

Mr. Arthur Henderson, the popular and extremely able representative of the Labor Party in England, visited here a short time ago and speaking of conditions in England said that since 1920 there had been an abnormal reduction in wages, the national wages bill (except for agricultural and clerical workers, civil servants, and shop assistants) being only half what it was prior to that date. Then, between 1921 and 1923, in addition to the Government dole, £27,000,000 had been paid by the Unions for unemployment relief, and yet the emigration figures for 1925 showed a reduction of 240,000 compared with those of 1912. Mr. Henderson is an ardent advocate of emigration, his views on which may be gathered from his pregnant phrase—"We can transfer population to the land but we cannot transfer land to the people."

That Great Britain is beginning to realize the economic importance of the Dominions may be inferred from the statement made by Sir Frank Nelson, another of the English delegates, who pointed out that Australia, with her 6,000,000 population, takes more goods from Great Britain than the United States, France and Germany combined, with their aggregate population of 220,000,000! It is evidently, therefore, of the utmost importance to both Britain and Australia that this tremendous trade should at any rate be maintained and if possible improved, and that the surplus population of the one should fill the surplus places of the other, increasing the productivity here and reducing the unemployment there, to the enormous benefit of both.

But in order to bring about that mutual and very desirable state of affairs we in Australia will have to radically alter our present course. In the first place, before we can honestly ask people to leave their English homes to settle here we must be able to offer them good land within easy reach of a market on reasonable terms, and it must be comparatively easy for an experienced man to make a living off the land when he comes. Our present federal system of exempting land values up to £5,000 from taxation while super-taxing up to 9d. in the land values above that amount is radically wrong, as is shown by its evil effects. It has enabled land holders to hold their land out of use pending a rise, it has encouraged land monopoly, it has prevented would-be settlers from obtaining access to land, and it has deprived the Commonwealth of a source of revenue which rightfully belongs to it, and the appropriation of which would have enabled us to meet most of our expense and to pay off a much larger proportion of the national debt than we are now doing.

If we want to settle, not our waste places, but our fertile and easily accessible lands to the best advantage, we must abandon a system which has admittedly borne such rotten fruit, and substitute in its stead a uniform flat rate on land values in the federal sphere, as has been done with such beneficial effect in the municipal sphere both by Queensland and New South Wales. By so doing we

would not only be able to transfer population to the land, as we are certainly not doing now, but we would be transferring land to the people in a way which was probably not in Mr. Henderson's mind when he coined the significant phrase quoted above.

—PERCY R. MEGGY.

Officers of the Henry George Foundation at Work in Delaware and the West

THE past month or two has witnessed a rather marked extension of interest in the Pittsburgh tax plan as a concrete example of the policy of concentrating the principal weight of taxation upon land values, and the Henry George Foundation has therefore been giving special attention to this department of its work.

The most important development was the introduction in the Delaware Legislature by Senator Kramer of a "graded tax" bill which would apply the Pittsburgh tax plan to the City of Wilmington. This movement is ably led by Frank T. Stirlith and John F. Thomas, of Wilmington, supported by Frank Stephens, of Arden, and a number of other loyal friends of the cause, most of whom were prominent in the famous Delaware campaign of 1896.

In response to official invitations extended, Secretary Percy R. Williams, a former member of the Pittsburgh Board of Assessors, went to Delaware and, on the 3d of March, addressed a joint assembly of the Senate and House of the Delaware Legislature at Dover in the morning, and that evening spoke at a public hearing before the City Council of Wilmington, explaining the nature, operation and effects of the Pittsburgh tax plan and advocating the application of this system to the City of Wilmington. The presentation was received in a very friendly manner in both instances and generous newspaper publicity given by all local papers. The March issue of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce Journal contains an article by Mr. Williams entitled "A Graded Tax Law for Wilmington," setting forth the benefits that may be anticipated by the adoption of the measure pending in the Delaware Legislature.

The act, as drawn for Wilmington, is mandatory (the same as the Pittsburgh act) but, if adopted in its present form, would mean much more rapid steps than were taken in Pittsburgh. The law would become effective with the fiscal year beginning July, 1928, and a ten per cent. step would be taken every year, instead of every third year, so that the half-rate on improvements would be effective in 1932. * * * Strong support is being enlisted, but some serious opposition may, of course, be anticipated before the bill is brought to a vote.

[A telegram from Mr. Stirlith says that the bill, amended to be permissive only, passed the Senate March 29 without a dissenting vote.]

Following the trip to Delaware, Mr. Williams spent ten days in the Chicago district, where he made a number of addresses to luncheon clubs and other gatherings, speaking chiefly on the Pittsburgh tax plan and giving an analysis based on studies made since it became fully operative in 1925. This tour was arranged through the cooperation of Frederick H. Monroe of the Henry George Lecture Association. On the evening of March 11th, a dinner meeting of the Chicago Single Taxers was held at the Woman's City Club, Michigan Boulevard, more than sixty persons being present. Frederick H. Monroe, Jr., presided at this dinner and the principal speakers were George E. Evans, President of the Henry George Foundation, Secretary Williams and John Z. White, veteran of the lecture platform. Mr. Evans outlined the programme and principal departments of activity of the Henry George Foundation, making reference also to the recent purchase of the birthplace of Henry George and the plans for its restoration. Mr. Williams dealt chiefly with facts and figures relating to Pittsburgh's interesting experiment in land value taxation. Mr. White, who gave evidence of his old-time vigor and keenness, concluded the programme with remarks in which he expressed his appreciation of Pittsburgh's progress and of the work of the Henry George Foundation and voiced his confidence in the triumph of the cause.

A resolution was adopted providing for the reorganization of the Chicago Single Tax Club and for holding a series of meetings during the ensuing year. This club, one of the oldest and strongest in the country, suspended its activities during the war, but is now getting together for effective action. Among those participating in the general discussion were Henry H. Hardinge, George C. Olcott, Henry Vick, Otto Cullman, Clayton J. Ewing, Emil Jorgenson, Henry L. T. Tideman, and George M. Strachan. Mrs. Henry Martin, Secretary of the Henry George Lecture Association, had charge of the arrangements for the dinner. Another interesting evening meeting was held at the home of Mr. Tideman.

On the return trip, Secretary Williams participated in the Single Tax Conference held at Columbus, Ohio, on March 19, and spoke at the dinner that evening in the Neil House. This conference devoted itself largely to the consideration and discussion of ways and means of bringing about more effective Single Tax organization in the State of Ohio, and the earnest cooperation of the Henry George Foundation was pledged. Dr. Mark Milliken, of Hamilton, Ohio, presided at the sessions and J. H. Kauffman, of Columbus, served as secretary. The spirit of harmonious cooperation pervaded the gathering and steps were taken to bring the various elements together on a state-wide educational programme. John S. MacLean and Wm. P. Halencamp, of Columbus, who have been prominent in Ohio Single Tax activities, were among the leaders participating in the conference, and Cincinnati was represented by City Attorney Ed. F.

Alexander. Some emphasis was given to the matter of organizing local clubs in principal cities and towns and the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh was cited as an example of a plan of successful club organization.

Other regional Single Tax conferences are now being arranged to be held in various centers during the next few months and all indications point to a general revival of organized activity in line with the spirit of the "forward movement."

Scranton Likes the Graded Tax System

BY an act just passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature, the City of Scranton has been legally divorced from Pittsburgh, after a wedded life of twenty years. But Scranton will retain the graded tax system, undisturbed, despite the divorce. Under the Pennsylvania system of classification of cities according to certain limits of population, Pittsburgh and Scranton have been linked together as cities of the second class since the census of 1900. Therefore, when in 1913, Pittsburgh sought and obtained the graded tax system, Scranton consented to join in the experiment, and has since been governed by the same law applying to second-class cities.

Scranton now enters a class of its own, to be known as "Second Class A." This re-classification will give the same measure of home-rule to both cities that is now possible for the City of Philadelphia—the privilege of obtaining legislation without consulting the wishes of any other city. But the re-classification of Scranton fortunately does not involve the repeal of any existing legislation. Scranton's present population is estimated at 143,000, while that of Pittsburgh is considerably over 600,000, and it has been found difficult to frame legislation that would, in all instances, apply with equal satisfaction to two cities varying so materially in size; hence the legal separation.

The 1927 tax rates applying to Scranton are \$24.30 per thousand dollars of valuation on land, and \$12.15 per thousand on buildings. The school tax (not governed by the graded tax law) is \$19.00 per thousand, a flat levy applying alike to land and buildings. Assessed valuations in Scranton are estimated to be fifty per cent. of sale value, whereas Pittsburgh's assessed valuations would probably average seventy-five per cent. Pittsburgh tax rates for 1927 are: Land, \$22.40; Buildings, \$11.20; School (Land and Buildings alike) \$11.50.

In a recent letter, the Secretary of the Scranton Chamber of Commerce, says:

"I thank you for sending me a copy of your pamphlet on 'Pittsburgh's Graded Tax in Full Operation.'

"The plan here, of course, has worked out the same as in Pittsburgh, We now have the rate on improvements one-half the rate on land. The plan seems to be generally accepted here without question."