

city, suburban, and country municipalities and shires for 1920 was £4,748,222, or at the rate of £2/5/9 per head of the population, and that nearly the whole of it was obtained from the U.C.V. of the land, altogether apart from the improvements. The cost of constructing the huge bridge to connect Sydney with the North Shore which has been in contemplation for many years, and is now to be commenced without any further delay, is to be met by a tax of a half-penny in the £ on the U.C.V. of land on the North Shore and in those parts of the city which will be affected by it, the balance to be met by the Government and Railway Commissioners combined.

The immediate effect of all this taxation concentrated on land values apart from improvements has been to make the holding of land idle in the city and suburbs, and generally within Local Governing areas, a luxury which very few people can afford. Sooner than pay the increasingly heavy rates the owners either put up buildings in the hope of making a profit out of the rents, or part with the land to others who are more enterprising than themselves. As a result of the large number of buildings which are everywhere going up rents must come down, competition among trades people must increase, their chance of making a livelihood must diminish, and unless some outlet is found for them on the land, where they can become producers and help to swell the wealth of the country, a crash must sooner or later ensue. The only way to avert it is by abolishing the Federal and State land taxes with their iniquitous exemptions and graduations, and to substitute one uniform tax on all the land values of the Commonwealth, the same in principle as the Local Government rates. If this were done no one could afford to hold land idle, but would be compelled either to put it to use or to part with it to someone who would. If this were followed by the abolition of the iniquitous system of protection, which taxes the men on the land and consumers generally in order to swell the profits of the manufacturers in the towns, we would soon see a change of things for the better, and such a happy revolution in our affairs as has never yet been recorded of any country in the history of the world.

International Press Bureau PERCY R. MEGGY.
Room 18, 65 Market St., Sydney, May 22nd, 1923.

The Freeville Fair

WELL, Townsend, I sure am glad to see you! Where are you going now?"

"Why! sit down, George, I have to get off at the next station. My stars, it's good to see you again. I heard you'd gone daffy over some tax plan. What is it all?"

"Oh, I'll tell you that, but first I want to know about your new Fair Grounds."

"Oh, that's great. You see we got a big tract of land on the harbor, river, railroads, highlands, water power, everything, and we've organized it on modern principles. We let anybody have a stand that wants it and he pays nothing but what his lot would rent for and we've nearly filled it up already."

"Gad, Townsend; they bring the value and you keep the land? You'll be a millionaire shortly."

"Well, you know it's a Company. Every leaseholder becomes a member. Of course I draw a good salary, but it's not that, it's the way the thing grows that tickles me. I'd rather work for Freeville than if I owned the place. I guess if I owned the place, I'd just let the people work for me, but this is 'the earth for all.'"

"But there must be plenty of pickings. I suppose you get a commission on the goods the exhibitors sell?"

"Commission nothing! Our plan is to make it the best place in the United States to sell goods; if we charged a commission other places would have an advantage over us."

"The exhibitors put up their own buildings, do they?"

"They do that, fine ones, too, because you see we pay all the taxes on them, so they are not penalized for building handsome stores. Other places fine anyone that commits an improvement."

"Ha! Ha! Good! then when anyone goes away or fails, you get the building, eh?"

"Nonsense, the buildings belong to the people that build them; they sell them. We want to make it attractive to sellers as well as buyers. That's the reason we have community water supply and street cars, free playgrounds, and all"

"But that must cost a lot of money. Where do you get it?"

"Why, don't you see, George, the tenants pay the rents of the land and out of that we pay their taxes and all their public expenses."

"O, I see—well that land will get to be very valuable. Can't you let me in on a nice plot? Then I'll hold it for a big profit when the place is all filled up."

"That wouldn't do you any good. As fast as the land becomes more valuable, the rent we collect rises too."

"But I could put buildings on it and sublet them?"

"You could; but the increasing rents of the land would go to the Freeville collector. You'd get back only the rent of the building and there's piles of buildings going up owing to our tax system."

"Your tax system. Oh, yes, you fix the taxes yourselves. Then you can collect licenses and taxes on incomes and sales and all sorts of things."

"Not us, old man; we want to make it a great place to live in, not to get skinned in. The more trade, the more profits, and the more profits the more people. We leave people free to do all the trade they can. That's what helps the place. Everyone works for himself, not for a Collector of fees. I tell you it's a success. But we're near my station and you haven't told me about your fad. What was it you called it, land tax, was it? But we're near my station. Well good-bye. Write me about it."

"Oh, it isn't necessary; it's just like what you have at Freeville Fair. If everybody pays for whatever privilege he gets, that will pay all public expenses. Then you don't need to fine one man and subsidize another to make them work. Well, good-bye and good luck. Yes, that's what they call the Land Value Tax."

BOLTON HALL.