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No. 44 211 West 79th Street, N.Y., U.S.A. March 18, 1937

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ADELEINE SWARTE, Editor

WALTER FAIRCHILD'S EVALUATES LAND LAWS IN CORNELL QUARTERLY

NEW YORK (HGNS) - In an article entitled "Economic Aspects of Land Titles," published in the February 1937 issue of the Cornell Law Quarterly, Walter Fairchild, tax authority, draws an outline of the economic waste produced by our antiquated land laws and the terrific burden which the community is forced to carry as a consequence of "what may be termed the direct economic waste of title procedure," involving our defective recording system, our faulty methods of keeping tax records and the continuance of ancient restrictions upon the free use of land and upon the transfer of the right to its use.

Repeated examination of title by lawyers and title companies, costing upward of 10 million dollars a year in New York City alone; the political and economic scandal that characterizes the administration of mortgage foreclosures -- 12 million dollars paid out in the past six years in the Borough of Queens alone -- not taking into account the economic property losses resulting from the actual foreclosures -- for the mere transfer of title in mortgage foreclosure cases -- a situation that is duplicated throughout the State of New York and the United States; tax evasions on a huge scale; unpaid and uncollectable taxes, uncollectable because of the loose administration of tax laws, and similar red tape, all combine to mulct the community of billions of dollars year in and year out.

And greater by far even than the economic loss is the commercial loss; the cost of time consumed in passing title, while all business relating to the property is checked or retarded, helps to swell the total losses which the community must shoulder to incalculable millions annually.

Of the abuses which grew out of the concentration of power under the title company monopoly to control title, mortgage loans, building construction, etc, and the inevitable collapse of a top-heavy structure based on economically unsound conditions at a public cost of billions of dollars, Mr. Fairchild says: "It is not contended that defective land laws are the sole cause of these enormous losses, but it is true that if direct and simple commercial methods for dealing in land title had been the rule, it would not have been possible for the institution of title companies and their methods to develop. It is significant that in Canada, where the Torrens System of title is practically universal, there are no title companies and there has been no mortgage security scandal."

He scores the "burden of increasingly complicated, contradictory and stifling land laws" that threaten the stability of our institutions and recommends the simplified commercial system of transferring title to land known as the Torrens system, "which eliminates the legal and mechanical obstructions to the transfer of title and to that extent tends to make it a liquid asset." Its application to tax sales and all proceedings which result in a judicial sale of land would correct all the abuses inherent in our cumbersome, defective and antiquated land laws, he declares.

The article covers specifically the Torrens Title, Title Examinations, Foreclosures of Mortgages, Collection of Taxes, Foreclosures of Tax Liens, Speculation in Vacant Lots, Loss to Commerce, Land Title Control, Nature of Land Title, Zoning and Concentration of Title Holding in their economic relationship to land title procedure.

Mr. Fairchild was at one time a member of the faculty of the Henry George School of Social Science and for the past year has been traveling 120 miles once a week to teach the philosophy of Henry George to a class in Middletown, N.Y.

March 16, 1937

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL LINKS NEW GEORGISTS WITH OLD

NEW YORK (HGNS) - The correspondence Division of the Henry George School of Social Science has just circularized 3000 old friends of the movement in the United States and Canada. By giving everyone an opportunity to study Progress and Poverty systematically, the School believes that it will bring all the followers of Henry George closer together both in thought and in action.

MAJ. GENL. BRECKINRIDGE SPEAKS ON RELATION OF LAND OWNERSHIP TO PEACE

SAN FRANCISCO (HGNS) - Major General J.C. Breckinridge, U.S. Marine Corps, Commanding Department of the Pacific, guest speaker at a dinner of the San Francisco Chapter of the Henry George Fellowship held on Monday evening, February 15 at the Y.M.C.A., 220 Golden Gate Avenue, delivered an address on "Land Ownership and Its Influence for Peace in Any Nation."

By his own admission the General carries a copy of Progress and Poverty with him wherever he goes. He has long been a student and protagonist of the philosophy of Henry George and there is no doubt about his ability to interpret what he has seen of the land question all over the world.

Revolts, mis-called revolutions, are essentially land questions, he declared. Where private ownership of land exceeded 50 percent, there, he said, was instability; where it was less, there was stability.

While on duty in an island possession during a revolt, he warned the natives against selling any more of their land and showed them that those who had sold, had neither money nor land. Some of the large sugar companies protested to Washington and but for the intervention of some influential officials of the American Federation of Labor, who had witnessed the affair and were highly gratified with the way in which he handled the situation, he came very close to losing his official head. The General said he graded his officers on the basis of the natives they got back on the land - "and it worked."

Major General Breckinridge was introduced by Joseph H. Thompson, president of the San Francisco Orchestra Ass'n., past president of the Bohemian Club, treasurer and sponsor of the San Francisco Extension of the Henry George School of Social Science.

T.L. Brazell spoke briefly on the Henry George Foundation -- what it is and what it does.

LIVERPOOL LEAGUE AIMS FOR OUTSIDE CLASSES IN ITS HOME AREA

LIVERPOOL, ENG. (HGNS) - Speakers of the Liverpool League for the Taxation of Land Values are concentrating on trying to persuade outside organizations to form classes for the study of the philosophy of Henry George. The League offers to furnish instructors to conduct such classes.

Secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. among others are being approached and before long it is hoped to have classes throughout this area.

The Committee has decided to allow its room at 21 Harrington Street to be used for a class of the Henry George School.