

Semi-Centennial International Union Conference

Members of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation met September 8th through 14th for their 1973 International Conference at the Villiers Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man. President Ashley Mitchell welcomed them the first day, and that evening gave his opening address. He noted the occasion marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Union's formation, that he was the last survivor of its founders, and that he had attended every conference it has held.

On Sunday, Fred Harrison spoke on "The History that Might Have Been," suggesting alternative measures be considered to deal with the land problem, based on varying policies used in different countries. Dr. Roy Douglas, talking on "Adam Smith and Free Trade," observed that Britain's return to free trade was prompted more by the climate of the times than by Smith's efforts.

Monday there was a discussion of a paper by Knud Tholstrup, on whether land speculation causes inflation or *vice versa*. Jack Irving, chairman of Mec Vanin, the Manx National Party, then traced the history of land ownership on the Island, underlining the growing concern about its land problem. Frank Othick reviewed the British land-tax system, and V.G. Saldji, treasurer of the Union, spoke on the basic principles of site value rating. In the evening, the mayor of Douglas gave a reception, which local councillors and members of the House of Keys (the Island's Parliament) also attended.

Hector Wilks opened Tuesday's agenda with a discussion of his experiences in making the second Whistable valuation, emphasizing the ease of site valuation as compared to valuing both land and buildings. Ted Gwartney delivered a paper in behalf of Malcolm McCarthy, reporting on the Port Credit experiment, and then his own case study in assessment reform. Joseph Zashin recounted his success in obtaining publicity concerning unfair assessments in his home area. A showing of the film "One Way to Better Cities," presented by V.G. Peterson of the Shalkenbach Foundation, closed the day.

A panel discussion on Wednesday covered two sub-

jects: "Site-Value Rating - Objections Examined" and "Wider Implications of Site-Value Rating." Harry Pollard delivered his paper on philosophical Georgism (see HGN, September, 1973), and George Glover presented an instructive illustrated talk on Hong Kong.

Thursday Gustav Bohnsack and Dr. Roy Douglas spoke on land reform in Germany and in the British Isles. Will Lissner, editor of *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, highlighted the effects of off-shore oil-drilling on land values. V.H. Blundell read a paper by Rolland O'Regan, president of the New Zealand Land Value Rating Association, urging that tax assessment be based on land's selling price, not its annual market value. After brief remarks by Bill Newcomb, Julian P. Hickok, Stephen Martin, Bill Farr, and Shirley-Anne Hardy, Perry Prentice wound up the afternoon with a talk on land speculation in Europe. In the evening, Dr. Geoffrey Esty discussed his recent visit to the Orient and Southeast Asia's land problem.

Harry Pollard enlivened Friday with a demonstration of one of his Mini-Courses. Robert Clancy reported the activities of the Henry George Institute, and summarized his paper, "The Good News and the Bad News." The sessions closed with John M. Kelly's talk on the moral and ethical basis for Georgist reforms, which was coupled with a reading by Richard Grinham from Frank McEachran's "Will Not Find Easy Acceptance." A general membership meeting followed. Officers and an executive committee were chosen, Ashley Mitchell being re-elected president with a standing ovation.

But all was not "strictly business." Ample time was provided for luncheons, teas, dinners, a tour of the Island, and an opportunity for the conferees to meet old friends and make new ones. A grand banquet Friday evening ended an enjoyable, successful and worthwhile Conference.

The editors are grateful to V.H. Blundell, secretary of the International Union, for his kindness in providing the details for the above report.