

Ireland Waking Up

WE learn from the *Irish Statesman* of Dublin in its issue of February 28, that an amendment to the local government bill has been presented by Senator Brown and accepted by the ministry providing a half rate valuation on new buildings. The proposal defines new buildings as all those erected between April 1st, 1920 and April 1st, 1927.

The *Statesman* announces that the Minister for Local Government is not only ready to accept the measure, but is willing to make a two thirds reduction in place of the one-half provided for. The *Statesman* goes on to say that "the proposal will, we hope, encourage the building trade and lead to more employment."

For a State

Real Estate Bureau

WORD was sent from Cleveland to Columbus, the capital where Ohio's legislature is grinding out laws at a dreadful speed, that the Cleveland Real Estate Board, with 2000 members, had declared in favor of the bill to establish a State bureau for licensing real estate dealers and regulating their business. Nothing was said about the fact that only 44 members voted on the proposition, that of these, 17 were opposed. You must give these 44 credit, however, for staging a real debate. James G. Monnett, Jr., real estate editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, reported it as follows:

"The opposition was led by Louis A. Moses, who argued against further multiplicity of laws. He was seconded by R. R. MacKenzie, who said he had operated four years in California under a license law which he characterized as ridiculous. H. R. Van de Boe argued that a license law would not help the real estate business nor protect the public, for the reason that immediately all the 'curbstoners' who hang out around the public square would get licenses and do business."

The affirmative was upheld by representatives of the State Association of Real Estate Boards, which was pushing the bill at Columbus. They argued that the bureau would eliminate the evils of the business. J. W. Jacoby, of Marion, Ohio, said that Ohio's blue sky bureau had put two widely known concerns out of business. Alfred G. Clark, of Cleveland, declared that the same bureau had not prevented a number of Cleveland concerns from swindling people out of millions of dollars.

The main object of the State Association is to limit the number of real estate dealers; but another object is suspected. The Association, at considerable expense, maintains a lobby at Columbus to oppose tax bills which real estate men do not like, and to push measures they favor. With a State Bureau controlled by real estate men, as it would certainly be controlled if established, the cost of

lobbying and publicity could be shifted to the State treasury.

With a real estate bureau once established, it could never be dislodged. Governor Pinchot of Pennsylvania, found 117 bureaus at Harrisburg which he deemed useless, but there has been no report of their abolition. The famous Rock of Gibraltar is apparently no safer than is a government bureau. Once in power, the real estate bureau would become a political machine for private interests, and always would seek to increase its functions, importance and emoluments, at the expense of the people.

When The New York Times Was For The Single Tax

WE will go as far as to say that in our belief the very best place to put it (taxation) is upon land and land alone. Editorial *New York Times*, January 25, 1889.

We have no hesitation in declaring that the ideal of taxation lies in the single land tax laid on the rental value of land exclusive of improvements. Editorial, *New York Times*, January 10, 1890.

WHAT is necessary for the use of land is not its private ownership, but the security of its improvements. It is not necessary to say to a man. "This land is yours," in order to induce him to cultivate or improve it. It is only necessary to say to him, "Whatever your labor or capital produces on this land is yours." Give a man security that he may reap, and he will sow; assure him of the possession of the house he wants to build, and he will build.—*Henry George*.

A PASADENA, Calif., paper announces that the city's woodyard is a "big success." Where woodyards are a "success" civilization is a failure, but it is too much to expect the editor to see that.

BOOK NOTICES

TWO NEW BOOKS BY HARRY GUNNISON BROWN

Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown has written a number of books in which the new political economy is treated lucidly and with singular ability. Here are two new volumes from the press of Lucas Bros., Columbia, Mo., one entitled *Economic Science and the Common Welfare*, a work of 447 pages and a smaller book, *The Taxation of Unearned Incomes*. Both are welcome additions to the library of the new science. The spirit in which the first is undertaken may be gathered by the opening paragraph of the Introduction which is as follows:

"Economics is concerned with the problem of 'getting a living.' It deals, therefore, with an important phase of the 'struggle for existence.' Unfortunately, this fact operates to prevent unprejudiced investigation of its laws and the effects of various economic policies. An examination that would show the effects of various policies from which a part of the public was benefiting, to be injurious to the remainder, might not be an examination which those who were profiting by the policies in question would desire to have made. And if such an examination were made, acceptance of its inevitable logical conclusions would probably be vigorously opposed."

There are chapters on Competition and the Price System, Money and the General Price Level, Depression, Prosperity and Prices, the Rent of Land and its Taxation, and a treatment of the subject of Interest. Theories in conflict with the principles defended are examined, and the chapters are written with a clarity that makes easy reading. We doubt if any one will complain that Prof. Brown has not made his meaning clear, so that "he who runs may read."

It would not be fair to attempt anything like a review of this book, which is by the way a second edition, in the space at our disposal, nor to indicate save in passing that here and there are statements with which we may be disposed to differ. We would not subscribe unreservedly, for example, to all that appears in the chapter on Monopoly. Prof. Brown expresses his belief that intelligent public policy would dictate the effective prohibition of combinations where such prohibitions would not seriously limit competition. He is considering only extreme cases of monopoly that may result from combinations able to dictate the terms under which they buy materials needed in manufacture. Whether even these exceptional cases would survive under economic freedom is extremely doubtful. But, on the whole, the author's treatment of the subject is satisfactory with the exception noted. We might also register our dissent from Prof. Brown's apparent agreement with Prof. Irving Fisher's money theory.

The second work, *The Taxation of Unearned Incomes*, is an examination of various theories of taxation and a strong plea for the Single Tax, the objections to which, as made by certain of the economists, are examined and subjected to rigid scrutiny. He bares their confusions, and what seems their intentional misrepresentations with perfect good nature, but his pen is trenchant and occasionally he permits his indignation to assert itself.

Prof. Brown is a herald of the new school of political economy. In his hands it becomes no longer the dismal science. Economic Science and the Common Welfare marks the arrival of the new concepts in scholastic economics which students and writers on the subject will find it more and more difficult to ignore.—J. D. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

A ROCK-RIBBER

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

William J. Blech, author of a recent article in your paper, seems to decry sectarianism. But he surely is a rock-ribber. He says, "The rent of the land should belong to the people." Why not let it go at that? If occupancy and use were the only condition of land tenure, the Commonwealth Land Party should be satisfied. Tax, single or double, is a misnomer. In the words of W. J. Wallace, "We hope to create a public sentiment in favor of the public appropriation of land rent."

Philadelphia, Pa.

W. E. JACKSON.

LAND SLAVERY IN CUBA AND PORTO RICO

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Recently there appeared in the *New York World* a report made by the Social Action Department of the Catholic Welfare Conference on the misery of the working population of certain West Indian Islands.

After a year's work the Social Action Department has been able to see but one reason for the wretched conditions of poverty of the peons of Cuba and Porto Rico and to a lesser degree of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It blames the American business man who has gotten control of the fertile lands and combined them into immense plantations of sugar, fruit or tobacco. It lays all the blame at the feet of the corporations because they employ the laborers only at certain seasons and at such wages that they barely exist. Since no other opportunities for work are available the workers are idle and half starved for long periods. All of which is true but it is not all of the truth.

The Social Action Department seems to hint that if every farmer held his own land the poverty would disappear. A knowledge of the cost of raising, transporting, and marketing such products as sugar, pineapples, grapefruit and tobacco, of the land areas available for cultivation, of the distance to markets and the transportation facilities, together with the census of field workers, will show the absurdity of the idea that any but large scale farming will pay in Porto Rico, to consider this as an example.

The real trouble is to be found in the land question of course. Most corporations do not own their land but lease it at exorbitant figures from absentee landlords. Land is exceedingly high so that capital is robbed at the start and naturally tries to make it up out of labor. The taxes on improvements and businesses are high. Company stores are a means of robbing the worker, but the corporations do not share in this nor do they allow it if it is brought to their attention. The outside stores or *tiendas*, being obliged to pay a tax, make it up in increased prices. A tax which appropriated the economic rent would bring down the price of land to the corporations and they could afford to pay better wages since their earnings would be greater. It would also cause other industries to be developed so that laborers not needed on the plantations could find employment elsewhere. Unfortunately the Social Action Department did not see this. As it is, it has made no direct recommendation for relief but has contented itself with damning American enterprise.

The report serves a useful purpose in showing up conditions as they are in contrast to the usual glowing accounts of the prosperity that one finds in some of high-brow periodicals.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

—JOHN LUXTON.

A CORRECTION

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Just a note for the information of the writer of "At the Sign of the Cat and the Fiddle." On page 14, he makes a reference to "political pensions." Actually there are only 5 available for ex-cabinet ministers. To qualify, a minister must have held his office for at least two years, and must make a declaration of inadequate means, which declaration has to be repeated at intervals so long as he shall continue to draw the pension. No Labor ex-ministers are on pension roll, first because none has served the qualifying period, and second because the whole 5 are at present being drawn by Tories and these may be expected to hold on while life lasts. We have one instance, the late Lord Cross, a Tory lawyer-politician, who held on to his £2,000 a year for 35 years. There are 3 first class pensions of £2,000 and two second class ditto of £1,200.

London, Eng.

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I made an offer of five dollars reward to any one who would answer the following question: No man can by any possibility produce an everlasting value. Crops must be repeated year after year, so must clothing and everything that labor produces. What justification, therefore, can there be for any man drawing an everlasting income, either by rents, interest or dividends, so that he can live year after year without producing?

So far I have received no reply.

Sometime ago at a public meeting of citizens, I offered any man in the audience a thousand dollars spot cash, if he would tell me of any rational employer of labor, who told his men that the better a man did for him, the worse he would do to that man; and the worse a man did for him the better he would do for that man, he would give him a chance to gain a fortune.

Any one who will accept that reward, stand up. I waited in vain.

At one of the meetings of the American Academy of Economic and Political Science in Philadelphia, the subject of unemployment was