

THE WEEK AT SWANWICK

The Conference was duly constituted at a preliminary meeting of the International Union, over which Mr. Austin H. Peake, the Chairman of the Executive, presided. The Programme as arranged was approved, and Mr. Peake gave the chair to the President, Hon. Bue Björner, who, in his speech of acceptance quoted very aptly from the Address by the late Charles O'Connor Hennessy, as President of the International Conference in London, 1936: "It seems plain to us that until men within national boundaries are set free by access to natural opportunities through the destruction of land monopoly, and the reduction of tax burdens that bear so heavily on labour and its earnings, we cannot expect enduring peace at home in any land; nor until the manifold obstructions to freedom of trade between nations are done away with, can we expect enduring peace either within nations or between them. Governments will best serve their own people and the world when they learn to limit their chief functions to the establishment of the concepts of orderly justice and freedom. The legitimate concern of governments everywhere should, in our view, be not in doing things for the people, but in setting people free, under equality of right and opportunity, to do things for themselves; where honest toil and its just rewards will be opened to all, and where the intellectual and spiritual emancipation of mankind may grow to glorious attainment in an atmosphere that, in the language of Henry George, 'Will make war the possibility of a past age and turns to works of usefulness the enormous forces now dedicated to destruction'." To-day every word of this applied as truly. Mr. Ashley Mitchell conveyed greetings on behalf of the many members who were with them in spirit, but for one reason or another had been unable to come. The Conference appointed its Committees for having charge over the order of proceedings, and arrangements were made for the formation of Sectional Groups for the study of special matters.

At each of a number of the Sessions, the President was assisted by a Chairman and a Deputy-Chairman, chosen respectively from Overseas and from Great Britain. Sharing in these duties were, from Overseas: J. Rupert Mason and Mrs. Ann Ross (U.S.A.); M. Cortvriend (Belgium); H. H. Hollins (Canada); Dan Björner, Mrs. Gudrun Björner, A. Krapper and A. Poulsen (Denmark); R. O'Regan (New Zealand); Ole Wang (Norway), and Mrs. B. Lundström (Sweden). From Great Britain: Chas. H. Batty, C. E. Collier, Andrew D. Haxton, H. R. Lee, George Musson, Miss B. Noble, Austin H. Peake, E. G. Popplewell, L. A. Stevenson, Mrs. F. G. Sumner and Arthur H. Weller. At the special Public Session on British local taxation reform, Mr. Ashley Mitchell presided.

Innumerable messages were received from members and friends from many parts of the world. Two of these were printed in the Conference documentation, namely, that from Mr. E. J. Craigie, the retiring President of the Union, and the other, *A Social Democrat's Tribute to Henry George*, from the Hon. K. K. Steincke, the Chairman of the Danish Upper House of Parliament, which (in translation) was read by Mr. Dan Björner. Cables or letters, to mention here only a few, came from Isaac Bernstein, Treasurer of Haifa; P. C. Pedersen, President of the Danish Henry George Union; J. L. and Signe Björner; the Tasmania Henry George League; Halfdan Hansen, of Norway; G. M. Fowlds, of New Zealand;

R. C. Clarke, of Hong Kong, and Judge Korshak, of Illinois. Deep regret was expressed that illness had at the last moment prevented the attendance of Senor Baldomero Argente, of Spain, to present his own Paper, and Mr. J. A. Simonet, of France; and Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Wilson, of U.S.A., by the illness of Mrs. Wilson. Another much missed member was Dr. Bernard Ascher, of Israel, who had been stopped by failure to procure his travel permits in time.

CIVIC WELCOME

At its inaugural session on Monday, August 15, the Conference was officially welcomed by the Vice-Chairman of the Derbyshire County Council, Councillor Mrs. G. Buxton, on behalf of the County Chairman, Alderman C. F. White, M.P., who was unfortunately prevented from attending by reasons of ill-health. In a gracious speech she appreciated how important and far-reaching were the problems they were about to discuss. She hoped they were not spending all their time indoors, but would be having the enjoyment of excursions into the surrounding lovely countryside, so that on return from their voyage they would be able to say with the poet:—

"At Home

I dreamed we knew again
The grass-grown ride of Cavedale
And the streams of Quet Lane
The Roman road to Stanage
And the cliff of Monsal Dale."

Happy that they had made Derbyshire the seat of their Conference, she wished for them a successful outcome of their deliberations.

THE FREEDOM OF TRADE

In his Presidential address: *Can International Problems be Solved Internationally?* the Hon. Bue Björner traced the sequence of all those Conferences of politicians and experts, from the Bretton Woods Currency Conference of July, 1944, until the present time, set up for the avowed purpose of solving international trade problems: events so confusing in their scope, inconclusiveness and alphabetical titles that few non-specialists are likely to retain any distinct impression of their course. The stupendous mass of material, wrapped so often in complex jargon, is reduced to a lucid narrative revealing in clear outline the main twists and turns of the interminable effort to remedy by further interference—under pretentious professions—a situation which is itself the result of interference. The evidence leads irresistably to the conclusion: "Let us go home from this Conference without making any appeal for further international discussions to solve basic economic problems internationally. Let each and every one of us work with the goal that our nation may take the sensible step of breaking down its own barriers, regardless of what others may do."

It was well said that the decades of quantitative trade restrictions, bilateral trade agreements had fostered an army of "writing desk economists" in every country who had the time of their lives in working out their planned economy, not to the expansion of commerce but to its destruction. Among the points emphasised by the many members who took part in the discussion were the failure of governments to realise that trade is between individuals, not nations, that no expedient, however ingenious and complex, can resolve the difficulties created by artificial exchange rates, the only solution being removal of ex-

change controls and a return to free trade in money as in goods. Outstanding in these speeches was that by Mr. Ashley Mitchell, who most convincingly proved the immorality of protectionist doctrine and practice.

AT THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

In his Paper: *Practical Statesmanship for Great Britain*, Mr. Frank Dupuis undertook an answer to those who challenge us with the question: What exactly are the practical steps you would take to deal with the present situation? Without assuming any impossibly favourable conditions or making extravagant claims, the Paper traces step by step how during a normal term of office a Georgeist Government might change the whole current of present tendencies.

Succeeding speakers gave much attention to the problem of the National Debt, some contending that as it was not morally justified a Georgeist Government should repudiate it, or deliberately adjust income tax so as to absorb the interest. Others argued we should take the world as we found it and honour the debt in the confident expectation that, given freedom, investment would be so much more attractive in productive industry the bondholders would eventually agree to compound for a practicable sum. The suggestion in the paper of first lowering tariffs instead of immediately abolishing them was criticised, and doubts were expressed, in view of the workers' opposition, about the possibility of reducing State monopolies, such as coal mines.

In reply, Mr. Dupuis emphasised that his paper presented not the ideal course, but what prudence might dictate in conceivable circumstances. For a Georgeist Government to apply its policy in such a way as to throw itself out of office immediately would only discredit its principles. No Government could retain power without paying its way and discharging its immediate obligations. A land valuation could not be made or a substantial sum be drawn into the Treasury until after some interval, and conditions during that interval must be met.

BRITISH MUNICIPALITIES AND LAND VALUE POLICY

Important was the special Public Session, to which invitations had been sent by the United Committee to representatives of Local Authorities and of trades and professions in Derbyshire and adjoining counties. It was to explain to them the principle and policy of Land Value Rating and to show, by the example of other countries, the satisfactory operation of the policy in practice. Mr. Ashley Mitchell presided and welcomed the guest-members. Mr. Madsen stated the case and in the course of his review placed the onus on the Government for its failure to act on the lines so long and so insistently demanded by hundreds of municipalities throughout the country, of transferring rates upon land values and exempting buildings and improvements—instead of which they now had the mischievous and disastrous Town and Country Planning Act, spuriously claimed as an appropriator of land values, with its killing effect on all development and its huge gift of public money to the landed interests. At this late date the Government was content to do no more than enquire into the "practicability" and "desirability" of land value rating; and the Conference had in its hands, in the Papers Nos. 14 and 15, the Evidence which the United Committee (and the Edinburgh League) had submitted to the Enquiry, whose report was awaited. Following speakers were Mr. K. J.

Kristensen, who spoke of the experience of Denmark; Dr. R. O'Regan, giving the facts about New Zealand, and Mr. Rupert Mason explaining how satisfactorily the land-value rating policy worked in the California Irrigation Districts, with the help of whose authoritative testimony the practical questions that had been raised in the discussion were fully answered.

THE MORAL LAW IN SOCIAL LIFE

To judge from the intense interest shown in the Session devoted to Henry George's social philosophy, it was obvious that the members of the Conference were more deeply concerned with the moral aspect than with any other. The chief speaker was Dr. Viggo Starcke, and his eloquent address on "Our Daily Bread" was in every way worthy of the occasion. So deeply impressed were the audience with his address that there was an immediate and unanimous request that it should be published. It is given here in our pages for possible "lifting" in pamphlet form. But cold type cannot convey the overwhelming effect of the speaker's quiet, direct sincerity and the simple convincing manner with which, by the handling of the bread-rolls before him on the table, he drove home irresistibly the distinction between "Mine" and "Thine" and what happens to our Daily Bread respectively under Beveridge Schemes, the Welfare State, the Planned Economy, State Socialism and Communism—as compared with the state of Social Justice.

THE PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

In the published literature of the Conference, four Papers can be grouped as dealing with practical legislation, namely, *Land Value Taxation in Denmark*, by Mr. K. J. Kristensen, chief of the Danish Land Valuation Department; the *History of Land-Taxation in Denmark*, by Dr. Viggo Starcke, leader of the Danish Justice Party; *Land Reclamation and Land Tenure in California*, by Mr. J. Rupert Mason, and the *Operation of Land Value Rating in Various Countries*, being reprint of the Evidence submitted by the United Committee to the British Government's Enquiry Committee. There were circulated also to members, copies of the *Sydney Standard*, giving a full and revealing account of the progress in New South Wales, achieved through the work of the N.S.W. League and its Secretary, Mr. A. G. Huie. Supplementing these was the Address (from manuscript) by Dr. Rolland O'Regan on developments in New Zealand, so comprehensive and so intimately told that the appearance of this statement in print, as many members remarked, would be of great service.

DENMARK

The value of Mr. Kristensen's paper is in its detailed description of the Danish legislation, how well it is based on sound valuation procedure and how it is applied to all land, urban and rural alike. By this paper and its predecessor at previous Conferences, *Land Valuation in Denmark*, lately brought up to date and reprinted, Mr. Kristensen provides the practical student of affairs with exceptionally useful instruction on basic principles as applied and proved by experience. The prospect of the full expansion to the total collection of land values by the State and the local authorities, with total abolition of taxes on buildings and improvements, commodities and earned incomes, is now before the Danish people, and the report of a special Commission which is sitting on the matter is awaited. Admittedly Denmark has still far to go to reach that goal, well as the basis for land value taxa-

tion has been laid. This is revealed in the fact that, of the total tax revenue, national and local (year 1947-48), amounting to 3,300 million crowns, not more than 176 millions are obtained by land value taxation. Of peculiar interest (although its merits are in controversy) is the distinct and additional tax on land-value increases which has been built into this Danish legislation and in which the attention of Parliament is immediately concentrated. But it was more on the matter of valuation procedure that discussion took place—the wise provisions for assessing agricultural land; the land-value maps universally employed in both town and country; the wisdom or otherwise of choosing “capital value” instead of the “annual land-value” as the standard, etc. These questions were not exhausted at one session, but were carried over to later “open sessions.”

TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

Sessional Chairman, Mr. Arge Krapper, Editor of the Danish Justice Party's monthly, *Ret og Frihed*, named among Dr. Viggo Starcke's qualifications his authority as Danish historian exemplified in his great book, *Denmark in World History*, now in course of translation into English. That book the author had been set free to write because of the enforced closing of Dr. Starcke's famous Sanatorium in Silkeborg which the German occupation forces took over. Incidentally, as the Conference knew, Dr. Starcke was the prime mover of the recent voyage of the “Hugin,” commemorating the Hengist and Horsa invasion and was author of the booklet, *The Viking Danes*, now being issued freely in thousands of copies by the Danish Travel Bureau. The Conference paper now before them was a vividly concise account of the history of Land-Taxation in Denmark, going back to antiquity, and at the same time embracing much English history about the Danelaw and the land taxation that preceded the Domesday survey as well as what evolved since. The whole throws a light on English social history which is to be found in very few school text-books, and Dr. Starcke's paper stands high in the instructive material which this Conference has produced. Danish members took home the determination to publish in their own country these contributions by Mr. Kristensen and Dr. Starcke, and the former is also likely to appear in German translation.

CALIFORNIA AND U.S.A.

In his paper, *Land Reclamation and Land Tenure in California*, Mr. J. Rupert Mason presented a mixed picture of excellent legislation adopted and of impediments put in its way not only by feudal interests but also by the constitution of the U.S.A. itself in the interpretation of Federal and State rights respectively. California's contribution to “land-value taxation in operation” was in the passage of the laws affecting the Irrigation Districts, which made possible and, since 1917, has made mandatory the raising of revenues in these districts by taxation only on land values, exempting improvements of all kinds. Under that dispensation over 100 Irrigation Districts have been organised, embracing over 4,000,000 acres of the most intensively cultivated land in California. Conclusive testimony was given of the beneficial effect as in Modesto and Turlock, where, in 1897, about 250,000 acres had been in few hands. “Absenteeism” had since been made unprofitable. Now the average holding was about 30 acres, and transformation from big to small holdings had been accomplished “without regimentation or arbitrary action by any public official but by application of the principle urged by Henry George.” Yet, latterly, feudal interests

have been able to take advantage of a U.S.A. Supreme Court ruling whereby the State is debarred from operating its own provisions for enforcing payment of taxes in default and land speculation is again rife. Another disquieting matter is that land certain to be benefited by the vast (Federal) Central Valley Project cannot be taxed by Congress to pay any part of the cost because it is constitutionally disabled from doing so; and unless the California Irrigation District Act of 1917 can be applied to the collection of those land values also, it is a scheme which will simply make the rich richer and the poor poorer. From this rather bleak outlook the paper turns to the most hopeful and extraordinarily significant interpretation by the U.S. Supreme Court of the 14th Amendment which in 1868 had forbidden chattel slavery. In the recent “Shelley v. Kraemer” case the Court decided that this 14th Amendment affirmed the equal right of all persons to land, thus making unconstitutional the Alien Land Laws like those in California and Oregon, as agreed also by the Oregon Supreme Court in March last. “How unfortunate,” Mr. Mason remarks, “that Henry George did not live to see these historic Court decisions, which affirm that the equal and inalienable rights of man, which he so steadfastly defended, were intended to be protected by the U.S. Constitution ever since 1868!”

GERMANY

“Bodenreform”—Land Reform—was the style and title of the movement and the League, founded fifty years ago by the late Adolf Damaschke. It had always meant land-law reform in the Henry George sense; but now, after what had happened in the Eastern Zone under the ruthless and ruinous parcelling (followed by the hated collectivisation) which the Russians called “land reform,” the term was anathema to every decent German citizen. The Henry George movement had to clear itself of any such liability. The developments now on foot, despite existing severe handicaps in assembling the League's scattered forces, the political prospects for enacting wise and just land and taxation legislation, are interestingly described in Mr. Rudolf Schmidt's paper, *Starting Anew in Germany*. The advocacy of the Henry George policy will be headed by the re-named “Land und Freiheit” (Land and Liberty) League. In his talk on his paper, Mr. Schmidt looked forward to the running of economic classes on the lines of the Henry George School and the regular production of their journal, to be called *Land und Freiheit*, all depending on financial possibilities, their gravest concern being to republish their literature, including translations of George's works, of which they were wholly bereft. One immediate hope lay in the negotiations they were having with an old-established publishing house in Berlin for reviving the Year Book which, issued in quarterly numbers, had flourished under Damaschke's editorship. In what they would strive to do in the educational field they valued beyond measure the guidance they would receive from the Henry George Schools in Great Britain, U.S.A. and Denmark.

EASTERN EUROPE AND ITALY

A more intimate and more searching light was thrown on *False Land Reforms* by Mr. Robert Major, who, travelling post-haste from Rome, after being delayed for visas and permits, arrived in time to have two days at the Conference, so that he could present his Paper in person. It is in two parts, the first dealing with the experience of Mr. Major's native country, Hungary, and of other Eastern European countries, under the Bolshevistic solu-

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE
SWANWICK, DERBYSHIRE, ENGLAND, 14th to 21st AUGUST, 1949



A Group of the Members on the Lawn at "The Hayes," Swanwick.

Derby Evening Telegraph.

tion of the land question, with its persecution, its terror, its drive against the so-called "kulaks" and the ultimate enslavement and impoverishment of the peasantry. The second part of the Paper explains the recent proposals of the Italian Government for a land distribution by compulsory subdivision of larger estates and compensation to the landowners affected, examination proving how impracticable, unjust and corruption-breeding the scheme is certain to be. It is a paper to be read for the lesson it teaches and the warning it gives against all proposals of the kind, against the arts of governments which try in vain to find a middle way between State omnipotence and freedom, individual and State production, right and wrong.

In the subsequent discussion, Dr. Curt Fischer, of Wiesbaden (coming as a guest to the Conference) spoke of his experiences when he was an acting administrator within the Russian-occupied zone and substantiated Mr. Major's account of Communist tactics in exploiting the revolt against the iniquity of the landlord system that had so long prevailed.

NEW ZEALAND

Dr. Rolland O'Regan's review of the progress in New Zealand made it clear how much was due to the work of a comparatively few earnest and vigilant protagonists. In the years that had elapsed since the passage of the first Act (in 1896) that gave local authorities the option to levy rates on land values, an Act that was amended in 1911 so that rates could be levied exclusively on the value of land and buildings totally exempted, they had succeeded in seeing the adoption of the principle in the great majority of the boroughs and in nearly half the counties of the Dominion. The task of securing the necessary signatures demanding polls of ratepayers was an arduous one, but they had won such victories for their policy and its advantages were so abundantly demonstrated that the Government should have no hesitation in making the system mandatory everywhere. He was aware that those local campaigns had a great educational value in keeping the question alive but they were out for a universal application and conferment of its benefits over the whole local field, so that as soon as may be they could be released to turn their attention upon the reform of national taxation and a more intensive campaign for the freedom of trade than they could conduct at present.

Dr. O'Regan took occasion to refer to the progress made in Australia (as recorded in the Conference Paper, No. 15) and paid tribute to the work of the Leagues in N.S.W., Victoria, South Australia and West Australia, mentioning also the valuable services of the Land Values Research Group in Melbourne, led by Mr. Hutchinson.

FRANCE AND BELGIUM

M. Daudé-Bancel, speaking in French, elaborated some of the main points in the Conference paper presented by himself and M. Marcel Cortvriend, which contains a wealth of information about French financial and fiscal conditions, and the disastrous rule of the bureaucrats and "planners." It reveals the continuous problems arising from ever-rising prices and tax burdens, aggravated by the futile controls which aim at checking the disease. Some of the parties and politicians had given lip-service to land value taxation, but the trouble was to have them turn their minds more in that direction. The situation in Belgium was similar, although in that country there was a freedom of enterprise and initiative that did not exist

in France. The discussion, taken up by M. Cortvriend, led to a consideration of the Belgian-Dutch-Luxemburg ("Benelux") customs union and the hopes and disappointments contained therein. An earnest plea was made for enabling the journal, *Terre et Liberté*, to attain more influence and a wider circulation, as essential aid to the restless pens of M. Daudé-Bancel and his collaborators, Cortvriend, Giannelias, Gracques, Simonet and Toubeau, whose success in gaining publicity in quite a number of French periodicals was a matter for congratulation.

TANGIER

Mr. Louis Hirschfeld, himself a Hungarian, but long resident in Morocco, travelled to England specially to attend the Conference. The letter he wrote in advance, in case he could not come, was included in the Conference documentation and given the title, *A Lonely Campaigner in Tangier*. Presenting his paper and speaking in French, Mr. Hirschfeld recited his own remarkable experience of a Geogist in isolation, cut off by the repercussions of the wars and international barriers from any knowledge of the movement in other countries. His talk was reminiscent of the exhortation in Bolton Hall's address at the Oxford Conference, "I am only One Man," and not to despair on that account. Undismayed, he had made the utmost use of his limited opportunities to reveal to the public he could reach the source of the economic ills which they in common with the rest of the world were surrounded. Testimony to that activity was his series of articles in the *Journal de Tanger*, which were on exhibit in the Conference Book Room. Speaking of Tangier and its administration under a special régime where trade barriers are non-existent and "freedom of enterprise" in the usually accepted sense prevails (but land monopoly has all in its grip), Mr. Hirschfeld saw in the situation an exceptional chance to propagate the principles and policy for which the Union stood.

SPAIN

The position of the Geogist movement in Spain was discussed with much sympathy. Before the tragedy of the Civil War and its consequences, this democratic movement had made striking progress in public understanding and practical legislation or proposals to that end. But its ably-led organisation, publishing most excellent material, was disbanded and its forces rendered impotent. Only occasionally can spirited contributors gain access to this or that periodical, editorial censorship not altogether frowning on such activities. It is heartening, however, that several correspondents are in regular contact with the International Union, so that LAND & LIBERTY can report their news and views. The keen interest taken in the Conference was shown by the submission of no fewer than nine motions, signed by Jose Anglada and Santiago Serra of Barcelona, some in the form of requests, chief of which, and received with acclamation, was that Mr. Baldomero Argente be re-elected a Vice-President of the Union.

TO SOME ABSENTEES

A whole day of three sessions and by adjournment some part of succeeding Open Sessions, with many speakers joining the discussions, gave the Conference a broad and informative picture of the state of affairs in the countries named, from what may be called the political and the propagandist points of view. Among the absentees to whom goodwill messages were sent were the

veteran Dr. J. J. Pikler, of Budapest, whose eminent services to the movement are so well remembered; to Dr. Bernard Ascher, of Israel, detained and prevented by passport difficulties; to Senor Baldomero Argente, stopped from travelling by sudden illness; to M. Simonet, of France, whom illness had also kept away; to Mr. A. Sevenster, Editor of the Dutch *Ons Erfdeel* (Our Heritage), and his colleagues in the Dutch League, the last-named message being conveyed by Miss Miedema, who attended as observer on their behalf.

Senor Argente's scholarly Paper, *Capitalism: Its Conception, Origin and Basis*, had to be "taken as read." It discusses "Capitalism" not only as a term in current use, but also as a condition in society which, in Marxist doctrine, is responsible for the vast concentrations of wealth enriching the few and impoverishing the many. Such "Capitalism" is in its death throes and no patching of it will help; nor is Communism the alternative. True Capitalism will give place to the false when the existing order is purged at its roots of all the injustice by which it is poisoned. The analysis demonstrates how the State itself, by instituting privileged property in land has violated the true and just basis of property, and Western Civilisation is now reaping the bitter harvest of that fundamental wrong.

EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLISHING AGENCIES

Three plenary sessions were devoted to the educational, literary and publishing work for the movement. The Henry George School of Social Science, New York centre, and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, publishers in New York, did the Conference the honour of being officially represented respectively by Mr. Robert Clancy, the Director of the School, and Miss V. G. Peterson, the Secretary of the Foundation. Their submitted Papers gave a most cheering account of activities undertaken and results attained. Following their statements the Conference considered the work in the same fields in other countries, taking also under review the Journals of the organised movement and press publicity in the widest sense.

THE SCHOOLS IN U.S.A.

It was by the inspiration and self-sacrifice of the late Oscar Geiger, Mr. Clancy stated, that the School in the U.S.A. was started in 1932. From one room and one teacher it had grown to a great institution, with a five-storey headquarters in New York, with branches throughout the United States and Canada, and several hundred voluntary teachers. The flourishing extensions in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Los Angeles and Montreal were specially mentioned. All told, including those instructed by correspondence, no fewer than 50,000 persons had completed the basis course in *Progress and Poverty* since the School was founded. But so full is Mr. Clancy's testimony to the influence and value of the School's work that no brief summary could do it justice.

THE SCHOOLS IN DENMARK

Mrs. Caroline Björner told of the expansion of the study classes all over Denmark, run in the name of the Ecotechnical High School, with its voluntary teachers everywhere and using as its textbooks the works of Henry George, Jakob E. Lange and other authors. The School was organised from her own home and, as with

the Henry George Schools in the U.S.A. and Great Britain, all instruction was free.

THE SCHOOLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Mr. V. H. Blundell, member of the United Committee's staff and (with Mr. Frank Dupuis) Assistant Editor of *LAND & LIBERTY*, described the healthy growth of the British Henry George School and the gratifying developments, especially at the London centre. The School is conducted at and its extensions (as in Manchester, Glasgow and elsewhere) are organised from 4 Great Smith Street, the United Committee placing its rooms freely at disposal for evening use and otherwise providing necessary aid and support, in so far as donations given directly to help the work of the School do not suffice. But it is only right to say that the considerable success achieved within the last three years is the fruit of Mr. Blundell's zeal and indefatigable industry. The classes multiply and, with them, fortunately, the number of voluntary teachers trained and ready to take over. The accommodation reaches the point of congestion. Indeed, such are the activities of a very busy office (which besides much else has the work of the International Union in its care) so many are the duties and opportunities awaiting attention, that to speak of the need for these headquarters having much enlarged premises even to "the fifth storey," and the means to occupy them, is no extravagance.

STUDY CLASS IN ACTION

But to return from this digression to the Conference. The work of the Australian School of Economics, conducted by Mr. W. A. Dowe in Sydney (Daking House, Rawson Place, the address of the N.S.W. League and of the *Standard*), had well deserved recognition. What aroused the keenest interest was the interchange of opinion—the discussion joined by very many—on the practical work of the Schools and all pertaining thereto; for example, the promotion of classes, different methods of advertising them, retention of the interest of students, the recruitment of teachers out of the classes, the curricula of the Schools and the text-books appropriate to them. All this ground was intensively discussed by the Sectional Group on Education, largely staffed by young people, which met continuously throughout the week in the intervals between the formal sessions. The climax came with the holding of a demonstration class, conducted by Messrs. Clancy and Blundell. Before a crowded late-evening audience, six volunteers were put through their first lesson, and the proceedings made a profound impression. It aroused enthusiasm among members to see classes initiated in their own areas and countries, notably in Belgium and Germany, where the ground work is being prepared. The established Schools, their new liaison through this Conference so advantageous to themselves, will give these efforts all assistance that is in their power.

PUBLICATIONS

The session on publications was led by Miss V. G. Peterson with a review of the Paper she had submitted on the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, whose functions as expressed in the Will of the founder, Robert Schalkenbach, are the teaching, expounding and propagating of the ideas of Henry George. Confronted with this task, the appointed Trustees assumed as their first duty the reprinting of George's works and later added such works as contribute to the main thesis; and now,

with a quarter of a million books in circulation bearing its imprint, the Foundation is recognised as a full-fledged publishing house. The work also being done in the educational field was of extensive nature, in the distribution of books to public libraries, colleges and universities, and the influence which the Foundation's *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* is having in that field. They were now engaged upon a compendium similar to the Single Tax Year Book, by the late Dana Miller, which in its time had been of signal service; and assistance was urged from all who could aid in assembling its material. One listened with conscious admiration of the self-effacing description of extremely effective work, realising how fortunate the Foundation was in having Miss Peterson as its chief executive, and "right-hand man" of the worthy president, the Hon. Lawson Purdy.

An equally gratifying account of publishing activities in Denmark was given by Mr. Dan Björner. In the "Henry George Forlag" they had a "House" of their own and among their many books and pamphlets which they kept reprinting to meet the demand they were proud of their editions of Lange's *Social Economy* (the standard text-book), their fourth edition of George's *Protection or Free Trade*, and their sixth edition of *Progress and Poverty*, having exhausted 12,000 copies of previous editions.

The considerable work of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values as publisher and feeder of the movement with its reading-material was briefly described by Mr. Madsen—not only as to the whole series of George's works, but also the books and pamphlets by many writers, the catalogue at present comprising 65 titles. This was apart from the continuous production of much campaign literature and (of course) the publication of LAND & LIBERTY itself. In the way of new issues he announced the early reappearance of the favourite Gems from Henry George, under its new title, *Henry George on Economic Justice*, handsomely bound and making an ideal gift book worth a good deal more than the 3s. 6d. being charged for it. Mr. Madsen also said they must not overlook the publishing house in Melbourne, another prolific "feeder," the Henry George Foundation, Australia, its activities made possible by gift of its founder, Edgar Culley.

ON A WORLD SCALE

What could or might be done in the way of widespread education, bringing influence to bear upon governments and persuading the minds of men by the various arts of publicity, was painted by Miss Margaret E. Bateman in her imaginative Paper, *The Need for Co-ordination and Dissemination of Information on a World Scale*. It was a breath-taking picture of potentialities, and as she spoke there grew in our sight the impelling vision of an organisation of grandest stature, "capable of consolidating our forces for a world programme and fully equipped to take a leading part in world affairs." None the less, as was agreed in the subsequent discussion, she had offered a number of valuable and immediately practicable suggestions which it was surely the function of the International Union to adopt and, given the necessary funds, carry into effect.

Later in the evening of the same day Miss Bateman, with many humorous touches, showed her delightfully entertaining and instructive film strips, "Millions of Jobs" and "Foreign Trade—It's Good Business."



J. RUPERT MASON

RESOLUTIONS AND ELECTIONS

The Declaration of Principle and Policy and the Resolution on Rights in Land, adopted at the August 19 Plenary Session, appear on other pages. They have been printed in handy pamphlet form and are offered FREE to all who can guarantee their effective distribution. Translations are being made into Danish, French, German, Spanish and, possibly, other languages, so that with the co-operation of our readers in many countries the persuasive Message of the Conference can awake attention far and wide. Immediate assistance with this vitally important publicity is earnestly invited.

Elsewhere in these pages we report the Business Meeting of the International Union, which confirmed the Constitution and elected the Officers for the ensuing period, headed by the new President, Mr. J. Rupert Mason, of San Francisco, whose appointment was hailed with acclamation. Responding, he said he had left home never anticipating that such great honour would befall him and he accepted the post with humility yet with pride because there was no other world organisation standing for the same high and true, timeless and immutable, principles of which they and he were custodians. He praised the papers that had been presented and congratulated the authors; and with special emphasis he called for a widespread circulation of the Principle and Policy Declaration as well as of the Resolution on Rights in Land, which latter (and here he paid tribute to Dr. O'Regan as its mover) he affirmed was "as oil upon troubled waters."

IMPROMPTU DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

The conveniently arranged open sessions enabled members to give consideration to subjects not fully dealt with at their place in the Programme or to introduce topics they had at heart. Practical questions engaged much attention. A discussion, led by Mr. C. E. Collier and spoken to by Mr. W. E. Fox, Rev. M. J. Stewart, and others, on the respective merits of "selling value" and "true annual value" as the basis for land-value legislation, as well as how to ensure that assessments were duly paid, proved highly instructive. In this matter the new

book by Dr. J. Dundas White, *Land-Value Reform*, was warmly commended. The discussion then turned upon the need for intensive propaganda in the popular sense by voice and pen, recognising, however, that such activity was more within the province of the home movement in each country. A proposal for campaigning by speakers' caravan, urged by Mr. W. J. Cadman, was enthusiastically supported by Mr. John Bush, with generous offer to head a fund for the purpose. Among other topics was the inescapable "have we the right name for the movement?" critically stated by Mr. L. Hirschfeld and Dr. S. Vere Pearson, and answered in the affirmative by Mr. A. H. Weller, that "Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade" is, and should remain, on the banner. Breaking new and original ground and lifting the discussion upon a broader plane was the impromptu speech by Mr. Frank Dupuis, "The Georgeists, are they Human?" which so pleased the audience that, by request, it is printed in these pages.

In the sessional discussions throughout the week, besides the authors of papers, the chairmen and deputy chairmen and those already named in this report, many others took part. Among them (to mention a few without, we hope, appearing invidious) were: Fred Adams, Mrs. Catterall, C. E. Clarke, G. Edwards, Mrs. Helga Fischer, J. Garner, Pavlos Giannelias, John E. Grant, John Gray, Miss G. Levy, Miss N. McGovern, J. D. Slater, Mrs. J. R. Thomson, Mrs. S. M. Willott and E. M. Ginders.

THE NEXT CONFERENCE—DENMARK, 1951

The final meeting looked back upon a week that had gained for all an exceptional measure of encouragement and inspiration; and now, their forces so strengthened and more securely linked, they could look forward all the more confidently to the future, in performance of their pledge that the cause must prevail. The sentiment and spirit of the occasion was well expressed from the chair by Mr. Rupert Mason and by Mr. L. A. Stevenson. It was decided, Danish friends gladly consenting, that the next International Conference should be held in Denmark in 1951. The meeting concluded with hearty votes of thanks to all who had helped to make Swanwick such a gratifying event, particularly the President of the Conference, Hon. Bue Björner, the organisers at the "secretariat," Mrs. D. Duplock and Mr. W. E. Bland for their care over household arrangements, and Messrs. C. H. Batty and J. W. Foley for their arrangement of the coach excursions, the musical evenings and other entertainment. It was a full programme, but it was by no means all work and no play. The social side of the Conference, the companionship of all being under one roof, contributed immensely to the success attained.

A. W. M.

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

To stimulate in all countries a public opinion favourable to permanent peace and prosperity for all peoples, through the progressive removal of the basic economic causes of poverty and war, as these causes are demonstrated in the writings of Henry George. Specifically, towards the realization of these objects, the Union favours the raising of public revenues by taxes and rates upon the value of land apart from improvements in order to secure the economic rent for the community and the abolition of taxes, tariffs, or imposts of every sort that interfere with the free production and exchange of wealth.

Membership is open to all persons, irrespective of sex, race, or nationality, who in good faith sign a written declaration of adherence to the objects of the Union, and pay a minimum annual subscription equivalent to five shillings sterling.

ENCOURAGING NEWS FROM SWEDEN

From Mr. Johan Hansson of Stockholm we have received an excellently printed and produced pamphlet, *Sveriges Rättsförbund*, containing the provisional programme of the Swedish Justice Union, formed on August 18 with similar aims to the Justice Union of Denmark. An Annual Meeting next year will decide and draw up the definite programme. "We find considerable interest," writes Mr. Hansson, "and there is no doubt we will have considerable success." Preparations are under discussion for publishing new editions of the Swedish versions of *Progress and Poverty* and *The Condition of Labour*.

We hope to publish later some translated extracts from the pamphlet.

Members of the Land & Liberty movement in all other countries will congratulate their Swedish friends on this achievement and renew their efforts to assist its progress by their own example.

MR. RUPERT MASON IN BIRMINGHAM

We are indebted to a correspondent for a report of the speech made by the President of the International Union to a meeting of the Midland Land Values League, held at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham, on August 26.

On the subject, "A Glimpse into the Economic and Political World Outlook," Mr. Mason said, "Looking at the world position to-day, the policies of Governments are those of confiscation and restrictions upon trade. I am of opinion we are in danger of making bigger mistakes than we made after World War I. What is there to offer wearied mankind?" he asked "in the way of a positive set of principles from which the solution of our difficulties might proceed? There are such principles, and they are the oldest principles known to man. Stuart Mill explained them in general terms, but he never explained how we could apply them consistently in economic life. Henry George was the first economist to explain how we could make these principles into a practical proposal if we wished to do so.

"I was a believer in those principles," said Mr. Mason, "before I heard of Henry George. Unless they are given more study, more discussion in all parts of the world, the prospect looks dark for our seeing in practice what each of us believed to be the rights of the individual. One of our main hopes is in multiplying small study groups. While we have freedom of speech, this is an effective means of spreading knowledge.

"As an American," Mr. Mason concluded, "I cannot help quoting some words of Henry George in his Fourth of July oration in San Francisco, 1877, when he said, 'Is it too soon to hope that it may be the mission of this Republic to unite all nations of English speech . . . in a league which, by ensuring justice and liberating commerce . . . will be the forerunner of a world-wide federation that will make war the possibility of a past age?'"

GUSTAV BUSCHER

In the passing of Gustav Büscher, of Zürich, whose death on September 3 we regret to announce, the Henry George movement has lost a supporter and able writer whose services in books and pamphlet date back many years. Librarian in his city, he was an authority on the land question in Switzerland and Germany. His last work, *Hat Hitler doch Gesiegt?* (Did Hitler win after all?), in the sense of the setback of democracy everywhere, was reviewed in our issue of June, 1948.