

# The Edinburgh International Conference

The Fourth International Conference to Promote Land Value Taxation and Free Trade was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from July 29 to August 4th, and was attended by followers of Henry George from twenty-four countries. The full proceedings will be published in book form; some of the addresses and the declaration of principles adopted, are printed elsewhere in this issue. The following report by Chester C. Platt is a general summary of the proceedings as they appeared to an American visitor.

**A**RRIVING at Glasgow we were met on the dock by A. W. Madsen, of the Secretariat of the International Union, and William Reid of Glasgow, and given a set of the printed papers to be presented at the Conference. Among these were papers on the Evils of Unstable Currency, by B. W. Holt, of New York; The Scientific Re-valuation of Real Estate in Chicago and Cook County, by Otto Cullman, of Chicago; Progress of our Movement in the United States, by John J. Murphy, of New York; and the Progress of Henry George Thought in Canada, by Alan C. Thompson and Arthur W. Roebuck, all valuable contributions to the Conference from our side of the Atlantic.

Looking over the pamphlets I was greatly impressed with the one containing messages to the Conference from British members of Parliament to the number of one hundred and twelve including fifteen ministers and seven of whom are members of the cabinet.

## PARTIES PLEDGED

The Labor and Liberal Parties of the House of Commons are pledged to the policy of the taxation of land values. It was one of the leading issues at the last parliamentary election, and again and again during the Conference confidence was expressed that in the next budget brought in by Chancellor Snowden the pledges of the Labor Party will be faithfully carried out, with some co-operation from the Liberal Party.

All the papers written for the Conference, together with the address of Mr. Hennessy, and the proceedings of the Conference are to be published, and they will certainly make a stout volume as there are more than 40 papers. Copies will be available for each member of the International Union.

Among those I have seen at the Conference are: A. P. Canning and wife and his son, Dr. Canning, of Chicago; Mrs. Otto Cullman, Miss Betty Cullman and Harvey Cullman, of Chicago; Mrs. A. E. DuBois and Miss S. E. DuBois, of Bayonne, N. J.; C. R. Eckert and Mrs. Eckert, of Beaver, Pa.; J. R. Fuchs, Mrs. Fuchs and two sons, of New Braunfels, Texas; Dr. and Mrs. R. E. Graves, of Chicago; Miss Frances Wolfe, Miss Antoinette Kauffman, Assistant Secretary Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; Chas. G. Baldwin, of Baltimore, his wife and son; Miss Scheer, of Chicago and Fiske Warren, of Enclave fame; Mrs. Byron W. Holt, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Dr. M. Milliken, wife and daughter, of Hamilton, Ohio; R. Scott, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Mrs. Anna George deMille, of New

York and her two charming daughters, Agnes and Margaret; H. E. Miles, of Racine, Wis.; Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow, of Cincinnati.

New College, (a theological school of the United Free Church of Scotland and one of the most handsome and imposing buildings in the city) with its large assembly room, dining room, smoking room, writing room, and numerous committee rooms made an excellent place for the holding of our Conference.

## BIGELOW SERMON

On the Saturday before the convention opened, a publicity committee and a committee to frame a constitution for the International Union, began work, and on the Sunday before the convention opened Rev. Mr. Bigelow preached an eloquent Single Tax sermon at the Unitarian Church. The local minister showed his friendliness to our cause by making the announcement that copies of Frederick Verinder's paper *Our Daily Bread* could be had in the church vestibule.

Dr. Bigelow told us that many great truths were born in a manger, and that as vaccination gives you a little small pox so you will not get more, so some churches give you a little religion, so you won't get more. He drew some striking contrasts between the house of want and the house of have.

Monday the Conference opened. Standing in front of New College was an automobile, with banners saying, "*Tax land values, which belong to the whole people, whose presence and activities create them. Abolish present unjust rates and taxes by this first reform. The certain and only cure for unemployment and poverty. Do not be misled, the problem of unemployment has only one genuine cure—Land Value Taxation.*"

Mr. Hennessy's opening address was introduced by remarks by Bailie Peter Burt of Glasgow, a friend of Henry George in days gone by, and both were received with enthusiastic cheers by the big audience gathered from twenty-four different countries.

The Inaugural Luncheon followed, and every day during the Conference, lunch was served in the dining hall of the college, and this gave us many opportunities to get acquainted. Besides most of the members were quartered at the Caledonia Hotel and the School of Cookery establishment, both served excellent oatmeal porridge, oatmeal cakes, short bread, cold veal pie, as well as the unapproachable Scotch mutton.



## GREAT PUBLICITY

The Conference has been given great publicity in the newspapers; all the leading papers in Great Britain were given copies of Mr. Hennessy's address in advance, and liberal use was made of it. The three Edinburgh newspapers gave excellent reports of the Conference, day by day, and particularly gratifying were the editorial commendations of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Edinburgh Evening News*.

At a meeting held on the evening of the first day of the Conference, Fiske Warren spoke on Enclaves and Mr. Miles, of the Fair Tariff League, on what the farmers don't get out of the tariff. Both talks called out animated discussions.

The principal differences in opinion brought out in the discussions of the Conference related to methods of assessing land values in which E. G. Geoghegan, of Malta, Sir Edward Harper, E. J. Craigie, of Australia and others took part.

## HIGH SPOTS

The high water mark of the Conference was reached at the great public meeting Tuesday evening when the Fiftieth Anniversary of the publication of "Progress and Poverty" was celebrated. Among the speakers was Mrs. LeMille, and she rose to great heights in her simple but heart-stirring talk.

Another public meeting which filled the great convention hall, was the final one Sunday evening when the topic was "The Religious Teachings of Henry George," and all the speakers aroused enthusiastic applause.

The social good times of the Convention centered in the garden party, when we were royally entertained by Sir Henry Ballantyne at his beautiful estate near Hadlington. His great garden was in full bloom with specimens of Scotland's choicest flowers perfuming the air, and round about were big fields of waving grain. The approach to his house was by a long drive through a wood where giant trees spoke of ancient days.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Refreshments were served from a large tent on a wide-spreading lawn. Mr. Madsen and Andrew Mac Laren, M. P., expressed our greetings to Sir Henry, and he delighted us by his response in which he called himself an old-time radical.

There were two interesting excursions, one to the great Forth Bridge at Queensferry, where some of us had tea at the famous old Hawes Inn described by Sir. Walter Scott in *The Antiquary*; and the other (with John Russell as a guide) down what is called the Royal Mile, a section of High Street where once were the houses of nobility and fashion, and where now (in what are called the "Closes" off of this street) are found the homes of the poverty stricken.

## LAND AND FREEDOM

At one of the closing sessions of the Conference I voiced the appreciation of the Single Taxers of the United States of the work done for the cause by Joseph Dana Miller, particularly through *LAND AND FREEDOM*, and conveyed to the Conference the good wishes of Mr. Miller. Many responded with appreciative words proving that Mr. Miller and his journal are internationally well known and highly regarded.

—CHESTER C. PLATT.

## PRESS REPORT

The following press report of the Conference was published in the *Philadelphia Bulletin* of August 17.

The fiftieth anniversary of the publication of "Progress and Poverty" has just been celebrated in Edinburgh by an international convention of Henry George's devoted disciples. Six hundred delegates from twenty-four nations met in the ancient metropolis of Scotland, and for a week presented arguments in support of the Henry George doctrines, particularly the substitution of a Single Tax on land values for all other taxes and absolute Free Trade.

What made this gathering especially notable was the receipt of a sympathetic message conveying the good wishes of Philip Snowden, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, and five other Cabinet Ministers, together with the greetings of about a hundred members of Parliament. M. Venizelos, the Greek Premier, detailed a representative to report to his Government on the proceedings, and the German Government was represented in like manner.

This tribute to the American economist thirty years after his death, when many of his suggestions have been incorporated in the programs of progressive political parties, marks the powerful hold which "Progress and Poverty" has taken in the Old World as well as the antipodes, where the Single Tax is applied with administrative modifications.

## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE AND POLICY

We, the members of the Fourth International Conference to Promote Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, assembled at Edinburgh July 29th, 1929, twenty-four countries being represented, reaffirm the declarations of principle and policy of our previous International Conferences: at Ronda, Spain; at Oxford, England; and at Copenhagen, Denmark.

We confidently affirm that the persistence of poverty, low wages, and unemployment in every country, and the evil and destructive social phenomena that derive from these conditions, are both unnatural and unnecessary; that they are due, primarily, to unjust restrictions upon freedom in the production of wealth (involving injustice in its distribution) that arise out of land monopoly.

Secondarily, we affirm that the conditions which produce poverty amid increasing wealth, and despite the increasing power to produce wealth afforded by invention,



discovery, and increase of knowledge, are accentuated by the burdensome measures which legislatures everywhere employ in the raising of public revenues.

And we affirm that the present system of internal taxes and rates adopted by Governments are unjust to Labor and Capital alike, by imposing impediments to industry, and penalties upon energy, enterprise and thrift.

#### FREE TRADE

For like reasons, we condemn those obstructions to the free flow of trade which have been set up between friendly peoples by so-called protective tariffs, "safeguarding" devices, and other interferences with the natural laws of freedom in production and exchange. These policies, yielding benefit only to limited privileged groups in the countries which adopt them, are, in our opinion, nothing short of treason to the true interests of the masses of human kind; and they have been identified by the representatives of fifty countries in the Economic Conference of the League of Nations, and by leaders of the International Chambers of Commerce, as among the chief causes of industrial depression, of unemployment, and of war.

#### PEACE

Therefore, we appeal to all true friends of humanity and of the establishment of an enduring World Peace to join with us in recognition of the fact that discord between nations commonly arises out of economic causes, such as the struggle for exclusive markets and other preferences, and for concessions in the control of natural resources, or because of the selfish policies by which some nations seek to advantage themselves by hampering the economic freedom of others. We cannot have Political Peace and Economic War.

#### LAND VALUE TAXATION

The remedy, we believe, lies in the establishment of freedom for all, equal rights for all, justice for all. These ends, we confidently affirm, will be attained when Governments can be led, through the enlightenment of public opinion, to repeal the present taxes, rates, and tariffs which now hamper freedom in the production and exchange of wealth, and cause injustice in its distribution.

Abandoning the burdens now directly or indirectly laid upon labor and capital, we would concentrate taxes upon the value of land and of all natural resources in private hands, in the conviction that these resources being the gift of the Creator to all generations, the value of land is the just and proper source of community revenues.

#### PROGRESS AND POVERTY

We would especially commend to the attention of serious-minded persons in every land a study of the premises, conclusions, and simple proposals of the inspiring and illuminating book, "Progress and Poverty" by Henry George, the Fiftieth Anniversary of which we are celebrating at this Conference. This famous politico-economic

work, translated into many languages, is in its essence a appeal for World Justice and Peace, a plea for the right of man everywhere.

Henry George was a great citizen of the world, a love of mankind, an unerring expositor of economic truth, far-seeing statesman, and a prophet of what has happened and is happening in the world at this time.

Finally, we reaffirm, in brief, our devotion to the policy which will in every country, when fully applied, inaugurate an era of social justice, economic freedom, and international peace. This policy we express as *Land Value Taxation and Free Trade as taught by Henry George*.

#### PRINCIPAL RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

The Conference welcomes the assurances that have been publicly given by members and supporters of the present Government of Great Britain to pass into law in the new Finance Act measures for the effective taxation of land values and for removing not only the protective and so-called "safeguarding" duties but also the indirect taxes on the necessaries of life. In the opinion of this Conference such action by the Government would set a stimulating example of progressive legislation to the people of the world.

RESOLVED that this Conference having heard with appreciation that the Danish Government proposes measures for developing the policy of land value taxation and free trade sends a message of greeting to the responsible Ministers and expresses the hope that the Government efforts in this direction will attain early success.

RESOLVED that the Conference sends its respectful compliments to the Government of the Greek Republic and thanks said Government for its consideration in permitting a representative of Greece to participate in the Conference proceedings in the person of Mr. Pavlos Giannelia and further resolves that we respectfully commend to the responsible officials of the Greek Government consideration of the declarations of principles and policies adopted at this Conference by members from twenty-four countries here assembled, believing that the application of these principles may be of benefit to the people of any nation.

RESOLVED that this Conference approve the policies recently announced by Hon. C. A. Dunning, Canadian Minister of the Interior and by Hon. D. G. Mackenzie, Manitoba Minister of Natural Resources in behalf of their respective Governments of safeguarding the town site of the new city of Churchill from the speculative abuses and exploitation of land values which has characterized similar developments in the past; and express the hope that thereby will be retained for the public represented by the Municipal Provincial Dominion Governments the annual land value created by public activity and at the same time the natural opportunities of Churchill will be reserved for use and development free from the baneful operations of the forestaller.



## INTERNATIONAL UNION OFFICERS ELECTED

President, Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy; Vice-presidents, Mr. Jacob Lange, Denmark; Mr. Otto Nuschke, I. D. L., Germany; Mr. C. E. Compton, Great Britain; Mr. A. P. Canning, U. S. A.; Treasurer, Mr. Ashley Mitchell, Great Britain; General Secretary, Mr. John Paul, Great Britain; Assistant Secretary, Mr. A. W. Madsen, Great Britain.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Messrs. K. J. Kristensen, F. Folke, (Denmark); C. G. Baldwin, Mrs. Anna George deMille, Mr. Otto Cullman, C. C. Leubuscher, (U. S. A.); A. Albendin, (Spain); Dr. Alec. Paletta, (Germany); Mr. Peter Burt, Sir Edgar Harper, Mr. Andrew McLarin, M. P., Mr. W. R. Lester, Rt. Hon. Col. J. C. Wedgewood, M. P., (Great Britain); V. H. Renwick, (Australia); A. W. Roebuck, K. C., (Canada); Sam Meyer, (France); Pavlos Giannelia, (Greece); D. deClerg, (Holland); Dr. J. J. Pikler, (Hungary); P. J. O'Regan, (New Zealand).

## The People and The Land

IT is taking the world a long while to realize the irrefutable truths that lie in the principles enunciated by Henry George, but there are signs that the pace is quickening. The Conference that is meeting in Edinburgh this week, therefore, will be listened to with a patience which was not particularly discernable when the author of "Progress and Poverty" was himself alive. It is a great opportunity to make a worth-while contribution towards the solution of the international problems of today, and the Conference president, the Hon. Charles O'Connor Hennessy, of New York, gave a brilliant lead yesterday in his address from the chair. It seems a remarkable thing that our creed in land values and free trade should be taken from the most keenly protectionist country in the world, but there is really no paradox in it. The fact of the matter is that America's tariff policy is no longer held to be an unalloyed asset. It is becoming unwieldy and burdensome, a bit of a Frankenstein, and though America might never officially suggest the abolition of all barriers, she might not break her heart if abolition were forced upon her. To make America—and the world—swallow the complete pill of the taxation of land values may not be so easy, however. But by all laws of equity it must come to pass some day. There is nothing but the old feudal respect for the landed proprietor to say against it; there is certainly no argument in logic with which to defend the present system. It is of some moment to remember that both Labor and Liberals in this country are pledged to the taxation of land values. They may not achieve the full reform at the moment, but they would be failing in their faith if they did not use their chances to educate the people a little more towards this great ideal.

EDITORIAL, EDINBURGH *Evening News*.

## Single Tax After Fifty Years

HALF a century has elapsed since a San Francisco man, a printer at the case, who occasionally tried his hand at editing, put forth a book on the land question, with the paradoxical title, "Progress and Poverty." The name of Henry George at that time was little known. He had written somewhat for obscure publications, and occasionally had spoken in meetings of laboring men. But neither as author nor orator had he attained any wide reputation. He had neither money nor influence wherewith to force his book upon the attention of the public. Indeed, when he endeavored to obtain its publication, he found publishers doubtful of the value of a work on economics, and unwilling to issue it unless he would pay the cost of making the plates. After a prolonged search he found a man willing to assist him in meeting the latter essential, but it is interesting now to recall the fact that so slight were the means with which the two embarked upon the undertaking that the author himself went back to the case and stick and set a very considerable portion of his own book. It was not long after he thus turned again to the tools of his trade that his name as an economist and propagandist was known in every quarter of the globe; more than 3,000,000 copies of his book had been issued, and it was translated into almost every known tongue. And last Monday, after the lapse of fifty years, Single Taxers from all parts of the world met at Edinburgh to celebrate this semi-centenary and to honor the name of Henry George.

Perhaps one hears less today about the Single Tax than one did when such magnificent propagandists as Tom L. Johnson, Louis F. Post and Henry George himself were preaching it in and out of season. But the reason why its praises are no longer heard over the clamor of various schools of economists is that the measure of truth in it has become accepted as a commonplace of economics, and it is no longer necessary to beat the tom-tom in order to call attention to it.

More and more the justice of taking for the public a considerable share of the unearned increment attaching to real estate as population grows is being accepted, although it is only in a comparatively few special colonies that the full measure of the Single Tax is applied, and the whole profit taken out of real estate speculation. Everywhere, however, the community recognizes the fact that its growth confers upon the owners of land within its borders profits which they have had but the slightest share in earning, and an increasing proportion of those profits is being taken for public uses.

Thoroughgoing Single Taxers hold that the taking of this entire increment would make it unnecessary to exact any other taxation whatsoever; would free industry from the burden of taxation; would do away with tariffs, and the international complications they produce; would