

LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

THE PUBLIC meeting at Crawley, Sussex, held on November 25, in sympathy with the protests against the folly and injustice of the New Towns Act as it will affect that and other places, had excellent publicity. In the local Council there had been a keen discussion on the invitation sent to Members and this advertisement of the League had prominent notice in the local papers. The public meeting followed and extensive reports were published of the speeches delivered, the burden of which was that this legislation was on wholly false lines and would prove abortive. The building of new towns was a great ideal but it could not be realised by schemes of State land purchase provoking land speculation on the one hand or compelling arbitrary and inequitable dispossession on the other hand, nor by bureaucratic regimentation for moving populations from one place to another which meant control over where they should live and work. The planners responsible for these schemes held lofty conceptions but it was deplorable how they disregarded the causes of the bad conditions they sought to remove, these causes lying fundamentally in the private appropriation of the rent of land and the evil incidence of taxation on buildings and improvements and the earnings of industry. The speakers were Messrs. T. Atholl Robertson, A. W. Madsen, Stephen Martin and George Winder.

The League's January programme of meetings include: On the 8th at the Scottish Liberal Club, Edinburgh, at 1.30 p.m., and in the St. Andrews Halls, Glasgow, at 8 p.m.; on the 9th in the Music Hall, Aberdeen, at 8 p.m.; all organised by the Scottish Liberal Party, with Messrs. Wilfrid Harrison and Ashley Mitchell as speakers, the subject being: 'The Crisis of Freedom—a Positive Liberal Policy—Free Land, Free Trade, Free Men.' Other public meetings arranged are in the Town Hall, Chiswick, on January 20 and in the Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead on January 28, each at 8 p.m., on the same subject as at Crawley and earlier (on October 16) at Stevenage.

Mr. Stephen Martin has been engaged in much Press correspondence, his published letters including those in the *Manchester Guardian*, in the *Hertfordshire Express* and several in various Kent papers on housing and town planning and the land question. The *Manchester Guardian* letter (December 30) corrected the statement of Mr. Lancelot Spicer (of the group called 'Radical Action') that it was the 'accepted Liberal policy' that some form of nationalisation is the only solution of our transport problem. It may be true, Mr. Martin said, that the Rowntree Report and pronouncements by the Liberal Parliamentary party leaders have advocated nationalisation, but the rank and file have never discussed the problem of inland transport at any national assembly of the party, nor have they had the opportunity to do so. Mr. J. Ward Daw, Chairman of the London Liberal Party, had a letter in the same issue of the *Guardian* making precisely the same point. The Liberal course was the abolition of all restrictions on road transport, bluntly at variance with the other two parties which fostered monopolies in one guise or other. Mr. Daw continued that Mr. Lancelot Spicer displayed a curious inability to understand the phrase 'Radical policies' and it would assist the Liberal Party if he could bring himself to the realisation that Radicalism is the alternative to Socialism and not a feeble shadow of it.

Memorandum addressed on behalf of the Executive by the Chairman of the League, Mr. Ashley Mitchell, to the Liberal Members of Parliament, the Officers of the L.P.O., and the Members of the Liberal Council.

The King's Speech announced that proposals would be submitted for Compensation and Betterment in relation to Town and Country Planning. Presumably these proposals will be on the lines of the Uthwatt Report for the purchase of the development rights of unbuilt-upon land, with a scheme for the taxation of the increment value of developed properties. In that event the attitude of the Liberal Party both in Parliament and outside is a matter of serious moment to all Liberals.

The fact that the Uthwatt scheme was approved by the Liberal Assembly in 1943, in the opinion of this League, should not be taken as binding the Liberal Party. The resolution was only carried by a small majority (72 to 59) in a rushed debate at the end of the day by a small attendance of delegates, and when the discussion had been heavily closed in order to clear the agenda for the next day's business. As a consequence of that decision, so unfairly taken, many Liberals expressed their consternation and urged the formation of this League to defend the long-established attitude of the Party that the land and housing problem be dealt with by means of

the Taxation and Rating of Land Values, unanimously re-affirmed by the last pre-war Assembly at Scarborough in 1939. In October, 1943, the London Liberal Party re-affirmed the same policy and condemned the Uthwatt Scheme. The Scottish Liberal Party has recently adopted a Manifesto expressing its adherence to the long-established policy.

If the Liberal Party supports the purchase of the development rights, there is certain to be a serious cleavage in the ranks. The efforts that have been made to reorganise and revivify the Party since the last election will be neutralised—in fact the Party will be faced with the most serious crisis in its history, despite all the tragic difficulties of the last 20 years. But the fact that so many Liberals have never accepted the Uthwatt policy and have openly opposed its support enables the Party to readjust its position.

If the land is nationalised, as is the practical effect of the Uthwatt scheme, there could be no future for a Liberal Party. All development would be under the control of the central Government. The present controls would be intensified and there would be no hope of release, with the result that local autonomy would be a travesty and Socialism permanently established.

If the Government becomes the landowner there will be little hope of ever restoring Free Trade, as the State would be opposed to foreign competition that might result in reducing the rent of State-owned land. If that position is reached there could be no call for a Liberal Party as the people would be less able even than to-day to understand the need of it.

The desire of many Scotsmen for access to land and an independent way of living, and their frustration, is indicated by the figures given for one County alone, Ross and Cromarty, where the number of unsatisfied applicants for small holdings is 4,186—Mr. Westwood in the House of Commons, November 19, in answer to a question.

Mr. Dalton, replying to Mr. Assheton in the House of Commons on November 19 stated that during the six months ended September, the amount repaid in saving certificates exceeded those bought by £1,750,000.

In the debate on the Trafalgar Estates Bill which provides for the ending of the £5,000-a-year Lord Nelson pension, it was revealed that in the 140 years since Nelson died, a sum of no less than £700,000 has been paid out. It was first granted, Mr. Dalton said, to his venerable brother the unsuccessful naval chaplain and had continued to be paid not to Lord Nelson's direct descendants, but to the descendants of his collateral relatives through successive generations.

Publications Received: *Where To, America?* an answer to Henry A. Wallace and his "Sixty Million Jobs," by Judge Max M. Korshak, Bayard Lane, Inc., Suffern, N.Y., U.S.A., \$1; *Economics Simplified*, by E. E. Bowen and George L. Rusby, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, \$2; *The Self-supporting City*, by Gilbert M. Tucker, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, \$1; *Freedom is as Freedom Does*, by Sydney J. Abelson, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; *Father McGlynn on the Land Question*, a doctrinal statement prepared by the Rev. Dr. McGlynn and approved by the Papal Alegate Mgr. Satolli, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 2c. each, 100 for \$1; *The Repeal of the Corn Laws*, by Francis W. Hirst, the Cobden Club, Midhurst, 1s.; *The Fiscal Policy of Europe*, by George Peel, the Free Trade Union, London, 6d.; *The Canker of Economic Nationalism*, by Otto Mombert, the Free Trade Union, 6d.; *Henry George*, a sermon by John Haynes Holmes, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York; *Introduction to the New Political Economy*, by C. Le Baron Goeller, Henry George Free Tract Society, Endwell, New York; *Money and Banking*, the Joint Council of Monetary and Economic Research, London, 1s. 6d.; *Danmark i Verdenshistorie* (Denmark in World History), by Dr. Viggo Starcke, Munksgaards Publishing House, Copenhagen, 24 Crowns; *Folket og Retsfaerdigheden* (The People and Justice), by Dr. Viggo Starcke, Second Edition, Retsforbundet, Copenhagen, 1 Crown; *Jesus af Nasaret* (Jesus of Nazareth); by Pastor Chr. Norlev, Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, Copenhagen, 5 Crowns; *Arbejdets Frigørelse* (Labour's Emancipation), by Pastor Chr. Norlev, Retsforbundet, Copenhagen, 1 Crown; *Samtid och Framtid* (The Present and the Future), No. 3 of 1946, with article on Modern British Tariff Policy, by Deryck Abel, Natur och Cultur, Stockholm; *Die Bodenfrage* (The Land Question), Part 6 of *Das Archiv*, published by Freiwirtschaftlicher Schriften, Bern, 1 Fr. 80 c.; *A Stiff-necked People* Palestine in Jewish History, by Berl Locker, Victor Gollancz, 3s. 6d.

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