

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

of any sort whatsoever, except that it disturbed very materially a lot of old rookeries in the city here built on valuable land. These rookeries were at once pulled down and magnificent up-to-date stores or factories erected in their stead.

Speaking from the business viewpoint—we find here in the municipality of Redfern where our business is situated, and also in the municipality of Darlington (adjoining) where our Bulk Stores are, that the institution of Unimproved Land Value rating has enormously reduced our rates. As our business has progressed we have built new premises and added to existing ones, and this has not increased our taxation. That is to say, if we buy land and hold it for a rise, we are looked upon as undesirables and taxed accordingly, but if we buy land and put it to its best use, we are treated as good citizens. And of course, as business men, we very much appreciate this more enlightened way of dealing with the question.

The adoption of Unimproved Land Value rating in Sydney and suburbs has been a big blow to the city of Melbourne, where they still pursue the antiquated method of taxing improvements. Quite a number of important industries have been started here recently, some of them being brought over bodily from Melbourne. Others, the promoters having examined the prospects of both cities, have strongly recommended Sydney as the best place to start, owing to the fact that no matter how large the enterprise grows, the expense will not be increased by the taxing of improvements, buildings, machinery, etc. In some cases this has meant a saving of £1,000 per annum in taxation, which of course at once decided the promoters in favor of Sydney as against Melbourne.

J. R. F.

Argentine Socialist Drift to Single Tax

IN our preceding issue we quoted the declarations of Dr. Juan B. Justo, leader of the International Socialist Party in the Argentine. In these declarations he denounced the programme of European socialism as impracticable, and advocated in its stead the Georgian principle of the absorption of land rent by taxation and the release of industry from taxation and from government control and direction.

Prior to that declaration, a prominent member of the same party, Prof. C. Villalobos Dominguez, of the University of Buenos Aires, had tendered his resignation from the party and passed to the ranks of the Georgists. We reproduce herewith a translation of Prof. Dominguez' letter of resignation:

Buenos Aires, June 15, 1918.

To the Secretary of the Socialist Centre of the 13th Section:

Will you kindly transmit through the proper channels my resignation as member of the Socialist Party, which I hereby present to you.

The reason for my resignation is that my convictions on social questions and reforms have come to diverge too greatly from those maintained by the Party. My ideas

have become frankly accentuated in favor of Georgism in its most decided and exclusive terms. And as this implies a great many discrepancies and as, besides, I cannot expect the members of the Party to agree at an early date to adopt a Socialist Party to my ideas, it seems to me a most natural solution that I should withdraw, now that we no longer coincide in the same aims and beliefs.

I believe I am fulfilling a conscientious duty, in this final communication as a member to my comrades of the 13th Section, to urge upon them to study seriously and directly the Georgian doctrine and to meditate upon it.

I wish to assure you, comrades and secretary, that I shall preserve a lively affection for those of the Centre whom I have known personally; for they have all seemed to me to be inspired by the most loyal purpose; and to them all I send cordial greeting.

C. VILLALOBOS DOMINGUEZ.

Prof. Villalobos Dominguez has, since the above act, accepted the Secretaryship of the Argentine Single Tax League. It is evident that the clear logic of the Georgist philosophy is acting as a solvent on the rigid formulæ of European socialism and producing in its stead a fluid, plastic liberalism, more in harmony with the American atmosphere of individual freedom and initiative.

The Georgist concept of society is that of a flexible organic growth, the antithesis of the rigid mechanical structure proposed by European socialism. Not the least of the services of Georgism to America and the world is that it has pierced to its vitals that hideous, clumsy and ruthless Frankenstein, compounded in his laboratory by Karl Marx from the distress of Europe's millions and false views of human nature and human destiny.

"Let us Avert a Social War," is the title of an important work just published by Dr. C. Villalobos Dominguez. As the book deals especially with the new trend of Argentine opinion from Marxian socialism toward the Georgian philosophy, we shall review it with some attention in our next issue. It is a handsomely bound book of 310 pages, published at \$3.00, paper.

Running through ten issues of *La Nota*, an important weekly review of Buenos Aires, there has lately appeared a spirited controversy between two well-known intellectuals, Emilio A. Coni and Andres Maspero Castro. The controversy, which revolves around the morality and efficacy of the Single Tax, recalls in many of its incidents the celebrated debate between the Duke of Argyle and Henry George. The results, polemically, are about the same. The present treatment of the land question in civilized countries cannot survive open discussion.

The admirable series of pamphlets published by a group of Argentine Georgists, under the name Bernardino, Riva-davia Edition, counts its sixth issue already, the latest to appear being "Proletariat Slavery," being several chapters from a notable work, with the same title, by Baldomero