

A Gallup Poll in Denmark

WHEN the Gallup Institute in Copenhagen directed an opinion poll to residents in 170 districts, one-third of them in Greater Copenhagen, three questions were asked. The results were presented in an address in the English language by Louis Wasserman, professor of philosophy and political science of San Francisco State College—translated into Danish for publication in the Georgist publication, *Vegen Frem*—and translated back to English for HGN readers by Joseph Jespersen of the New York faculty.

Professor Wasserman also analyzed the returns of Danish elections in 1950, 1957 and 1960, and found that the Justice party has a hard core of between 30,000 and 40,000 voters who can be depended on in any election. The great increase in voting strength in 1950 and 1951, he believed, came from two large groups who supported the party for widely differing reasons. Extreme liberals were attracted by its strong opposition to high taxes, trade restrictions, subsidies and welfare policies; and working men who were former Social Democrats were protesting against anti-strike laws in 1950 and 1956. In the 1960 election most of the votes from these two groups went back to the parties from which they came, but with some drift toward the left. He reached the interesting conclusion that the real problem of the Justice party arises from its attempt to combine two ideologies. The full collection of ground rent by the community is seen as a radical and collectivist attitude toward property, while its individualistic attitude in favor of free enterprise and against state interference, taxes and welfare policies, places it far to the right. In this light, any uncertainty of opinion in the sample testing is understandable.

To the first question asked in the poll—if there was a proposal for "Grundskyld" for all Denmark, would you be for or against it—12 per cent answered in the affirmative, 17 per cent in the negative, and 71 per cent didn't know. If the 12 per cent is taken as an absolute figure, it means that one out of about eight persons in Denmark is willing to go ahead with Grundskyld, which is encouraging. But compared with the 17 per cent, it means that among those who have a definite opinion, two out of five favor Grundskyld. The 71 per cent represent the challenge that faces Georgists and the Justice party. But the philosophy can never be adequately or clearly explained in an election campaign.

As to the second question—*why* would you be for or against it—about half of those who favored the proposal gave the reason "it will stop speculation in land." Only three per cent favored it "because it would be accompanied by the reduction of other taxes." No one answered that Grundskyld was "more ethically just" than taxes on income and consumption. Among those who opposed it, 16 per cent said they didn't think such a tax would be reasonable, 14 per cent said it would deprive people of freedoms they now have, 13 per cent said we have enough taxes and don't want more, 5 per cent said such a tax would be too expensive to collect, and 39 per cent were unable to give their reason.

As to the third question—if Grundskyld should be put into effect, should the public pay compensation to the present landowners—19 per cent answered in the affirmative, 13 per cent in the negative, and 68 per cent said they didn't know.

This sampling is presumed to reflect the opinion of some 2,000 persons.