

Story of the Henry George Congress in Baltimore

A BREATHLESS programme, a really representative gathering, fifteen states having sent delegates, and a spirit of harmony and good fellowship characterized all of the three days' sessions of the Sixth Annual Congress of the Henry George Foundation at Baltimore, October 12 to 14, inclusive.

There were many "high spots" in these interesting days, some that will be long memorable. Notably, these were the masterly address of Lee Francis Lybarger at the banquet, certainly one of the greatest Single Tax speeches ever delivered, perhaps among the greatest orations during a decade on any subject; the recitation of "The Central Truth," from Progress and Poverty, by the son of our old friend Ed Ross; the recitations of Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips (whom some of the readers of LAND AND FREEDOM will recall under her maiden name of Elizabeth Magee); the singing of "The Land Song" and Robert Burns' "To the De'il with the Excise Man," by Mrs. Arnold, rendered with extraordinary spirit; and as a more purely intellectual treat, the remarkable paper of Benjamin W. Burger. Perhaps we should include the few but impressive words spoken by Anna George deMille with the quiet grace and charming modesty characteristic of her.

The convention was opened by the chairman, Charles G. Baldwin, who extended the welcome of Baltimore to the Congress. His speech was a happy one, which began the proceedings auspiciously. He reviewed the work of the Maryland Tax Reform Association and the progress in that State, informing his hearers that every county in Maryland had local option in taxation for county purposes, and that there had been considerable improvement in assessments in the City of Baltimore.

Further along in his speech, in commenting on our wicked tax policy, he used as an example the Lord Baltimore Hotel, where the convention met, and the tax burden borne by this magnificent institution which has added so much to the attractiveness of the city.

Referring to the tax on personalty, Mr. Baldwin said: "I have never found a single assessor wicked enough to assess personal property at its true value." He closed with an eloquent tribute to Henry George.

In the absence of President Evans of the Foundation, who was detained by his bereavement in the death of his wife, Mr. P. R. Williams, secretary of the Foundation, made a short address welcoming the delegates, and then read a letter from Waldo J. Wernicke, of Los Angeles.

A motion was then made and carried that a committee of twenty-one on resolutions be appointed. Chairman Baldwin read the names of the twenty-one selected, and Mr. Miller pointed out that there was not a woman on the committee though many women were present as delegates. The list of those appointed was then referred back to the

Executive Committee of the Foundation for reconsideration.

Mr. Will Atkinson now addressed the convention, his subject being "The Hope of Humanity," and Mr. C. H. Ingersoll, of New Jersey, spoke on methods of propaganda. He asked that a moment be spent in silent tribute to the memory of James R. Brown.

The talk of Mr. Ingersoll on methods called forth an animated discussion, participated in by Miss Siddall, of Washington; Mr. and Mrs. Swanton, of Washington; Mr. Weinberger, of New York, and others.

LUNCHEON MEETING, OCT. 12

At this luncheon Charles R. Eckert, of Beaver, Pa., presided, and Benjamin W. Burger read his paper on "The Single Tax in Perspective." A motion was made that this paper be printed in pamphlet form, and this suggestion was referred to the Executive Committee of the Foundation. It is likely that its publication will be arranged between the Foundation and the Single Tax Publishing Company.

AFTERNOON SESSION, OCT. 12

Prof. Broadus Mitchell, of Johns Hopkins University, delivered the address which appears on another page, and Mr. George L. Record, of New Jersey, followed with a paper which called forth considerable discussion, in which Frank Stephens, of Arden, Alan Thompson, of Toronto, and others were heard. To their criticisms Mr. Record vigorously replied.

Walter Fairchild, of New York, an added speaker on the programme at this afternoon session, followed with an informal talk on lecture work and the need of coordination in this field. He expressed his opinion that a new hospitality to our doctrines was being manifested in universities and colleges. He said that in his visits to many institutions of learning he had not met a single professor who had expressed hostility to the Single Tax. Generally speaking, Progress and Poverty is studied in the economic classes, and this phase in the development of our movement he thought extremely gratifying.

Miss Amy Mali Hicks, of New York, spoke briefly in reference to the High School Essay contests conducted by the committee of Single Tax women, Miss Schetter, of Northport, L. I.; Miss Grace Isabel Colbron, of Canaan, Conn., and herself, and added her assurance to that of Mr. Fairchild that they had encountered no opposition in the thirty and more high schools where the pupils took part in the contest.

Dr. Millikin, of Hamilton, Ohio, talked on certain instruments of democracy, the initiative and referendum and proportional representation.

Benjamin Marsh, of Washington, D. C., spoke on "Our Peerless Stupidity in Taxation" and advocated taxes on land values and a progressive surtax on estates and in-

comes. Mr. Marsh is a vigorous speaker, but has never realized what the taking of the full economic rent would mean. He told us that Prof. John Dewey, whom he had seen a few days before, had asked to be remembered to the gathering.

EVENING SESSION, MONDAY, OCT. 12

John Salmon, of Baltimore, opened this session with an interesting talk on taxation. Among the speakers was Bolton Hall, of New York, his subject being "Your Work and Mine." Those who are accustomed to think of Mr. Hall as too exclusively a piece of intellectual mechanism would have been surprised to find themselves emotionally stirred by the words of this great veteran of our cause. He pleaded for toleration. Referring to the division of our friends in England, he said he saw no reason why there should be antagonism between the two forces. He said he was not disappointed or disheartened, but indeed was uplifted and comforted by the progress of the movement. He compared our movement with others through their years of struggle for achievement. Mr. Hall's speech was one of the most remarkable made during these three days.

Hon. W. D. Jamieson, of Washington, D. C., was the next speaker. He is a former Congressman from Iowa, is a well-known newspaper man and conducts the syndicated column "The Window Seat," which reaches more than two million readers. His subject was "Getting an Audience," and his humor was a treat. He admitted not being a Single Taxer, "probably because he did not know enough about it," as he said, but he showed as he proceeded a knowledge of the subject and a sympathy with its objects.

Mrs. Anna George deMille said: "All I can promise of my speech is that it will be brief. I am out for the kids—I am out for the young people. I get a tremendous thrill out of it. I have just returned from making a talk to five hundred school children and I am wildly enthusiastic over my experience."

Then followed a more serious note in Mrs. deMille's address. She said she felt like one at a fire who alone among the imperiled knew the only exit. "I do not know what Henry George would do were he here. Sometimes I am glad that he is not. It might be that his heart would break. But at all events it devolves on us to fight as we never fought before."

MORNING SESSION, OCT. 13

Robert C. Macauley, of Philadelphia, made an admirable plea for the method of propaganda of which his paper, *The Pennsylvania Commonwealth*, is as yet the only example. Believing his plan of what he calls a "sales letter" is capable of indefinite extension, he explained to the session the small cost of the 12,500 circulation attained by the *Commonweal*.

Miss Amy Mali Hicks, of New York, spoke briefly on the question of slogans.

John Lawrence Monroe gave an address on "Unemployment a Challenge to Democracy," and was listened

to attentively as the youngest man on the programme, after which letters were read by Secretary Williams from Alfred N. Chandler, of New Jersey; John Emery McLean, of Fairhope; Edmund Vance Cooke, of Cleveland; F. G. Anderson, of Jamestown, N. Y., and others. Mr. L. D. Beckwith, of Stockton, Calif., read a lengthy communication from Matthew Warriner, of the Commonwealth party of England. A number of New York Single Taxers will recall with pleasure the visits of Mr. Warriner to this country.

Hon. George Finger, former mayor of Capital Heights, Md., now told us something of that Single Tax town. It has a population of 800, with twenty miles of streets. Of course, it has achieved but a small approach to the Single Tax, since State and county taxes are still in force, the needs of revenue are small and land values almost negligible. But as far as it has gone it has worked out to the satisfaction of the citizens of this small community. Mr. Finger said that if any man in the town were approached with the inquiry as to whether he would abandon the system which operates there he would reply with an emphatic "No." It is said that there are a larger proportion of home owners and more homes free from mortgages in Capital Heights than in any town in the metropolitan district there.

DIRECTORS' MEETING

At the directors' meeting on the noon of this day the present board, on motion of C. J. Ewing, of Chicago, was re-elected for the ensuing term. Some anxiety was caused by the sudden illness of Frank Stephens, which deprived us of his wise counsel at all the succeeding sessions. His departure for home followed in the afternoon of this day. We are pleased to inform our readers he has now recovered from his illness.

Mr. Miller nominated Mr. Walter Fairchild, of New York, and Mr. Culley, of Rochester, N. Y., as members of the advisory committee. The names of those added at this meeting to the advisory committee are as follows: Dr. George R. Geiger, of the University of North Dakota; Lee Francis Lybarger, of Mifflinburg, Pa.; Archie MacLean of Columbus; Howard S. Buttenheim, of Madison, N. J.; Claud L. Watson, of Chicago; Dr. S. Solis Cohen, of Philadelphia; George C. Olcott, of Chicago; Prof. Broadus Mitchell, of Johns Hopkins University; William Culley, of Rochester, N. Y., and Walter Fairchild, of New York.

AFTERNOON SESSION, OCT. 13

At this session Carl D. Smith, of Pittsburgh, presided. Mr. Smith read a short address from F. W. Maguire, now in his eightieth year.

An interesting discussion followed on methods of propaganda, and Messrs. Ewing, Morton, Beckwith, Bolton Hall, Will Atkinson, Mrs. Swanton and others were heard.

BANQUET TUESDAY EVENING, OCT. 13

At the banquet on this evening Mr. Baldwin acted as

toastmaster and Secretary Williams read letters from Mrs. Post and others. Dr. Dillard, of the Slater Foundation, who was on the speaking programme, sent a letter stating that illness prevented his presence. Mr. Williams announced the names of those comprising the committee to visit president Hoover, of which committee Dr. Millikin was chairman. Letters were then read from E. B. Gaston, of Fairhope; F. F. Ingram, of San Diego, Calif.; Otto Cullman, of Chicago; Senator Buckley, of Ohio; Herbert S. Bigelow, of Cincinnati, who has just returned from a visit to Russia; Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown, of Missouri; E. Yancey Cohen, of Fairhope; Congressman Robert Crosser, Senator Dill, of Washington; Poultney Bigelow, of Malden-on-Hudson, N. Y., and Prof. John Dewey.

Toastmaster Baldwin now called upon Amy Mali Hicks, who responded briefly. Edwin Ross read "The Central Truth" in magnificent style, and Mr. Ewing read an admirable paper. Then followed the great address of Lee Francis Lybarger, mention of which has been made. Carl D. Smith made an appeal for funds, and James F. Morton, of Paterson, appropriately closed the proceedings with a summing up of the work of the conference.

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION, OCT. 14

At this session Mr. Beckwith presided and Mr. Fiske Warren spoke on the enclaves and answered questions. Miss Siddall explained the Landlords' Game to those interested.

LUNCHEON, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14

Mr. Spencer Heath, of Elkridge, Md., presided and Hon. George H. Duncan spoke. He said he anticipated that James F. Morton had already said what he had to say of the Foundation, and that in addition to this handicap the Secretary had taken away a good part of his audience. Mr. Duncan suggested many difficulties in the way of the taxation of land values, more, we think, than have any existence, and what he said called forth corrections from Will Atkinson and others.

FINAL SESSION, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, OCT. 14

A committee on the Landlords' Game was appointed. The principal speaker at this final session was Western Starr, of Washington, D. C. The speaker said that of all philosophers who had gone before him Henry George had tracked privilege to its final lair. Others had considered economic processes with a cold, methodical analysis, but George of all the philosophers and economists of many nations was the first to announce the supremacy of the moral law in society.

"I have been a Single Taxer for many years; I have studied with devotion the economic problems that have come under my notice, and I know of no economic problem that does not find its answer in the philosophy of Henry George."

Secretary Williams read letters from Miss Mona

McMahon, of New Orleans; Hon. Edward Polak, of New York, and others. Mr. Polak urged the extension of lecture work. A letter was also read from Judge Pittman, of Memphis, Tenn., making a plea for Memphis as the meeting place for the next convention, and one from L. D. Walling advocating Toronto. The decision of the meeting place was left to the Executive Committee of the Foundation. A letter of sympathy drafted by Will Atkinson to George E. Evans on the death of his wife was unanimously adopted.

Mr. C. J. Ewing, who was one of the committee which the Congress had sent to Washington to see President Hoover, now announced that he was ready to report. Dr. Millikin, who was chairman of the committee, had addressed the President as follows:

"We appreciate the difficulties under which the President labors at this time. We believe the land question is of all others the most important and that the taxation of land values will provide opportunities for employment. We offer this to you as a solution, and it is for the purpose of presenting this solution that we have inflicted ourselves upon you."

The President replied:

"We certainly have plenty of troubles these days, and any one who can offer a solution will be welcome."

The recommendations prepared for the President were handed to him and the committee took their departure, agreeably impressed by the cordiality of their reception.

These recommendations appear elsewhere in this issue. It may be said that this hearing had been arranged by Congressman Clyde Kelly, of Pennsylvania, who is sympathetic to the principles of Henry George.

The closing session of the Congress now considered the resolutions favorably reported by the resolutions committee, after which it adjourned.

So ended the Sixth Annual Congress of the Henry George Foundation. We think it was well worth while. The speeches were above the average, and your reporter is impressed by the inadequacy of this summary of the proceedings. There have been, necessarily, omissions of reference to many who contributed notably to the interest of the sessions. The inspiring and impromptu effort of Mr. Mooney, of Baltimore, was outstanding. Some of the addresses appear in this number, and others will follow. But it is impossible to convey a wholly faithful picture of these three days and the fine spirit that pervaded the gatherings. We are certain that it marks a forward step in our propaganda.

The *Baltimore Sun's* reports of the proceedings of the Congress were generous, full and friendly. For the Lord Baltimore Hotel a good word must be spoken. Every effort was made by the management to supply accommodations for meeting rooms and to provide for the comfort of its Single Tax guests.

Resolutions Adopted

AFFIRMATIVE action was taken by the Henry George Foundation Congress upon the following resolutions presented by its Committee on Resolutions at Baltimore Oct. 14, 1931:

PREAMBLE

The Henry George Foundation of America, in conference assembled, holding that the right of all men to the use of the earth is an inalienable one, without which our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is denied, do again affirm our faith in the Single Tax as the only effective way of restoring to mankind the heritage which has been stolen from them.

UNEMPLOYMENT

By Mr. Ewing:

Whereas, a serious situation of unemployment exists; and,

Whereas, all employment originates in and upon the land;

Be it resolved, that we favor the freeing of the earth from private monopoly by instituting the Single Tax upon land values, thus restoring to all men their equal rights to the use of the earth, thus opening jobs for all, stimulating employment and raising wages.

DEPRESSION

By Mr. Ewing:

Whereas, it is quite the habit for public men who do not know a remedy for the present depression to attempt to blame it upon the depression in other countries than their own;

Resolved, that it is our conclusion that if we had a condition of internal economic justice in this country by the collection into the public treasury of the annual economic rent of land, we could easily have prosperity in the United States; and the other great powers could secure their prosperity by the same means.

AGRICULTURE

By Mark Millikin:

Whereas, the readjustment of agriculture has become a national problem, with an attempted solution by the Federal Farm Board;

Therefore, we, the members of the Henry George Foundation, now in convention assembled, while endorsing the Federal Farm Board's plea for an adjustment between production and consumption, believe that the farm problem would be nearer solution if farmers were exempted from taxation of their homes, buildings, improvements, live stock, crops and everything distinguishing improvement value from wild land.

As a corollary we advocate taxing only the location value of the farmer's land, irrespective of its improvements.

We further believe that farmers free from ruinous and vexatious taxes on their capital and crops would naturally tend to voluntary cooperation.

It is our belief that the farmer is not suffering from his overproduction, but from the underconsumption of his impoverished patrons.

We further declare that the need of exempting from taxation the farmer's capital and products applies also to the manufacturer, both of whom should be taxed only on the value of their land.

Be it resolved, that a copy of these declarations be sent to every agricultural paper in the United States.

POWER SITES

We deplore the general failure throughout America of the governments to tax land values of power sites, whether improved or unimproved, and believe that this is the best method of obtaining widespread and cheap electric power.

KELLER BILL

The present deficit of the national treasury affords the opportunity for the Federal Government to tax land values and at the same time

encourage industry and to balance the national budget. We hope that Congress will reconsider the bill recently introduced by the late Congressman Keller.

RADIO BROADCASTING

We view with alarm the tendency to permit vested rights in the ether lanes without compensation to the Government.

ASSESSMENT OF REAL ESTATE

Resolved, that in order to secure accurate data regarding land values in the United States, it is earnestly recommended that the Henry George Foundation urge through every practical means on all taxing authorities the three following principles in regard to assessments of real estate:

1. Annual assessments of real estate.
2. Full value assessment of real estate.
3. Separate assessment of land and buildings.

STABILIZING CIVILIZATION

Resolved, that the stability of civilization can be secured only by modernizing our civic, political and industrial machinery to correct the present state of unbalance resulting from the impossibility of making our present antiquated social machinery keep step with our modern shop machinery.

WORLD PEACE

Whereas, we believe the underlying causes of war are generally the unjust exploitation of natural resources, tariffs and other forms of unjust taxation, we call upon all those who love peace to work for the taxation of land values and free trade.

POLITICAL ACTION

By Mr. Bastida:

Resolved, that the Henry George Congress call attention of local groups of Single Taxers to the possibility of stimulating Georgeist propaganda by the nomination of candidates for the State Legislature—Assemblymen and Senators,—on a platform confined solely to the full appropriation of economic rent to the State for needed public revenue as such legislators are the only officials competent to vote on the tenure and taxation of land.

Resolved, that this method of procedure, making as it does a direct appeal to the voters, does away with irrelevant issues and places our issue squarely before them, avoiding the implication of partisanship and enabling the voter to register his convictions while developing a system of education in our principles as no other method would enable us to do.

SALES TAXES

We oppose all sales taxes.

HENRY GEORGE UNIVERSITY

Resolved, by the Henry George Foundation of America, that a committee be appointed from its members to examine the educational field with the idea of founding a Henry George University.

THANKS FOR HOSPITALITY

Resolved, that we who have participated in the Sixth Annual Henry George Congress express our sincere appreciation of the cordial hospitality extended to us by the Georgeists of Baltimore, and also of the splendid cooperation accorded us by the Maryland Tax Reform Association, the Baltimore Association of Commerce, the Lord Baltimore Hotel, and the public press of this city.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

To George E. Evans: The Henry George Congress desires to express its profound sorrow and sincere sympathy to the father of the Henry George Foundation, and the hope that by sharing with you this sorrow we may somewhat lighten its burden.

Words are idle at such times, but we all feel our deep obligation to you for your self-sacrificing labors for humanity.

The words of Richard Cobden to John Bright, when he was suffering

ing from a similar bereavement, are already familiar to you: "Come with me; there are in England women and children dying of hunger, of hunger made by laws. Come with me, and we will not rest till we have repealed those laws."

As you know, only in continuing your work for others can surcease of sorrow be found.

So closely have you knitted our hearts to yours that we feel stricken with you.

Address to the President

ON the 14th of October, 1931, Dr. Mark Millikin, of Hamilton, Ohio, heading the committee of ten selected by the Sixth Annual Convention of the Henry George Foundation, personally handed to President of the United States Hoover the subjoined address:

TO THE PRESIDENT:

The committee appointed from the Henry George Foundation of America, lately in session at Baltimore, desires to submit to you the following brief:

1. The land values of the United States are estimated to be from \$160,000,000,000 to \$200,000,000,000. This is a community value which has steadily increased with the population. It is a value that increases directly in proportion to social pressure. Where the population is dense, as in urban centers, the value of land sometimes is several millions of dollars per acre. In the wild, sparsely settled regions an acre of land may be worth only a few cents.

2. The annual rental value of this land at 5 per cent would be from \$8,000,000,000 to \$10,000,000,000. The average tax on land in our country is about 2 per cent. There is then at least 3 per cent of the annual rental from land going to private land owners as an unearned increment. It is therefore a conservative estimate to put the unearned increment at from \$5,000,000,000 to \$6,000,000,000 annually. This amount, we claim, is a dividend that should go to the community.

3. While we advocate taking the entire rental value of land to be applied to paying the cost of government, we do not come to you with such a radical suggestion. We feel that great reforms are made slowly, and that they are apt to be more permanent and acceptable if obtained gradually. Therefore we ask that you urge Congress to pass a bill levying a 1 per cent federal tax on the value of land in the United States. This would bring in an amount somewhere between \$1,600,000,000 and \$2,000,000,000. Some years ago the Keller Bill was introduced in Congress seeking similar legislation.

4. We believe that a tax on land values is *just*, inasmuch as it permits the community to take what it itself has made. As a corollary, we believe that the individual should be exempt from taxation on the products of his labor.

5. We believe that land should not be regarded as a commodity but as a great reservoir from which commodities are drawn by the aid of labor.

6. We direct attention to this fact: a tax levied on land according to its value makes land less desirable to hold for speculative purposes. The evils of land speculation in Florida are still fresh in memory. Even a tax as low as we suggest would in great measure lessen land speculation.

7. We hold that a land tax tends to throw land on the market, thus opening opportunities for the unemployed. While we are favorable to some temporary methods that have been proposed for relief of the unemployed, yet we regard them as more palliative than curative.

8. We oppose the generally accepted idea that taxes should be levied according to ability to pay. Business is not conducted on that principle. Only about 2 per cent of the annual \$90,000,000,000 turnover is based on an ability-to-pay plan. This comprises fees paid to the professions, lawyers, doctors and dentists. On the contrary, we advocate levying taxes according to a benefit-received plan. Of several

taxes levied on the benefit-received plan, none seem to be as good examples as the tax on land values. In that case the user is taxed for the benefit he enjoys in having exclusive use of a part of nature's reservoir.

9. We are favorable to a rugged individualism under conditions of freedom. Individualism is handicapped, first, by taxes levied on commerce; second, by a policy that makes access to land difficult. The conflict between communism and capitalism should be easily won by the latter if we adopt a land policy that has been advocated from the time of Moses to the present-day social philosophers.

10. We call attention to the fact that England has recently passed legislation levying a tax of a penny on the pound on land values.

11. A tax on land values cannot be shifted to industry. All economists agree on this. It is the easiest tax to collect—land cannot be hidden. It is not a "nuisance tax." It is the only tax that, while producing revenue, aids both production and consumption.

Henry George and the Teacher of Political Economy

ADDRESS BY PROF. BROADUS MITCHELL OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY AT THE BALTIMORE CONGRESS

THE academic method is to picture the universe photographically, with every detail automatically included. The philosophical free lance, on the other hand, is apt to use selection; he decides, after longer or shorter scrutiny, which masses in the picture are important, and which should be sunk into mere contributory shadings.

Perhaps it is true in the physical sciences that every fact is pertinent and not to be neglected, for, given insight enough, the whole may be derived from any of the inter-meshed parts. But in the social sciences, where there is a multitude of variables, this is hardly the case. Here, paradoxically, the true picture may be the inexact one. Choice, relative emphasis, are necessary. A Greek column, if it is to appear to have a given girth, must have a greater girth, or entasis.

In the social sciences it is imperative that we should not be obsessed by detail. We should be aware of detail, but at the same time be capable of treating the material freely. It is altogether right to drag the ponds, but we should know the difference, in the catch, between a fish and a newt.

Now, I think we academic people are not very good, taken as a group, at these judgments. We feel ourselves bound by a scientific technique, and sometimes forget that to inspection must be added discrimination. The non-academic observer, by whatever method, usually arrives at his thesis sooner than we do. (I speak here of the serious student, and not of the mere catch-as-catch-can commentator, whose conclusion, half the time, neither he nor anyone else could defend.) Perhaps I do the academicians an injustice by taking them as they come, and thinking of "outsiders" as represented by a few brilliant individuals.

However that may be, I venture the suggestion that, in the social sciences the cause of truth is set further for-