

as the only one that can permanently improve the lot of the workers.

One can understand that after the way Labor leaders have referred to our policy as "the capitalist's last ditch" and a "red herring drawn across the path of the workers," they will need to be very careful in the manner of bringing forward our policy.

As one who speaks in many parts of the country and to all kinds of political and social reform organizations, I am convinced that the rank and file of both Labor and Liberal parties are strongly in favor of our policy; and, not only these, but many men in the Conservative Party are ready to give their support to the party that will put up a real earnest fight for Land and Liberty.

Since the foregoing was written, the Liberal Federation meetings have been held at Birmingham and referring to these meetings, a correspondent has written me as follows: "The Manchester people strengthened a little the resolutions on Land Value Taxation at the National Liberal meetings but, as you know, the whole question is kept well in the background. Asquith never mentioned it in his address. The position is most unsatisfactory but I must say that I don't like the idea of joining the Labor party. Liberal principles, put into practice, include all we want."

Just now a bye-election is taking place in Spennings Vale, a Yorkshire constituency. Sir John Simon is the Liberal candidate.* He is considered one of the best Radicals among the front rankers, but in this contest he is ignoring the question of the Taxation of Land Values. These things go to prove, as Henry George said, that "we cannot safely leave politics to politicians. . . . The people themselves must think, because they alone can act."

F. SKIRROW

Puerto Rico

OUR friend, Antonio M. Molina, reports that during his Summer's holiday in Puerto Rico he was invited by the leaders of the Socialist or Popular Party there to speak on economic problems. Of course, in dealing with the subject he pointed out the fallacies and shortcomings of Socialism as a remedy, and was pleased to note that both the audience and party leaders "saw the cat" when the Georgian philosophy was put before them. He was repeatedly asked afterwards to speak on the subject and literature was requested for distribution.

This incident seems to illustrate, like the action of the Socialist Party in Buenos Aires, what our old friend, Charles Frederick Adams, said of the Latin mind as being more logical and receptive than the Teutonic and therefore more inclined to accept the Georgian philosophy.

Send the REVIEW to your public library if it does not already take it.

*Since this was written the campaign has been fought, resulting in the defeat of Sir John by the Labor candidate for Parliament.—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

New South Wales

AN UNEQUALLED OPPORTUNITY

THE termination of the war has enormously increased the opportunities of the Single Tax movement to make real progress in every part of the world, and nowhere more so than in New South Wales. One result of the tremendous waste and destruction caused by the war, and the unparalleled increase in taxation to meet an equally unparalleled expense, has been to concentrate public attention on the question of how to obtain the necessary funds in an equitable way. The almost daily increase in the price of everything we use has added to the complexities of the question, for wages have no sooner been raised to meet the increase in cost of living than prices again go up to meet the additional expense caused by the increased wage, so that, as the *Daily Telegraph* very aptly puts it, it is like a dog chasing its own tail. Then comes the Prime Minister and announces that the tariff is to be raised with the view of "protecting our industries," and the manufacturers, eager to dip their hands still deeper in the public purse, placard the ferry boats and trams with attractive looking posters beseeching the public to buy only "Australian made goods," declaring that the £626,000,000 worth of goods imported by Australia during the last ten years was a "tragic waste," every penny having been a loss to the country, preventing the people here from obtaining work! Thousands of pounds are being spent by the manufacturers in attempting to gull the public in this way, but the public are beginning to get tired of paying such heavy prices for everything they want, and the proposed raising of the tariff, which means that prices will go up still higher, threatens to lead to widespread revolt against the whole system of tariff taxation. This is giving the League an unequalled opportunity of contrasting the Georgian method of obtaining revenue by the appropriation of land values with the old-fashioned but still lingering system of taxing the products of labor. The most surprising thing is that the Labor Party in Australia has long been and still is in favor of a protection policy, although it has never done the workers any good. Only 7 per cent. of their number are engaged in protected industries, and the increasing cost of living, due in a large measure to the protective tariff of which they are so fond, very considerably reduces their purchasing power. They do not even yet see that the only person a protective tariff protects is the manufacturer, who is enabled to charge a higher price for the goods he makes, while the purchaser is prevented from obtaining the imported article at a cheaper rate.

THE FALLACY OF THE BASIC WAGE

To make matters worse the N. S. W. Board of Trade has just declared a basic wage of £3 17s, or 17s more than the ruling rate, to be immediately applied to all industries in New South Wales, which will mean an estimated addition to their cost of £14,000,000, and so overweight many of them that they will stop producing sooner than submit to such an exorbitant charge. This is just the opposite of

what the country wants if it is to meet its tremendous responsibilities in connection with the war. The Premier recognizes the difficulty, and proposes to partially avert it by basing the minimum wage not on the requirements of a man his wife and two children, as provided by the Board, but on the requirements of a man and his wife only, every child to entitle the parent to an additional wage payable not by the employer direct but from a fund contributed by the employers to the State. How this scheme will meet the difficulty remains to be seen, but the whole system of the State declaring and enforcing a basic wage is radically wrong, and the only thing in its favor is that it will intensify the Labor problem and the evil effects which are bound to follow in its wake will help to open men's eyes to the real truth.

AN ANGLICAN DEAN TACKLES THE PROBLEM

The problem caused by the high cost of living is already so acute that even the Church—which cannot pass it on to anybody else—has awakened to the fact that there is something rotten in our social system, and we have the unusual—in fact, the unparalleled—spectacle of an Anglican Dean proposing as a palliative—for even he does not claim that it is anything more—in the shape of the fixing of prices as the necessary corollary of the basic wage. In this he is quite sound, for, if the fixing of wages by the State is right, then, in order to make it of any avail, prices should be fixed too. The other night the Dean had the time of his life, and so had the members of the Radical Club. The Dean had never heard of the Radical Club (which is the debating section of the Single Tax League), and apparently thought it was a body of Unionists that did not know any more about the social problem than himself, so he readily accepted an invitation to address the members on his favorite subject. He told them that he was the son of a politician and had always taken a keen interest in political questions, that he came from Manchester famous for its laissez faire school, which, under modern conditions of industrial organization, had yielded pride of place to State control, and that on his desk he always had the Bible and Karl Marx. His main point was that, under modern conditions, competition was practically eliminated, and this necessitated the fixing of wages and prices, which doubtless had many defects but which would perhaps lead to that socialistic Utopia about which we all dreamed. At the conclusion of the address the Club had a go, and for over an hour fired off 5-minute speeches at the Dean, telling him more about the real solution of the problem than he had ever heard in his life. The Club then presented him with the works of Henry George with a request that he would put them on his table a little nearer the Bible than Karl Marx.

REAL ELECTORAL REFORM

A very great event in the political history of New South Wales during the past year has been the adoption of the principle of Proportional Representation for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly. The 90 single

electorates are to be replaced by 9 five-member districts, and 15 three-member districts. This is the culminating point in the long struggle for electoral reform which was started in Great Britain in 1832, and has been going on all over the British Empire ever since. It is proposed to apply the principle in the election of Local Government bodies, and if the reform proves a success in the Legislative Assembly the date of its application in the Federal House of Representatives and Senate cannot be far off. No one did more to procure the adoption of Proportional Representation here than Mr. Huie, the Secretary of the Single Tax League (or Free Trade and Land Values League, as it is now called), who has published a pamphlet on the subject, and summed up the advantages of the principle in a few telling words. "It releases the elector," he says, "from the bondage of the political machine. The candidates are now free to vote according to conscience for the best man without fear of vote splitting. A land value man, for instance, may now come forward on his merits. In a 5-member district he will have to get one more than the sixth of the formal votes, and in a 3-member district one more than a fourth to get a quota, in order to be elected in spite of all opposition." Mr. Huie himself is trying his luck in the Western Suburbs electorate, and you may be sure that the League will do its utmost to promote his candidature and get him returned. The Labor Party in New South Wales, which owes much of its strength to the working of the machine, opposes Proportional Representation tooth and nail, thereby showing that it is not the benefit of the community at which it aims but the raising of its own status at the expense of the community.

HOW THE COST OF RAILWAYS SHOULD BE MET

Among the measures strongly advocated by the League is that of the transfer of the cost of the construction of the railways on to land values. This question was very ably dealt with by the Secretary in his recent Annual Report. "New South Wales, unlike many other countries, lacks navigable rivers, and consequently has to depend upon railways to get the products of the country to local markets and to ports for shipment. Cheap railway carriage, therefore, is a matter of vital necessity for the development of the country. There is also the suburban aspect of the question. High fares are forcing people back into the slums. There is plenty of room in the outer suburbs, but add heavy fares to the time involved in travelling to and fro, and we have a condition of affairs effectively checking the decentralization of the population in the metropolitan area. The three increases in railway charges in recent years have been severely felt. There is only one way to deal with this question. The railways and tramways must be run to pay working expenses only. The cost of construction must be transferred to the value of the land. Building a line greatly increases land values. There we see the natural fund to draw upon to pay the interest upon cost. The transfer of the interest would permit of a reduction of one-third, giving our producers and suburban residents far the lowest

charges in Australia."

HOW OTHER EXPENSES SHOULD BE MET

A matter of great importance to the city householder is that of meeting the expense of water and sewerage by a rate levied on land values. A Water and Sewerage Rating Bill, providing for this reform, has been before the Legislative Assembly for some time, but vested interests have so far prevented its further progress. It is asserted that a large majority of households in the suburbs pay twice as much in water and sewerage rates under the present system as they would pay on a land value basis. An effort is being made to get the measure passed through the House, which it is to be hoped will meet with success before long. Some years ago a Public Works Fund was established which so far has not done much good. A capital suggestion has been made by our Secretary that this fund should be reorganized and made to cover all national works apart from railways and tramways, and that the interest and sinking fund in connection with the loans raised for carrying out these works should be made a charge on the land values of the State.

THE GREATEST MAN OF MODERN TIMES

The Henry George Anniversary, which was celebrated in the Pitt Street Congregational Hall, proved an unusually interesting event. Mr. W. E. Johnson, M.P., Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, delivered an address on the Life of Henry George. When the great reformer came to Australia at the invitation of the Single Tax League, Mr. Johnson, who was appointed manager of the tour by the League, accompanied Mr. and Mrs. George all over Australia and organized the meetings which were held. He had, therefore, exceptional opportunities of forming an estimate of their characters, and the conclusion he came to was that Henry George was the greatest man which the century, or even modern times, had produced, and that Mrs. George was "a woman of a million and a fit companion and mate for such a man." By a curious coincidence Mrs. Henry George—who, by the way, was an Australian—was born in a house on the very spot occupied by the Congregational Hall where the address was delivered. I was Secretary of the League when Henry George came to Australia, and I acted as his private secretary when he was in Sydney. I regarded him then as the modern Messiah, and so I regard him still. If he were only alive now, and could breathe into us some of the enthusiasm with which he was himself inspired what difficulties would we not overcome and what a leap forward would we not make in the path of genuine reform! Bht, alas, such men only visit us at rare intervals, and there is none such with us now.

PERCY R. MEGGY

Press Secretary, Free Trade and Land Values League.

WHAT is there for which life gives us opportunity, that can be compared with the effort to do what we may—be it ever so little—to improve social conditions and enable other lives to reach fuller, nobler development?

—HENRY GEORGE.

Limited Land Value Tax in Australia—Its Benefits

THE writer is an alderman of nine years standing in the municipality of Strathfield, New South Wales, and was mayor of the municipality 1915–16.

Strathfield is what you might call a "kid glove" district, so that the views of the people there are naturally tinged with conservatism. The people of Strathfield esteem the Unimproved Land Value Rating system to be most advantageous to the home owner, to the business man and to the public welfare.

The outstanding benefits are a big reduction in the taxation of small homes, and the bringing into use of large tracts of land hitherto held for a rise.

On land, for instance, in Strathfield which under the old system was paying £80 a year in rates, the new system raised the taxation to over £1,000 per annum, with the result of course that it was quickly cut up into allotments of about 50 feet frontage and offered at reduced prices, with the further result that people of moderate means had an opportunity of buying the land and building their own homes.

The war has interfered with this beneficial tendency very materially, because it has made the cost of building houses exceedingly high. But, notwithstanding, the holders of unimproved land in the municipality have offered every inducement to people to build by means of selling land cheaply, also when subdividing making very good roads, and planting all the new streets with fine avenues of trees, spending very large sums of money in order to make the place attractive to the prospective buyer of a home allotment.

The adoption of Unimproved Land Value rating has given universal satisfaction in the municipality, with the exception of course of a couple of owners of large tracts of unimproved land who naturally do not appreciate having their rates multiplied at least ten times. No alderman, or would-be alderman, or councillor or member of Parliament, or in fact any public man at all, has ever suggested that we should return to the old system of taxing buildings and improvements. Anybody who did so would be considered not only by the people of Strathfield, but by the people of Sydney and New South Wales generally, as only fit for a lunatic asylum, and any public man even suggesting the taxation of improvements would be at once dropped by his party, and by the people at the polls. Many aldermen who opposed this reform most strongly before it was adopted, directly it was adopted acquiesced in it, and at any rate pretended to be converted in its favor. Whether they were really converted or they realized the vast majority of the people were in favor of it, is immaterial. They knew it was meeting with great satisfaction and had come to stay, and therefore they advocated it, knowing that any other course would cast them into political oblivion.

When the change was established, not only in Strathfield but also in the city of Sydney, although it was put into effect quite suddenly, it caused no business disturbances