

HE HAS HELPED TO MAKE HISTORY

Mr. C. W. J. Morley Retiring this Month

ON Henry George's fiftieth birthday (2nd September, 1889) was born in England a boy who in later life was to do much of what he now describes at the "donkey work" involved in getting George's ideas known and even on the Statute Book. Now 68, Mr. Charles W. J. Morley is retiring from the staff of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values on December 28. He was nearly 21 and one of more than a hundred when, in June, 1910, he answered an advertisement in the *Daily Chronicle* notifying a vacancy for a junior clerk. Mr. John Paul, the then secretary of the United Committee and editor of *LAND & LIBERTY*, who had placed the notice, whittled down the applicants until only two were left—one a Londoner and one from East Anglia. As a Scot new to London he chose the Londoner, and Charles got the job. He was not then a Georgeist and at that time was considering offers of a post with *The Times* and another with a firm of theatrical costumiers which, in view of his great love of the stage, no doubt appealed strongly to him. Mr. Paul urged him to read *Progress and Poverty* and every lunch time he read a few pages from a closely printed fourpenny pocket edition. At first he found it hard going but in due course the light came flooding in. He has held to those ideas ever since, working to advance them for more than 47 years apart from a break of 2½ years during the first World War. In his early days with the Committee Mr. Morley addressed a few small meetings, but decided that public speaking was not his *metier*. He also wrote some articles which were widely distributed as leaflets—one was on *Land Values and the Peace Question*—and a number of releases for the Land Values Press Bureau. In those days before the first War the Bureau sent fourteen articles a month to some 200 newspapers which it was Mr. Morley's duty to type, stencil and despatch—a heavy task on top of other work. In 1919 he was appointed Office Manager and in the early twenties he was honorary secretary of the Henry George Club in London.

The work on which Mr. Morley has been engaged has had its exciting moments—for instance, in the days when the late A. W. Madsen was honorary secretary to the Parliamentary Land Values Group Mr. Morley spent much time in the Commons and was well acquainted with many of the leading political figures of the time—but in the main his efforts have contributed to the smooth running of the more spectacular activities without attracting wide attention. His dearest wish, he says, is to see a land-value taxation measure put back on the Statute Book. He admits that it takes time for an idea to gain popular acceptance, and he denies that he is impatient. But he thinks fifty years a reasonable period—and 47 have passed since he read *Progress and Poverty*! Echoing his sentiments, we hope that he and Mrs. Morley will enjoy his retirement and that Charles' "dearest wish" will be realised.

EDUCATION IMPERILLED

To the editor of *Land & Liberty*

AT present each Local Authority is responsible for the provision of educational facilities in the area under its control, the cost being met partly from the rates and partly from government grants. This system has tended to encourage spending on Education, since the more money a Local Education Committee (L.E.A.) allocates to its schools, the larger its grant; and the criticism that certain L.E.A.'s have thereby been encouraged to fritter away money on extravagant non-essentials is not unfounded.

Under the proposed Block-grants scheme, government grants made to local authorities for specific social services are to be replaced by a lump sum which the Authority will use for any purpose it pleases. This system will enable the Government to calculate in advance its financial commitments to L.A.'s, and throws on the Authority the responsibility for allocating the money to the various services.

Criticism of this plan has come not only from the teaching profession but from the L.E.A.'s themselves; they are as follows:

1. An expanding service, such as Education, must not be limited by a fixed budget. To do so would be to endanger the future of the nation.
2. Education should be a *national* service, and standards and facilities must be uniform throughout the country. Equality of opportunity would disappear under the Block Grants scheme for, in a period of economy, small, or backward and unenlightened L.E.A.'s would cut expenditure on Education first.
3. All the disadvantages to Education of the Block Grant, its inflexibility, its overburdening of the rates and its tendency to increase inequality of opportunity are likely to be intensified as a result of the increase in loan charges and general economic retrenchment.

The National Union of Teachers, together with other professional bodies, plan a propaganda drive aiming at bringing home to the "man in the street" the grave threat to the youth of the country, and consequently to the economic future of Britain, inherent in this government economy measure. The problem is to explain to the public the tie-up between the grant system and the rate of progress in the Education service. . . .

Most teachers feel that Education is a national matter and should not have to depend for financial support upon the present out-dated rating system; yet if central government assumed complete responsibility for the service, including the payment of teachers' salaries, then the latter would become civil servants and lose their freedom of action and the English state system would lose that independence of outlook for which it is renowned.

It seems to me, therefore, that the N.U.T. and other professional bodies might be interested in the alternative solution offered by the rating of land values, if approached at this time.

Enfield, Middx.

F. S. HUSS.

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