

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR ECONOMIC FREEDOM.*(For the Review.)*

By JOHAN HANSSON.

I have just finished my two years journey around the world as a student of economic and social matters.

The journey has been extremely useful not only because of the extensive materials I have been able to gather, not only because of the acquaintance it has given me with actual conditions, but still more because of the many new reform thoughts and ideas I have got hold of during that time. Later on I may perhaps have opportunity to give the readers of the REVIEW an account of some of these ideas and of my experiences generally. But for the present I will limit myself to a proposal which should have some interest for our people all over the world.

I went out from the far away Scandinavian north with rather optimistic notions of the strength of our movement and of our ideas. I must admit that I was disappointed by the facts as I could see them. And although I admit that I have perhaps not always been able to judge correctly, I come home with the conviction that everything that can be done ought to be done to put our movement and our beautiful teaching in prominence. Very early it became clear to me that the words "Single Tax" were a hindrance to our work and that in reality the name was unpopular not only among our enemies but among our best friends, and that very few would regret if we could do away with it for ever for the sake of a better one. (For my own part, I have some time since been using a term which I think can be used with advantage also in English speaking countries—it is *land values reform*). But when I came to the Australian continent it was further clear to me that we would have to give up not only the name but also the meaning of Single Tax as it is generally understood.

What really concerns us primarily is, after all, not Single Tax, but economic justice and freedom, and *therefore* the socialization of all social values which are now in private hands. The method of doing that, the question whether such values when socialized will be insufficient for public needs, as some believe, or far too much, as others think, are questions only of secondary importance and it is a regrettable blunder to give them a primary place, as we have by the very name adopted. It was clear to me that it really did not matter very much if—when land values were socialized—some other taxation on inheritance or income or both should be necessary. I mean that under present state of things by frankly admitting this we will not lose anything, but rather the contrary. But it should also with all possible strength be pointed out that the true source of revenue for any community is the socially created land values and that revenue from any other source can be justified only in time of great need. In this way we would free ourselves from much misunderstanding and opposition.

Finally my desire for new activities and necessary reforms and revisions suggested the thought of forming an international organization entirely based on our philosophy, but formally new in name and to some extent new also in demands. It is a very common view among certain classes of reformers that the Georgian movement is a dying one. By making an attempt to organize our work on international lines it would be made clear that we are a living, vital force.

Following is a necessarily incomplete outline of such organization:

PROGRAMME.

1. The socialization of land values.
2. The abolition of all burdens of taxation on labor, all indirect taxation, including protective tariffs, and the establishment of universal free trade.
3. Gradual reduction, and when possible final abolition of charges for public utilities. The expenses to be covered out of the land values which, normally, will be created by this very reduction and abolition.
4. Reform of the present patent rights with the purpose of excluding all monopolistic features.
5. Opposition to private monopolies in general.
6. Furthering of all kinds of cooperation based on principles of freedom

METHODS OF WORK.

1. The establishment of an *international land values reform information bureau* for the benefit of legislators, scientists and reformers.

The bureau shall as far as possible be complete with regard to

- a. All bills and laws in all countries *re* land values reform, (land valuation, land values taxation, etc.).
- b. Parliamentary reports and debates connected with such bills and laws.
- c. All books, pamphlets, leaflets relating to land values socialization.
- d. Important magazines and newspaper articles.
- e. All land values reform journals, published in different countries.

For the purpose of gathering such material and keeping it up to date with regard to the progress of the movement the secretary shall appoint trusted men in different parts of the world as agents for the bureau. These agents shall assist in sending printed material, and shall give a short half yearly report on the progress of the movement in their respective districts.

The bureau shall, when means permit, publish a yearly report containing an account of the work by the bureau, and also review the progress of the movement in all parts of the world. To realize this extensive plan of work of the bureau we will have to depend on contributions from individuals and associations, but efforts should at least be made toward getting *progressive* states and municipalities to support this work, which largely is organized for the benefit of such communities. Such contributions must, however, be given *unconditionally*.

2. The publication of booklets and pamphlets written by prominent men from an international point of view, and dealing largely with general principles.

The publication of newspaper and magazine articles in different countries shall be organized when practicable with help of the agents of the bureau.

3. The furthering of the movement of land values reform and free trade in countries where such movements are weak and in need of help.

4. To issue manifestos whenever a state attempts to introduce or increase protective tariffs. These manifestos, issued in the name of the association, shall be addressed (1) to the government and legislative bodies. (2) to the advanced reformers of all countries with a request to join in the protests, thus helping to advance the cause of freedom and peace, which is always more or less endangered by protective tariffs. (Through widely circulated publications these manifestos may be made of good use in advancing the idea of universal free trade.)

5. Organizing international gatherings for the purpose of discussing and, when opportunity offers, expressing publicly opinions on matters relating to the programme of the association.

ORGANIZATION.

The organization shall be based on the principles of equal individual freedom, individual responsibility and co-operation. In charge of the work shall be one or more secretaries (each with his special duties), a treasurer, a president and two vice presidents.

The subscription will be voluntary and the members shall have the right to decide on the use of certain percentages of money subscribed.

Every member to have the right to attend the annual meetings and use his or her vote or, if not attending, a right to vote by proxy.

Any society which has a desire to support the association can be affiliated with it. But as the association rests on individual membership such societies can have only *one* vote.

Most of this plan will speak for itself. But some points may call for explanation. From the two first figures of the programme it will be gathered that we are practically asking for all that we want, although the word Single Tax is not there.

Regarding the third point there is, I suppose, very little difference of opinion, but it should be pointed out that it is of considerable importance for the sake of real economic freedom that weak and strong, poor and rich alike shall be placed on the same level with reference to communication. But that can not be the case until we have free access to public utilities.

The fourth point I am leaving out for the present. But as to the demand I think we all agree. The same can be said regarding the fifth point and I suppose, also, regarding the sixth. While we require a simple and still comprehensive programme I think we cannot leave out the question of cooperation based on sound principles.

Under "Methods of work" I should like to call the reader's special attention to the proposal of an information bureau. Such bureaus are already existing for some other movements, for instance, the Peace Bureau at Berne. As we no doubt will be able to procure a great amount of materials at very low cost, it will be possible to start this work at any time, or as soon as we can find the right man for it.

Among other things which an association can do, nothing will perhaps be more useful than the desire to preserve the peace between West and East.

The "yellow peril," and the Asiatic question in general, have got such a hold on public opinion in the civilized world, that from the point of view of policy alone it will be a good thing to lay special stress upon it. And I dare say that no body of men are more qualified to do it than we, as the fundamental issue after all is one of equal rights and economic freedom.

The system of organization here proposed is already in use among societies in Scandinavian countries, and has proven a success. With the great distances separating members in such an organization as proposed the provisions will be found still more needful.

The intention is that the whole work should be done with as simple and cheap a machinery as possible. We cannot expect very much financial support from the already overburdened reformers.

The plan has been laid before several of the leading Single Taxers in Australia, always finding understanding and compelling interest. I hope that interest in the plan will be found everywhere, and that very soon we may be able to get to work.

UPPSALA, SWEDEN.

MY ISLAND.*

(*For the Review.*)

By JAMES R. BROWN.

Private property in land is the most baneful institution that has ever cursed the human race. It is the most flagrant violation of human rights. Few are the social and individual wrongs that cannot be traced to this fundamental evil. We take issue with those who hold that the wretchedness of this world is due to the fallen and perverse nature of man, and boldly declare the doctrine of total depravity to be a lie and a slander, a convenient refuge for

* The story of "My Island," which we will publish serially, is an elaboration of a speech which Mr. James R. Brown has repeated on a number of occasions, and which at the instance of Mr. Thomas Ferguson, an active member of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, he has cast into narrative form. No effort has been made to give this literary polish, but, on the contrary, the writer has endeavored to preserve the character it bears as a