

# THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE TAXATION OF LAND VALUES

OXFORD, ENGLAND, 13TH TO 20TH AUGUST, 1923

*Hon. President:* CHARLES E. CROMPTON

## CONDENSED REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND SUMMARY OF ADDRESSES AND SPEECHES

Last month we gave a brief review of the Conference and description of its leading features, including the Henry George Commemoration Dinner, the subjects dealt with in the addresses and speeches, the extraordinary interest taken in the discussions, the adoption of the Declaration of Principle and Policy, the issue of the Manifesto to Rulers in All Lands, and the wide publicity secured for these pronouncements and for Mr. Arthur Henderson's statement on the Taxation of Land Values. We have already put that matter on record in our columns. It has been broadcast in newspapers with an aggregate circulation of many millions, and all that propaganda stands to the credit of the Conference.

We now take up the story of the proceedings in more detail, and publish some of the speeches and addresses delivered. Considerations of space make us defer the printing of others till our next month's and following issues. The publication of the complete Report, to appear in book form,\* will be expedited by an adequate response to the appeal we have made for funds to meet the cost of printing and to discharge all Conference expenses, for which more than £150 is still required. We again earnestly invite contributions that will clear the way for the next business in hand—to carry out the mandate of the Conference, and prosecute our campaign with the utmost determination.

### HENRY GEORGE COMMEMORATION DINNER

*Monday, 13th August*

The large assembly which had gathered at the invitation of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values was photographed. The menu card with which each guest was presented bore a picture of Henry George with this familiar quotation from *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*: "It is a well provisioned ship, this on which we sail through space. If the bread and beef above decks seem to grow scarce there is a new supply of which before we never dreamed, and very great command over the services of others comes to those who as the hatches are opened are permitted to say: 'This is mine!'" The card was bordered with an illustration (one of the drawings by Mr. J. W. Bengough made for the catalogue of the Bazaar of the Scottish League in 1902) showing that land values constantly tend to increase, while "the landlord sleeps, but thrives."

After dinner was served, cables, telegrams and letters were intimated conveying greetings to the Conference from supporters of the movement in many countries and at home. There were more than one hundred of these fraternal messages all expressing the profound regrets of the senders and of numerous friends that it was not possible to be present. Acknowledgment of invitations to the dinner were also received from most of the Embassies and Legations in London and from the High Commissioners and Agents-General of British Dominions.

The Hon. PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE (Mr. CHARLES E. CROMPTON) rising to propose the toast of the evening: "To the Immortal Memory of Henry George," said:—

"We have met to-night from all parts of the world, and in the name of the United Committee I extend a most hearty welcome to all the members of this International Conference. I welcome our friends from America,

\* The price will be 2s. (post free), and we ask that orders may be placed now.

Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Germany, Hungary, and all the other countries and last, but not least, the daughter-in-law and the grandchildren of Henry George. We have all come to do reverence to the memory of Henry George, and the very fact that we are here is a proof that his memory endures. His message stands for all time as the correct exposition of what is necessary for a just social condition. We have to take counsel as to the best way in which we can carry forward his teaching as propounded in *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, and his other works, and insure that his message shall prevail.

"To-day the problem is even more acute than it was in the time of Henry George. No matter to what political party a person may belong, everyone, not only in this country, but in every country, is worrying about the problem that civilization has come to such a pitch that it seems bent upon destroying itself. We are all dreading the possibility of another Armageddon, knowing that if it comes it will efface civilization and humanity from the face of the earth. We know also that these evils will disappear if we can win the victory for the social justice to which Henry George has pointed the way.

"I look at the reverse side of the Name-Badge we are all wearing and will wear during the week as members of this Conference. There we find these words from *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, words that are the epitaph on the tombstone over Henry George's grave: 'The truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. If that could be, it would have been accepted long ago. If that could be it would never have been obscured. But it will find friends—those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth.' Turn to the passage in the book and see what follows in the next sentence: 'Will it at length prevail? Ultimately, yes. But in our own times, or in times of which any memory of us remains, who shall say?' It is only forty years ago since Henry George began his mission, and the thought he gave to the world has travelled far. We are here to-day in international assembly as living witnesses to its great advance and upon us lies the responsibility to spread it abroad in every land. I hope that the historian of the future will be able to write that on 13th August, 1923, the Georgeists raised their standard at Oxford—I mean the standard of battle and of war. War, bitter, relentless and determined; not war against human beings, but war against poverty, tyranny and the suffering of humanity at large. I exhort every one to rally to that standard.

Response to the toast was made by all rising and standing in silence for a few moments.

Mrs. HENRY GEORGE, Junr., called on to speak, was welcomed with acclamation, and said that the great kindness they bestowed on her, for her name's sake, made anything in the nature of a set speech very difficult. She recalled her early recollections of Henry George. Her parents often talked of all he had done and was doing. She remembered their first meeting when she was 14 years old, and realized even at that age that he was singled out as a great and good man, who captured the hearts of others. Not of grown people only, but also of children, with whom he had a wonderful winning manner. It was her happiness to have shared that love and to have been so intimately associated with his crusade in the after years. Henry George had been spoken of as an idealist; but he was an idealist whose ideals were capable of practical application.

Mr. ANDREW MACLAREN, M.P., said that Oxford was the centre of academic training and perhaps the centre of much that was reactionary, but during the coming week they would be carrying the war into the enemy's camp. It had been said that there was no better way to kill the truth than to ignore it, and in no place had that been done more than in the colleges of Oxford. The bold facts were facing any one who wanted to look at them. What Henry George had written was hidden away from the minds of the younger generation at the school and at the university. They need not deplore the tardiness of their progress; the wonder was that they had been able to prevail at all.

Miss BEATRICE GEORGE said she would respond to the Chairman's call for a speech in only very few words. She felt she was not entitled to speak in such a gathering consisting of those who had devoted a life's work to the movement. She as one of the younger generation had the deepest reverence for all the workers in the cause and for the younger generation it was a day of consecration to ideals. "We have a great inheritance from our grandfather, more valuable than all the treasures of the earth, and the claim it makes on us would, perhaps, be too great to uphold if we did not know that, holding all the truth as Henry George's message does, it is inspired from the fountain of truth itself where we can all draw the strength to do our duty."

The meeting continued till a late hour, and in the speaking many others took part including: Mr. R. C. Macauley (Philadelphia), Mr. Frank Stephens (Arden, Delaware), Mrs. S. Björner (Copenhagen), Dr. J. J. Pikler (Budapest), Mr. Bolton Hall (New York), Mr. A. Paletta (Greifswald, Germany), Mr. S. Wielgolaski (Christiania), Mr. Johan Hansson (Stockholm), Mr. A. Albendin (Cadiz), Mr. John Paul, Mr. F. L. Crilly, Mr. A. W. Madsen and Dr. Percy McDougall. After the Hon. President's speech, the solo of the Land Song was sung by Mrs. Eustace Davies. Mrs. G. T. Stone accompanied, and the audience joined heartily in the chorus. The sentiment was warmly applauded which found repeated expression in thanking the United Committee for having convened the Conference and for the admirable arrangements that had been made.

Readers wishing to have a specimen of the Name-  
Badge used at Oxford and of the illustrated Menu Card  
of the Henry George Commemoration Dinner, both  
mementoes of the International Conference well worth  
keeping, should make application for them to our offices.

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This is the period of the year when the valuation roll of Edinburgh and other cities is made up. It is one in which even-handed justice has to be dispensed and a watchful eye kept on additions and improvements in house property. It seems, of course, hard that because a man has improved his own property with his own money he should be in a way fined by the city authorities on that account by having his valuation raised; but such is the law.—THE SCOTS PICTORIAL, 8th September.

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There used to be a popular song in politics known as "The Land Song," one line of which went, "God gave the land to the people." That was an assumption, and one he disagreed with. God created the material world, and also human nature, and human nature was endowed with those two instincts of acquisition and possession.—Lord Hugh Cecil, at a Conservative Summer School at Wilton, reported in THE TIMES, 8th August.

As Mr. A. H. Weller said, on 19th August, at the International Conference: "This may be the landlords' theology. It is a very old one. It is accepted and practised by the slave-dealer, the burglar and the pick-pocket, all of whom give free play to their acquisitive and possessive instincts."

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

Tuesday, 14th August

MORNING SESSION

### Preliminary Discussion

The Conference began its first Session on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock, with the Hon. President, Mr. Charles E. Crompton, in the chair.

The MAYOR OF OXFORD, COUNCILLOR T. BASSON, was present in his official capacity, and delivered a brief address offering a cordial welcome to the members of the Conference on behalf of the City and Corporation. Oxford had played its great part during a period dating back 1,000 years and he was the 800th Mayor. He was gratified to know that at their Conference they had members present from fourteen different countries. There was no better means of promoting international goodwill than by people from different nations meeting together for such a great purpose they had in view. He wished every success to their deliberations.

The CHAIRMAN, Mr. CROMPTON, rose to deliver his Presidential Address, and to move the Declaration of Principle and Policy which had been submitted to the members in the printed Conference papers.

Mr. R. L. OUTHWAITE immediately intervened and wished to know what his position was; whether he should be allowed to remain, because he was opposed to the policy as set out in the Declaration.

The CHAIRMAN was about to give a ruling but was again interrupted.

Mr. R. C. MACAULEY (Secretary of the American "Single Tax Party" National Committee) rose to make a protest (without previous notice given) that the Chairman was not competent to give a ruling, because the Conference had not yet been formally constituted. Until that had been done they could not proceed with any business. In America they were quite unaccustomed to that kind of treatment and, as they had been told the previous night that "genial impartiality" was one of the attributes of the Chairman, he hoped to learn of its application.

A member rose and asked if these remarks were in order. The CHAIRMAN said he did not think so, and resumed his Address, but was not able to proceed.

Mr. J. A. ROBINSON and Mr. GEORGE EDWARDS (both office-bearers of the Single Tax Party) joined in Mr. Macauley's protest; and there was general confusion.

The CHAIRMAN said it was most disappointing that a few people, possibly in all earnestness and sincerity, should raise what seemed to him to be unnecessary obstacles to getting on with the business. He suggested that the gentlemen who had raised the points might withdraw to their private room (the room which the Single Tax Party had engaged for their own committee work) and think over the procedure. He deplored having to make the suggestion.

Dr. P. McDOUGALL said there was surely a misunderstanding, and thought that concord would be restored if they went through the formality of constituting the Conference.

Mr. JOHN PAUL agreed that it would be a calamity if their friends from the Single Tax Party withdrew. Their friends thought the meeting was a little out of order technically. He therefore moved that the Conference accept the Chairman as chairman of the Conference and the secretary and conveners of the Conference, as stated in the printed programme, and that they proceed to business.

Mr. BOLTON HALL (New York) seconded.

Mr. S. Y. GILLAN (California) pointed out there were only certain Americans present who were members of the Single Tax Party. He and others dissociated themselves from the objections that had been raised. In America they had been accustomed to a certain form of procedure and it worked very well, but it remained to be seen how the American harness would fit the British horse.

Mr. MACAULEY said that they only wanted a formal declaration that the meeting was duly constituted as an

International Conference. They were delighted with the officers selected by the United Committee and had no criticism to make.

Mr. OUTHWAITE said they had been told that objections had been raised on a technicality. He brought forward no question of technicality. He wanted to know whether they were free to discuss how best to apply the principles of Henry George, and how did he stand as an opponent of the Taxation of Land Values. Was he entitled to be there?

The CHAIRMAN: The matter under consideration is the resolution moved by Mr. Paul.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: You are only running Asquith, that's all.

Mr. W. NOBLE said they had come to discuss Henry George and not the politicians. They had been invited there and surely that was enough. He would have his say about the Asquith party at another time.

Mr. OUTHWAITE said he had no wish to alter the procedure. He only wanted to see that he did not get entangled in it.

Mr. PAUL, in reply to Mr. Outhwaite's suggestion that something had been before the Conference identical with Liberal Policy, said they had not taken their policy from Mr. Asquith. If the Liberal Party would adopt the policy of the Conference, then God speed them! The conveners had taken their policy from Henry George, and Mr. Outhwaite should be able to move an amendment if he wished.

Mr. Paul's resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. JOHN GEE (Secretary of the N. Norfolk Labour Party) said a number of those present like himself had absolute faith in the Labour Party, which in the last election had distributed millions of leaflets advocating the Taxation of Land Values. (It may be remarked that in the later divisions Mr. Gee voted for the deletion of the paragraphs in the Declaration relating to the Taxation of Land Values, and against the Declaration itself when it was put to the Conference without amendment.) He said that the invitation given to Mr. Asquith was a cause of offence to some present, and an easy way out would be to send a courteous telegram to Mr. Asquith asking him not to attend the Conference.

Emphatic protests interrupted further speaking, and when order was restored it was announced that the Conference had also invited Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Secretary of the Labour Party.

An AMERICAN MEMBER said that as they were now an organized International Conference they should proceed on an international basis and not discuss purely local matters.

Mr. OUTHWAITE said they were not there merely to discuss methods of taxation, they were there to discuss human rights. "Who is this man Asquith?" he said, amid loud cries calling him to order. He continued to speak in defiance of the Chair, and on being told that he could move an amendment to the Declaration, he said he had another point.

Mr. PAUL said that Mr. Outhwaite was there to prevent the Conference doing its work and he would not be permitted to do so.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: "This Conference of Single Taxers is to be used as a jumping-off ground for Mr. Asquith." The whole Conference loudly protested at that statement.

Mr. GEE then moved to send the telegram to Mr. Asquith as he had previously proposed. He was sorry to make the motion, "but it is the only way to get unity."

Mr. PAUL: You are not a bit sorry.

Mr. OUTHWAITE again rose, remarking that Mr. Asquith was known as the man who introduced Conscription.

Amid demands that the vote be taken, Mr. D. J. J. OWEN attempted to speak and said: "As one of the men whom Mr. Asquith sent to prison"—but he got no further.

Mr. Gee's motion was put to the meeting and received five votes.

Mr. OUTHWAITE continued to make obstruction by standing up when the President wished to resume his Address, and a member of the American Single Tax Party explained

that a ruling was wanted as to when it would be possible to move an amendment to the Declaration.

The CHAIRMAN: How can I fix a time when I cannot start the business?

### The Presidential Address

The CHAIRMAN, taking up the printed programme of the Conference, read the *Declaration of Principle and Policy*. (The text was published in the August issue of LAND & LIBERTY, and was in the hands of all the members.) He said he was sorry that some disturbance had delayed them so far. "I have full sympathy with those friends who feel bitter about the disgraceful state of affairs everywhere, but bitterness will not carry us along. We must approach the subject as rational beings and remember that we are not here to discuss politicians, but to discuss the principle and policy of the Taxation of Land Values. We must not let the politicians and the political parties divide us. The only practical politics that count in the real affairs of men are our principles and their application. We Single Taxers know that there are only two factors on which all wealth production and wealth distribution depend, namely, land and people. We see that the people who do most of the work do not get most of the world's goods. Those who do no work have the best fare, the best houses and the best clothes. The cause of this evident unfairness has been explained by Henry George as arising from private property in land. That institution not only takes from the workers the wealth which they produce, but also allows land to be held for speculative purposes, so keeping natural resources out of use and preventing the workers from producing all the wealth they could. Henry George has shown that land-withholding is the root cause of trade depression and unemployment. His remedy for poverty and the inequitable distribution of wealth is to establish equal rights to land by taking the rent of land for public purposes, and he has put his proposal in the practical shape of appropriating economic rent by the Taxation of Land Values—to concentrate taxation on land value and correspondingly abolish all other taxation. That is the policy which will free labour from its burdens, bring land into use, open opportunities to all, raise wages, increase production and give abundance to all. We show that all these results will necessarily flow from this policy, just as we are certain that the conditions we live under are due to the denial of the people's equal right to land. We have to establish justice by the Taxation of Land Values, in that way devoting all the economic rent of land to public purposes, that is the policy for which the United Committee stands. Is there any other way to these results? Anyone is free to put the question more clearly and better than we have succeeded in putting it in the Declaration, which is now submitted to debate."

Mr. OUTHWAITE moved an amendment that there be deleted from the Declaration all the words from "that to attain this end" to "industrial condition of the people"; and that the words "the complete collection of economic rent" be substituted for "the complete taxation of land value." This meant in effect that the International Conference on the Taxation of Land Values was to be asked to omit from its Declaration all reference to the Taxation of Land Values. Mr. Outhwaite spoke as a declared opponent of the Taxation of Land Values. He demanded that the whole economic rent of land should be collected at once and on a given day. He made it clear in these and subsequent remarks that he would not only not accept a tax on the value of land which would only take a part of the economic rent, but he would oppose any such proposition as defrauding the people of their full rights.

The morning session was approaching its close when Mr. Outhwaite had finished, and short speeches were made by Mr. Macauley, who seconded the amendment, Dr. R. E. Pearson (Kingston), Dr. P. McDougall, Mr. J. E. Docking, Mrs. L. H. Berens and Councillor Austin Brook. These speeches and others mentioned in what follows here will

be noted more fully and summarized, with a general account of all the discussion in the complete Report of the proceedings, under preparation in book form.

It was agreed to adjourn the discussion on the amendment to a special session on Thursday afternoon, the 16th August. Members of the Conference gathered in the grounds of Christ Church and were photographed.

*Tuesday, 14th August*

EVENING SESSION

#### International Aspect of Land-Value Policy

Mr. H. G. CHANCELLOR, ex-M.P., presided, and introduced Dr. J. Dundas White, ex-M.P., who in an excellent paper opened a discussion on the "International Aspects of Land-Value Policy." In this issue we reprint Dr. White's Address, and Mr. Chancellor's speech from the Chair. Dr. White's treatment of the subject was most suggestive and provoked an illuminating series of speeches.

Mr. BOLTON HALL (New York) referred to the matter of Reparations, and said that any sums paid must or should come first from land values. On the general question of assessment for land values taxation he pleaded that the tax should be based upon the annual and not the selling value of land.

Mr. FISKE WARREN (Tahanto, Harvard) mentioned the question of the sufficiency of land value to bear the whole amount of public revenues, including even the interest on public debts. Could anyone tell him what was the true economic rent of any country? They did not know, and they could not place the highest figure upon it, especially under conditions when all land would be put to its best use and there would be the maximum production.

Mr. FRANK STEPHENS (Arden, Delaware) said that in propaganda one demanded the whole reform and nothing less; in politics one asked for what there was some hope of getting. He urged the crying need for universal Free Trade, and gave striking examples of the effect of the tariff in America.

Mr. ANDREW MACLAREN, M.P., said this should be a most important session. It was quite plain that land monopoly was the fundamental cause of all wars. It was sad to think that with the peoples robbed of their rights, millions were being sunk in new naval stations; pilotless aeroplanes and amphibious tanks were being perfected with the sole object of human slaughter.

Miss A. M. HICKS (New York) wished that some definite message from the Conference should be the outcome of their deliberations. She suggested that they should address themselves in a document to the governments of the world, calling on them to adopt as a permanent solution of the economic chaos and social distress the overthrow of land monopoly and turn their attention to the rights of the peoples to the full freedom of trade. They should challenge the Governments to answer. The suggestion was received with great applause and was referred to the United Committee for action.

Mr. FREDK. VERINDER recalled the International Free Trade Congress in Antwerp held in 1910, and made the point that the blessings of Free Trade, with all the increased power that it gave to production, were absorbed by the private appropriation of land values. Real Free Trade could only come about through the policy of devoting the rent of land to common purposes.

The others who took part in the discussion included Mr. Edmund C. Evans (Philadelphia), Councillor Austin Brook, Mr. Abel Brink (Denmark) and Mr. Fred Shirrow, who said he was not going to let any stranger understand or infer that the United Committee and the Leagues for the Taxation of Land Values had qualified the doctrines of Henry George. He had never hesitated to declare at every meeting that all the rent or value of land belonged to all the people. There was only one way of establishing their full claim and that was through politics, with the consent and understanding of the people as far as it would

take them at any time. They had all the machinery for the purpose in taxation, and Taxation of Land Values was only too well understood by their opponents in the landlord camp.

*Wednesday, 15th August*

MORNING SESSION

#### The Henry George Movement in Denmark

Mr. W. R. LESTER, M.A., presided and, in introducing the speakers who were to address the Conference, referred to his recent visit to Denmark, where he had been much impressed especially by the evidence of prosperity on the countryside. It was generally true that the smaller countries had better conditions; and at the same time these smaller countries were free from all the vast expenditure on military adventures. In his journey he passed through Bremen and was happy to learn that in that city a law had just been enacted for valuing all land separately from improvements with a view to obtaining some part of the municipal revenue by the Taxation of Land Values. This first real step in Germany in the direction of their reform was due to the work and influence of Dr. J. J. Pikler, who was present as a member of the Conference.

Mr. ABEL BRINK, the Secretary of the Danish Henry George Union and a member of the staff at the Danish Land Valuation Department, spoke on "Henry Georgeism in Denmark: Experiences and Results." He expressed most profound regret that Mr. Jakob E. Lange and Mrs. Lange had been prevented from attending at the Conference, owing to the sorrowful circumstances of a railway accident in which teachers at the school in Odense had been seriously injured. Mr. Lange was a pioneer of the movement in Denmark, and the progress they had made was so largely due to his untiring activity that he (Mr. Brink) as a much younger man felt it difficult to take his place and speak instead of him on the subject before them at that session.

Mrs. SIGNE BJØRNER, who was heard with great delight by the Conference, and to whom the movement in Denmark is deeply indebted for many great services especially her able literary work as (late) editor of *DET FRIE BLAD* and other papers, devoted her Address to the subject of "The Spiritual, Mental and Economic Background for the Henry George Movement in Denmark."

Mr. Brink's and Mrs. Bjørner's Addresses will be found printed elsewhere in this issue. The speakers were asked and answered many questions. The session was one full of instruction, in view of the practical progress Denmark has made as a country where the Taxation of Land Values had been initiated.

#### MR. ASQUITH DECLINES TO ATTEND

About an hour before Mr. Asquith was due to take the platform, the discussion was interrupted by the receipt of a telegram from him as follows:—

"In view of proceedings yesterday regret cannot attend Conference."

The message caused much disappointment, and the Hon. President announced that they would have to discuss what should be done.

At the conclusion of the discussion on the addresses by Mr. Brink and Mrs. Bjørner,

The HON. PRESIDENT explained that a deputation had been to see Mr. Asquith at Sutton Courtney. They asked him if he would reconsider his decision, but he was adamant and said his decision was final. The deputation had explained to him the regret and indignation expressed when his telegram was received, and he (the President) assured them that Mr. Asquith quite understood the position. The United Committee and the Conference had to express their regret to the public who had come in the hope of hearing Mr. Asquith and he moved:—

"That this Conference regrets that owing to the discourteous and unmannerly behaviour of an insignificant

minority it has been deprived of the opportunity of hearing Mr. Asquith's promised address."

Mr. CHAS. H. SMITHSON, who was to have been Mr. Asquith's chairman, seconded, and said they all deplored the action taken on the previous day by a very few members of the Conference. Mr. Asquith had not been invited because he was a leader of the Liberal Party but because he was one whose utterances carried great weight and because in his recent speeches at Paisley, Buxton and Bournemouth he had spoken clearly and emphatically in favour of the principle for which they stood.

A member suggested that they might do without the words "discourteous, unmannerly and insignificant," and a proposal to delete them was moved and seconded.

Mr. MACAULEY, speaking for American members of the Conference, said they had as high a regard for Mr. Asquith as any Englishman, and there was not one who would not have gladly heard his Address. He welcomed the resolution as it stood.

The PRESIDENT, having read the proposed amended form of the resolution, Mr. PAUL urged that the original words remain. They expressed the mind of the Conference.

The amendment was supported by 12 votes and defeated. The Resolution was then put and carried with loud applause. It was sent to Mr. Asquith in the afternoon with a covering letter from the President stating that the United Committee deeply regretted that the inconsequent remarks of a few insignificant members of the Conference should have prevented him from addressing the magnificent audience which had assembled in the Town Hall to hear him.

#### Public Address by Mr. MacLaren, M.P.

A very large number of the public in Oxford had attended the session, as visitors, to hear Mr. Asquith, and the Hall was crowded to overflowing. It was an opportunity not to be missed and Mr. Andrew MacLaren, M.P., called on by the Chairman and the Conference to speak, delivered an Address, which, extempore as it was, stated the case for the Taxation of Land Values with facile argument and fluent deliberation. A ready and persuasive utterance that was loudly applauded.

Mr. MACLAREN said they were out to reform social conditions, absolutely convinced that the present evils were due to the plundering of the people by land monopoly—conditions that were only aggravated by the levy of oppressive taxation which further robbed industry and were spent in public charity. The State had no more right than the individual to break the ten commandments, and the commandment which said: "Thou shalt not steal" was broken to-day by the tax-gatherer confiscating the earnings of industry and allowing private interests to appropriate for themselves what belonged to the public—the economic rent of the land. Millions of pounds weekly were being distributed in doles to the unemployed, while great areas of valuable land were withheld from their best use. The material waste was not the worst; it was the terrible demoralization that poverty brought in its train. Turning to the housing question, Mr. MacLaren described the utter failure of past legislation, because it offered no cure for low wages, land speculation and the taxation that fell on houses when built. He gave a striking illustration from his own constituency. Land already condemned by the Ministry of Health as a housing site because of subsidence was the only place they could procure for a housing site. The owner wanted £6,000, but the land was valued for local taxation at only £4 10s. per annum. Moreover, in the conveyance the owner reserved the minerals underneath and guarded himself against compensation for damage to the surface likely to arise from working the minerals. What was their remedy? Surely, if £6,000, plus the value of the minerals, was the true value of the land, it should be taxed and rated on that basis and not on the basis of the nominal £4 10s. per annum. Houses and all improvements should be freed from taxation.

Apply that remedy all round in town and country, and the monopolists who were holding on to their landed privileges for one reason or another could no longer stand in the way. Freed from the landlord and the fiscal burden, industry would flourish and unemployment would be a nightmare of the past.

Wednesday, 15th August

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

A number of the Conference members gathered in the Assembly Room at 2.30 o'clock in response to a suggestion by Mr. Frank Stephens that there would be many willing to forgo excursions so that they might take the fullest advantage of the precious time available for mutual instruction on matters of important and particular concern. A meeting of about 50 members was constituted on the spot. Mr. FRED SKIRROW taking the Chair. There followed a thorough discussion on the principles underlying valuation and the assessment of such "wasting" natural resources as coal and virgin forests, and on other matters.

#### EVENING SESSION

##### Mr. Henderson's Letter

Mr. LOUIS P. JACOBS (Melbourne) presided. He intimated that Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., had sent a letter regretting that he could not be present at the Conference and expressing in comprehensive and most sympathetic manner his adherence to the Taxation of Land Values.

Mr. Henderson's message was read and received with acclamation. (It was printed in LAND & LIBERTY of last month.)

Mr. H. G. MCGHEE proposed that a hearty vote of thanks be sent to Mr. Arthur Henderson for his message. Mr. CHAS. H. SMITHSON, in seconding, said it was as fine a statement in regard to their policy as had yet been uttered; but as a Liberal he supposed he ought not to commend Mr. Henderson! (Laughter.) The motion was carried unanimously.

THE CHAIRMAN, introducing the speaker of the session, Mr. A. Paletta, expressed the great pleasure the Conference had in extending to him and his colleagues, Mr. O. Karutz and Dr. A. Schwarz, a most hearty welcome. It was a gratifying thing that they had with them from Germany three such worthy followers of Henry George to meet and greet in the warm fellowship of their common cause. The speaker, on rising, got a hearty and rousing reception.

#### Land Reforms in Germany

Mr. ALEX PALETTA (Berlin) read a well-documented paper on the taxation of real estate in Germany and the campaign work of the German Bodenreformers. He showed how gravely the whole question of assessment had been affected by the enormous monetary inflation, how mortgages had been completely discharged in valueless paper marks, and the whole class of lenders on real estate had been ruined. In the State of Anhalt a land tax had been introduced with the value of land apart from improvements as the basis and it was levied at differential rates according to the total amount of land value in the possession of each landowner, who, to assist the authorities, were required to make their own estimate of the value. The constitution of the German Bodenreformers Union laid it down as a principle that they must seek all means to prevent the land being abused by speculation; their activities included schemes for expropriation, and the establishment of small holdings. Mr. Paletta described the operation of Land Value Taxation in Kiaochau in the days of the German administration, and paid a tribute to Dr. Schrameier for having instituted the reform there.

We can only treat very briefly of the contents of this and other papers and speeches that we have not so far been able to print in our columns. They will come to be dealt with fully either in the next or a succeeding issue of LAND & LIBERTY, and in the complete official Report of the proceedings when published.

### Spain and South America

SENOR ANTONIA ALBENDIN (Cadiz) was introduced by the CHAIRMAN as one whose name was familiar to Single Taxers the world over. The Chairman greeted him and his good lady Senora Albendin. Mr. Albendin was the President of the Spanish Single Tax League and editor of the monthly journal *IL IMPUESTO UNICO*. He had been responsible for bringing *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* to Spain and for its first circulation in South America. His own literary work included translations of the *LABOUR QUESTION* (the abridgment of *THE CONDITION OF LABOUR*), Dr. Dundas White's *A.B.C. OF THE LAND QUESTION*; the speeches made at the burial of Henry George; and Mr. Bailey's pamphlet, *HOW TO GET RICH WITHOUT WORKING*. He had also made a compendium in Spanish of Henry George's *SCIENCE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY*, and among all these great services to the movement there was to be mentioned last, but not least, the organizing of the first International Single Tax Conference at Ronda (Spain) in 1913.

Mr. ALBENDIN'S Address is among those that we certainly hope to publish next month. Although Mr. Albendin speaks English with ability, he preferred to have his statement read by his friend, M. Garrido. The paper contains much valuable material about the history and condition of land-holding in Spain, and the introduction and spread of Henry George's works. Support had been given in Spain to the Single Tax idea by a host of brilliant men. The message had gone abroad to South America from Spain, and over in that Continent they saw with pride and satisfaction an increasingly successful agitation. A touching episode of a personal nature was mentioned; how after having read *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* as a young man The message had gone abroad to South America from Spain, and over in that Continent they saw with pride York the day after Henry George died. One of the interesting publications of the Spanish Single Tax League, and Mr. Albendin brought a number of specimens with him, was a Spanish translation and reproduction of the "Source of Unemployment" poster, issued by the United Committee in 1910. It had been widely billed in many Spanish towns.

### RONDA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

A resolution was unanimously approved conveying a greeting to the Spanish Single Tax League, applauding the initiative that had been taken in convening the 1913 International Single Tax Conference at Ronda, and putting on record the resolutions there adopted. (The transactions of that Conference are set forth in *LAND VALUES* of July, 1913. Copies of the Resolutions are to be had on application at our offices.)

In the discussion that followed on Mr. Paletta's and Mr. Albendin's papers, Messrs. Fiske Warren, A. W. Metcalfe, Abel Brink and others took part. Attention was centred upon such plans as increment and graduated taxation, and the so-called "self-assessment" by landowners. These schemes were much criticized and condemned, and so many notified their desire to speak that it was decided to adjourn the discussion to a special afternoon session on Saturday, 18th August.

*Thursday, 16th August*

### MORNING SESSION

#### The Full Appropriation of Economic Rent

Dr. J. DUNDAS WHITE, ex-M.P., presided, and introducing the speaker of the session, Mr. R. L. Outhwaite, ex-M.P., said that it was very necessary to work out a practical policy, based all the time on the fundamental principle that the land belonged to the people. They had not only to frame their plans for legislation but to get the people on their side. He recalled his association with Mr. Outhwaite in Parliament and the work they did together as members of the Land Values Group.

Mr. R. L. OUTHWAITE'S subject was "Economic Rent—the Case for its Full Appropriation by Act of Parliament." He said that politicians and reformers were building sand castles but the revolutionary tide would sweep them away. He was not putting forward visionary prospects unrelated to facts, but a practical policy framed to meet the impending catastrophe. The problem confronting Britain was more terrible than that confronting any other country. They had some 45,000,000 people depending upon international trade and 90 per cent. of its population were divorced from the soil. There were now 10,000,000 persons dependent upon doles—under sentence of death imposed by economic wrong. The Government was spending millions on emigration schemes. The Declaration of Rights, implemented by the Bill of Rights of 1689, was the bulwark of British political liberty, since it established the supremacy of Parliament over the King. He proposed that the Declaration of Rights should be implemented by a Finance Bill which would collect from the holders of the common estate the whole economic rent of their holdings; this fund should be removed from Parliament and allocated on a population basis to local authorities. There had been a world war and civilization itself was on the brink of destruction. He stood for the immediate and total emancipation from wage slavery instead of asking the slave masters to be kind to the slaves and give them a little freedom. To stay the coming terror and disaster, if not bloody revolution itself, the cause should be taken out of the category of rates and taxes and presented to the people as one for their full liberation. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Outhwaite said he was determined not to belong to any party whose leaders had been suppressors of Liberty. He had now retired from connection with the Labour Party. He was finished with them as with the Liberal Party. (It has since been announced that the Commonwealth League, of which Mr. Outhwaite is secretary, has been constituted as the Commonwealth Land Party.)

A keen discussion followed, the speakers being Dr. J. J. Pikler (Budapest, Hungary), Mr. George Lloyd, Councillor Austin Brook, Mr. Judge Ryckman (Los Angeles) and Messrs. D. J. J. Owen, R. C. Macauley, Fred Skirrow and Wm. Noble. Mr. Macauley supported the attitude taken up by Mr. Outhwaite.

COUNCILLOR AUSTIN BROOK and other speakers pointed out that the case to be explained was surely that trade and industry must be relieved of their burdens and public revenue be derived instead from the economic rent of land. The Commonwealth League did not make that sentiment in its manifestoes. Governments and municipalities could find plenty of scope for spending the rent fund, without remitting other taxes, just as the Commonwealth League itself had offered in its original proposal to present the rent fund (or part of it) as "back pay" to soldiers returning from the War. The opener of the discussion had referred to the failure of the Federal Land Tax in Australia; that was not a land value tax as they all knew very well; owing to its graduation it became a tax on improvements, and owing to the exemption the bulk of the land value escaped taxation altogether. The tax by its absurd incidence simply promoted speculation in all land of less value than £5,000. Even one step in the direction of land value taxation, based of course on the present market value of land, would promote housing, relieve unemployment, and give that stimulus to production which was the immediate practical question of the day. They could not value a theoretical thing, the full economic rent of land under conditions that do not exist, they could only assess the values that obtain under present circumstances, and let the Taxation of Land Values operate upon them. That way lay the quickest, most reasonable and most practical road to their full policy—the abolition of all taxation save that upon land value. There was no other way.

Thursday, 16th August

AFTERNOON SESSION

### Vote on the Declaration of Principle and Policy

The HON. PRESIDENT, Mr. CROMPTON occupied the Chair.

The debate, adjourned from Tuesday morning, on Mr. Outhwaite's amendment to the Declaration of Principle and Policy was continued.

It was agreed that the vote on the amendment be taken not later than 5.30 that afternoon. Very many speakers took part in the discussion including Miss B. GEORGE, and Messrs. S. JOHN GEE, J. A. ROBINSON, R. C. MACAULEY, A. H. WELLER, A. J. MACE, C. H. SMITHSON, H. G. CHANCELLOR, W. J. SHAEFFER, M. WARRINER, JOHN PAUL, J. McCLULLOCH, A. MACLAREN, M.P., JAMES BUSBY, E. J. McMANUS, J.W. G. PEACE, GEORGE EDWARDS, A. W. MADSEN, J. O'D. DERRICK, FRANK STEPHENS, A. S. DORAN, E. G. EVANS, Councillor JAMES MACDONALD.

The amendment was defeated by 80 votes to 31.

The Declaration of Principle and Policy was then put and carried by 79 votes to 21.

EVENING SESSION

### Independent Political Action in the U.S.A.

The HON. PRESIDENT, Mr. CROMPTON, presided, the subject under discussion being "Political Action for Adoption of the Single Tax." Mr. CHARLES J. SCHOALES and Mr. R. C. MACAULEY (both of Philadelphia) explained the activities of the Single Tax Party in the United States; how it had been formed and why. It aimed to get away from the idea that the Taxation of Land Values could best be put to audiences as a mere tax reform and emphasised the argument that the land belonged to the people. It stood outside all political parties as an independent political organization. It made propaganda by taking advantage of every opportunity to put forward Single Tax candidates at municipal, State and Federal elections. It demanded the taking of whole economic rent all at once. Mr. SCHOALES gave an interesting description of the efforts they were making in Philadelphia to get especially the younger people to study PROGRESS AND POVERTY and the other works of Henry George.

Once more the discussion was of a very informing character. Those who took part included ex-Bailie PETER BURT (whose remarks were received with such interest that he was granted extra time for his speech), and Messrs. Derrick, Outhwaite, Busby, J. A. Robinson, Frank Stephens, and Judge Ryckman.

Friday, 17th August

MORNING SESSION

### Sweden and Norway

Mr. E. M. GINDERS (Manchester) presided, introducing the speakers Mr. JOHAN HANSSON (of Stockholm), Mr. S. WIELGOLASKI (Christiania) and Mr. A. W. MADSEN. He said he was glad to make the Conference better acquainted with these speakers if that was possible, explaining that Mr. Johan Hansson had for many years been a leader of the movement in Sweden, had been editor of the Single Tax monthly journal *BUDKAVLEN*, was the author of a number of pamphlets published by the Economic Freedom League, and in his travels abroad had studied their question in New Zealand, United States, Switzerland and other countries. Mr. S. Wielgolaski was Secretary to the Supreme Board of Taxation of Norway, and had been for some time editor of the Single Tax journal *RETFAERD* and Chairman of the Norwegian League for the Taxation of Land Values. Mr. Madsen's credentials were well known to all of them.

Mr. JOHAN HANSSON spoke on the Liberal movement in Sweden, the fight to maintain Free Trade and to make headway with the Taxation of Land Values. He described

the growth of the Labour Party and was glad to say it stood solidly for the policy the Conference had met to promote. Another gratifying fact was that nearly all the able modern political economists of Sweden, notably Professor Heckscher, were in line with their ideas. Sweden had just got a valuation of all the land in urban areas and apart from improvements.

Mr. WIELGOLASKI was able to bring good news from Norway that the idea of taxing land values had made much advance in Parliamentary circles and in public opinion. In his country certain local authorities had power to transfer some part of their taxation to land values, and four towns, including Haugesund and Tromsø, had taken advantage of the option by placing a higher tax on land values than on buildings. A valuation had just been made in Christiania which would enable similar powers to be exercised. An interesting historical fact was that under an old law (of 1818) the land in Norway had been valued separately from improvements; an admirable Act it was, although now not operative because the values had not been revised up to date.

### The Operation of Land Value Taxation in British Dominions and Other Countries

Mr. A. W. MADSEN spoke on "The Taxation of Land Values in Operation in British Dominions and Other Countries." He described the progress made in New Zealand, the Australian States, South Africa, Canada and other countries, and pointed to the overwhelming testimony proving that the claims made in favour of the Taxation of Land Values had been more than adequately justified. In these countries it was in the field of local taxation that the policy had been adopted but even so, and although such adoption was only a small instalment of the reform, the evidence showed what great and beneficial social changes there would be with every further step in the direction of their goal. This was especially true of Canada and in that respect he quoted a special reprint on the subject which had appeared in the August, 1922, issue of *LAND AND LIBERTY*. (This print was distributed to members of the Conference and copies may be had on application to our offices.) References were made to a most convincing report that had just been issued by a Committee of the Durban Town Council and to the fact that in Tanganyika an ordinance had lately established native land rights much on the same lines as had been done in Northern Nigeria.

In the discussion that followed Mrs. S. BJØRNER, Mr. Harry Bland (Melbourne) and others took part, but as many more wished to speak, it was agreed to adjourn the meeting till the afternoon of Saturday and link up all the topics with those that had been raised at the session on Wednesday evening.

EVENING SESSION

### Attitude of British Political Parties

Mr. E. J. McMANUS presided, the session being devoted to a discussion on "The Attitude of the British Political Parties to the Taxation of Land Values."

Mr. ANDREW MACLAREN, M.P., who represents Burslem, spoke for the Labour Party, and began by sketching the background of the sentiments that dominated the leaders of the working-class movement, drawing the contrast between the teachings of Karl Marx and the teachings of Henry George. He said he was in the Labour movement himself to advance the philosophy of Henry George. He related the progress that had been made in the Labour ranks towards acceptance of Taxation of Land Values and the placing of that policy in the party's programme. As an instance of what was happening, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in a debate in the House of Commons on the Land Valuation on 3rd July, had pledged the party as its leader, in these words: "I am in favour of the

Taxation of Land Values. The landlords' section of this House knows that if the decision of the country is that a Government is to come in with that in its programme, it is going to be carried out." Mr. Snowden said: "The Financial Secretary has only just discovered that those who support the Taxation of Land Values, and a valuation, do so in order that it may be used to carry out their desires. We have never made any secret of that. We hold that the whole economic value of land belongs to the community." The speaker went on to explain that the Labour Party in the House of Commons had appointed an Enquiry Committee whose conclusions were first, Land Valuation; second, a Budget Tax on Land Values; and third, the local rating of Land Values. There were other proposals which they would not approve; but the important thing was that the Taxation of Land Values came first. He said that in the work he was endeavouring to carry on in Parliament he was specially gratified to have the assistance and association of Josiah C. Wedgwood.

Mr. P. WILSON RAFFAN, Ex-M.P., who spoke for the Liberal Party, said it was a Party with a great tradition. It had secured the enfranchisement of the people, fought for religious freedom and toleration, wiped the stain of slavery from the British flag and laid the foundation of popular education. "Freedom" had been its watchword, and it would be in the line of its tradition if it now bent its energies to secure the economic freedom which would result from the restoration to the people of their rights in the land. The lessons which Henry George taught were not, unfortunately, assimilated by the Liberal leaders of his time, and it was only when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman assumed the leadership of the Party that the question was taken up in real earnest. Mr. Raffan referred in glowing terms to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's devotion to the Taxation of Land Values and the efforts which he made to carry out the pledges he had given on the subject. He did not live to see the fruition of his labours but handed on his task to Mr. Asquith, his successor in the Premiership. Then came the 1909 Budget and the Land Campaign. The work of the Land Values Group in Parliament had prepared the way for practical legislation on right lines. The Government had introduced measures for revising the valuation and was pledged both to rate and tax land values. But the War intervened and set back all democratic progress. The policy was clearly and emphatically set forth in the official programme of the Liberal Party. They were about to launch a winter campaign to advance it. What he hoped to see was fewer conflicts at triangular elections between advocates of their policy belonging to different parties. Although Liberal and Labour men may start competing campaigns they must end in converging and joining forces on the Taxation of Land Values.

Members who took part in the discussion referred with gratification to the fact that both the Labour and the Liberal parties had the Taxation of Land Values so definitely in their programmes; that over 340 candidates in the last general election and 140 members of the present House of Commons had personally subscribed to it. Members of the Conference from other countries were impressed by these facts, showing as they did the place and the influence of the British movement in the country's politics.

#### Manifesto to Rulers in All Lands

During the course of this session the HON. PRESIDENT took the Chair to submit to the Conference the Manifesto to the Rulers in all Lands, which had been drafted at the instance of Miss A. M. Hicks, and with the assistance of Mr. Frank Stephens. The PRESIDENT read the Manifesto (the text was printed in our issue of last month) and on his motion it was carried unanimously and with acclamation. The United Committee received instructions to have it translated and given the widest possible circulation in the foreign press.

Saturday, 18th August

MORNING SESSION

#### Single Tax Enclaves

The CHAIRMAN of the Session was Mr. Alexander Mackendrick, who introduced the three principal speakers, Mr. Fiske Warren, Mr. Bolton Hall and Mr. Frank Stephens, by remarking that he had himself resided in America during the eventful years from 1914 to 1919, and had become an enthusiastic American in spirit, in sympathies and in general outlook. He had been privileged to act for two years as Secretary to the Massachusetts League for the Taxation of Land Values; and speaking with his intimate knowledge, he assured them that among the responsible economic reformers in the Eastern States of America, no names were held in higher esteem than those of the three gentlemen with him on the platform.

Mr. FISKE WARREN (Tahanto, Harvard) spoke on "Enclaves of Economic Rent of Fairhope, Arden, Tahanto, Halidon, Free Acres, Sant Jordi, Shakerton and Ardentown." The sub-title of his address was "How to Obtain Single Tax without Legislation." He said that the places he had named were not to be considered mere models of Single Tax. They were the thing itself. The whole economic rent was collected for the benefit of the community. The Enclaves had been established and extended sometimes by gift and sometimes by the purchase of land.

Mr. Fiske Warren's Address is one of those that must be printed in full for the sake of all its interesting information, like the many other contributions to the business of the Conference, which cannot be adequately summarized in this record. The Enclaves are faithfully dealt with in a special book entitled ENCLAVES OF SINGLE TAX OR ECONOMIC RENT, by C. W. Huntington. Mr. Warren brought a number of copies of this book with him to Oxford and placed them on the literature stall where they were sold at the specially reduced price of 2s. each. Copies at the same price can be had on application at our offices.

Mr. BOLTON HALL (New York) delivered an Address which has left a lasting impression on the members. There had been some curiosity over the title chosen "I am only one man," but Mr. Bolton Hall soon made clear his meaning. The despair of loneliness kept us from our best work. We thought our influence was so small that it was not worth while to strive for the main object. All of us underrated or ignored the power of anyone over all the rest. The true reformer did not say "I am only one man." He went out to do his duty for his fellows, and it was such men who had been leaders—the self-appointed leaders, as it were—of the world. We are certain that when the official Report is published, Mr. Bolton Hall's Address will be one of the favourite chapters in the book.

Mr. FRANK STEPHENS, who had been particularly mentioned by Mr. Fiske Warren for his interest in the Single Tax Enclave at Arden, joined in the discussion with a speech whose eloquence arrested the attention of all present. Having touched on his own experiences in the building up of Arden, and its development both socially and as a place where the arts flourished, he took higher ground. He spoke of the great and wonderful civilization that was possible when the gulf was bridged between rich and poor. Mankind would be blessed by the liberation of the soul, now hushed or strangled; and with that liberation, men's mental and spiritual yearnings would achieve their highest aspirations.

The Chairman himself took part in the discussion and was followed by Dr. S. Vere Pearson, Messrs. John Paul, J. Derrick, August Williges and others. The objective was stated to the Single Tax Enclaves that they had been and could only be established either by favour of some wealthy person or by land purchase. There was no prospect for such schemes while land monopoly obtained. Their establishment under existing conditions simply caused an increase in the price of surrounding land.



**Letter from Mr. Robert Smillie, M.P.**

At the beginning of the session a letter from Mr. Robert Smillie, M.P., to Mr. George Haug, one of the American members of the Conference, was read. Mr. Smillie wrote: "I am deeply interested in the proceedings of the International Conference on the Taxation of Land Values. I would gladly have taken advantage to be present, but it is impossible for me to be in the South for some little time. If a report of the Conference is published please let me have a copy. During my brief stay in the Island of Islay I had an opportunity of inspecting the ruins of some small villages, and many cottages where at one time lived and moved the men and women who produced their living from the soil. Large patches of land once productive are now lying waste. My experience has made me more determined than ever to denounce the present cursed system of land ownership in this country."

*Saturday, 18th August*

AFTERNOON SESSION

**Adjourned Discussion**

Mr. P. WILSON RAFFAN presided, and said that they were about to take up and have a general discussion of the subjects which had been adjourned at two previous sessions, and to cover any other points that members wished to bring forward. But he would first call on Dr. S. Vere Pearson (Mundesley) to move a Resolution, of which notice had been given at the morning session. The Resolution, which was carried unanimously, declared that:—

We the followers of the philosophy of Henry George, in International Conference assembled, are opposed to all schemes which have underlying them the nationalization of land by way of purchasing it, or by the issue of bonds in compensation to landowners.

The CHAIRMAN said that nationalization of the land by purchase would meet with opposition from all sections of the people. The movement had always been kept above party politics, and however powerful or strong a party might be which brought nationalization by purchase forward, they would regard it as a reactionary policy.

A large number of questions were put to the speakers who had opened the discussions at the adjourned sessions, and their replies provoked an intimate examination into such questions as valuation, increment taxation, graduated land taxes as in Australia and Anhalt, and the beginnings with land value taxation in Pittsburgh, Vancouver, New South Wales and elsewhere. On these and other subjects opinions were expressed in speeches by Mr. Abel Brink, Mr. Wielgolaski, Mr. J. A. Robinson, Dr. P. McDougall, ex-Bailie Peter Burt, Mr. R. C. Macauley, Mr. A. H. Peake and Mr. S. Y. Gillan.

EVENING SESSION

**Land Value Policy in Hungary**

Dr. PERCY McDUGALL (Manchester) presided, and said he was introducing one of their friends whom they were all waiting to hear because of his eminent services as chief of the Land Valuation Department of Budapest. Dr. Pikler had already taken some part in their deliberations, and in these contributions had given them an insight into the great talents he possessed.

Dr. JULIUS J. PIKLER (Budapest) had chosen as the title of his address, "Theoretical and Tactical Lessons to be learned from the introduction of Land-Value Policy in Hungary." With a wealth of example, he described how the valuation of land apart from improvements had been effected in Budapest and how for three years (1919-1922) a tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. (say 1½d. in the £) of the selling value had been in operation. Owing to a reaction the tax had been suspended, but the Valuation Department was still in existence and ready to function. He had

been successful in persuading the authorities of several other large Hungarian towns to introduce the Taxation of Land Values and there also, as in Vienna in Austria, the valuation had been carried through. While the repeal of the tax had been temporarily successful in Budapest that was not the case elsewhere. The principle remained in operation in these towns, and from his experience Dr. Pikler was able to point to its undeniably beneficial effects. The speaker went on to mention his having been called in to help in framing legislation on the Taxation of Land Values in Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck. He spoke also of his recent visit to Denmark, and his consultation with the valuation authorities there, giving good grounds for the criticism he had to make of certain flaws in the Danish valuation machinery. He was glad to say that in Bremen progress had already been recorded, and an Act for valuing the land apart from improvements had been passed.

Dr. Pikler's address, which occupied more than an hour's time, marshalled in masterly fashion a whole dossier of facts and arguments. It made a profound impression on his audience, and speakers in the discussion were glad to express their hearty appreciation of his informing treatment of the subject, especially complimenting him on the way in which he had dealt with questions of controversy.

It was found necessary to adjourn the discussion to Sunday afternoon to hear Dr. Pikler again, and have his replies to many questions. That meeting took place in the Hall of Ruskin College. Dr. McDougall was again in the Chair, and presided over a very well-attended gathering.

*Sunday, 19th August*

MORNING SESSION

**Christian Economics and Private Property in Land**

Mr. CHAS. H. SMITHSON presided, the speakers of the session being Mr. Frederick Verinder and Dr. S. Vere Pearson (Mundesley).

THE CHAIRMAN, introducing Mr. Verinder, said that his name was a household word wherever their movement existed; for forty years he had been the moving spirit of the English League. Having referred to the great Conference of the Christian Churches to be held in England next year, the Chairman said it was a happy thing that in the closing sessions their attention should be directed more particularly to the ethical side of Henry George's message, which had clearly demonstrated that economic law and moral law were essentially one. That was why they could describe his doctrine as a gospel of glad tidings. He had revealed the beneficence of natural law. The Chairman himself belonged to the Society of Friends, and he was glad to say he had recently been able to address many of their meetings and with much success.

Mr. FREDK. VERINDER, whose Address was entitled "Christian Economics; Private Property and Equal Rights in Land," began by referring to the Conference of the Christian Churches mentioned by the Chairman. In one of the "Questionnaires" issued to the social study circles in preparation for that Conference, the following searching questions were put, which took them at once to the heart of the problem. "What is the Christian view of the purpose and justification of private property? Should Christians regard all forms of private property as equally justifiable, and if not on what principle should they distinguish between them?" Mr. Verinder found a complete and convincing answer (such as is also given in his book *MY NEIGHBOUR'S LANDMARK*, a vade-mecum to all students of the question) by going to the Scriptures themselves. Quoting references at every stage of his argument and interpreting the texts, he revealed how clearly recognized were the three primary categories into which this earth and its contents and inhabitants fell—land, labour and capital. It was proclaimed that man had clear right of property in the results of his own labour. But what of the land, "the Mother of all things"?

The reply was that the individual had no right of absolute ownership in land and the law clearly recognized that the loss of equal rights to the use of land meant reduction to servitude and loss of economic liberty. It was then shown how equal rights had been lost and restored, and even the method of using taxation as a means of adjusting equal rights found support in the Mosaic Law. The question of "capitalism" and the "wage system" was discussed, and shown to rest in the monopoly of land. Supported by repeated Biblical authority, these truths were established; and the student learned from that source that the problem of a due proportion between work and leisure would soon solve itself under free conditions; abundant opportunity for education for all would follow in the train of a just land law; in consequence of the just assertion of God-given rights the opportunities for obtaining huge unearned incomes would disappear. Jesus, His apostles and the Fathers of the Church agreed with the Hebrew prophets in teaching that this would be a good thing for the rich themselves as well as for the society whose peace they at present endangered.

#### Land Monopoly, War and Public Debts

THE CHAIRMAN, introducing Dr. S. Vere Pearson, said that he had been fortunate in attending a meeting of the Henry George Club in London where the speaker had ably dealt with the question he was about to bring before them.

Dr. S. VERE PEARSON, delivering his Address on "Land Monopoly, War and Public Debts," referred the audience to Henry George's SOCIAL PROBLEMS, chapter XVI., where they would find the gist of his remarks. He said the public purse was poorly filled because the public revenue, the economic rent of land, was not collected for the public good. This led to theft from the individual, which increased the poverty already created; and then the public moneys were grossly mis-spent in bureaucratic efforts to palliate the present evil social system. Since the days of the English Revolution, this country had spent 85 per cent of her national income upon wars, their preparation and results. From August, 1914, to March, 1920, eleven thousand millions were spent and of this 36 per cent was raised by taxation and 64 per cent by loan. Examining the details, one found that only one-twenty-seventh or less of the total debt was held by the vast majority of the lenders, who paid much more in taxation for the service of the debt than they received in interest as lenders. In a very real sense the foundation of "credit" was to be found in land monopoly; those who held the land values enriched themselves further by loan-mongering. He quoted examples of the need for clear thinking. For instance, Bertrand Russell had recently written that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance "enabled Japan to absorb Manchuria and Shantung." Quite an inaccurate statement. The fact was that only a few wealthy Japanese had got hold of the rich natural resources in these countries. To bring out the relation between land grabbing, public debt and wars he gave some illuminating illustrations such as what resulted in the voyage of the U.S. battleship "Kentucky" in 1896. Admiral Chester had instructions to redress the murder of some American missionaries in Armenia. He returned with large concessions including copper mines and oil lands. The English control over Egypt was a convenience to the syndicate that had acquired territory in the Sudan for cotton growing. Large sums had been spent in irrigation works and the syndicate appropriated the enormous increase in the value of land.

In the discussion that followed Mr. A. H. Weller and others took part.

At this session the Conference rose to pay a silent tribute to the memory of two devoted Single Taxers who had recently passed away—Frank D. Butler (Oakland, California) and John J. Hopper of New York City. On

the motion of Mr. Bolton Hall, seconded by Mr. John Paul, the Conference agreed to send a message of condolence to the bereaved.

*Sunday, 19th August*

EVENING SESSION

#### The United Committee

Mr. A. W. METCALFE (Belfast) presided, and said he had an easy task in introducing their good friends the Hon. President, Mr. Charles E. Crompton, and Mr. John Paul, the Editor of LAND & LIBERTY and Secretary of the United Committee, whom they held in the highest regard and deepest affection. He recalled the formation of the United Committee in Barton Street, London, how it was composed of the leading men of the two Leagues that then existed, the English League and the Scottish League. One of their founders had just passed away, and he wished that the Conference might send a letter to Mrs. Harry Llewelyn Davies expressing their deep regret that Harry Davies was no longer with them. The sentiment was warmly endorsed.

The Conference devoted this its final session to a special consideration of "The United Committee: its Activities and its Place in the Movement."

Mr. CHARLES E. CROMPTON said he thought the Conference had been a great success and they had had an unexampled banquet of thought, information and inspiration. Something ought to be achieved now in the field of their endeavour. A great responsibility fell upon all the men and women in the movement at this most critical time in national and international affairs. The sort of general idea that prevailed was that there were two classes of people in the world—those who had special privileges and rights, and the other class that had no other privileges or rights. The Tories frankly admitted it; they recognized that there was their own class and the inferior class, for whom the Tories were very sorry; but do them honour, they did all they could for the inferior grade of people. Then they had the great Party which stood for democracy and freedom, the Liberal Party, but it too held tacitly the same idea, and so Liberals came forward with mock measures of reform, palliatives, to help people in poverty. Then there was the Labour Party elected from the poverty side which said: let the working people have representatives to control their destinies; but in all the measures put forward by the Labour Party there was always the admission that something must be done whereby their leaders would look after and organize the slaves. There had been no suggestion that the slaves should be set free. The Labour Party took exactly the same view as the other parties; they proposed measures of amelioration which they themselves were going to administer. Thus between the political parties and the Single Taxers a great gulf was fixed. The United Committee represented the concentrated thought and effort of people who stood for the freedom of the slaves all over the world by instituting the method of the Taxation of Land Values. Yet all the political parties were alive to the headway the Taxation of Land Values was making, and the Liberal and Labour Parties were adjusting their programmes to suit that advance. He said that the United Committee was an executive body acting in association with all the Leagues for the Taxation of Land Values. Its duties included the publication of LAND & LIBERTY, campaign leaflets, books and pamphlets, the holding of demonstrations and Conferences as funds permitted, and much other important work. At the office most valuable information had been compiled as to what was going on in other parts of the world. He spoke of the work of the Leagues in their own centres and what they did through meetings, Press work and economic study circles. The United Committee had also hundreds of Corresponding Secretaries at their service, making a band of men and women up and down the



MRS. C. A. WARBURTON  
*Convener of the Accommodation Committee*

country in constant touch with the office. In every way the Committee was organized and the Leagues were organized for a great campaign; but the exchequer was empty, and he earnestly appealed for the self-sacrificing financial support of all who earnestly wished their work to go on.

Mr. JOHN PAUL spoke of the beginnings of the movement in Glasgow, how the Town Council had been won over and had taken the lead in a great municipal agitation which found expression in several Bills introduced into Parliament, but before 1906 they did not get beyond the Second Reading stage. Then came the Liberal victory and the leadership of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister. At that stage it was found imperative to establish an office in London to be the headquarters of the movement, to co-ordinate the work of the various Leagues, and to be in closer touch with the Parliamentary situation. Shortly after, Joseph Fels came in to give them his magnificent support and the encouragement of his zealous spirit. The Budget of 1909, with its valuation clauses, turned the whole country into a debating society on the Taxation of Land Values, while at the same time the Lord Advocate (Mr. Ure, now Lord Strathclyde) was addressing his splendid meetings in every large centre. In those days, in one year alone, the United Committee distributed more than 40,000,000 leaflets from door to door in many constituencies. And the effect of all that educational campaign was still abroad in the land. Even the war did not suspend their activities, although in Parliament no progress could be made. The war had smashed a lot of democratic movements, but it had not injured theirs. They had been successful in holding most representative conferences, and maintained the agitation all the time. Their case was now firmly established in the programmes of the Labour and Liberal Parties. They had a great opportunity ahead. Some mention had been made of Cobden and the sweeping away of the Corn Laws. But they did not start fair with the Cobden movement. Before they could substitute taxation of land values for taxation of industry they must have valuation. That was the first essential step, and they could not get it except by education and propaganda. It had been of enormous encouragement to members of the United Committee that so many had attended the Conference and given the moral support which

wasso dearly to be cherished. Moral support, however, was not the only essential thing. The Committee had been kept alive by earnest men, rich and poor, in sixpences, shillings, pounds, and multiples of pounds. There had been a hard struggle, and had it not been for the goodwill of comparatively few men the standard might possibly have gone under. They had initiated the Conference, with all faith in its great purpose, at a time when they were £2,300 in debt, and the Conference itself had cost over £600. He was glad to announce that for the discharge of the debt two friends had made themselves responsible, one for £800 and the other for £1,500. But the liability incurred by the Conference now faced them. He therefore made a most earnest appeal for their support and hoped, too, that his voice would reach far beyond the meeting to the friends outside, whose interest was equal to that of any member present. Let them think what had happened in 1909 and remember to-day that their position was far stronger. What they wanted was the assistance and the stimulus that would bring a great reward.

A number of members of the Conference responded at once to the appeal and their contributions have helped materially to reduce the financial burden involved through the Conference, but a considerable balance remains to be discharged.

Many speakers expressed the greatest satisfaction with the Conference. Following the suggestion made by Senor Antonio Albedin on the Wednesday evening, consideration was given to the question of the place and date of the next International. Mr. Brink hoped that it would be possible to convene such a Conference in Copenhagen, and speakers from other countries emulated his example in making competing suggestions. The general agreement was that the next International Conference should be held not later than three years hence.

Hearty votes of thanks were accorded to the Hon. President, the United Committee as conveners of the Conference, the secretaries who organized it, and to Mrs. Warburton, who so capably took charge of the accommodation arrangements.

The Conference concluded after passing unanimously the Resolution that:

"This International Conference of the followers of Henry George assembled at Oxford sends greetings to their fellow workers in all lands."

#### LITERATURE STALL

A well stocked literature stall was in charge of Mr. William Munn (Assistant Secretary of the English League) and included many books and pamphlets, particularly the works of Henry George. The stall was well patronized both by members of the Conference and by the general public who attended the sessions.

A. W. M.

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