

Gathering for the Great Contest

THE activities of the British Georgists toward bringing the question of land value taxation into the arena of active politics is progressing with rapid strides. Early in December there was held a notable Manchester Municipal Conference, in which official representatives of a large number of municipalities gathered to discuss and act upon resolutions asking Parliament to permit local governing bodies to raise at least a part of their revenue by a tax upon land values, exclusive of improvements.

The *Manchester Guardian* gave ample reports of the proceedings. By a vote of 65 to 23, nearly three to one, a strong resolution was adopted approving the resort to land-value taxation. The Lord Mayor of Manchester presided at the closing session, and suggested that the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Snowden) and the Minister of Health be asked to receive a deputation to suggest the details of the proposed legislation. A committee of seven was appointed.

The success of the Manchester Municipal Conference was due in large measure to the activities of Councillor Arthur Weller, a member of the Manchester City Council, who is an uncompromising Single Taxer. He may be remembered as presiding over one of the interesting sessions of the Edinburgh Conference of last summer. Besides being secretary of the Manchester League for Land-Value Taxation, he is also a member of the United Committee.

This Municipal success is of special value in support of Chancellor Snowden's announced purpose to provide for the rating of land values in the Budget for National Revenue Raising which will be proposed to Parliament in the spring.

Under the leadership of the United Committee, and the Manchester Land Values League, there has been recently projected the holding of a national conference of Henry George people, in the city of Manchester in February. The local Labor M. P. will preside, and representatives from all parts of the country will participate.

Of course there is a possibility that the Labor Government may be temporarily retired from Government responsibility before Mr. Snowden has an opportunity to present his Budget. It is feared in some directions that the radical and Socialist elements in the Labor Party will become dissatisfied with the slow progress being made toward reducing unemployment, and will kick over the traces and join with the enemies of MacDonald's government for its overthrow. Already there are signs that the extremists in the Labor ranks are at loggerheads with the government. It is now evident that even if the Labor Party had a majority of the House, and were not dependent upon the good will of the Liberals, their existence would still be menaced by their own supporters who want the coach to go faster down the hill. Meantime, it is clear enough to those who can see any distance through the

political murk that the only way out is for the Labor Party to push its proposed Budget Tax on Land Value as the chief issue, and if defeated, to go to the country on this issue, and show that it means a fundamental fight for the destruction of land monopoly and the establishment of economic freedom.

John Paul wrote this to a friend the other day:

"The main question is, What can we do to impress upon public opinion the urgency of turning to land-value taxation as the one true path to the revival of industry and the abolition of poverty? We have the chance of our lives to make Henry George's practical proposal understood in the national campaign. The statesmanship that can see the connection between free land (freed from the elements of monopoly) and general prosperity, is what this good-natured, patient old globe most greatly needs, and it is this need, of course, that calls for service of all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear!"

Dr. Ely's Disciple and Six "Experiments"

JAMES G. MONETT, JR., real estate editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 5, tells a significant story about Aaron H. Weinstein, a Cleveland attorney. Weinstein is described as "a close friend of Dr. Richard T. Ely, noted economist, who is head of the Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities at Northwestern University and contributed to the establishment of the American Society of Land Economists."

Monnett's article and interview with Weinstein prove that the term, "Land Economics," as used by Ely, is camouflage for the clearer and more descriptive term, "Land Speculation."

Weinstein, according to Editor Monnett, "has been a student of land economics since 1916 and has made a small fortune out of his six 'experiments,' as he calls them."

This term, "Experiment," is new camouflage for the ugly and unpopular term, Gambling or Speculating in land-values.

It is easily seen that study of land economics is really humbug. No study or much perspicacity is required to know that if you gain legal ownership of a piece of land which is sure to be needed by the government, or by a manufacturer, or by a builder, you can sit back and demand and receive what amounts to a bribe or tribute to induce you to relinquish your legalized privilege and let workers do useful things. You are in the position of the hold-up man or bandit, except that you are protected by the courts and are considered respectable.

It is not the purpose of Editor Monnett's article to make it plain that this legalized robbery differs little from illegal plundering. The object of publishing the real estate pages now seen in every large daily is to please