

industry. The Conference therefore welcomes the prospect of a Budget Tax on land values; urges that it be applied in town and country alike, with corresponding remission of taxes now levied on production and trade; and resolves to secure support for this policy by every legitimate means.

Moved by Councillor Andrew MacLaren, M.P.

Seconded by Mr Charles Dukes, M.P.

Other Conference Meetings

On Saturday evening, 15th February, following the Public Conference in the Houldsworth Hall, delegates and visitors will meet at the Grand Hotel at 8 p.m. to take up for consideration any of the points discussed during the day. The main topic will be "How to Promote the Objects of the Conference." Councillor Rupert East, Mayor of Aylesbury, will preside.

On Sunday, 16th February, special meetings will be held also in the Grand Hotel at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., to which all interested in the work of the Conference are cordially invited. Details of these arrangements will be announced later.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE IN BURSLEM

Saturday, 25th January

Under the auspices of the United Committee a representative Conference to Promote the Taxation and Rating of Land Values will be held in the New Town Hall, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, on Saturday, 25th January. There will be two sessions, one at 3.30 p.m. and the other at 6 p.m., the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent presiding.

Burslem is the constituency of Mr Andrew MacLaren, M.P., and as a matter of course he will be one of the chief speakers. He will open the discussion at the evening session on "Taxation, Rating and Unemployment." At the afternoon session, the Rt. Hon. Josiah C. Wedgwood, Member for the adjoining constituency of Newcastle-on-Tyne was to have opened the discussion on "The Principle of Taxation of Land Values" but owing to his visit to South Africa, as explained in another column, arrangements are being made for another speaker to act in his stead.

Invitations to appoint delegates have been issued within the area of Staffordshire and Derbyshire to Labour Trade Union, Co-operative and other progressive bodies; and to meet the expenses of the Conference a fee of 1s. per delegate has been fixed, or five delegates 3s., five being the limit of representation for any Branch, Party or Association.

The Conference, like that to be held in Manchester on Saturday, 15th February, is of special importance in view of the declared intentions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to embody a measure of land value taxation in his forthcoming Budget.

The organization of the Burslem Conference is in the hands of Alderman E. T. Bird and the local address is 2, Church Street, Burslem, where all information may be obtained.

The *Irish Weekly*, in its Christmas number, contains a ten-inch column advertisement of publications on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, including Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* and the abridged edition of *Protection or Free Trade*. Special prominence is given to the words of commendation written by Mr Philip Snowden in his introduction to the latter book. Readers of the journal are also invited to join and subscribe to the International Union.

A UNIVERSITY STUDENT ON HENRY GEORGE

[From an article appearing in *THE SERPENT* of November, organ of the Manchester University Unions. The authoress is Miss E. Jean McDougall, a daughter of Dr Percy McDougall of Manchester. She was present and spoke at the International Conference held in Edinburgh last July.]

Fifty years ago in America, Henry George first published his great classic of political philosophy, *Progress and Poverty*; and to-day Philip Snowden promises in his coming Budget to start the practical application of that philosophy by levying a tax on land values in this country.

Between these two events stretches the early history of a world movement. *Progress and Poverty* was the result of years of observation and thought upon the social conditions of Western civilization at the end of the nineteenth century. Few books can have had such world-wide influence upon modern politics.

Henry George pointed out an amazing injustice in our laws, and he realized its fundamental importance and its far-reaching effects. He saw that since land is the ultimate source of all wealth, unequal property rights in land means unequal opportunities to produce wealth.

He pointed out that the land laws of all the civilized countries had not been altered since the days when might was right and the landowner was the law-maker. Thus the law, although it does not permit him to use physical force to achieve his own ends, grants the landowner the deadly economic power to prevent others from using the land of their own country to produce wealth. The law grants this privilege, and the landowner uses it without a thought of the injustice of his position. The fault is with every man who has power to change the law, but who regards the present unjust system as normal or inevitable.

Henry George worked out a remedy in full practical detail. He said that the value of land apart from improvements is created by the activities of the community as a whole, and therefore every man holding land should pay that value back to the community in tax. At the same time all taxes should be removed from improvements and the products of enterprise.

The effects of this change would be enormous, for it would be working always towards equal opportunities for producing wealth, just as the present system is working always away from such justice.

The immediate effect would be that landowners would have to put their land to its most profitable use, or sell it. Land at present unused or poorly developed would be for sale at a very low price. Towns could at once expand and cheaper houses be built. This means employment of more labour. Industry and every form of productive enterprise would benefit, from the farmer to the small shopkeeper. Wages would rise with the increased demand for labour, and the prosperity of the community as a whole would inevitably rise. . . .

Britain needs the reform perhaps more vitally than any other country. No redistribution of wealth, or confiscation of a man's just earnings, can increase the national prosperity while valuable land lies idle or poorly developed. No relief of rates or expenditure of public money can profit any class but the landowners so long as the nation neglects to collect the ever-increasing land values which it is itself creating.