirely upon the policies such a Government would follow. Their interests lay in those things for which they were elected: the solution of the land question, the liberation of trade and putting bounds to the power of the State.

A. W. M.

## THE INDEPENDENT GEORGEISTS

Dr. Viggo Starcke tells of the growth and purpose of "Retsforbund," the Danish League for Justice and Rights, in the encyclopedic book *Den Danske Rigsdag 1849-1949*, descriptive of Danish Parliamentary Institutions and celebrating the centenary of the new Constitution which was granted in 1849 on the abolition of the absolute monarchy. This story has been lifted from the book and has been reprinted in pamphlet form.

The Justice League, Dr. Starcke explains, is a Danish movement founded on historical precedents and developed by Danish thinkers much influenced by the Physiocrats, Adam Smith, Cobden and Henry George. Not long after George's work *Progress and Poverty* was published in 1879, Jakob E. Lange opened a discussion on George's ideas in the periodical of the high school movement, and that led in 1902 to the formation of the Danish Henry George Union. Lange himself, Sophus Berthelsen, (Prof.) C. N. Starke, F. Folke and Signe and J. L. Bjørner addressed themselves to the social and economic problems and came to exercise a great influence upon the Radical Liberals, the Social Democrats and (later) the Justice League. At the same time Danish philosophy was given a direction which developed these ideas from the sociological and ethical points of view. Notable books were produced, the authors of which included Prof. Starcke, Dr. Severin Christensen, Dr. Axel Dam and C. Lambek.

The initiative coming from the Henry George Union, a meeting was held in Odense in April, 1919, with representatives from a number of associations and societies and progressive political bodies. The nucleus of the Justice League was born and later, in October of the same year, the Justice League was formally constituted. The League first took part in Parliamentary elections in 1924 when it secured 12,643 votes but no seat in Parliament. In 1926 the voting was 17,463 and two members were elected. In 1929, votes numbered 25,810, returning three members. In 1932, votes numbered 41,239, returning four members. For certain reasons, some of them unfortunate, the League suffered a temporary setback. Then came the election in 1939 when three members were elected, 33,783 votes being cast.

During the years of occupation, at the 1943 election, under difficult conditions, the voting was 33,323 and two members were elected. But it was not long before progress was resumed so that the votes went up to 38,459 in 1945, returning three members. A considerable advance was recorded at the 1947 election—94,570 votes, raising the representation in Parliament to six members. (\*)

The League now has branches in all the county areas of the country. Its Youth movement was started in Copenhagen in 1924 and the vigorous National Youth League of Justice was founded in 1929. The appeal to working men is made by another vigorous branch. There is also the Women's League, formed in 1946, over which Mrs. Lis Starcke, the wife of Dr. Viggo Starcke, presides.

In addition to books and pamphlets the work is supported by the weekly *Vejen Frem* (The Way Forward); the monthly *Ret og Frihed* (Justice and Freedom); the

(\*) Here may be added the results of the March, 1950, Local Authority elections which took place after the book was written, when the Justice League secured 133,800 votes by which it captured 50 seats in the Boroughs, 12 seats in the County Councils and upwards of 80 seats in the Parish Councils.