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WHAT HINDERS GOOD HOUSING

It is axiomatic that price depends upon the relation of supply to demand. This is strikingly seen in the way in which the crying need for houses is reflected in the soaring prices for land for housing sites. That the demand will increase rather than diminish will tend to make those who own land incline to wait for still higher prices; the effect is to shorten the supply of land just when it is increasingly needed. It is no wonder that public authorities, as well as private builders, find land prices becoming prohibitive. We have noticed many instances of the straits to which local councils are put and their protests at the barriers to housing development which high prices, due to land monopoly, present to their schemes. Few of them realize, however, that the remedy is largely in their own hands. It is not to blame the landowner, a profitless pursuit, but to get on with the business of having the law altered which allows vacant land to escape rates, and which at the same time levies heavy rates on houses when they are built, thus checking development from the other end. (Examples follow of prices paid for land for building houses, in some cases as high as £30,000 per acre). -- Land and Liberty, Sept. 1945.

THE SQUARE DEAL

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 Ernest J. Farmer, Editor

A GRAVE NATIONAL MENACE

On September 11th the Canadian Federation of Property-Owners' Associations held its inaugural meeting in Winnipeg.

This Federation has developed out of the Toronto Landlords' and Property-Owners' Association, organized about ten years ago. At the inception of the latter a number of public-spirited citizens, including J. H. L. Patterson, H. T. Owens, Charles Kerr, and W. S. B. Armstrong, joined it in the belief that such an organization might aid in checking civic mismanagement. They quickly found, however, that the Association was formed solely in the interests of the monopolistic landlords, and that any advocacy of the interests of the home-owner or small property-owner would be promptly suppressed. The Association is governed by a self-perpetuating Executive; the members at large have no voice in the election of officers, the selection of matters for discussion or the determining of policy. The Association is so well financed that the small man's dues are inconsequential.

At an early meeting Mr. Patterson succeeded, in spite of the open hostility of the chairman, in making a brief plea for the home-owner, but it was made plain that he would never be allowed to speak again. The following proceedings he described as a sickening exhibition of short-sighted and unprincipled greed. Mr. Armstrong was briefly a member of the Executive, but retired for good reason.

The Toronto Association soon dropped the words "landlords and" from its official title, remains devoted to the aggrandizement of the monopolistic landlord. While it is amply supplied with crocodile tears for the plight of the homeowner, its policies are directed towards the elimination of the latter. It was primarily responsible for Premier Drew's recent present of \$10,000,000 a year to landholders, with the resultant encouragement to speculation, at the cost of the workers. Spending a great deal on publicity, the Toronto Association was soon followed by similar ones in other cities. Some Property-Owners' Associations were indeed organized on democratic lines; in Ottawa Mr. H. G. Barber is President. In the Ontario Association, however, the reactionaries have control.

The policies to be expected from the Canadian Federation are indicated by the election of Jamieson Bone of Belleville as President and Harold Manning of Toronto as Honorary President. Bone is an ardent advocate of the British municipal taxation system, a system which makes home-ownership a rare privilege. It is as true now as when Buckle made the statement, that "landlords are probably the only great body of men whose whole interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the nation." Landlords proper are but a fraction of one per cent of the Canadian people, but they are in pretty complete control of the press, the universities and many of the churches; now they are further organized under the leadership of men instantly ready to sacrifice the welfare of the masses to the aggrandizement of a parasitic class.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

Ernest J. Farmer

The production of the atomic bomb was an achievement without precedent. According to the accepted scientific principles of 1900 the bomb should have drifted down harmlessly, there being no known force which should make it do otherwise. Its production involved the cooperation of ten thousand expert technicians, including over one hundred ranking scientists, working at widely separated points. It involved calculations of hitherto unknown forces, with the constant threat of a miscalculation causing a catastrophe. Never before has a secret shared by so many been kept so well.

It is natural for people to imagine that such an achievement should be an important step on the way to the abolition of poverty and war. Unhappily these evils are not to be abolished or even mitigated by progress in the physical sciences or in modes of production, but only by improvement in the general standard of economic understanding.

The last number of "On the Campus" lists 30 major inventions and discoveries made during the period between 1752 and 1934, and remarks: "Yet after all this material progress, the world was in the throes of industrial depression and 46.5 per cent of the families of the United States were receiving incomes of less than \$1,000 a year. These 18,358,949 families averaged only \$600 annually -- less than \$2 a day." Even these figures do not show how desperate the plight of millions of these families actually was. They were completely cut off from any opportunity to provide for their needs by their own labor. Such income as they had was provided by public charity on an unprecedented scale; charity made possible only by adding billions to the public debt. Without this charity millions would have starved to death.

"On the Campus" continues: "May we expect that atomic energy will do for living conditions what the inventions and discoveries of the past two centuries failed to do? When utilized in peacetime pursuits will it better the lot of the average family? Will it raise above want those who today are able to make but a bare living?"

The answer to these questions is, of course, a flat "no". Basic wages will still be limited to what the laborer can produce on rent-free land. Speculation and land-grabbing will still make such land scarcer and scarcer, so that the laborer's wage will be based upon what he could make under worse and worse conditions. Taxes imposed without the slightest consideration for common honesty will still rob him of a considerable part of that pitiful wage.

Such improvement as atomic power may effect will be due, not to the fact of greater potential production, but to the fact that for once the government has kept an important natural resource

public property. This is a departure from the almost invariable policy on this continent of giving away everything worth while in the people's heritage for nominal considerations to those who make the quickest and most shameless grabs.

One or two per cent of the genius and effort devoted to the atomic bomb would undoubtedly, if devoted to sound economic education, be enough to guarantee to everyone on this continent the opportunity for a wholesome, happy life.

There is no better reason for hoping that the atomic bomb will end war. The invention of the machine gun, which gave the defense a great temporary advantage, later that of the bombing airplane, led to prophecies of the end of war. But all such inventions change only the conditions of war, not the impulse which causes war. As things are shaping, it seems all but certain that there will be at least one more world-wide war, in which atomic bombing will play a part.

The importance of the atomic bomb will, however, in all probability be lessened by the character of the war. Even the war just ended took in part the character of a widespread civil war. In the next war, few if any nations are likely to escape internal conflict. Allies and enemies will be so intermingled that even aviation will be subordinate.

In the case of such nations as preserve reasonable unanimity, those which make greatest use of the single tax principle will possess an important advantage. The cities of Glasgow (Scotland) and Sydney (Australia) differ in population by only a few thousand. But because Glasgow does not tax land, its people are greatly congested; because Sydney taxes only land and not buildings its population is exceptionally spread out. Glasgow is crowded into only one-fifth the area of Sydney. It is evident that Glasgow would be much more vulnerable to bombing of any type than would Sydney. This advantage is apart from that of better health conditions, of the greater vigor and productivity of the people who benefit by the single tax principle. The congestion of the Japanese cities was an important factor in the Japanese collapse.

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For our own salvation we in the United States must co-operate with other like-minded nations in setting up a sound and equitable system of commercial and economic relationships among all nations.

A vigorous and expanding international trade is indispensable to such a system. It can be achieved only by joining with other nations in clearing away the uneconomic barriers which throttled international commerce after the last war and in preventing new barriers from arising. -- Franklin Roosevelt, in an address to the U. S. A. Foreign Trade Council, Oct. 11, 1944.

VETERANS DENIED ACCESS TO LAND THEY FOUGHT FOR

Strethel Walton

It seems ironical that discharged veterans, returning to their homes after fighting to protect their land, are denied access to it. The following instance could no doubt be multiplied by thousands.

A couple of young friends of mine were recently discharged from the Air Force. During their training period they were camped in a beautiful section of Eastern Canada, close to a river and also to rail transportation. Fishing was the main industry in that locality, but as there was no refrigeration plant thousands of pounds of fish were lost every year. So these young men decided to build a plant as a service to the community and as a source of income after the war. Upon inquiry they found that all the land on both sides of the river and near the railroad was owned by one man. This man refused to sell or lease them any land for their project. He was not interested in having a refrigerating plant built in that locality, because his profits in buying fish during the last few years had made him a multi-millionaire. The fishermen, on the contrary, were entirely dependent upon his bounty, since he owned the land, the boats, the nets, and the general store. They would bring their catch to the store and get groceries and other necessities in exchange. Sometimes by spring they would be in debt at the store and have no money coming to them for their whole winter's fishing.

It seems rather shocking that any one person, or a group of persons, should have the power to impoverish their neighbors and hold up progress in this way. Returning veterans will be very bitter and disillusioned when they meet situations such as this. After fighting to protect their land, they should not be denied access to it in order to earn a livelihood. -- Henry George News, October 1945.

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Even now as we scan these lines thousands of children are being born into the world where their rightful place is denied to them in advance; their forefathers were turned off the soil, their descendants are not allowed upon it -- except upon payment of rent. They are, in fact, condemned to pay for mere permission to live, and this will be the fate of every (landless) child until the time that the great robbery is ended. To end the robbery the land must be restored (i. e., given back) to the free and equal use of all its inhabitants; and there must not be any compensation paid to the Landlords, for that would be to continue the theft under another form. -- J. Graham Peace, author of "The Great Robbery".

SOME CONDITIONS IN AUSTRALIA

E. F. Halkyard

The Square Deal continues to arrive and is circulated among our active members.

Recently we have enjoyed the company of your fellow worker, Mr. H. B. Cowan. He has made a most thorough study of some of our municipal finances.

Probably you know the setup of the Georgean Movement in Australia. The Henry George Foundation provides the booklets and books. In each State there is a League for education, lectures and support of candidates for election. Three of the Leagues run monthly newspapers: Standard (Sydney) Progress (Melbourne) and People's Advocate (Adelaide).

Probably our greatest difficulty arises from the franchise. There are "Upper Houses" based on a narrow landowners' franchise. These put a veto on bills which have passed the Lower Houses, providing for Land Revenue. But Socialist bills, tho' altered a bit, are usually passed. Hence the Socialists are, and have been, "getting on". Their proposals have a chance and their members in Parliament have success. It is then success which brings more success.

This forty year old obstacle to our measures is not likely to yield until we first win Proportional Representation. That is a preliminary measure and a wise generalship sees great value in preliminary preparation.

The strong moral appeal of the Gospel of Social Justice is an enduring support during many years of disappointment. -- From a letter to the Editor. Mr. Halkyard is Hon. Secretary of the Henry George Foundation.

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Instead of land confiscation, the Kuomintang has advocated the following measures: First, introduction of scientific methods of farming which, it is estimated, will increase agricultural production up to 40 per cent. Second, extension of cultivation. It is estimated that only 1,600,000,000 mou of land out of a total of 12,274,000,000 is cultivated in China. Even if all the cultivated land were equally divided among the people -- a process which would cause tremendous social disturbance -- the per capita amount of land would be only 3.5 mou -- about half an acre. Third, adoption of a progressive land tax, and fourth, reduction of land rent. The first two measures will improve the people's livelihood; the next two will peacefully and gradually bring about a status of relative equality. -- The Chinese News Service, quoted in 'Our' Magazine, Oct. 4, 1945. p. 11.

FRANK BARBER

The recent death of Mr. Frank Barber removed from the Toronto scene one who for a considerable number of years had been a member of the Executive of the Single Tax Association. He was a brother of Mr. H. G. Barber of Ottawa, now one of the leading Canadian active Georgists.

MONTREAL NEWS

Strethel Walton

We have many plans for the season; the first of course the classes in "Progress and Poverty," beginning about Sept. 26th. On. Sept. 27th was our first monthly "get together meeting", with the programme mostly taken up with talks on plans for the season and a showing of the picture "Millions of Jobs".

On October 18th we expect to start a new venture consisting of a series of weekly lectures, at which the Rev. Wylie Young of Batavia, N. Y. will be the first speaker. We have invited other people to speak at these meetings, including Senator Arthur Roebuck and Mr. Gerald Walsh of Ottawa, but no definite plans have been made as yet with them.

Classes in "Protection or Free Trade" and "Science of Political Economy" will commence later.

HAMILTON NEWS

Robert Wynne

The Henry George Fellowship Club met on September 11th. We secured 50 sets of the Wylie Young letters and we are mailing them, one a week, to a list of ministers. We shall soon interview these ministers in the hope that some of them at least will make their church rooms available to us for classes.

Howard Stobbs was with us on Sept. 11th. He will soon be out of uniform and is very enthusiastic.

A class started at St. Enoch's under John Wilson on October third. At least four groups are in prospect, besides one taking "Protection or Free Trade"

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A hundred years ago we decided that it was silly to tax bread and so make people starve. Is it not equally silly to tax houses and condemn people to overcrowding? -- Land and Liberty.

OTTAWA NOTES

H. T. Owens

A new group to study "Progress and Poverty" will start on October 18th; meeting, as heretofore, at the home of Mr. H. G. Barber.

At the annual meeting of the Ottawa Branch of the HGSSS H. T. Owens and H. G. Barber were re-elected president and secretary respectively. Mr. Bond and Miss Brewer were named as publicity committee.

Mr. H. Bronson Cowan should be back in Canada soon. The last problem on which he worked was, to determine why Sydney's Water and Sewerage Board rated on site and improvement values while the municipalities rated on site values only. The cooperation of the authorities in all sections where Mr. Cowan worked during his survey was willingly extended.

A number of those who have attended the study groups in Ottawa in the past few years belonged to one Branch or another of the Services; a number have now returned to their homes. It is hoped that new groups may spring up in different localities. Lieut. John A. Potts, now in Toronto, will be sorely missed. Lieut. John Ferguson has organized and taught groups at places in the Maritimes where he has been stationed. The first contact of these valuable workers with the Henry George philosophy was with the Montreal groups.

Future prime ministers of Canada are to have an official home in Ottawa. The Government is expropriating an estate between the French embassy and Rideau Hall, residence of the Governor-General. The owner demands \$256,000 for the property -- the bulk of which figure is, of course, unearned increment. The Government's offer was about \$125,000. The case now goes to the Exchequer Court.

In Senator Roebuck's maiden speech he emphasized the desirability of reducing taxes on small incomes. This perhaps implies that there may be an untapped source of revenue.

The Prime Minister has announced that Canada's war memorial for those who have fallen in the war will be the creation of a federal district of about 900 square miles, embracing parts of Ontario and Quebec. It will be about the size of the Australian Capital Territory. To achieve the purposes of the federal district doubtless a great deal of land and property must be expropriated, and the present system lends itself to the enrichment of those whose holdings will be required for this public purpose.

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Just as no nation can have a greater external enemy than war,  
have no greater internal enemy than poverty. -- Wm. Green,  
of L., in Maclean's Magazine, Sept. 1, 1944.