

WHAT THE BRITISH LEAGUES ARE DOING

ENGLISH LEAGUE: Frederick Verinder, General Secretary, 12/13, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2. (Phone: Temple Bar 7830.)

JANUARY, 1930.

- Thurs. 9th.—Oxsted and Limpsfield Labour Party: Fredk. Verinder. 8 p.m.
 Tues., 14th.—St. Matthew's, City Road, London (Women's Fellowship): Frederick Verinder, "God's Labour Law." 3 p.m.
 Wed. 15th.—Woolwich Labour Party, Well Hall Co-operative Stores: Sir Edgar Harper, F.S.I., F.S.S., "Unemployment."
 Wed. 22nd.—Rotary Club of London, Hotel Cecil: Sir Edgar Harper, F.S.I., F.S.S., "Is there a Cure for Unemployment?"
 Thurs. 30th.—Labour Hall, Hanwell: Miss Stella Browne. 3.30 p.m.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR to all members of the League and to all our co-workers in the world-wide movement which the League is doing its part to further. A.D. 1930 promises to be a busy year for the League office, which will need all the help, financial and other, that the members and friends of the League can afford it.

The New Year brings two gifts to the literature of the League. The President has revised his pamphlet on "Unemployment," and, by the generous help of one of our members, a new edition has been published by the League under the title of "Work and Wages: the Root of the Matter." (One penny; post free, 1½d.; 5s. per 100.)

Mr G. A. Goodwin, C.M.G., has also provided a new edition of his latest booklet, published last August under the title of "How to Secure 'A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work,'" and now revised and renamed "How to Benefit both Capital and Labour." (Sixpence.)

Both these booklets are well printed on good paper, and Mr Goodwin's has the usual pertinent pictures of which he always makes such effective use.

On another League pamphlet, "Our Daily Bread" (2d.), a member of the League writes to the author: "At this season, when chrysalis Christians are sending one another good wishes, may I offer mine to one of those rare Christians who believe that Grosvenor Square and Gray's Inn Road are 'God's footstool,' and that we must 'cease to do evil' before we 'learn to do well'?"

One of the best services that can be rendered to the cause in the few weeks preceding the introduction of the Budget is to circulate the literature which is abundantly available. One member has just undertaken to distribute 2,000 leaflets from house to house in the constituency in which he lives.

LAND VALUES CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

The following meetings have been arranged:—

JANUARY, 1930

- Fri. 10th.—Crawley and District Labour Party, Congregational Sunday School, Crawley, Sussex: S. P. Viant, J.P., M.P. 7.30 p.m.
 Sun. 12th.—Aston Divisional Labour Party, "Ruskin Hall," 145, Victoria Road, Aston, Birmingham: Councillor F. G. Sawyer, M.P. 7 p.m.
 Fri. 17th.—Cleveland Divisional Labour Party, Institute Hall, Redcar: T. W. Stamford, M.P.
 Sun. 19th.—Leicester and District Trades Council, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: W. T. Kelly, M.P. 10.45 a.m.
 Mon. 20th.—Rochester Men's and Women's Liberal Associations, Liberal Club, off High Street, Rochester: Tom Wing, ex-M.P. 7.45 p.m.

FEBRUARY, 1930

- Sun. 2nd.—Lincoln Trades Council and Labour Party, Central Cinema: Councillor Andrew MacLaren, M.P. 7.30 p.m.
 Fri. 7th.—Hertford D.L.P., Baths Hall, Hoddesdon, Herts: Somerville Hastings, M.S., F.R.C.S., M.P. 7.30 p.m.
 Sun. 9th.—Batley and Morley D.L.P.: T. W. Stamford, M.P.

Sun. 9th.—Newport (Mon.) Labour Party, Palladium Picture House, Newport: Councillor G. F. Sawyer, M.P.

Sun. 9th.—Barnard Castle D.L.P., Memorial Hall, Lanchester, Co. Durham: R. J. Wilson, M.P. 7.30 p.m.

Mon. 10th.—Huddersfield Liberal Assoc.: Ashley Mitchell.

Sun. 23rd.—Grimsby Labour Party, Palace Theatre, Victoria Street, Grimsby: Councillor A. MacLaren, M.P. 7.30 p.m.

Sun. 23rd.—Hartell, Lanark: Geo. D. Hardie, M.P.

MARCH, 1930

Sun. 9th.—North Shields: Dr Marion Phillips, M.P.

Sun. 16th.—Edmonton Town Hall: Jack Mills, M.P.

Sun. 16th.—Cambridge: John Beckett, M.P.

Sun. 16th.—Middlesbrough: Arthur L. Shepherd, M.P.

Sun. 16th.—Keighley: Captain W. G. Hall, M.P.

Thurs. 20th.—Heston, Middlesex: Fred. Messer, M.P., C.C.

Sun. 23rd.—Glasgow, Dixon Hall: Councillor A. MacLaren, M.P.

Three other meetings, to be addressed by Colonel Wedgwood, would have been included in the above list but for the fact that he has been suddenly called to South Africa. He sailed on 3rd January and expects to be back in England by about 5th March. The Secretary is endeavouring to make other arrangements for the meetings at Hertford, Llanelly and West Bristol.

THE LAND VALUES PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

At the second meeting of the Group, held at the House of Commons on 2nd December, Colonel Wedgwood in the chair, there was a large attendance of members. A very interesting discussion took place on the Taxation of Land Values as opposed to an Increment Duty. A memorial was drawn up, signed by those present, and afterwards circulated for signature to the other Labour and Liberal Members. It has been sent to the Ministers for Agriculture and for Health, to the Lord Privy Seal and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, all of whom were asked to receive deputations from the Group. Mr J. H. Thomas has already done so, and Mr Snowden, with Mr Greenwood, will receive a deputation after the Christmas recess.

OBITUARY

One by one the veterans of the great movement which started in this country nearly 50 years ago are passing to their rest. This month it is my sad duty to record two such losses.

JOHN CHARLES DURANT

In the winter of 1882-83 a few friends were meeting at each other's houses to read a new work (*Progress and Poverty*) which had recently reached England. In the Spring of 1883 they decided to form a Society, the "Land Reform Union"—now known as the English League—"to advance the principles laid down by Henry George and other writers for the Restitution of the Land to the People." The Manifesto then issued—a copy of it has just been sent to me by my old friend, Rowland Estcourt, who was one of the group—bore also the name of J. C. Durant, who passed away on 14th December at his home in Cliftonville in his eighty-fourth year. Durant was then a printer whose presses were always at the service of the cause. One of the greatest services he rendered to it was the undertaking, at what seemed to be a great risk, of the printing of a sixpenny, paper-covered edition of *Progress and Poverty*, which had a very large circulation. Mr P. Wilson Raffan, who published in the *South Wales Gazette* (which Durant founded and Mr Raffan edited for several years) a touching appreciation of Durant's work, tells how he himself was brought into the movement which he has so valiantly served by a copy of this sixpenny volume, which reached him in a Highland village. Mr Durant was also the owner of the English copyright of Henry George's *Condition of Labour*, of which he issued new editions from time to time. Before his death he

handed over his rights in this book to the United Committee. In 1885, Durant and his colleague in the League, William Saunders, were the first Georgeists to enter Parliament, he as "Liberal and Labour" member for Stepney. A harassing and costly election petition was, as Mr Raffan says, "without justification" brought against him, and helped to break down his health. He did not seek re-election when Parliament was dissolved in 1886, but later he took an active part in securing the election of Mr Raffan for the Leigh Division of Lancashire. In recent years, advancing age, and to some extent change of opinion, kept him out of the fighting line, but the older members of the League will remember with gratitude his many years of active service, and will share the sympathy of his old friend who writes these lines with his widow and children in their bereavement.

NATHANIEL WILLIAM HUBBARD, J.P.

Another old member of the English League passed away on 20th November, at the age of 83 years. Son of a bricklayer, who died when the boy was only four years of age, he was earning 3s. a week by minding cows at the age of nine; but in spite of his early hardships, or more probably because of them, he became in later life one of the best known and best loved servants of the people of London. He was a member of the old Lambeth Vestry, and one of the many fine Radicals who became members of the first London County Council, when no less than forty members of the first "United Committee for the Taxation of Ground Values" found seats on the Council. He had been a Justice of the Peace for nearly thirty years, and for some years was a County Alderman. He was in frequent touch with the League office and, owing to his active connection with the Brotherhood movement, had many opportunities of advocating our principles. Indeed, only three days before his sudden death, he was addressing such a meeting; probably the meeting he had in view when he wrote to me a week or two earlier for some information for use in a Brotherhood address.

Sir Edgar Harper and the General Secretary represented the League at his funeral on 25th November.

To his son, Mr Chalton Hubbard, J.P., Hon. Solicitor to the League, and to Mrs Hubbard and her daughter, an old friend, on his own behalf and that of the Executive of the League, offers heartfelt sympathy.

FREDK. VERINDER.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: William Reid, Secretary, 67, West Nile Street, Glasgow.

So far as Glasgow and the West of Scotland are concerned propaganda work seems to be confined to the Labour Party at present. The other parties seem to content themselves with Whist Drives and other social functions. Occasionally one sees a band labelled "Economic League" addressing audiences on the virtues of Safeguarding and the vices of Socialism. Following a meeting in the Townhead District, addressed by Andrew MacLaren, M.P., and George Hardie, M.P., we note that J. O'Donnell Derrick has addressed a meeting of the Provan Independent Labour Party. The Labour Party locally is accused of speaking with two voices on some questions, but we have not yet heard any second voice on the Taxation and Rating of Land Values. The other side to our question is everywhere—silence, though we thought we detected something more active in a recent issue of *The Scottish Radical*. A writer in that magazine put as an alternative that towns should be given legal powers to purchase land. The last Conference of the Scottish Liberal Federation passed a motion calling on the Liberal Party to define its position on this question. Perhaps later we may discover whether the writer, to whom I have referred, has anticipated or mistaken the decision.

As regards land purchase, there seems to be no end of it in Glasgow, and why the Corporation should go beyond the City boundaries to purchase more, passes comprehension. The arbiter recommended that the Corporation should pay five business firms the sum of £108,078 for ground necessary in the construction of a proposed new bridge at Finnieston.

These are further purchases proposed for the purpose of street widening at St. Enoch Square, Glasgow. At a

meeting of the City Council, 19th December, Mr Tom Kerr (Convener of the Sub-Committee appointed to consider the matter) said the prices asked for the three properties involved totalled £72,000. The widening of the entrance to the square would facilitate the traffic passing through the most important thoroughfare running north and south in the centre of the City.

A Glasgow newspaper, in reporting the discussion at the Council, revealed the extent of the three pieces of land as follows: (1) 546 square yards; (2) 480 square yards; (3) 396½ square yards. Smaller pieces of land, bought for the purpose of widening the street immediately west of St. Enoch Square, we understand, worked out at about one million pounds per acre. There are odd individuals yet who say that we should not tax these values when the land becomes useful, but we should buy land that we don't need.

Three meetings have been held in the Rooms, 67, West Nile Street, during December, the speakers being Mr William McLennan, Mr Alex Mackendrick and the Secretary. There are several Parliamentary Debating Associations which hold weekly meetings in Glasgow. In the oldest of these, namely, the Glasgow P.D.A., Mr A. S. Munsie raised the question during the last month which reminds me that between thirty and forty years ago Mr David McLardy, who—I understand—was Prime Minister then, managed to pass a Bill abolishing landlordism and establishing a Single Tax. The Western P.D.A., of which the Secretary is a member, has a Labour Government which has budgeted to raise eighty million pounds by a Tax on Land Values. A Liberal member has now submitted a Bill for the Rating of Land Values.

The *Edinburgh Evening News*, 2nd December, reports a wireless talk by Dr James Devon, from which we quote:—

"Attempts to settle housing difficulties by compelling those who lived in old houses to pay part of the rents of those who lived in new ones were futile, absurd, and unjust. Why should not those in the old houses also have a subsidy? The spectacle of tenants of slum houses being made to contribute for the payment of houses in which people lived who could afford to keep motor cars was a sad comment on the wisdom of our rulers.

"The man who had his house subsidized from public funds was as much in receipt of a dole as the man who got parish relief or unemployment pay, and if he were compelled personally to go weekly to the 'Buroo' in order to get it they would the more easily see how once again the poor had been made to pay for those who were better off than themselves.

"Unemployment and bad housing have their root causes in monopoly. Both are ultimately dependent on a system of land tenure which allows one set of men to determine, according to their will, the conditions under which all others may live and work. . . .

"Scottish social problems can best be solved by the application of the sound principles that guided our fathers; freedom to work; freedom from tolls on industry; freedom from monopolists whose big business is based on preventing men from working unless they pay toll in money or independence."

Letters have appeared in *Citizen*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Daily Record* and other newspapers. The writers include Mr John Peter, Mr A. S. Munsie, Mr A. J. Mace, "Gracchus" and the Secretary. "Gracchus," in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, 30th November, observes:—

"It is futile to blame the Labour Government or any other Government for not providing work for the unemployed. It can't be done! What the Government can do is to sweep aside those who stand—until sufficiently bribed—between the willing and needy worker and the medium upon which alone he can work—namely, the land. The evil is not in capital, nor in competition of the genuine kind—i.e., among free men. The competition which is fundamentally wrong—and artificially created—is the competition among the disinherited for the right to use the earth. Destroy this false competition, and the rest will follow. This is the message of those one-idea'd and misguided advocates of the Taxation of Land Values."