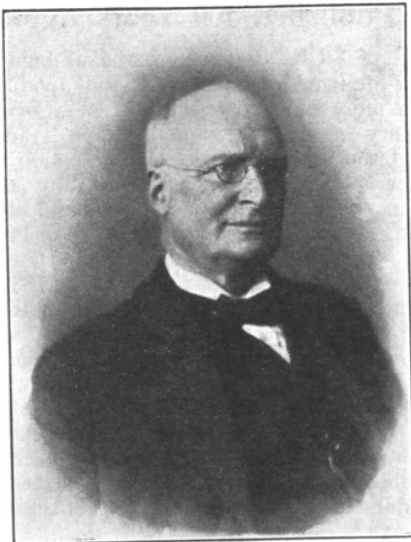


## A REAL FREE TRADER



Ernest E. Belfour, J.P.

A Complimentary Dinner to celebrate the 80th birthday of Mr E. E. Belfour, J.P., President of the English League, was held at St Ermin's Restaurant, Westminster, on 22nd December, 1931. Some forty friends attended, with Mr W. R. Lester in the Chair.

Letters regretting inability to attend and sending good wishes were received, among others, from Jabez Crabtree, H. Morrill, Ronald Batty, Mrs L. P. Jacobs, Frank Fox, Mrs L. H. Berens, E. S. Weymouth, John E. Grant, Athelstan Coles, Dr R. O'Regan, F. Batty, Ashley Mitchell, Chapman Wright, S. W. Challen and Fred Skirrow.

Mr LESTER said: We are all delighted to welcome the guest of the evening, Mr Ernest E. Belfour, who only yesterday reached the very respectable age of 80 years, a man of such vigour that in his presence we all feel young. It was some 20 years ago, coming down from the North and looking round in the South for some kindred spirits, that I heard the name of Mr Belfour. Since that time I know he has been hard at it doing excellent work for the cause. He is convinced that Henry George's teaching is the word of truth, and his concern is how it must be promoted. The English League is doing what it can, but, unfortunately, like the United Committee and our other Leagues, it has to carry on with most meagre funds. Politically, at the moment, we are right down at the bottom of the wave. But we are going to rise. Of that I am sure. Truth can never be suppressed, and that is why we are so delighted to have a man like Mr Belfour who, ever since I have known him, has been doing his best, with all his ability and knowledge, to promote land value taxation and Free Trade. His letters, as I have read them in the Press—the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times*—show that he is master of his subject. I hope he will be with us for many years to come, and that he will live to see his work bear fruit—live to see the day of victory for our cause. I give the toast of the health of Mr Belfour on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Mr BELFOUR said, in part: It is only on such occasions as these that the poignant regrets I have had all my life of never having studied the art of post-prandial oratory are very much revived.

I am deeply grateful to you for the way in which you have honoured this toast. Visiting 94 Petty France the other day, where I had gone in a mood of deep depression, I was uplifted by a heart-to-heart talk and at the end I was asked: "What about a little dinner among friends?" I can assure you I looked forward to this day when I knew that I should be able to come here and meet with the full human sympathy, for which I think we all yearn for in our troubles. I felt more encouraged that somebody thinks so well of me to ask me to dinner amid all this charming company.

Mr Lester asked about my coming to the movement.

When I was about 30 years old, a very old relative of mine said to me: "My boy, here is a volume you ought to get." It was *Progress and Poverty*, and from the very first page I remember being impressed. Henry George shed on everything a light which absolutely satisfied me. The book has remained my great satisfaction ever since and is the clue to every economic disturbance we have been going through for the last 50 years.

We must continue in the effort to get other people to see what we see. As to suggestions, I see two main directions in which we can work at present. One is, show the relation of land monopoly to unemployment; and to make known the remedy. We must get the working people to see that. The second direction I have in mind is to promote opinion for the rating of land values. There we have distinctly a big public opinion in our favour. It is a matter of organizing the forces where they are so favourable and persuading the municipalities to press again upon Parliament the urgency of this legislation.

I would like to thank you for the wonderful reception you have given me, and I certainly feel very much honoured this evening. I am sure I shall be able to live long enough to see the renewed march forward of our cause.

Mr JOHN PAUL said: My pleasant duty is to ask Mr Belfour to accept a Memento of this meeting: to receive from us a present of Henry George's works, as published under the auspices of the Henry George Foundation. [The five volumes presented were *Progress and Poverty*, *Social Problems*, *Protection or Free Trade*, *The Condition of Labour* and *Gems from Henry George*, each in superior binding and with Mr Belfour's name thereon.] You all know the great work the Foundation is doing. *Land & Liberty* can tell you. In the name of the United Committee, the English League and all friends, I am sure we are all very delighted and pleased to honour Mr Belfour. He is one who is ever most welcome at 94 Petty France, because he is always looking ahead—he never looks behind. "What next?" is his question, just as if he were 30. Long may he continue with his inspiring call to action.

Mr BELFOUR received and acknowledged the presentation as a gift he would treasure more than he could say.

Councillor F. C. R. DOUGLAS: As far as the condition of this country and of the world is concerned, from an economic point of view, it is undoubtedly the truth that we are very rapidly drifting from bad to worse, and that an economic crisis has become extremely acute. What is happening is merely an illustration of what Henry George pointed out in *Progress and Poverty*. We are suffering from an era of speculation such as has never been seen in the world before—an era of speculation which has extended right over the whole civilized world, and which has gradually reached the culminating point at which the increase of rent has absolutely strangled further development. People have been taught by the Labour, Liberal and Conservative Parties all kinds of nostrums, all kinds of fallacious explanations of the trouble which the world is suffering from at the present moment. I am not depressed at all about the condition in which we are at the present moment, except, of course, for the fact that we suffer from lack of funds to carry on the propaganda of our movement, but I believe the opportunity is greater than ever.

Therefore, I hope that all of us who are present, and many others as well, will take courage from the example of Mr Belfour, and will be renewed in our determination to push forward in extending the truth of Henry George's teaching, and carry it to a successful conclusion.

Others who spoke were Mr Andrew MacLaren, ex-M.P., Mr H. G. Chancellor, Mr Fredk. Verinder, Mr G. H. Winder (Australia), Mr H. A. Berens and Mr Leon MacLaren.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman brought to a conclusion a very pleasant and profitable evening.

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