

Teacher had to say. The Messiah whom the Order of the Star of the East is so anxiously expecting had indeed already arrived, and with him a new era had opened, and a new chapter in the Book of Life had commenced.

He had a wonderful dome-like head, and the great thinking apparatus within could always be relied upon to give the most clear and lucid exposition of his philosophy before crowded audiences wherever he went, the orator walking up and down the while and thinking it all out as he went along. There was no hesitation, no slipshod imagery, no hunting for a word, no confusion of thought. Everything was orderly, logical, and straight to the point carrying conviction to all but those whom neither eloquence nor logic could convince, leading the bulk of his audience to the irresistible conclusion that here at any rate, was a system of economics based on justice and equity, which went to the very root of the social problem, and which only required the votes of the majority to be carried into practical effect. We Single Taxers were so convinced of the unanswerable logic of the Prophet's message that we confidently looked forward to its being accepted by the majority within a comparatively short period and made the law of the land! But, alas for our simple credulity! We reckoned without our host, represented in this case by self-styled democrats of Australia, who followed leaders even blinder than themselves, and refused to accept the teachings of the greatest democrat who ever lived. Nearly 35 years have elapsed since the visit of the great Seer, and we seem but little nearer our goal than when he came among us.

It is true that both in Queensland and New South Wales the Single Tax principle has been applied in the municipal sphere, and the other States are gradually adopting our views so far as the municipal sphere is concerned, but the bulk of the people are still ignorant of what the Single Tax really is. The Labor Party, which should be the first to adopt it, is following false gods, and by its policy of exemptions and graduations which the other parties support, has done the principle of land value taxation far more harm than good, while its persistent advocacy of protection almost to the extent of prohibition still further blocks the progress of our cause. But notwithstanding every obstacle, in spite of all opposition, that cause is bound to win.

There are already signs, and very significant signs, that the belief in the efficacy of protection is breaking down, while in its stead another and far more democratic belief is springing up—that the expenses of the community should be met out of the communal fund created by the presence and activities of the people as a whole. The city newspapers, run in the interests of capitalists, may refuse to publish our views; the Church may continue to discourage our efforts to overthrow vested interests and to bring about a reign of justice on earth; lack of funds may hinder and restrict our work; and the task of educating

the people on Georgian lines may become increasingly difficult; but the present system, based on injustice, cannot last; the Great War, by the huge indebtedness which it entailed, is straining it to breaking point; and the unremitting advocacy of the gospel of Henry George by a band of enthusiastic workers in every one of the Australian States must be ultimately rewarded by the solution of the social problem on the lines which our great Master laid down. In the meantime, while the work of education is going slowly on, we must learn to "labor and wait," believing that the time must ultimately arrive when the cause of truth will prevail, and when the great gospel taught by Henry George will come into its own.

—PERCY R. MEGGY.

Our British Letter

THE British Trade Union Congress has just concluded its 57th Annual Session. Some 800 delegates, representative of every branch of industry, have been in attendance at Scarborough for a week past, where they have varied the discussion of an agenda of 85 resolutions (with the customary "emergency" motions as extras) with the pleasant attractions of that fashionable East Coast resort.

The Congress claims to represent over 4½ million "organized" workers; but it must not be thought that all these are "class-conscious" Socialists, or even that they necessarily are adherents of the political Labor Party. Far from it, in fact. The membership of the Unions comprises men and women engaged in industry, who have joined their respective unions for the purpose of obtaining the several "benefits" held out to them in return for the contribution paid. For example, sickness, unemployment, and funeral insurances; also various "compensation" payments, such as for loss of tools and for household furniture by fire, etc. As these matters are affecting all workers quite apart from any political label, it follows that every political party has its supporters inside the Trade Union Movement, and, also, that there are many members who are quite indifferent to political issues, and who do not, therefore, take the trouble to vote at elections. Thus, in spite of the pretence of the Trade Union Bosses that they speak for the whole of organized Labor, the T. U. Movement regularly stultifies itself at each General Election, the members voting Liberal, Labor and Tory, or neglecting to go to the poll at all.

Some idea of the real strength of the "class-conscious" element within the Unions may be formed in the fact that the *Daily Herald*, "Labor's only daily," and which is the joint property of the Labor Party and the Trade Union Congress, and, as such, is boosted at all their gatherings, and in every branch meeting, only has a circulation of about 400,000, which figure, of course, includes the many readers who are quite outside the Labor Party, if not, indeed, actually hostile to it. Still, the Congress is the

Parliament of the industrial section, and its agenda is an indication of the way these are thinking, or, at least of the way that smaller section of them which is sufficiently active to draft and submit resolutions for discussion—a quite small section at best—is thinking.

In view of the peculiar interest of the Trade Unionists in the question of unemployment, it would be quite natural to expect that this subject would loom large in the agenda; indeed, it would not have been at all remarkable had the whole of that document been devoted to this one subject. Ever since the close of the war, the number of those registered as being out of work has shown an alarming upward tendency. There have been fluctuations, of course; but the minimum number persists in rising steadily, in spite of all the expedients resorted to by the authorities in a vain effort to conceal the ugly truth. The last official figure, that for August 31, 1925, being 1,354,100. This was an increase of 10,362 over the previous week, and of 204,984 in the corresponding week of last year. In the last six weeks the figures have risen by 156,500, and at this moment (September 14, 1925) there are officially registered as unemployed in Britain, more than the entire population of New Zealand.

To this grave total must be added the thousands who are temporarily "out of benefit" under the Insurance scheme, and are, therefore, not counted at the Labor Exchanges; and, also, the large number of others who for various reasons are not qualified to claim "Unemployment" benefit, or who have refrained from undergoing the humiliation of registering, hoping their small reserves may last out until something turns up. It is no exaggeration to put the total of actually unemployed persons at 2,000,000. This fearful total must grow, for the reason that we are now approaching that season of the year when, in normal times, the curve of unemployment is highest, owing to winter conditions. But there is another factor operating that must be taken into account. We are paying out millions of pounds weekly in poor-relief, for, of course, the unemployed cannot be allowed to die of starvation. They must be kept alive—if only just alive, at that—and so an enormous and increasing burden of taxation is falling upon the community, reducing its purchasing power, and, consequently, adding to the numbers of the unemployed those others who are being paid off owing to the failure of effective demand for commodities, because of the reduction in real wages caused by the aforesaid taxation. Take the case of one London Borough. The Camberwell Guardians have just made their demand for Poor Law purposes. For the half-year ended 31, March, 1925, there was £97,612, but for the half-year ending 31, March, 1926, it will be £201,171. The number of persons receiving relief from the rates having grown from 3,000 to 10,000. The whole community is revolving within a vicious circle, the circumference of which is steadily shrinking toward the centre. Where will it end?

What is the contribution of official Labor to the one question which especially concerns itself? Here are some of the resolutions that were thought worthy of consideration:

"Early Closing Orders: That in view of the difficulty experienced by Local Authorities in enforcing the Early Closing Orders, this Congress calls on the Government to introduce national legislation to regulate the closing of all business premises at a fixed time."

"Payment of Holidays: That it be put forward that a fortnight's holiday with pay be granted every employee. Seeing the clerical staffs of firms and Government employees receive this as part and parcel of their employment, it is only right the men who do manual labor should also receive it."

"Payment of Wages Mid-Weekly: That the Congress press for a Government measure to make wages payable mid-weekly to all workers."

"Transference of Members: That this Congress is of the opinion that all laundry workers within the membership of other unions should be transferred by December 31st, 1925, to their own industrial union, and such members be based on the basis of immediate benefit."

The above are samples of the weighty matters brought up for attention in the midst of the present critical period. Other motions were of a purely political character, having little if any bearing upon the unemployment peril—a peril that intensifies as time passes with nothing done. But it must not be thought that the agenda was silent regarding the problem. There was a section reserved where, under the heading, "Unemployment," three motions were set forth.

The first called "upon the Government immediately to introduce an Amending Act which will provide for continuous (Insurance) benefit being paid to unemployed workers without reference to standard or extended benefit."—This is not to reduce unemployment but to increase it.

The second motion ran: "That this Congress calls upon the General Council to consult with the Labor Party to introduce a bill into Parliament to transfer the administration of Unemployment Insurance to the various Trade Unions."—No question of reduction here; merely a demand that, if conceded, would make more work for the Trade Unions, at "adequate remuneration," as the only amendment to the original motion thoughtfully demands.

The third resolution, "Views with greatest concern the serious volume of unemployment now existing." It condemns the Government for "lack of effective measures to alleviate the situation," and continues: "It further declares its emphatic opposition to the spurious remedies of lower wages and the degradation of established working conditions, and calls upon the Trade Union Movement to offer its utmost resistance to any attempt to increase the hours of work. It asserts the unquestionable right

of the unemployed worker and his dependents to adequate maintenance, and reiterates its demand for the establishment of a National Employment Development Board for the purpose of devising and co-ordinating measures whereby the extent of unemployment may be reduced."—Not a glimmering of the truth that there is no need for a single person able and willing to work to be out of a job in Britain at this moment. The situation is accepted as part of the natural order of things, and so there never is a suggestion that unemployment could be abolished immediately and for ever. In consequence of this failure to grasp this truth, Labor goes on blindly groping for a way out. Congress succeeds to Congress, without a single practical proposal emerging from all the flood of eloquence.

"The Labor Movement exists to get right down to causes, instead of tinkering with effects," said Mr. R. B. Walker, Secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, the other day. His Union submitted the following example of "tinkering with effects."

"Land Cultivation: Having regard to the number of young farm workers leaving the land, and in view of the urgency of the unemployment problem, this Congress calls upon the Government to require from the County Agricultural Committees return of all uncultivated and under-cultivated land, and to give the Committee wide powers of control and compulsory acquisition of all such land. It demands that all assistance, financial or otherwise, given to farmers should be contingent on certificates being produced that the land is satisfactorily cultivated."—No recognition of the "cause" of the flight of the young farm workers from the land. Always "control!" Freedom is something the Trade Union Boss cannot understand, and for which he has no use.

The Butcher's Federation, with an eye to business, proposed "That the General Council of the Trade Union Congress be requested to bring forward a Bill for the compulsory utilization of golf links to carry not less than one sheep per acre, so that fuller provision can be made for the supply of fresh meat to the general public at a reasonable price."—As if there was ever the remotest chance of the present Tory Government paying any heed to the "calls" of the T. U. Congress. Really, the whole proceedings must appear farcical to any who understand!

Fourth, at the very end of the agenda appeared the following motion: "This Congress is of the opinion that the present system of land 'ownership' is at the root of our social and economic problems, and that as a natural gift to or inheritance of the community it is not in the interests of the nation that it should be privately owned by any individual or group of individuals, short of the whole community. The Congress, therefore, demands the restoration of the land to the people, through the collection by the Treasury, on behalf of the people, of the whole of the rent, and declines to agree to any form of compensation (whether by way of purchase or otherwise) from the pub-

lic treasury for what has already been taken and withheld from the community."

This was proposed by the "Altogether" Builders' Laborers and Constructional Workers' Society, and the General Council, by placing it under the head of "Miscellaneous," and printing it at the very end of the Order Paper, showed how little they were prepared to deal with "causes." They also secured that it should not be fully discussed. Of the 85 resolutions the above—No. 82—was the only one that touched fundamentals. It was at the final sitting of the Congress, on Saturday morning, that the motion came on with a number of others. There was no time for more than a short—very short—speech by mover and seconder. The vote being taken, the resolution was declared carried; but it must not be imagined that all the delegates who voted for it quite appreciated its implications. However, the fact of its having been passed by Congress ensured its publication widely in the newspapers for the edification of the supporters of privilege and monopoly who derive their information—and often their opinions, too—from what the *Daily Herald* is so fond of calling the "Capitalist Press."

Now, unless the supporters of the motion within the Trade Unions get busy, it will be snowed under and forgotten like thousands of other motions from former Congresses. Having once been carried by Congress, however, it is open to those who agree with the demand for the restoration of the land to undertake an intensive educational campaign inside the Trade Unions, with a view to arousing attention and securing front place for the question at the next Congress. In this work all who agree with Mr. Walker as to the purpose for which the Labor Movement exists have a part to play. When the "organized" workers get alive to the difference between getting down to "causes" and "tinkering with effects" they will speedily change the system, for they possess even now all the power necessary. Until they do, it is a sure thing that Congress will succeed Congress as long as time shall last, and the workers, both "organized" and other, will be no nearer achieving their objective, which is, though they may not realize it, the full enjoyment of the individual's equal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, only to be attained through equality of opportunity to use the gifts of nature.

While Trade Union Congresses and other similar gatherings of workers ignore the Land Lords, they but waste their time in what Mr. Lloyd George—and he should know—contemptuously dismisses as "Words, words, words!"

—J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

"THE air in Ireland is very healthy," said a lady to Dean Swift.

"Madame," said Swift, "don't say that in England for if you do they will certainly tax it."