

LAND & LIBERTY

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HENRY GEORGE

2nd September 1839—29th October 1897

COMMEMORATION DINNER

TUESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1935

Readers in and around London and all who can get to London on the date are cordially invited to the Henry George Commemoration Dinner being held in St. Ermin's Restaurant, Caxton Street, Westminster, on Tuesday, 17th September, at 7 for 7.30 o'clock. The Dinner is organized by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, 94 Petty France, S.W.1, Mr Charles E. Crompton, Chairman of the Executive of the Union, presiding.

A large and representative gathering is anticipated. The guests of the evening include Mr F. Folke, President of the Danish Henry George League, Capt A. R. MacDougal of Blythe, Lauder, Councillor H. Kolthek of Holland, Miss A. Lambrick of Melbourne, and Mr Alexander Greene of Chicago. The toasts include "The Memory of Henry George" and "Our Guests," in charge respectively of the Chairman and Mr B. A. Levinson, B.A., LL.B.

Application for tickets (price 5s. each) should be made to the International Union to reach the office not later than Saturday, 14th September.

From the Commemoration and in the name of the Henry George movement in Great Britain, Denmark and many parts of the world Mr F. Folke and Mr Madsen (who are sailing next day) will carry a tribute to the life and work of Henry George and convey greeting to the Henry George Congress which meets in New York 26th to 28th September. In connection with this, a ceremony will take place at the graveside at Greenwood where the remains of Tom L. Johnson also rest.

The Outcry Over High Rents

Almost every day we receive cuttings from newspapers all over the country complaining of high rents. Typical quotations are: "Rents are so terribly high that people cannot pay them with any sort of comfort unless they get in lodgers to help them" (Jedburgh). "Sometimes we don't have enough to eat because of the high rent" (London). "Old folk are having to pay 6s. to 10s. a week on rent" (Preston). "In city tenements 75 per cent of the relief granted is being paid in rent" (Dublin). "Rents of 8s. to 12s. 6d. and upwards are obtained for two rooms with insufficient accommodation for the occupants" (Llanelly).

Similar statements could be multiplied indefinitely. They are usually accompanied by a plea for some form of administrative action or legislation for the purpose of restricting rent raising. Only occasionally are the real factors of scarcity and low wages referred to. Still more rarely is it pointed out that high land values have anything to do with the height of house rents, or that houses are made dearer and scarcer by the rates imposed

upon them. Yet how can an effective remedy be found without regard to the real causes of the evil.

This outcry from every quarter of the land points to what is actually concerning the people. There is a great opportunity before the political party which is prepared to place before them a simple and consistent solution of this vital problem. It ought to be a dominant issue of the next general election.

Land Settlement Held Up

The Commissioners for the Depressed Areas, Mr Lloyd George and others have pointed to land settlement as a means of absorbing some of the unemployed in useful work. The *News Chronicle* (21st August) reports a discussion at a committee of the Glamorgan County Council at which Councillor Caradoc Jones said the committee had had considerable difficulty in acquiring suitable land for small holdings. Landowners in some cases were asking up to £400 an acre. While the Ministry were urging them to do something for the unemployed, the landowners, it seemed, were determined to take advantage of the occasion to get rid of property at a big price just because the ratepayers would have to pay for it.

Thus we have one more illustration that it is not low prices of produce but high prices of land that is the real handicap to agriculture. The attempts of the Government to raise the prices of farm products are simply aggravating the evil.

German Lutherans and Social Justice

A sidelight on the conflict between the National Socialist State in Germany and the Protestant Church is given in the *Manchester Guardian* (16th August), which reproduces part of a manifesto issued by the Protestant clergy of Altona on 11th January, 1933, before the Nazis had actually attained power. Those who seek the Church as an ally in the political struggle or who would make the Church subordinate to a political power are denounced in strong language.

In addition to rejecting every deification of the State the manifesto says:—

"We definitely reject the dream of the coming temporal realm of justice, peace, and general well-being in all its varieties. We see in the utterances of the different political parties that this dream has not yet been dreamt to an end. Whether it be a coming temporal realm of peace and security for all nations, or a classless society without hunger, tribulation, and suffering, or a future national state of perfect justice and racial purity—*whoever believes in such dreams thereby denies the limits fixed by God, falsifies political action, and teaches that salvation through Christ be but lightly esteemed.*

"We believe, teach, and confess that because of our sins there will never be a State in which work and wages really correspond, in which there will be no war of any kind, and in which justice will be essentially just."

This pessimistic Calvinism almost makes one sympathize with the Nazi dictatorship, and it certainly indicates a reason why the Nazi movement achieved power if it had to face such opponents.

The sentiments in this manifesto are a cynical denial of the prayer which is common to all Christendom: "Give us this day our daily bread. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Bitter complaints are made that religion is losing its hold upon the people, but such doctrines contradict every aspiration of mankind for truth, freedom and justice. It is said that Jesus drove the money-changers out of the temple. What would He do to some of His professed followers if He came to earth to-day?

The Reclamation of Lord Nuffield

No one has been more to the front in demanding protective tariffs than Lord Nuffield. They were good for the motor manufacturer, provided the raw material of his industry could be had tax-free. But protection is a game where everyone wants to play beggar my neighbour until the pocket-picking causes more curses than the spoils it brings. So Lord Nuffield turns free trader. He protests against the advantage the steel producers have taken of the Customs duty to put up the price of steel. "I declare now," he said, speaking at a dinner in London on 16th August, "that it is time the duty was taken off so that we can reduce the price of our cars. The present state of affairs is disgraceful."

It is a first-class revelation of "tariffs in the making." It is an all-round experience; what is raw material to one industry is the finished article of another. Carry the protection far enough, and the presumed benefit to any industry is cancelled out. Lord Nuffield wants to stop that consummation. Let the steel producers retort that tariffs on motors should also be taken off and we are in a fair way to reaching common sense and decency in trading relations within and without, and with the rest of the world.

From Rack Rent to Building Bonds

The extent of the building boom is shown in the latest Year Book of the Building Societies, the amount advanced on mortgage in 1934 having been no less than £124,214,655. The total assets of the Building Societies are now £555,028,811. In the year 1934-35 private enterprise without any State assistance produced a total of 286,050 houses.

But there is another side to the picture. A large portion of the total mortgage sum is the price of the place on which to build the house, the site value that has proved a magnificent "rake off" for the owners of land previously paying nothing in rates. To escape high rents the people are moving into these new houses where the interest and redemption charges on the mortgage are just a little bit less than the rent of the old house.

It is a case of "things seen and things unseen." We see the houses, but we do not see the debt that hangs over them or realize that it is land monopoly which has piled up that figure and keeps it high. It is increased by the rates that fall on the houses. So there is no glamour about it at all. How different would be the circumstances if land value taxation had squeezed out the monopoly price of all that land and houses were freed from a most unjust imposition. Then we would see the houses and know that they really belonged to the inhabitants.

Trade Follows the Flag

An amusing story on this theme is told in a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian*. Patriotic Japanese were highly incensed to discover "Down with Japan" inscribed on the boxes of a certain brand of matches. They were still more annoyed to find that these were of genuine Japanese manufacture. The explanation is that they were intended for consumption in China, where it was assumed they would be popular. The

Chinese Government, however, in compliance with requests of the Japanese Government to restrain anti-Japanese propaganda, very properly prevented the sale of these matches. The manufacturers went bankrupt and their stock was thrown upon the market in Japan as a job-lot.

Glasgow and the Duke of Montrose

Some time ago it was announced that Glasgow Corporation was to purchase 101 acres of land for housing purposes at Balornock from the Duke of Montrose for £15,152, or £150 an acre. The price was in some quarters regarded as extremely low, and Mr Kevin MacDowall, of the Scottish Nationalist Party, in which the Duke is a leading spirit, issued an open letter congratulating him on his splendid public spirit.

More light is thrown on the matter in an article by Bailie Jean Mann, chairman of the Housing Committee, in an article in *Forward* (17th August). It appears that not all the offered land was suitable for building. In addition to the price of the land there are claims for probable mineral workings, compensation to tenants and unexhausted manures.

In spite of the compliments of his henchman the Duke sent "a letter to the Housing Director repudiating his former agent, and making further claims for compensation to tenants and for unexhausted manures." The Committee suspended negotiations, and after two months the Duke "came down from his pedestal and intimated his willingness to accept the agreed-upon terms."

An obstacle of another kind now arose. The Department of Health for Scotland wrote to the Corporation intimating that the land was not worth £15,152, but in the opinion of the Government valuers only £9,700.

The land is valued for rating at an annual value of £186, but as it is agricultural land the valuation upon which rates are actually paid is reduced to £23.

Thus the price asked by the Duke (apart from the other items of compensation) is 81 years' purchase of the full rateable value and 658 years' purchase of the value on which rates are paid.

Glasgow has had other experiences of dealing with the Duke of Montrose, particularly in respect of its water supply, for the right to obtain which very high prices were paid for land that had very little value for any other purpose.

Mr Roosevelt's Unemployment Scheme

The *Daily Herald*, 17th August, reports: Counting big trees in the Savoya National Park, California, is the latest job evolved to absorb some of the army of the United States unemployed. President Roosevelt (says the British United Press) has just allotted £2,000 out of the £800,000,000 work relief fund to pay the men.

Not long ago Mr Hore-Belisha had 10,000 men on the roads to take a census of the passing traffic. This was hailed in some quarters as a helpful unemployment scheme. Counting trees and counting motor cars. Let us all count our fingers and get inspectors to check up on the data. The politicians would sing with us, little man you've had a busy day, and we could make tea houses of the Labour Exchanges.

Beet Sugar

When the beet sugar subsidy was introduced in 1925 it was believed that after a period of 10 years the infant industry would be full grown and able to look after itself. £50,000,000 in subsidy and rebates of taxation have been spent for this purpose, but the only result has been to create a vested interest nourished by taxation. Despite the devastating criticism of the Greene Committee, the Government has decided to continue the

subsidy for an indefinite period. The only consolation of the consumer and taxpayer is that the amount of sugar on which subsidy is to be paid is limited to a maximum of 560,000 tons.

The Government's proposals include the amalgamation of all the beet sugar factories into a single corporation. A curious feature of the scheme is that the factories are to be given production quotas which would enable them to refine imported sugar, and it is contemplated that the refiners will buy these quotas from the sugar beet factories. Thus by selling their quotas the sugar beet factories will obtain an indirect subsidy at the expense of a higher price charged by the refiners to the consumers.

The scheme includes the usual last resort of the harassed politician and civil servant. A sugar commission is to be established to supervise the working of the new plan. The Government will, therefore, return a blank negation to future criticism by saying: this matter is in the hands of an impartial and independent tribunal; make your complaints to it. So responsibility to the public will be avoided and the interests of monopolists safeguarded. The most important of these monopolists will, of course, be the owners of land on which sugar beet is grown, but no one says a word about them. The plea is that the subsidy gives more employment, the fact is that it maintains high rents.

What Landlordism Means

The foreshore at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, is to be put up for auction on 27th September. In making this announcement the *Daily Telegraph* (14th August) says:—

"The shore extends for 1½ mile. The purchaser will eventually be able virtually to control and manage the beach, which is the resort of thousands of holiday-makers in the season. He will have power to erect and let bathing huts and tents, to hire out chairs, boats, etc.

"At low water parts of the beach are 400 ft. wide, and it consists almost entirely of firm sand.

"The Sandown and Shanklin Urban District Council now hold practically the whole shore on lease, at a nominal rent of £2 a year. This lease expires in April, 1938. After that date the purchaser will be able to do what he wishes with the sands. He may even prevent people going on them."

The vendors have issued a statement that "Owing to the death of the previous life-tenant a few years ago, many claims for death duties have had to be paid, and now that the lease is drawing to an end a favourable opportunity presents itself to put the matter on an ordinary commercial footing and of reimbursing the estate for the heavy payments that have had to be made. By putting the property up to auction the Council are not deprived of an opportunity of acquiring it."

No, the Council may acquire it at a price based upon the revenue which the highest bidder thinks he can obtain by charging for permission to enjoy the sand, the sea and the sunshine. They may buy something that the vendors never made nor could make, something that the vendors did not make valuable but which has been made valuable by the public who would provide the money to buy it back.

A Staffordshire Case

Brownhills Urban District Council proposes to carry out a sewerage scheme for Norton Canes. A suitable site is 5 acres belonging to the Conduit Colliery Co. In a discussion at the Brownhills Chamber of Commerce (reported in the *Lichfield Mercury*, 16th August) it was stated that in order to acquire this site the Council

would have to buy the whole of a 38½ acre farm at a price of £70 an acre. It was alleged that part of the ground was suitable for building purposes, but on the other hand it appears that the ground is open to subsidence owing to the shallow nature of the pits. This appears to be a case in which the landlord is too polite to name an exorbitant price for what the Council really wanted, but would achieve the same result by asking the Council to purchase land they do not want at a very high but not so outrageous figure.

Queue for Farms

Under this heading the *Star* (6th August) says:—

"The head of a firm of land agents in the South of England tells me that it is a long time since he had so many applicants for farms on his books.

"He now has a waiting list, for there are many more would-be farmers than there are farms to accommodate them.

"Good farms are snapped up almost before they come on the market. Land prices are rising. The value of farms with anything like good land has risen by about 15 per cent in the last 18 months.

"It seems that already the transference of the taxpayers' money for agricultural subsidies into the pockets of landowners and land speculators has begun."

Collectivism or Free Land?

In an article on a recent visit to Russia (*Manchester Guardian*, 25th July) Lord Noel-Buxton writes:—

While industrial development has been made easy by the possession of unused resources, it is incredible that such rapidity would have been achieved without collectivism. The system is an economic asset. The endless complications of compensation for land and other property, with the obstruction of personal interests which, in other lands, impede progress and make it expensive, are here short-circuited. The handicaps which prevent rationalization in capitalist countries are absent.

It is evidently not "collectivism" which is the secret of Russia's progress but the absence of private monopoly of land, and that is something which can be brought about by other means than those which were actually used in Russia. It is interesting in this connection to recall the statement made by Trotsky in his account of the revolution that it was the decision of the Bolsheviks to deal with the land question (not to establish collectivism) that was the determining factor in giving them the mastery of the State.

Writing in the *Christian Science Monitor* on President Roosevelt's new tax proposals Mr Charles G. Baldwin says: Those who by honest exchange, co-operation and industry produce wealth, acquire a title thereto good against the entire world, including sovereignty itself. For the Government to take even a scintilla of such wealth is thievery.

The Government ignorantly creates monopoly and special privileges by statutes such as the tariff on imports—patent statutes—licenses to practice law, medicine, etc., and, worst of all, permits private persons to collect ground rents created by public improvements and public services.

These statutes should be repealed and the Government should collect sufficient ground rent to defray its expenses, and desist from all taxes on industry.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I bequeath (free of duty) to the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Limited, the sum of £.....

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THE NEED FOR EXPANSION

Mr P. M. Stewart, the Commissioner of the Distressed Areas, in his recent Report argues for diminishing the working population so that others will have more employment. Boys and girls are to be kept longer at school and anyone who employs them will be punished. At the other end of life, increased old-age pensions, forfeited if they do go to work for gain, will induce men and women after their 65th year to withdraw their competition for jobs and make way for younger people. There is not enough work to go round. That is the implication, with the deduction that those who make a living by adding to the store of wealth, far from rendering a service, are injuring if not ruining their fellows. By that reasoning, every worker is a parasite and an enemy of society whether he is under 18 or over 65 or his age comes in between.

The proposals made for shortening hours of labour are innocent enough, if perfectly futile. But monstrous are the ideas governing the proposals which lead Mr Stewart to advocate emigration as a cure, when "transference to the British Empire overseas" can be resumed, and finally to the creation of military camps and the recruitment of young men for the Services of the State. It is an unemployment policy dictated by the theory of over-population proving again that Malthus still dominates in the counsels of State.

Alas, it is not an isolated instance; for the Malthusian view, scouting the evidence of the plenty all might enjoy, scouting the fact that unemployment and the extremes of poverty and riches are due to an elemental injustice in society, now rides roughshod over Europe and the world. It is the Italian Government's excuse for coveting Abyssinia and it inspired the damnable admission made by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, in the House of Commons, as to the aspirations of that Government being justified.

The *Daily Telegraph* of 13th August, commenting on a particularly outspoken article by Signor Gayda, Mussolini's firebrand in the press, said that seriously-minded Italians held that disarmament on their East Africa front would result in a dangerous increase in unemployment; it is estimated that 35,000 civilians are drawing regular pay for their participation in public works in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland; these men mostly from the south are sending home their savings; another 200,000 are under arms there; about 190,000 are under arms in Italy; factories are working day and night to equip these armies and send out materials for public works; to bring all these men home without a victory (military or diplomatic?) . . . would be, it is held, a fatal political and economic error with far-reaching consequences.

It is an easy transition from Mr P. M. Stewart's report and recommendations to the practical and fuller

adoption of given policies by the Italian Government, all in the faith that to make work, promote emigration and cause money to circulate is the remedy for unemployment. Here we have the military camps on the grand scale and the determination to win new territories for settling the alleged surplus of population. The governors of the distressed area which is called Italy—and miserable are the conditions of the working people—are acting brutally and violently; but who among their prosecutors will question the assumption with which they started and the economic motive that has driven them to such desperate courses? If our own country has not gone to war, it has wasted millions of treasure and incidentally built higher the walls of privilege in trying to solve the unemployment problem by just such tactics, trying to make work by all manner of public expenditure and voting £45,000,000 for emigration schemes that crashed against the monopoly price of land, teaching a lesson seemingly quickly forgotten as to who really owns the British Empire. People speaking in the name of New Deals and Five Year Plans, advocates of public works at the cost of the taxpayer and for the enrichment of the landowner, all who ignore or deny the evils of land monopoly and repressive taxation, who are indifferent about if they do not approve fiscal or other barriers against international trade, who look to foreign investment and the emigration of working people as solvents of the unemployment problem—it is not for them to cast stones at this Abyssinian adventure regarded solely as an economic proposition, supposing it did have Haile Selassie's full consent and support.

Sir Samuel Hoare said on 11th July, "We have always understood Italy's desire for overseas expansion. . . . We admit the need for Italian expansion." Well may it be that Sir Samuel has in mind the growth and development of the British Dominions and those "wide open spaces" of which our pompous Imperialists speak when they talk of shipping people overseas out of the country where they have no foothold. The British people it is said is fortunate in possessing those wide open spaces as an outlet and safety valve for its growing population; but it has monopolized more than enough of the world to the exclusion of other nations and cannot without hypocrisy criticize an Italy or a Japan or a Germany for demanding a similar refuge for its surplus inhabitants. Signor Gayda has thus put it very bluntly*: "Is Great Britain, which possesses a quarter of the globe, disposed to revision and partition of her existing Empire? Are those other great States at Geneva so disposed? It is the eternal problem of the haves and have nots. If the League were just it would redistribute those Empires." It is quite remarkable to notice the sympathetic response in the British Press to this Italian point of view, not that any part of the British Empire should be handed over to Italian ownership but that Italy has a good case before the League of Nations as the next grabber of fertile territory with natural resources that are worth while. The only proviso is that the League, while negotiating this peaceful penetration and rich spoil for concessionnaires, shall prevent the robbers and the robbed from going to war and probably starting a world conflagration. They must help to preserve collective security. It is the password of the League.

The admission of Italy's need for expansion, as it has been stated and in its context, is the greatest blow that could be struck at the peace of the world or the welfare of the Italian people themselves. In the first place who is to define this alleged need? Or the need of

* *Daily Telegraph* report, 13th August.

any country whose statesmen, not daring to grapple with the domestic causes of industrial distress, are now encouraged to seek expansion as the alternative to convulsion? Shall it in Italy's case be Mussolini or the Negus or some appointed arbitrator? Remember always that it is a quarrel about natural resources which are to be appropriated for the benefit of one party at the expense of another. Already in 1906 by Treaty between Britain, France and Italy, Abyssinia without consulting its inhabitants was to be zoned off in what are called spheres of influence, but in reality fields of exploitation for the profit of favoured groups. Under the ægis of the League of Nations, representatives of the three countries came together in 1935 to decide how much bigger the Italian slice might be by way of bribe to avert a war of conquest. The bribe has been rejected and the world waits to know what the dread outcome is to be.

Great Britain it is said possesses a quarter of the globe but the British working man, what does he possess? Mr P. M. Stewart can speak for the inhabitants of the distressed areas, and over the whole country the statistics of unemployment and public assistance answer only too shockingly the suggestion that the existence of an Empire makes any difference to social conditions in industry. If British possessions occupied a half instead of a quarter of the globe the general level of wages would not rise by a single penny, since wages are determined by one thing and one thing only, namely the price that must be paid for the use of land. In the last analysis the division of the product is into wages and rent. High rent means low wages, and the withholding of land at an excessive price brings the disaster of unemployment. Great Britain's need like Italy's need is great. It is the need of statesmen who will speak the truth about the causes of poverty, who will uphold the rights of their peoples against the enemy within their own gates, who will discard all pretences that territorial aggrandisement abroad can minimize or undo the effects of social injustice at home. The Italian people have been educated into the belief that over-population is their whip and scourge. Not the Dictator only is to blame. It is this false doctrine, this flaming lie, so carefully and successfully cultivated, in the interest of privilege and monopoly, applauded by leading lights in the high places around the globe, that is hounding on the nations to another Armageddon.

A. W. M.

THE LAND UNION ON THE CAMPAIGN

The annual report of the Land Union, published in the August-September issue of the *Land Union Journal*, says that the most important event which has taken place during the year 1934 is the repeal in the Finance Act of that year of the Land Value Tax introduced by Lord Snowden when Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour Government. The Land Union takes credit for the part it played in securing the repeal, but the report continues:—

"Although for the moment the danger is past, we would impress upon property-owners that the agitation for a tax of this kind continues, and the London County Council have recently instructed their Finance Committee to report on the advisability of imposing a rate on land values, and several local authorities throughout the country have passed resolutions advocating methods of this kind.

"The Council of the Land Union are fully aware of the campaign which is being carried on to reintroduce

site value taxation, and, provided the continued support of members of the Land Union is given to them, will resist any attempt which may be made to give legislative effect to systems of this kind."

We need hardly add that this is a challenge which we are sure that our readers will take up by increasing the assistance which they give to "the campaign" to which our opponents pay such a testimony.

HIGHER ASSESSMENTS FOR RATING

Quinquennial valuations for rating have recently been made in London and other parts of the country. Bitter complaints have been made in the press by aggrieved ratepayers who have had their assessments increased. In some cases it is alleged that the increase is so large that businesses have been closed down.

The blame is laid at the door of the assessment authorities, but they are merely carrying out the law, which says that the assessment must follow the rent. The real source of the trouble is that rents are high, combined with the fact that our present system of rating imposes the burden upon the use which is made of land and not on its value. The better used land is and the more highly improved, the greater will be the assessment and the burden of rates. Let it remain idle, however, and no matter how valuable it is the owner need pay nothing.

The periodical outcry against increase of assessments solves nothing. It is the system that is at fault. Those who protest most loudly against increased assessments are often those who oppose most violently any proposal to alter the system. They give the impression that they do not mind how much other people have to pay, so long as they escape. Those who are concerned to improve matters might well ask their local authorities to follow the example of Cardiff and other municipalities in pressing upon the Government the need for a thorough-going reform of the whole system.

At a Ministry of Health inquiry into an application by Fleetwood (Lancs) Council for permission to borrow £10,000 for the acquisition of land, the town clerk said that land consisted of 9,320 square yards, and the purchase price was equal to £1 1s. 5½d. a square yard. The plot was valuable, having a frontage to the promenade, overlooking the sea. The land was freehold and free from any rent charge, land tax, or tithe rent. Though so near the railway station, tram and bus termini, and ferry, it was the only vacant land on the promenade for a distance of nearly a mile now available for the building of boarding houses.

"In the course of a year or so the land is bound to increase in value on account of the great popularity Fleetwood has attained."—(*Manchester Guardian*, 6th July.)

* * *

It would appear that the reason certain Powers are repudiating and defying the collective system is that they are failing to get access for their people to the world's abundance. The historian of the future may find that one of the chief causes of the present distress in the world is the restrictive system adopted by Great Britain in 1932. That closed the last safety valve and increased the difficulties of all trading countries. A return to free imports in a madly Protectionist world would be most beneficial to this country and to the world. Economic nationalism was an overgrown and flabby giant.—Mr Ramsay Muir at the Liberal Summer School, Cambridge, 6th August.

THE MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN

Cardiff Conference to Promote Land Value Rating

In terms of the resolution adopted on 8th April, 1935, the Town Clerk of Cardiff sent invitations to a representative Municipal Conference the City Council of Cardiff is holding on Wednesday, 25th September, to which all the local rating authorities in Wales and Monmouthshire have been invited to send representatives. The declaration of the City Council and the objects of the Conference are as stated in the governing resolution, for which Councillor George Ferrier and Alderman Sir William R. Williams had been responsible:—

"That, in the opinion of this Council, the first step towards a reform of the system of rating is that rates should be levied on land on an assessment based on its full market value irrespective of the use to which the land is being put and as to whether it is in use or not, with corresponding reduction of the rates now levied on houses and other buildings and improvements; and that the Town Clerk be instructed to enter in communication with county and municipal authorities throughout Wales and Monmouthshire with a view to joint action and the calling of a Municipal Conference for considering and/or promoting the necessary amendments to the present law to enable this resolution to be carried into effect."

Many local authorities have responded favourably. As an instance, here is one of the latest press cuttings received, appearing in the *Western Mail* of 23rd August: Pontardawe rating authority, at its meeting on Thursday, decided to support Cardiff City Council with regard to the assessment of land. Mr J. L. Rees, of Trebanos, moving that the resolution should be adopted, said it would mean a tremendous increase in revenue, and it would be on a far more equitable basis. Councillor Tom Williams, of Clydach, seconded, and it was decided to send the chairman (Mr Richard Roberts) and the rating officer (Mr R. S. Griffiths) to the conference.

Clitheroe Debates Land Values

Under the bold heading "Henry George Up To Date," the *Clitheroe Advertiser* of 23rd August devotes four long columns to the discussion in the Clitheroe Town Council on a resolution declaring in favour of the Rating of Land Values, and instructing the Town Clerk to call a Conference of Local Rating Authorities in Lancashire for the promotion of this policy. The motion was in the same terms as that of the Cardiff Corporation, which we have given above, calling a Conference of Welsh and Monmouthshire authorities.

Councillor Hallows in his speech moving the resolution, made a comprehensive statement on the principle and policy of Land Value Taxation. Councillor Leith, in seconding, said he did so as a Liberal. Because the Liberal Party did not put the system into operation they had descended to the position they held to-day. Councillor French, supporting, urged that the resolution should be carried as a whole.

Councillor Dewhurst pleaded for delay in taking a vote. He wanted to give the subject further consideration. Councillor Bentham had doubts about the calling of a Conference; it would throw no light task on the Town Clerk's department. Alderman Booth took exception generally to the proposed move. It was a national problem and one for national consideration.

Alderman Seedall said he was one of those who believed that the Taxation of Land Values would be

the salvation of the country. He referred to the 1931 Finance Act. One of the first things that the National Government had done, after promising the electors it would not be partisan, was to suspend what the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer had done. In 1934 they had repealed the Act. Every member of the Council knew that they had to pay through the nose for land required. All that Councillor Hallows was asking was that the Council should pass the resolution and get into touch with other authorities, so that eventually legislation could be arranged backed by influential authorities all over the country.

Councillors Parker and Hargreaves strongly supported the case for the Rating of Land Values, and while agreeing that the Council should seek the co-operation of other authorities, they approved the plan adopted in Sheffield, which had first submitted the matter to the Finance Committee for consideration and report.

Councillor Manley opposed the Conference idea on account of the cost, and agreeing with Councillor Parker in the matter of committee discussion he suggested that members should be addressed by some person who was an authority instead of having pamphlets sent to them.

Councillor Waddington moved an amendment that the question of calling a Conference be remitted to the Finance Committee, and this was carried by seven votes to six.

Southgate Land Values

In our July issue (p. 95) we reported the carrying of a resolution at Southgate (Middlesex) Borough Council in favour of the rating of land values. The mover of the resolution, Councillor Owen Roberts, had an interesting article in the August *Wood Green and Southgate Citizen* giving numerous illustrations of the prices paid for land in Southgate and of the increase in values in recent years.

Further light on this was afforded by the answers to questions asked by Councillor A. E. Lauder at the meeting of Southgate Council on 23rd July. For 12½ acres purchased from Hazelwood Park Allotments Association the Borough Council paid £16,500. This land was used partly for tennis and partly for allotments and was assessed at an annual value of £149 and the rates paid were £54. The price paid by the Association was £5,437. Three acres of frontage land was sold in 1924 for £2,887 and the remainder was sold to the Council in 1935 for £16,500.

For 8½ acres at Tottenhall Fields purchased from Tottenhall Ltd. the Council paid £9,037. The assessed annual value was £122 and the rates paid were £53 4s. In 1922 Tottenhall Fields were purchased for £4,250, of which the land recently sold to the Council was only part.

It will be seen that the price paid by the Council for the land at Hazelwood Park was 110 years' purchase of the rateable value and the price of the land at Tottenhall Fields was 74 years' purchase of the rateable value.

An interesting correspondence ensued in the local press. Mr W. K. Spalding took part in this, and on 2nd August Councillor A. E. Lauder wrote in the *Palmers Green Gazette*:—

"Within the last few years the value of land in the Borough has increased four-fold.

"The growth of London, the extension of transport

facilities and the wise administration of the Borough Council have all contributed to this astounding result. The one person who has done nothing in the matter is the owner who takes the profit.

"He can remain passive at the other end of the earth; he may never even see his land, but its value will increase just the same. Little crowds of speculators have made fortunes out of Southgate by buying one day, selling the next, and then clearing out of the Borough with fatter bank balances.

"Some of us suggest that the State or the Borough Council should have power to annex part of this rake-off which they have helped to create.

"Regular Reader" is aghast at this proposal, because if and when the lucky speculators invest their profits they will have to pay income tax on the annual

proceeds. It is true that income tax is payable upon all taxable income, whether it is gained by hard work, speculation in land, or even by such an illegal occupation as gambling.

"But what on earth has this to do with the claim of the public to appropriate part or all of the increased value they have conferred upon the land?

"In point of fact, until the landowner collects his legal swag and invests it, he escapes the tax collector. The owner of vacant land in Southgate can sit still, withhold it from use until the community have made it 'ripe' for sale, and watch its value go up annually, but he will pay no tax on this annual increment and no rates on the land. His neighbour, who uses his land for building, and is thus of service to the community, will pay both taxes and rates."

CATHOLICS AND THE LAND QUESTION

At the annual conference of the Catholic Social Guild, held at Oxford on 3rd to 10th August, a special feature was three addresses by the Rev. Lewis Watt, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Heythrop College, on "The Catholic Doctrine of Property in Land, with special reference to the theories of Henry George."

The first lecture was devoted to George's economic teaching, but failed to show any appreciation of the main point of the argument—the effect of material progress in increasing rent, the speculation in land value and the holding of land out of use generated by the expectation of future increases in land value, and depression of the margin of production and the impoverishment of the workers ensuing from this. In fact the lecturer denied the existence of monopoly in land.

The second lecture dealt with George's teaching on private property in land. The main point was an alleged inconsistency between such phrases as "we must therefore substitute for the individual ownership of land a common ownership" and the practical proposal "to appropriate rent by taxation." Any careful student of *Progress and Poverty* cannot be left in any doubt that George's argument is directed against the private appropriation of economic rent, and that such phrases as "individual ownership of land" or "private property in land" refer to this.

The chapter in which George states his practical proposal is entitled "How equal rights to land may be asserted and secured." The moral basis of his proposal is that if men have equal rights to life, then they have equal rights to the land without which they cannot live. The point is discussed at greater length in *A Perplexed Philosopher* in which he says: "The primary error of the advocates of land nationalization is in their confusion of equal rights with joint rights. . . . In truth, the right to the use of land is not a joint or common right, but an equal right; the joint or common right is to rent."

The second lecture led up to the third, which asserted that to take the value of land by taxation of economic rent would substitute private occupation for private ownership, and would therefore be inconsistent with Catholic doctrine, which asserted that there was a natural right to possess both the substance of the land and its fruits. It will be observed that Henry George did not propose to disturb private possession, or indeed property, in land subject to the payment of economic rent to the State. It follows, therefore, that in this he does not contradict any Catholic doctrine. The real point at issue is whether the taxation of land values conflicts with any Catholic doctrine. In an endeavour to prove this Father Watt indicated that the doctrine

of natural right to possession of land involved a right to the private appropriation of rent—an assertion which we have not before met with on the part of any exponent of standing. This contention throws some light upon an endeavour made in the second lecture to prove that the value of land was not different from the value of commodities (and so, presumably, was not an unearned value). However, in response to questions Father Watt admitted that there were evils in landlordism and that the rating of vacant sites was justifiable.

Reference must also be made to an attempt made in this lecture to belittle the importance of the McGlynn case. On this all that need be said here is that a brief account of this incident is contained in the foreword to the new edition of *The Condition of Labour*, in which is reprinted Dr. McGlynn's own statement of his views on the economics and morals of the land question. This document, as both McGlynn and George stated and any impartial reader can see, contained a clear and unequivocal statement of the Henry George teaching. It was examined by a committee of four professors of the Catholic University of Washington and declared by them "to contain nothing contrary to Catholic teachings." Cardinal Satolli, at whose request the examination was made, thereupon declared Dr. McGlynn free from all ecclesiastical censures, and stated that "Dr. McGlynn had presented a brief statement of his opinions on moral-economic matters, and it was judged not contrary to the doctrine constantly taught by the Church and as recently confirmed by the Holy Father in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*."

Among those who took part in the discussion were Messrs George Tulloch and Otto Ommer, of Glasgow, who, at their own expense, printed and distributed at the third session a brief reply to Father Watt. Mr F. C. R. Douglas took part in the discussion on the second paper.

In his Radical days Mr Lloyd George said (Swansea, 28th May, 1912): "I will tell you what is wrong with this country. There is one limited monarchy here, but also 10,000 little Tsars. They hold absolute sway. Who gave it to them? We mean to examine the conditions. A fight full of hope for the democracy, we are asking nothing unreasonable." We recall this bold utterance as we read covering letter to the report received from our correspondent in Wrexham, printed in another column. He writes: "I purposely omitted the names of the villages A and B. I am always sure of my facts when I send in a report, but the facts gleaned in a village may be traced home to my informant with unhappy results to the poor beggar." The English countryside is still terrorized by the little Tsars.

AGRICULTURE AND THE LAND QUESTION

Capt A. R. MacDougal at the Liberal Summer School

A vociferous reception was given to Capt A. R. MacDougal at the conclusion of his address on "The Real Cause of Agricultural Distress" at the morning session, 3rd August, of the Liberal Summer School in Cambridge. As the Chairman, Mr E. O. Fordham, said, the applause sounded more like an encore. It was clear proof that when a rousing call is given to settling accounts with fundamental wrongs in society the rank and file of the progressive forces, whatever be the political label, are only too ready to respond.

Capt MacDougal had shown much enterprise in having his Address printed beforehand in the form of a pamphlet which embraces 32 pages, with a vast amount of striking instruction and information in it that could not possibly have been spoken within the limits of the time at his disposal on the platform. He was able to bring out the main points that were heard with so much acceptance, and immediately after the Address more than 100 copies of the pamphlet (at 6d. each) were sold to those in attendance. A fresh edition of the pamphlet has since been prepared for general circulation, at the more popular price of 2d. each, and it is one of the pieces of literature that should be in the possession of every person who would spread the agitation for Land Value Taxation *especially in its application to the holding of agricultural land.*

"In my opinion," Capt MacDougal said, and he speaks himself as our readers know as a tenant-farmer of 4,000 acres, "the present cry of 'Help the Farmer' is false. The only result of State aid without rent control and Taxation of Land Values will be to increase land values and benefit and safeguard the owners of land and the Mortgage holders. The present policy has aggravated distress and delayed recovery.

"As a man with some feelings of justice and humanity, and as a Liberal, I recoil from food taxes as immoral and utterly wrong, and as a plain business man and farmer I look upon the whole present policy with dread and distrust. If it succeeds it will result in a new crop of forced occupying owners at boom prices, burdened with mortgages, and the whole body of tenants sitting at high inflated rents, whilst workers will be in distress.

"When the inevitable crash comes and sanity returns these men will be left tied to hopelessly mortgaged farms and hopeless highly rented farms. They will be ruined, as at deflated prices the rents will not cover the mortgage interest and the tenants will be unable to pay them.

"We should welcome cheap food and insist on cheap land.

"Land was made for the use of man, and man was not made for the convenience of the landowner, which role he has too long played. Doles to agriculture will merely make us worse. Give us conditions of tenure that are fair and no State aid is required."

VARIOUS CAUSES

Capt MacDougal started by enumerating the various causes that have been suggested for agricultural distress, viz.: 1. Heavy and unfair rates and taxes; 2. Stipends and Tithes; 3. Inefficiency of farmer; 4. Inefficiency of Marketing; 5. Lack of capital; 6. Low prices; 7. Under consumption.

The eighth clause, he said, was the land system, including rack rent, insecurity of tenure, excessive and uncontrolled mortgaging, etc., adding that "this is never mentioned by the present Government and is taboo in all polite society, and many farmers who know

it well enough mostly feel it is not good policy for them to say so."

He disposed of the first seven alleged causes. As to No. 1 he pointed out that agricultural land had been exempted from local taxation under the Derating Act; that in the assessment to death duties the ownership of agricultural land had been peculiarly favoured; that as to income tax the tenant-farmer got special benefits by being assessed on his rent, which is assumed to be equal to his income, and if his profits are less than that he can show his accounts and pay on his actual profits; as for the occupying owner, he can set off his loss as an occupier against his assessed income as an owner. Finally, in considering this matter of taxation one must take into account the free gifts received.

These free gifts or "doles" to agriculture were computed at £38,000,000 a year, all coming out of the pocket of the general taxpayer, including "derating," wheat, sugar, milk and beef subsidies, and afforestation grants—to which should be added the extra cost to consumers of import restrictions of all kinds and items like research, education, small holdings, etc. But putting the dole or subsidy at £38,000,000 it was equal to 19s. per week for every agricultural labourer employed. "The agricultural landowner is the lightest taxed and rated and the heaviest subsidized member of the community."

As to capital or credit, agriculture is in fact surfeited with such. This does not mean that too much is being spent on the land in improvements. It means that the price of land and the rent of land is driven up to unprofitable heights by the vast amount of capital seeking investment in land or in farming, and to the scarcity and monopoly of land. The present high prices and rents show no lack of capital available, but money spent merely buying land is not money spent in improving land. The more spent in rent or price leaves the less for the real business of farming and developing land.

Agriculture may be likened to a rain water barrel with the bung knocked out. You cannot fill it above the level of the open bunghole of rent. You may pour in spates of subsidies and doles but you will never fill it until you control the size of the bunghole of rent and land values. As an instance of the futility of present subsidies I have it on good authority, and as quite a typical case for comparison, that the tenant of a farm paying over £1,300 in rent has received this last year in wheat and beef subsidies over £800. Surely we as taxpayers and consumers are entitled to demand that this quite gratuitous and unnecessary dole-mongering should stop and that the farmer should get no subsidies at all, but should pay £800 less rent.

For the finest, most concise and devastating statement against agricultural subsidies I refer to the White Paper, Cmd. 2581, issued in 1926 by Mr Baldwin's Government, on Agricultural Policy, vide Paragraph 5. A brief extract is here given, viz.: "Any general scheme of subsidies for agriculture is open to the gravest objection. They would have to be unlimited in duration and very large in amount to have any material effect in increasing the arable area or the number of workers employed. . . . In view of the extreme variations all over the country in the quality or productive capacity of land, it is impossible to devise any scheme of subsidies which will not result in the payment of a bonus to farmers who do not need it and for which no return will be received by the nation."

The proposals now to raise prices will fail for seven reasons. Briefly :—

1. Rising land values will more than absorb benefits if any.
2. Consumers' purchasing power being limited, present action will reduce it. Artificially higher prices mean lower consumption and more surplus.
3. It is impossible to assess the cost of production of agricultural products owing to variation of yields.
4. Similar tariffs on goods will raise costs of agricultural requirements.
5. Restrictions of imports and quotas will subsidize the foreigner by making us pay him more for less goods.
6. Stability of prices is dependent on political action, hence there can be no stability.
7. Certain ruin will fall on tenant farmers who are compelled to rent or buy land at boom prices, and further cuts in wages will ensue when the bubble bursts.

THE TRUE CAUSE—THE LAND QUESTION

It is well to ask : "Is there a sufficient income from farming to yield to all parties concerned a reasonable return if fairly divided in proportion to services rendered?" The answer, based on 35 years' actual experience of farming, is *YES*, and this is proved by the rents and prices still being offered for farms.

DIVISION OF THE SURPLUS

Example is given of a very big farm where the rent on long lease has remained stationary, showing the division of the available surplus.

From 1901 to 1913 the total figures for that period were : wages to 17 men £8,385 ; farmer's profit, salary and interest, £5,411 ; rent to one man for permission to use land, £11,700. Of the divisible surplus wages took 33 per cent, farmer's profit, etc., took 21 per cent and rent took 46 per cent.

For the post-war period 1913 to 1930 rent took 26 per cent ; for the worst period of the slump, 1931 and 1932, rent took 61½ per cent ; for the last two years, 1933 and 1934, rent took 50 per cent. In these last years rates and taxes amounted to only 1 per cent of gross receipts, while rent represented a return of about 15 per cent on landlord's capital outlay over the preceding 80 years.

Another example is that of a grazing farm, the division of gross receipts being given in terms of sheep sold at an average price of 18s. 3d. per sheep. Shepherd's wages were 3s. 7d. ; other wages and charges, hay, dip, rams, drains, etc., 4s. 2d. ; rent, 12s. 8d. ; farmer's loss, 2s. 2d.

In the *Farm Economist* for January, 1933, Professor Orwin shows that on a group of farms over the period 1921 to 1931 the "distribution of farm profits" was : wages 66 per cent, farmer 2 per cent, rent 32 per cent.

Again, in a survey of "The Profitableness of Farming in Scotland," issued by the Scottish Board of Agriculture it is shown for a group of 130 farms that in 1928-29 for every £100 of production wages took £30, farmer's profit took £9 and rent took £13.

Rent is taking too far big a share although the owner renders least service and often none. It is clear from these figures that there is ample margin in rent now to enable efficient farmers to pay good wages and to have a reasonable return for themselves provided rents are reduced. In brief, the distress is due to a maladjustment or an unfair division of the surplus.

THE SEVERAL PARTNERS—RAMSAY MACDONALD'S "SWEATED LABOUR"

The respective positions of farm worker, occupying owner and landowner are discussed. The real cause of the worker's distress is excessive rent and lack of power to get his fair share of the wealth he helps to create.

Here Capt MacDougal deals trenchantly with the statement by Mr Ramsay MacDonald in his New Year's Wireless Address that :—

"The towns must no longer live on the sweated labour of the tiller of the soil."

The plain fact is that never at any time has the town dweller lived on the sweated labour of the tiller of the soil. The tillers of the soil have been sweated, but not for the town consumers. They have been sweated by rack rent. The towns and free trade have given us the finest market in the world, but as farmers prospered rents and land values increased still faster.

On the long view, while the present occupying owners may benefit by State doles, their successors either by purchase or inheritance will be damaged by the present spate of doles. Their present troubles are not due primarily to low prices but to having paid too high a price for the farm. If the present price-raising succeeds, a new crop of occupying owners will be forced into being, doomed to the same distress as the present ones are suffering from, when the bubble bursts once more.

One of the things chiefly affecting the landowner's position is the power to burden land. The decline of estates is mostly centred in uneconomic borrowings. The effect of huge mortgages has been to increase the effects of land monopoly and to leave landlords quite unable to maintain and improve the land they nominally own and which for some foolish pride they will not sell. Land should not be a subject of preferential security for debt. The owner should require to sell a portion of his land if he could not borrow on his own credit like any other business man or farmer. If such a rule were established, no one would lend money on land. The moribund estates that now like corpses poison our countryside, smothered in bonds raised to pay portions, dowries, personal debts, death duties, would vanish and a healthy debt-free ownership would replace these really harmful estates.

As to management, while there are many exceptions, a comparatively small proportion of landlords know anything about farming or agriculture and many care less. Management is left in the hands of city lawyers who know nothing practical but who administer law instead of common sense, and who perhaps with good enough intentions, or merely obeying orders, deem it their duty to refuse to spend a penny and to exact the last farthing in rent, and when forced by circumstances to do improvements, spend the very minimum on a cheap job which satisfies nobody and proves the most expensive in the long run.

WHO MAKES IMPROVEMENTS ?

Capt MacDougal answers two pleas often made : (1) that the rent does not represent any return for the land itself but is merely about 1 per cent or so on the capital sunk in improvements executed by the landlord and (2) that the rent or most of it is entirely spent on maintenance. He quotes from the conditions of let of one of the biggest arable estates in Scotland and it is typical of the majority : "The whole house, buildings, grates in farm house and cottages, water supply, mill ponds, ditches, drains, roads, bridges and internal fences shall be maintained and upheld by the tenant during the lease and shall be left at the termination

thereof in thorough and complete order and repair." While it is true that the permanent equipment is now the property of the landlord, it does not follow that he paid for or executed the improvements. In most cases the cost has been borne by the tenant either directly or in increased rent to repay the landlord's expenditure. The fact is that agriculture has been steadily drained for a century by excessive rents which have been in too many cases spent outside and squandered.

REMEDIES

In the first place Capt MacDougal calls for stopping absolutely the whole policy of State credits, and of spoon-feeding agriculture with quotas, tariffs, subsidies, derating, etc., and would announce that in no circumstances will any public money be given to the landed interests. Secondly he would "appoint a land court to adjudicate and enforce economic rents." Then he goes on to say that the whole problem should be attacked from the point of view that plenty is a good thing and that we wish plenty of food and cheap land, not food scarcity and dear land . . . "Our efforts should aim at increasing the purchasing power of the people by transferring as a start the whole of the rates now levied on houses on to land or site values by means of a thorough-going scheme of Taxation of Land Values, both rural and urban."

As to this programme we query only the place Capt MacDougal has given to a proposed land court. He may have in mind the Land Court in Scotland for the smallholders and the statutory small tenants, which has in a measure lightened the rent burden of these landholders; but the land court has done and can do nothing to break up the stranglehold of the land monopoly in its withholding of land from use at excessive rents and prices. It can at best only fix a rent for land now used, in the circumstances that exist. Its assessed "economic rent" can only be an arbitrary and fictitious thing. When the land monopoly is broken, when land is really open to use to all who can use it, and not till then, can any one say what an "economic rent" is. Therefore the best and most efficient rent court is the steady operation of Land Value Taxation in impelling and encouraging the best use of land with all its "extreme variations all over the country in quality or productive capacity"—to quote again the White Paper, Cmd. 2581 issued in 1926 by the then Conservative Government. Rent will automatically and without any control find its natural level. Therefore let the start be made at once for a thorough-going scheme of Land Value Taxation, applied to both rural and urban land.

Councillor Wm. Bowey, of Sunderland, of whose death in January last we have only just heard, was a strong supporter of the Taxation and Rating of Land Values, and one who in a public life of much self-sacrifice ever fought for the common welfare. The strenuous opposition he made against the L. & N.E. Railway Company, when they sought to enclose part of the Town Moor, the partly successful fight against exorbitant prices charged for land on the new municipal housing estate at Ford, and last, and perhaps most noteworthy, his and Councillor Thurlbeck's successful efforts to prevent enclosure, by the landed interests, of Tunstall Hill, the well known local playground, which has been open to the people of Sunderland since time immemorial. This last-named agitation in the spring of 1929 led to him and Thurlbeck appearing in the local police court, when they came through with flying colours.

EMPTY LANDS

Significant is the leading article in the Conservative *Glasgow Herald* of 13th August, from which we take the following extracts:—

Italy's ambitions in Abyssinia arise, in part at least, from the desire of a growing country to find a suitable annexe for that part of the population which can no longer be comfortably housed under the national roof. The methods by which Italy is preparing to solve this problem do not invalidate the reasonableness of the case for expansion which Germany also has argued with some force on her own behalf and may argue even more strongly in the not distant future. . . .

The other side of the problem is the British Empire's possession of vast territories so sparsely populated that the few inhabitants are like caretakers left in charge of an empty mansion. Australia supports two persons to the square mile; Canada three. What will be the future of these Dominions in a world where great Powers are stretching out their hands for new land? . . .

The Empire's best and ultimately the only reason for possessing so many millions of square miles of habitable land is that they are being put to the most profitable use. Unless the problem is tackled in sober earnest the consequences will be extremely serious 10 or at most 20 years hence, by which time it is not unreasonable to suppose that the claims of growing countries for means of expansion will have swelled to clamourings. The problem is one to be considered first by the Dominions. The land is theirs, but unless they can plan its future so that their possession is justified by results they must be prepared at least to listen to the claims of others who feel they can and should expand. Ultimately the problem will become one not for the Dominions nor even for the Empire as a whole, but for the world. For every nation may fairly claim to grow. One cannot be sure that the Dominions have yet understood all the implications of their ownership, and the most careful study of every aspect of the problem cannot be made too soon.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

(Press Service of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, 94 Petty France, London, S.W.1)

UNITED STATES

The Henry George Congress

The Tenth Annual Congress under auspices of the Henry George Foundation of America will be held from 26th to 28th September in Hotel New Yorker, 34th Street and 8th Avenue, New York City. Mr Edmund P. Donovan will preside. A strong programme has been arranged and this year one of the main sessions will be devoted particularly to the International aspects of the movement. Attending from overseas are Mr F. Folke, the President of the Danish Henry George League, and Mr A. W. Madsen, the Editor of *Land & Liberty*. Members of the Congress will participate in a pilgrimage to the grave of Henry George and Tom L. Johnson at the Greenwood Cemetery, where in honour of a great memory and in behalf of followers the world over fitting tribute will be paid.

ARGENTINA

The Council of the City of Rosario has increased the tax on land values from 2 per 1,000 to 5 per 1,000. The Argentine newspaper *La Vanguardia* (13th June) says: "The definite adoption of the tax on land value, apart from improvements, marks the triumph of a fiscal doctrine which is steadily gaining ground. This could not be otherwise, for it has been demonstrated by the socialists, and especially by Juan B. Justo, that the tax on the unimproved value of land is the most just from the point of view of equality of burden, the most beneficial in encouraging production, and the most scientific since it can be ascertained with accuracy and is socially advantageous as falling upon a special privilege in the form of the rent of land."

SPAIN

The following survey of the legislative progress of the movement for the taxation of land values in Spain is based upon information supplied by Don Baldomero Argente, the president of the Spanish League, and editor of *La Reforma Social*. It is believed that this is the most complete and accurate account which has yet been published in English.

By a law of 12th June, 1911, municipal corporations were permitted to abolish the tax on foodstuffs and to replace it by one or other of certain alternatives including a tax of not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the selling value of vacant land. Madrid, the majority of the provincial capitals, and various other cities immediately made use of these powers. Where adopted the tax applied to all land, within the city boundaries, which had not been built upon. The land was divided into two classes, viz., land in the completely urban zone and land outside that zone. Land in the urban zone was from the passing of the Act assessed at its selling value. Land outside the urban zone is assessed at its selling value (owing to an amending Act of 1924) provided that value is at least double its value for agricultural purposes simply, but otherwise is assessed as if it were agricultural land of the first quality.

There was also introduced in 1911 a Bill for a national tax on land values, but the landlords succeeded in so modifying it that the land would not be valued at more than the value of agricultural land of the first quality, and the measure became ineffective.

The municipal tax of 1911 was due to the initiative of Senor Argente, who was then a Deputy and a member of the Commission on Taxation.

The Provincial Code of 1925 allowed the Provincial Councils (i.e., county councils) to duplicate the tax on vacant lands levied by the municipalities and use the proceeds for provincial revenue. Thus where this power was exercised, in addition to the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on vacant land raised for municipal purposes, another $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent would be raised for provincial purposes. Various provinces, including that of Barcelona, have made use of this power.

A law of 27th August, 1932, empowered municipalities which had approved schemes for the provision of cheap houses to increase the tax on vacant land from $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent up to not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. The city council of Madrid has made use of this provision.

A new municipal code was enacted in 1934. This re-enacted the law of 1911, and added an important new provision. In order that this may be understood it should be explained that the Spanish Government levies a real estate tax on the annual value of land and improvements. The municipalities levied a tax of 20 per cent of the State tax (designated as a surcharge on the State tax) for their own revenues. The code of 1934 enabled the municipalities to replace this surcharge by a tax on the value of land apart from improvements, whether built upon or not, such tax not to exceed 1 per cent. It was provided, however, that for a period of five years from the adoption of this tax the municipalities should not raise more revenue than they would have obtained from the surcharge. The incentive to adopt this provision has been correspondingly weakened.

A Catalan law of 13th April, 1933, applying only to Barcelona, allowed the council of that city to levy a tax of not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent on the value of all land apart from improvements. This tax was to be in addition to the tax on vacant land. The city council is now levying the tax and obtaining a revenue of some five million pesetas a year.

Another Catalan law of 19th March, 1934, allowed all Catalan municipalities of more than 10,000 population (excluding Barcelona) to impose a tax of not more than 1 per cent on the value of all land apart from improvements. This is by far the most advanced legislation yet passed in Spain, as the municipalities are not subject to any restrictive conditions as to the purposes for which the revenue may be raised.

Lastly, a law of 1935 permitted the city of Seville to levy a tax of not more than 2 per cent on the value of vacant land (such tax to include the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent allowed by the general law).

In all cases the rates of taxation mentioned are maxima, but wherever any of these laws have been adopted the municipalities have applied the maximum rate.

In Catalonia many important municipalities decided to apply the law of 1934, but in the recent disturbances and under the pressure of the landowners the Government in some cases suspended the operation of the resolutions adopted by the municipalities and in other cases suspended the municipal councils and entrusted the local administration to juntas in which landed proprietors predominated. Even in these municipalities, however, the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent tax on vacant land is still being collected in those cases where it had already been adopted.

The majority of Spanish towns of importance have made a valuation of the land apart from buildings and improvements. For this purpose they are divided into zones and the zones sub-divided into polygons. To

each of the latter a mean value per square metre is assigned, and in applying this unit value to calculate the value of individual plots additions or subtractions are made according as the individual situation is more advantageous (e.g., frontage to two or more streets) or less advantageous (e.g., excessive depth) than the average. The value thus ascertained prevails unless the proprietor appeals, in which case the valuation is settled by experts. The rules for the valuation and the maintenance of the register were established under the Act of 1911.

The valuations are made by the municipalities, and are, generally speaking, well done, although they tend to be somewhat low. A revaluation takes place every three years.

La Reforma Social for August contains the sad news of the death on 30th July of Doña Elena Argente, wife of the President of the Spanish League. Following upon the loss of their only daughter a few years ago this fresh blow will evoke respectful and sincere sympathy for our distinguished colleague.

The Madrid branch of the Republican Union has formulated a programme which is to be discussed at the full assembly of this party. The section dealing with tax reform demands:—

A re-adjustment of taxation so that it shall bear an inverse proportion to the social utility of the wealth on which it is imposed.

A gradual transformation of the present fiscal system, on the basis of a gradually increasing absorption by the State of rents due to the presence and activity of society and not to labour and capital.

A gradual change of the present agricultural tax, which instead of being based on the product should be based on the productive capacity of the land, that is to say its value excluding the value of the improvements.

Imposition of a tax on the value of land, whether built upon or not, in all municipal areas with a corresponding suppression of all national, provincial or municipal taxation on buildings and on consumable goods.

ADOLF DAMASCHKE

We regret to report the death of Dr Adolf Damaschke, for 37 years the leader of the Union of German Land Reformers. He was in his seventieth year and, up to the last, maintained his extraordinary energy in his chosen field. "Bodenreform" and "Damaschke" have been synonymous terms in Germany for so long that the breach will be difficult to make good. By voice and pen, on the platform, by his intense literary work in books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, by the weekly *Bodenreform* and the remarkable contribution of the *Year Book of Land Reform*, now making 30 volumes, he directed thought to the cause of social ills in a wrong land system. Noteworthy is the continuance of *Bodenreform* appearing (latterly as a fortnightly) right up to the present date, the new regime not objecting. Damaschke as a land reformer took up and devoted himself to many projects, such as land settlement, the increment tax, small holdings, the removal of feudal restrictions, housing schemes and the rest of the "ad hoc" policies upon which, alas, in our own country, reformers have spent so much effort in vain, not getting to the root of the problem. For Damaschke, land value taxation was more incidental than fundamental, although through his agency *Progress and Poverty* and others of Henry George's works have been given wide publicity. His own introduction to the Gustav Fischer edition of *Progress and Poverty* is an eloquent tribute to

the author; but here Damaschke explains himself and his attitude: "Joseph Fels paid me a visit and offered me for the German Union of Land Reformers the same financial support as he was giving in England and America, if in our journals, *Bodenreform* and the *Year Book*, I would advocate the 'pure' doctrine of *Progress and Poverty*, that is of the 'Single Tax.' When I pointed out that in my own book, *Land Reform*, and in my *History of Political Economy*, and in various special writings I had always endeavoured to make this great American master personally and in his basic ideas known to our people, this did not satisfy. And the contention was rebutted that we would be acting precisely in the spirit of Henry George if we determined the steps to be taken in Germany toward our goal in the light of the conditions existing in Germany. We parted without coming to an understanding." In fact, Damaschke was saying that he could not concentrate upon land value taxation and the remission of taxes on trade and industry, as if German conditions made any difference to the law of rent. He dissipated his energy over many fields, but he is to be remembered for the gold he did dig up, one piece being his classic *Battles for Land Reform in Greece and Rome*, an extract from which was translated into English and published by the Joseph Fels Fund of America. To Dr Damaschke's relations and to his colleagues and co-workers in the German Land Reform movement, who have no light task these days, we offer our sincere condolences.

FRANCE

The latest quarterly issue (April-June) of *Terre et Liberté* has much interesting information, including an article on "Georgeism in Holland"; report of the Chicago Conference in 1934; translation of an article by Dr Damaschke on the Land Values Question in France; a sketch of "Leon Walras and his Time," especially interesting to the economic student; a short biography of Henry George from the columns of *L'Espoir du Monde*; a continued series of "How to Fight Poverty with the Truth"; and among the matter from other countries is a complete translation of Mr Lester's article "Man and the Machine" taken from *Land & Liberty*. Collaborators of the Journal are Sam Meyer and M. Daudé Bancel, and besides these the contributions are from V. Precy, F. Bernard, P. Giannelia, G. H. Bousquet, N. Ivanoff, Miss Brun and E. Armand. Our readers who "have the French language" should subscribe to this excellent Journal (at 40 francs yearly) obtainable from 29 Boul. Bourdon, Paris, IV.

M. Sam Meyer, who is a member of the Executive of our International Union, writes to say with how much regret, in view of business engagements, he is prevented from attending the Henry George Commemoration Dinner in London on the 17th September, while conveying a greeting to all who will be present.

The "Dolmetscher Institute" of the University of Heidelberg made application for literature dealing with the Taxation of Land Values and the Henry George principle and policy. A large assortment was sent and we have acknowledgment from the Director expressing sincerest thanks for the material. "The publications," it is said, "will not only prove most useful for our work but the matter itself is of extreme interest." Literally "Dolmetscher" means "interpreter" and if in Heidelberg the Single Tax philosophy in this English setting is to be interpreted to all who visit the University speaking or studying English, one knows not what repercussions that may have for the good of Germany as for the world outside.

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES, LTD., 94 Petty France, London, S.W.1. A. W. Madsen, Secretary; F. C. R. Douglas, Assistant Secretary; W. R. Lester and C. E. Crompton, Hon. Treasurers. (Telephone: Whitehall 6008. Telegrams: "Eulav, Sowest, London.")

Social Problems by Henry George will be on sale (and advertised by display card) from 15th September at 210 railway stations in England, Wales and Scotland. This book and others will be advertised in coming weeks in various journals including the *Schoolmaster* and the *Teacher's World*, and it is intended to combine with the newspaper advertising a postal campaign by circular, enclosing reprints of such advertisements, to a large number of selected addresses.

The office has collaborated with Mr John H. Hamilton (member of the Committee) and the Clitheroe Henry George Group in advancing the demand for Land Value Rating through the local Town Council. Councillor Hallows raised the question by moving resolution in Council on the 20th August in the same terms as the resolution of the Cardiff Corporation. All members of the Council were supplied with relevant literature—*Cities Held to Ransom*, the Report of the Sheffield City Council, the Memorandum on Methods of Local Taxation, and the leaflet *Who Should Pay*—with circular letter urging their support for the motion. The debate was one of the main events of the week in the town, the report occupying four columns in the *Clitheroe Advertiser* of 23rd August. The moot point, apart from the general acceptance of the principle, was whether Clitheroe should call other local rating authorities to a conference for joint action. An amendment that this matter be referred to the Finance Committee was passed by a majority of one vote. The next step will be a debate on the report of the Finance Committee. In another column we give an extract from the newspaper report of the discussion.

The Committee has republished as a leaflet the article in our issue of last month *Denbighshire Slums and the Cause Thereof* by A. Williams Price. This is for a special distribution in the Wrexham area.

In addition to the papers named last month reviews of Mr Lester's *Poverty and Plenty* (many of them extensive and most of them helping in the instruction) have appeared in the *Ardrossan Herald*, *Barnsley Chronicle*, *British Industries*, *Buxton Advertiser*, *Globe* (Canada), *Huddersfield Examiner*, *Irvine Times*, *Shetland Times*, *Southport Guardian*, *Warrington Examiner*.

The address given by Mr Madsen at the garden fete of the Chesham Liberal Association on 15th August was reported at considerable length in the *Bucks Advertiser*. Mr Madsen attended the Cambridge Liberal Summer School on 2nd and 3rd August, hearing Capt MacDougal's address on Agriculture and taking part in the discussion on the New Deal proposals as treated by Professor Mason of Princetown, U.S.A. and Sir Walter Layton. Mr Douglas attended and spoke at one of the sessions of the Summer School of the Catholic Social Guild at Oxford the following week, where altogether three assaults on the Henry George doctrine were made by the Rev Lewis Watt. At Cambridge it was interesting to meet Mr Wilberforce who as a school-boy had heard Henry George speak at a public demonstration but did not follow what it was all about. Later as a youth, with a very small wage, he saw a second-hand copy of *Progress and Poverty* marked 2d. in a bookseller's window box. He could not spare the 2d. but he wanted to read the book which fortunately remained unsold for all the time that he went to it every day at his lunch hour to get through the pages. And so "by instalments" and without any expense he consumed the whole. Since then as fortune favoured him, he procured and read everything that Henry George has written.

Overseas visitors to the office during last month have been Miss Lucy and Miss Edith Swanton of Washington D.C., Mr Fiske Warren who, on his way back to the U.S.A. had just come from San Jordi in Andorra and Mr Alexander Greene of Chicago back from a visit to Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

A Committee in the Rotary Movement has published a booklet on Social Credit entitled *Can Prosperity Return?* Mr C. H. Batty (who two years ago presented to more than 100 Rotarians Henry George's *Science of Political Economy* as a Christmas gift) sent to each member of that Committee a copy of Mr Lester's *Poverty in Plenty*. He has given us a glimpse of the resulting correspondence. All or nearly all of the Committee acknowledged receipt and a few offered criticisms. We cannot confidently affirm that two of the critics have kept rigidly within the limits imposed by the recognized courtesies of debate, but we willingly allow for a little of the playful exchange of pleasantries that seems inevitable when men are in dead earnest.

ENGLISH LEAGUE: Frederick Verinder, General Secretary, 7 St. Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2. (Phone: Temple Bar 7830.)

In the League's monthly *Bulletin* for September, Mr Andrew MacLaren gives a fuller account of his recent successful meetings in Tyneside and Co. Durham than is possible in the space available here. He is able to give the result of his personal observation and inquiries as to the conditions in these distressed areas. It is hoped that it may be possible to arrange for another series of meetings in the North, in response to the very pressing invitations of local friends and helpers.

A copy of this issue of the *Bulletin* will be sent to any reader of *Land & Liberty* on application. Mr MacLaren's pamphlet on "The Truth about the Distressed Areas" is still on sale at the League Office (3d.; post free 4d.).

At the time of writing, Mr MacLaren is addressing a series of public meetings in the Burslem division of Stoke-upon-Trent.

He will open a new session of Economic Lectures and Discussions in the Lecture Room at the League's Office on Tuesday, 3rd September. Admission free. 8 p.m.

Mr A. C. Blackburn addressed open-air meetings at East Fulham on 29th July and 12th August.

The General Secretary will address a meeting of the Women's Section, St Pancras Labour Party, at Buck Street, Camden Town, at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th September. Subject: "Woman's Interest in the Land Question."

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: William Reid, Secretary, 9 Woodside Crescent, Glasgow, C.3. (Telephone: Douglas 5599.)

Our members and friends have been busy keeping our question to the front in one or two organizations during the past month. Captain A. R. MacDougal was on the programme of the Liberal Summer School at Cambridge, and there are anxious inquiries as to a report which appeared in the *News Chronicle* regarding a private meeting of a Committee of the Scottish Liberal Federation. It is thought—perhaps wrongly—that the meeting reported was called for quite different objects than the support of policy which is being ably led by Captain MacDougal and James Scott.

Messrs Otto Ommer and George Tulloch attended a Summer School of the Catholic Social Guild in Ruskin College, Oxford, where the doctrines of Henry George were adversely commented on by one lecturer—Father Watt. Being dissatisfied with the opportunities for questions and reply a leaflet headed "The Single Taxer's Reply to Father Watt" was printed and distributed.

Newspaper correspondents during the past month include the President, Messrs Alex Campbell, A. J. Mace, A. A. M., and the Secretary. One prominent newspaper failed to publish a reply to some ordinary Protectionist "mush" which they published over a prominent name. Some people appear to have little faith in the things they daily advocate.

Readers of *Land & Liberty* who are to be in Glasgow on Friday, 20th September, whether members of the League or not, are requested to note that date and to attend the formal opening of the new premises at above address. The hour of meeting will be 7.30 p.m.

Arrangements have been made to associate the name of Henry George and all for which he stood with the new rooms.

YORKS AND NORTHERN LEAGUE: F. Skirrow, Secretary, Tanfield Buildings, 129 Skipton Road, Keighley.

Since our last report we have removed from Compton Buildings to the above address. Here we have a much larger room, which we hope to make good use of for student classes and lectures.

During the past month circularized 150 political and social reform bodies and sent out literature.

On 1st August the Secretary addressed an open-air meeting in Victoria Square, Leeds, and was supported by Wm. Thomson.

Press correspondence has been as follows:—

27th July: W. R. Lester and A. W. Dakers in *Keighley News*; 3rd August: Wm. Thomson, J. W. Booth, A. W. Dakers, J. McSweeney, and the Secretary, also in *Keighley News*; 10th August: W. R. Lester in *Keighley News*; 17th August: A. W. Dakers, J. W. Booth, J. McSweeney and the Secretary; 24th August: W. R. Lester and "Free Lance."

MANCHESTER LEAGUE: Arthur H. Weller, J.P., Secretary, 69 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. (Phone: Central 5527.)

Four meetings held at Alexandra Park Gate, Manchester, during the past month were addressed by Messrs E. M. Ginders, W. Withington, E. F. MacClafferty, G. Wright, and the Secretary.

On Saturday, 10th August, a party of Manchester members and friends visited their colleagues in Clitheroe. The combined party assembled at the beautiful Guest House, Heys Farm,

where tea was provided. At a gathering in the open air after tea, regret was expressed at the absence of Mr John Haworth and an affectionate message of greeting and goodwill to him was entrusted to Mr Hamilton. On the proposal of Mr E. M. Ginders a resolution was adopted asking Mr A. W. Madsen on his visit to the States to convey the good wishes of the assembled Single Taxers to the forthcoming Henry George Congress in New York, and also another resolution congratulating Mr O'Connor Hennessy on his Golden Wedding. Glorious weather contributed to the pleasure of this annual reunion, and the visitors returned to Manchester greatly encouraged by what they had seen of the good work being done for the cause of economic freedom in this part of Lancashire.

CLITHEROE HENRY GEORGE GROUP: Hon. Secretary, John L. Hamilton, Waverley, Brungerley Avenue, Clitheroe.

On the 10th August the Manchester Land Values League joined the Clitheroe Group in the annual summer visit. This year the afternoon was spent at the Guest House, West Bradford, and both in the individual discussions and the joint meeting which followed tea, as in games on the lawn, everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the union was voted by all to have been a great success. Councillor A. Hallows brought the matter of the Rating of Land Values before the local Town Council at its meeting on 20th August, and the matter has been referred to Committee.

WELSH LEAGUE: Mrs Annie Fento, Hon. Secretary, 214 Caerphilly Road, Birnigrove, Cardiff.

As we have reported to *Land & Liberty* (and will no doubt be noticed in the columns of the Journal) the representative Municipal Conference, called by the Cardiff City Council for the promotion of Land Value Rating, has been fixed for Wednesday, the 25th September, at 3 o'clock, in the City Hall.

The following reference to this important event appears in the Welsh edition of the *News Chronicle* of 26th August:—

A united demand from Wales for a repeal of the present laws relating to the taxation of land values is to be made to the Government shortly.

The recent invitation sent out by Cardiff Corporation to Welsh local authorities has, I understand, brought numerous replies expressing willingness to participate in a conference on the subject with a view to concerted action.

"There is not a single authority in Wales which is not a victim of the existing anomalies," Mr C. A. Gardiner, Vice-Chairman of the Welsh League for the Taxation of Land Values, told me to-day.

"In Cardiff itself the position is well known to the public and it is true to say that the city has lost many opportunities of establishing new industries not only because of the high price of land, but because of the conditions which the great landowners invariably attach to its transference."

The Labour administrations in the area are heartily in favour of some alteration in the present laws because they have all, in the last few years, experienced the utmost difficulty in acquiring land for such purposes as road improvements and land settlements.

The success achieved in so advancing the municipal movement that the Cardiff Corporation now gives this lead is due primarily to the campaign the Welsh League has persistently maintained and not least to the co-operation it has received from the electors and candidates at municipal elections as from the elected representatives in the Council. This work must be continued with redoubled vigour and funds are urgently required for the purpose. We use this occasion therefore to make a strong appeal to all members of the League whose subscriptions are renewable; and readers of this Journal who are not yet members are besought to give their support by enrolling and by their help with financial contributions as generously as they can afford. Subscriptions and donations may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr J. T. Jones at the above address.

NORTH WALES

Mr A. Williams Price of Wrexham writes:

"I recently tramped around two villages of about equal size though situated far apart and differing much in history and in the nature of their industry. Village A still retains some of its feudal features—castle ruins, Norman church, and a clout-sized fragment of the old village green; the workers are mainly engaged on the land. Even the village cobbler (cobblers are usually credited with Radical sympathies in Wales) ventured nothing more than a pious wish that good times might return once more; the legend of 'the good old days' (prior to the Land Enclosures) still persists and several lots of land were indicated, from which the owner-occupiers had been evicted when the nation was engaged in the Napoleonic Wars. Village B is of the standard type of barracks provided for citizens about a century ago: Houses (?) built with one room, or with two, these

have been amended and extended until the ground is crowded with buildings, thus the 'slum-clearance areas' which now bring distinction to the hills and dales of Denbighshire. In both villages the inhabitants made comments and remarks that reminded me of Lowell's *Editor's Creed*—

"I do believe in bein' this
Or thet, as it may happen
One way or t'other handiest is
To ketch the people nappin'."

"I distributed tracts Nos. 102 and 104: *Idle Lands and Tax Land Values*. Areas A and B were both parts of the lands granted in 1695 to Bentinck by the Dutchman William III."

LIVERPOOL LEAGUE: F. R. Jones, Hon. Secretary, 23 Rocklands Avenue, Bebington, Cheshire. (Office and Meeting Room: 21 Harrington Street, North John Street, Liverpool.)

At the Birkenhead Study Circle, held each Thursday evening, 8 p.m., at the rooms of Mr Byrne Hely, Charing Cross, Mr O. B. Sweeney spoke on 1st August to a crowded meeting on "Protection or Free Trade," and Mr E. J. McManus on 8th August on "The Social Problem." These addresses were interposed in the series of outline lectures on Political Economy given by the Secretary, illustrated by Post's charts. This series was completed on 15th August, and on 29th August a new, more thorough series was commenced, based on a reading through of George's *Science of Political Economy*. Great interest is being shown and the circle is steadily growing.

At 21 Harrington Street, the Liverpool Circle, meeting each Wednesday evening, is now half-way through George's *Social Problems*. Every reader in our area is urged to come to one or both of the above circles, and to make an effort to interest others to come.

In the *Birkenhead News* the controversy with the chief local Conservatives on Protection is arousing much attention. Each week it occupies several full columns, and is printed prominently with striking headlines. This is quite apart from the "Economic Forum" on another page, which is forcefully conducted each Saturday by Mr O. B. Sweeney.

MIDLAND LEAGUE: Chapman Wright, Hon. Secretary, 20 Cannon Street, Birmingham 2.

£200,000 has just been paid (*Birmingham Mail*, 23rd August) for the Gilbertstone Estate, which is situated within the city about six miles from its centre. Gilbertstone was formerly the residence of Sir Richard Tangye, but its 300 acres will now be used for the erection of three thousand houses. The growth of Birmingham seems to have increased the value of its agricultural land about tenfold during the past generation.

Press correspondence during the month included a letter from "G. T. P." in the *Birmingham Mail* and two letters from the Secretary in the *Birmingham Gazette*.

A recent visit from Mr A. H. Weller, spending several days in Birmingham, was much appreciated.

BRISTOL LEAGUE: J. A. Hurley, Hon. Secretary, 14 Queen's Road, Knowle, Bristol.

A meeting of members will be held at 26 Somerset Road, Knowle, on 17th September to make important fixtures for the forthcoming season. Meanwhile, members have been invited to bring friends to their homes on one or two occasions for lectures on the land question. So far eight members have responded giving 29 meetings, quite apart from League meetings and lectures to societies. Our President, Mr Brierley, who has been responsible for these plans finds this is the most effective and far-reaching method he has yet tried and it is bringing in many new members. He has had new supplies of books and pamphlets from the United Committee, which like the frequent previous parcels, are sold or distributed to good purpose.

Progress (Melbourne) of 1st July reports the death of Edwin E. Reseigh, and we share sincerely the regret of such a loss to the Australian Henry George movement. His visit to England some years ago and the frequent correspondence he had with British co-workers, made acquaintance with a man of great mind and of the noblest spirit. In *Progress* worthy tribute to his memory is paid by public men and many of his immediate colleagues. He was a pioneer of the old Victorian Farmers' Union, Vice-president and a former Chief President (1928 and 1929) of the United Country Party. He sat on the Committee which recently considered the Single Tax and was author of the report pledging the party a good way in that direction. We tender Mrs Reseigh and the family our deep sympathy in their bereavement.

NOTES AND NEWS

Whatever the outcome of the present dispute, it seems likely that there will be in the future a greater development of Abyssinia's mineral wealth on which Italy has her eyes and which is believed to be considerable, although no accurate estimates can be made.

There has been some commercial development of gold, platinum, potash and mica resources, but the known deposits of these, so far, are small and not very important.

Of much more significance is the fact that there may be substantial resources of copper, tin, oil and coal which might easily be of considerable economic importance in the future if and when they are developed.—*Daily Herald*, 23rd August.

During an arbitration in Manchester on 26th July to settle the price to be paid for land to be acquired by the Corporation in West Gorton under a compulsory purchase order, Mr J. F. Linney, valuer for one of the owners, valued an area of 700 square yards at 25s. a yard clear of buildings. Replying to Mr R. H. Adcock, Deputy Town Clerk, he admitted that the last comparable sale of land in the area was of seven acres at Galloways works for £9,000. Mr Adcock suggested that this worked out at £1,300 per acre, whereas Mr Linney's valuation of the 700 square yards worked out at £6,000 per acre.

If the rating of land values had been in operation in Manchester, the question of the true value of this land could easily have been settled. Under existing conditions the ascertainment of values in cases of this kind becomes largely a matter of guesswork because it is based upon isolated facts of the particular case and there is no generally established scale of values to which to refer.

A London correspondent writes: "What's wrong with *Taxation* by Jackson N. Ralston is a very able work and deserves a wide circulation." It is also most suitable as a text book for economic classes. Price 1s. post free from *Land & Liberty* offices.

In the town of White Plains (New York) officials have discovered one of the oldest documents relating to the occupation of America by the white man. It is a deed of sale, dated 1682, whereby Stephanus van Cortlandt bought 30 square miles of land along the Hudson River a few miles north of where New York now stands. The signature of Van Cortlandt and the marks of the seven Indians who sold the land are appended to the document. To-day the land is worth 77,000,000 dollars (£15,400,000 at par). This is what the Indians received for it: "Two anchors of rum, five half fatts of strong beer," and some wampum, guns, powder, and a few gaudy clothes and trinkets.—*Barnet Press*, 20th August.

Noble lords have always had a shrewd eye to the land. Many of them would not be noble lords if they and their forbears had not been something less than noble landlords. By various processes—some by present-day standards of public morality at least dubious—they have come into possession of great slices of England's green and pleasant land. Their traditional function has been to sit tight upon their holdings while, by the enterprise or public spirit of other men and women and the normal growth of population, the proceeds of new and higher land values have been poured into their private pockets. . . .

This question of land ownership and exploitation for private gain against public good is going to be one of the big issues of our time. Britain for the British—or Britain for the big landlords? A developing and prospering Britain yielding its fruits to all, or an impoverished Britain, stained with Black Areas and slums, depressed farming and mining industries, in the interests of bright coronets? That is the question.

As to the people's ultimate answer there can be little doubt.—*Star* (London, 27th July).

Presiding at the Kettlewell Horticultural Show on 10th August Mr Cutcliffe Hyne said that watercress grew wild in the limestone streams of Wharfedale. In Bradford more than 3½ tons of watercress were imported from the South every week, and in the South the tenants had to pay £300 per acre for their watercress beds. Beds could be had for nothing in Upper Wharfedale, and thus there ought to be an ample margin of profit.

If anything comes of this suggestion we may safely predict that watercress beds will not be obtainable "for nothing" in Wharfedale once it is shown that there is an ample margin of profit.

"Henry Georgeite" has been engaged in a long and informing controversy in the columns of the *Dundee Courier and Advertiser*, and the editor is to be congratulated in providing this "Forum" with a writer of such calibre to guide the discussion. A vote of thanks also, in which we are sure "Henry Georgeite" will join, is due to the critics of Land Value Taxation and the "doubting Thomases" who have kept the ball rolling.

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WILLIAM COBBETT

As this year marks the centenary of the death of William Cobbett the following extracts from his *Rural Rides* will be of interest. The first (written on 24th December, 1821) shows that cries of "agricultural distress" and appeals by farmers to the "collective wisdom" (Parliament) for tariffs and other assistance were as rife then as now.

* * *

For, in fact, it is not the *farmer*, but the *landlord* and *parson*, who wants relief from the "collective." The tenant's remedy is quitting his farm or bringing down his rent to what he can afford to give, wheat being 3s. or 4s. a bushel. This is his remedy. What can he want high prices for? They can do him no good; and this I proved to the farmers last year. The fact is, the landlords and parsons are urging the farmers on to get something done to give them high rents and high tithes.

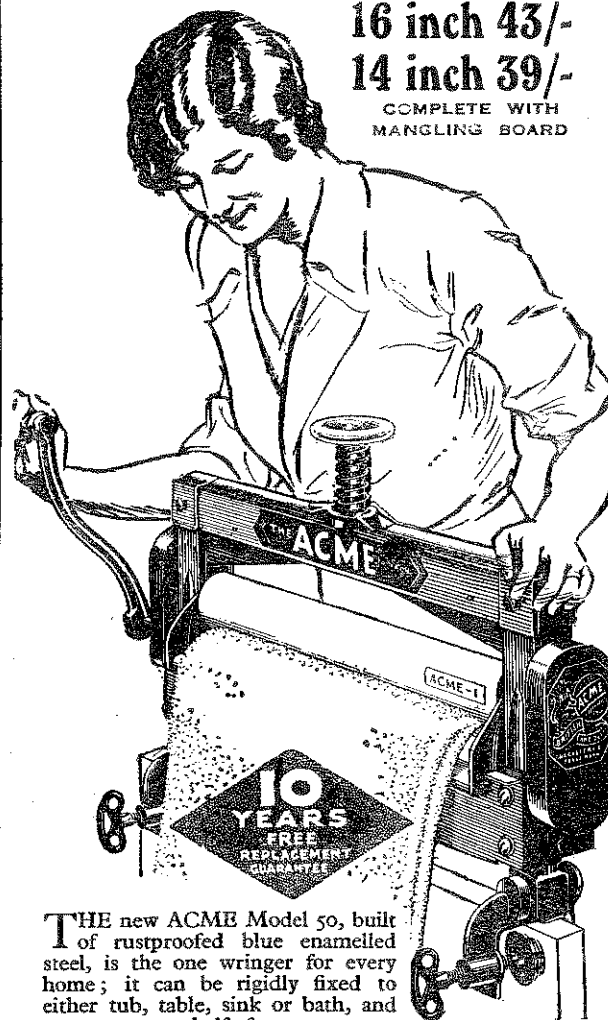
* * *

We were getting ready to be off, to cross the country to Burghclere, which lies under the lofty hills at Highclere, about 22 miles from this city (Winchester); but hearing the bells of the cathedral, I took Richard to show him that ancient and most magnificent pile, and particularly to show him the tomb of that famous bishop of Winchester, William of Wykham; who was the chancellor and minister of the great and glorious king, Edward III; who sprang from poor parents in the little village of Wickham, three miles from Botley; and who among other great and magnificent deeds, founded the famous college, or school, of Winchester, and also one of the colleges of Oxford. I told Richard about this as we went from the inn down to the cathedral; and when I showed him the tomb, where the bishop lies on his back, in his Catholic robes, with his mitre on his head, his shepherd's crook by his side, with little children at his feet, their hands put together in a praying attitude, he looked with a degree of inquisitive earnestness that pleased me very much. . . .

After we came out of the cathedral, Richard said, "Why, papa, nobody can build such palaces now, can they?" "No, my dear," said I, "That building was made when there were no poor wretches in England called *paupers*; when there were no *poor rates*; when every labouring man was clothed in good woollen cloth; and when all had plenty of meat and bread and beer."

Your support is invited for the
"Land & Liberty" Sustentation Fund.

In several parts of *Capital* I allude to the fate which overtook the plebeians of ancient Rome. They were originally free peasants, each cultivating his own piece of land on his own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement which divorced them from their means of production and subsistence involved the formation not only of big landed property but also of big money capital. And so one fine morning there were to be found on the one hand free men, stripped of everything except their labour power, and, on the other, in order to exploit this labour, those who held all the acquired wealth in possession. What happened? The Roman proletarians became, not wage labourers, but a mob of do-nothings more abject than the former "poor whites" in the southern country of the United States, and alongside of them there developed a mode of production which was not capitalist but depended upon slavery.—Letter of Karl Marx to the Editor of a Russian journal, 1877 (*The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, p. 354).

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