

THE PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE

PROGRESS

An Australian Journal to Advocate the Rights of the People in the Land

POLICY: 1. APPROPRIATION OF LAND VALUES OR GROUND RENT AS PUBLIC REVENUE.
2. THE ABOLITION OF TAXES NOW IMPOSED UPON LABOR AND LABOR PRODUCTS.
3. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR ALL ELECTIONS.

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A. R. Hutchinson, B.Sc., Editor.

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per annum.

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HENRY GEORGE COMMEMORATION

will take the form of a dinner at

AIR FORCE HOUSE

45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Thursday, September 2nd, at 6.15 p.m.

Commemoration address by Hon. E. L. Kiernan

Modest Charge

Reserve the date

CURRENT COMMENTS

FRANCE MOVES FOR FREE TRADE

(We are indebted to the provincial "Geelong Advertiser" for the following news item ignored by Melbourne dailies. It is portion of an article on attempts being made in France to raise wages without raising prices. It appeared in the issue of March 20th, 1954.)

"Combined with new price ceilings in certain industries, the Government is launching a four-year plan for making French industrial prices more competitive in the world markets.

This plan included a relief from certain taxes which weigh heavily on the cost of production of a variety of products. It also includes a gradual lowering of customs tariffs.

Reduced Import Duties

Import duties on raw materials are to be lowered by 50 per cent. next January; by 70 per cent. in January, 1956; by 90 per cent. in January, 1957, and abolished entirely by January, 1958.

Import duties on consumption goods and equipment for industry are to be lowered by 25, 40 and 60 per cent. in 1955, 1956 and 1957, and are likewise to

reach nothing in 1958.

This plan is subject to final endorsement by the Government at a future cabinet meeting, and will eventually be proposed by France to the organisation for European Economic co-operation, the 16-nation body which was started to "administer" Marshall Aid in Europe, and which now exists to promote and liberalise trade between European nations, including Britain."

We trust that the later changes in the leadership of France do not result in the shelving of this statesmanlike programme.

THE PUBLIC BE DAMNED!

The "Argus" newspaper put this heading on its editorial of July 2nd and continued: Victoria took one more step yesterday toward becoming a police State. The new Labor and Industry Act came into force and its effect is to slice another large piece off the personal liberty of both shopkeepers and the public.

We shall now have more snoopers about to pounce on shopkeepers who open their doors before 8 a.m. or do not put up their shutters where the Act prescribes Saturday afternoon holiday. This is the regimentation of the many into a goose stepping obedience in the interests of the few belonging to some pressure group which the Government wishes to please.

In this instance, at least on the surface, the pressure group concerned is the Shop Assistants' Federation, whose secretary says: "We would like to see much more severe restrictions on trading."

The "Argus" believes there is usually a sinister background to these legislative actions, which are peculiarly popular with Labor Governments, and designed to restrict the rights of the majority to give extra privileges to organised minorities.

Rule by Birch

A letter from Mr. I. A. Robinson, secretary Henry George Justice Party appeared on July 6th and congratulated the Argus for the above editorial "which highlights the tendency of Governments to rule by the rod and the birch, and to ride roughshod over all principles of liberty and justice.

The less Government is felt, the better the Government, but, as The Argus points out, Governments seem

bent on making crimes of the most innocent private contracts and criminals of honest men.

Much of the responsibility for this attitude is due to loose thinking on the subject of majority rule. Governments which are supposed to be elected by a majority of the people are set up to deal with community questions and to protect the rights of the people.

They have no moral or ethical right to interfere with any man's property or private business.

Every restrictive law eventually reacts to raise the cost of living, to add to the difficulties of life for the ordinary man and woman and to stifle progress in all the arts and amenities of life which add up to what we call civilisation."

What to Do.

Citizens need to do some thinking. First to realise that single-member districts give politicians the whip hand over the voters. Union of these electorates means strength for the citizens; 5-member electorates mean solidarity for the lovers of freedom. If interested write or call at this office.

KEILOR SHIRE

Ratepayers Slowly Wake Up

While the land boom of the twenties (up to 1929) was still hot, Collins St. firms secured dairy farms or grazing pastures in Keilor Shire, cut up the area into allotments and hawked these around the country as "investments." Keilor Councillors were very helpful: they maintained the horse and buggy era in municipal finance by awarding especially low rate charges to owners of vacant blocks. Since the cost of holding vacant land was so slight the investor could afford to pay more to the vendor firms and speculate on a rise in value to bring him the unearned increment. Keilor Councillors then secured the Shire revenue by a stiff levy on improvements. They watched a man build a house, waited till he was nearly finished and then clapped on the penalty rate charge on his enterprise for social benefit. This legal trick brings resentment so the budget was kept low down by avoidance of development.

Look at St. Albans, a village in the Shire. Victorian Railways in the twenties ran an electrified suburban line from Sunshine to St. Albans, but got very few passengers because of building blocks being held vacant by speculators. Vacant blocks provide no train passengers, hence the number of trains was low and incentive to build was lacking. The village remained a decrepit disgrace.

Shire Rates Recovery

Many investors neglected to pay even the favorably low rate charges, preferring to let the complaisant Shire councillors go short on revenue and borrow from the banks instead. By L. G. Law, the council can sell up the block when rates and interest due reach £10. But Keilor seems to prefer vacant blocks, for there has been no rate recovery auction sale in this municipality for many years until 1954. Many vacant lots had a great deal more than £10 owing. Then something stirred in the musty council and 104 building allotments in Keilor East, St. Albans and West Essendon were advertised to be sold for recovery of municipal

charges at an early date. Pronto! 39 investors paid up outstanding debts to Shire before the sale!

The balance, 105 blocks went to auction and sold for £16,485. Bidding was brisk, especially from builders. These self-employed citizens understand, as trained social workers do not grasp, that first concern in housing is to get a block of land for a house to stand on.

Site Value Rating

More blocks come on the market when basis of rating is bare land value which means exemption of all buildings from rates. This system is used by Essendon and Coburg, and is badly needed in Keilor.

August elections are coming near and new men should stand for Council on Site Value Rating demand. It's a winner. The old style rating can hardly be defended. Ratepayers must decide this issue. Their troubles are at their own doors. Once they wake up Keilor ratepayers can help themselves.

Valuation Trouble

Bright Shire Council recently re-valued all properties and an owner of property on the Porepunkah Rd. appealed to the Court of Petty Sessions.

For the Council, its selected valuer, Mr. E. V. English said: "I am a very busy valuer and do many Shires in a year. I also do outside valuing. A fair rental value for this property would be 55/- per acre or £412 per annum for the whole property. It would return £60 per cow per annum." He valued the same at £250 nett annual (rental) value. Altogether there were 150 acres and with buildings and improvements the gross valuation of the property would be about £5,500.

Mr. M. J. Seymour, valuer for the appellant, said he had 33 years experience in valuing and knew the North East very well. The property in question had a lot of blackberries, briar and St. John's Wort growing on it. He assessed its value at £4090. House value was £1000, sheds £400, stock yards £30 and material for water supply £50, and fencing £200.

Councillors at Fault.

Bright Shire Councillors choose the antiquated notion of making valuations on net annual values. As a result these discrepancies arise. The bare land value then appears, at low figures, round about £20 an acre for dairying land.

Councillors should be urged at next August elections, to modernize and make a valuation on the capital unimproved value.

SEVEN DEADLY DELUSIONS

1. That the Federal Government can prevent depressions.
2. That our economy is more "stable" than in the past.
3. That trained economists have learned how to control the business cycle.
4. That military expenditures bring prosperity.
5. That a lot of immigrants insures continued prosperity.
6. That borrowed money represents income.
7. That, since we have repealed the former laws of economics, human nature and external nature, things are different now than in the past.

—Adapted from Saturday Review, Jan. 23, 1954.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Broadcast Talk by Mr. L. F. Bawden over Stations 3DB and 3LK on Sunday, 18th July, 1954 in Justice Party Session.

This afternoon we will consider the free use of Broadcasting and Television Services by the major political parties at election times. The Royal Commission on Television included in its report a recommendation that at election times Television facilities should be made available to political parties under the same conditions as those which already apply to Broadcasting.

Under the existing arrangements the three parties forming the Government and opposition between them monopolize the entire propaganda services of the National Broadcasting Stations. At each election the Government and opposition share equally in the free and exclusive use of a total of seven hours broadcasting time on each of seven National Stations in the seven capital cities of Australia. But this is not all. Every commercial Broadcasting Station in Australia is compelled to give to both the Government and opposition one and a half hours free broadcasting time each.

Without counting the many country stations, there are at least twenty five major Commercial Broadcasting Stations in the capital cities. The charges for evening session broadcasting over Melbourne Stations averages over fifty pounds per hour, if and when time is available. A conservative estimate of the total value of broadcasting facilities taken by the major political parties is over six thousand pounds.

However, it is not only the monetary value of these facilities that must be considered. Even on commercial Broadcasting Stations only a limited amount of time is available to be purchased, and much of the time that is available is not at the hours when most people are listening; but the free time for the Government and Opposition is taken at the times when the largest audience is listening.

What are the implications of the recommendation of the Royal Commission that at election times these same conditions should apply to Television? In America the television stations charge the colossal amount of over one hundred thousand dollars per hour, the equivalent in Australian currency is over fifty thousand pounds per hour for one station. This means that when Television is established throughout Australia with seven National and nine Commercial Stations spread over our 7 capital cities, at election times the Major political parties will be sharing in the free use of half a million pounds worth of Television services, and this figure is only arrived at by assuming that the Australian Stations will charge only one eighth of the rate per hour that the American Television Stations are charging.

The fact that three political parties are giving themselves free use of a very valuable public utility is bad enough, but the worst feature of this set up is that the major means of propaganda is monopolized by two groups of politicians who follow similar lines, if not the same lines, on many issues. For instance, both the Government and opposition are extremely protectionist, so nobody puts the case for free trade. Take another example, during the recent election campaign,

a matter absolutely vital to Australia was not even mentioned. Neither the Government or opposition expressed any policy on matters affecting Asia or Asian people.

If parliamentary democracy is to survive in Australia, every candidate for Parliament must be given equal facilities. It is useless giving every citizen the right to vote if his choice is restricted to two candidates each of whom is selected and controlled by a party machine.

Whatever broadcasting or television services are available should be shared equally by every political candidate. If the broadcasting time had been shared equally by the 300 candidates in the recent Federal Election, each candidate would have received 10 minutes on a National Station and 15 minutes on a major Commercial Broadcasting Station. Under this arrangement if the 120 Government candidates combined their allotted times, the Prime Minister would be able to give his policy speech of one hour and a final talk of half an hour over every station in Australia; the same would apply to the Leader of the Opposition, but the 5 minute nightly talks would be shared with the independent candidates.

Television will become a threat to our Parliamentary Democracy, unless there is a fair and reasonable sharing of its propaganda services. One of the first things a Dictator does is to give himself a monopoly of the means of propaganda in his country. Is this to happen in Australia? Remember the words of Edmund Bourke. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

FUNCTIONS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

The following letter from Mr. W. Tindall was selected for publication in the "Diamond Valley Local" of 25/5/54 and for an award of one guinea from the publishers.

The function of a municipal or shire council is to integrate the individuals, welding them into a community; a happy, progressive community, whilst giving every encouragement to the individual.

Thus, a local council, by its meeting and determinations, creates a true society — a society that in no way restricts the individual.

But the individual must not interfere in, or with the equal rights and freedom of his neighbor, i.e., society.

A function of the council is to enable the construction and provision of those utilities, facilities, and amenities which are essential, or desirable, for people to live in, a community such as streets, roads, drainage, public hygiene, parks, gardens, and whatever else may be collectively decided upon.

Now it is readily recognised by all and sundry that these facilities and amenities do one thing—enhance land value.

A road, extension of electricity, bridge, parks . . . in fact, any public work that is desirable to the community has only to be mooted and land values rise.

People put this extra value on by themselves.

If proof is needed, check the prices vendors themselves put on properties around Hurstbridge BEFORE any talk of electricity, and what they ask NOW.

In this vast increase in values we have a source of all the funds needed for the functioning of our council.

This fund can be tapped through site value rating. This must be carried to the full to make it effective with no borrowing from the Government (that only subsidises the landowner at the expense of the taxpayer).

Borrowing from banks, etc., should be unnecessary, as land values rise as soon as any desirable public work is suggested, increasing with the progress of the project.

Site value rating would at once provide all the funds needed for desirable projects and free the council of individualistic pressure and wildcat schemes.

Whilst the council integrates the individual into a community, and thus ensures freedom, increasing the liberty of the individual, it must safeguard society by restricting the public nuisance, that menace — the thoughtless or anti-social person, and by confining noxious industries.

It is not the function of councils to engage in business, to do so is to court disaster. Therefore a business manager is unwarranted.

The services of a good engineer, valuator, and a town clerk or secretary are essential. Being desirable they would not be a charge upon the community as their services would fully return their salaries.

With these officers, engineer, valuator, and clerk, to advise, the councillor need not be a brilliant manager or organiser or outstanding in any sphere — such a man would not be representative of the people.

The first and only essential qualification of a councillor is that he be representative of the majority of people in the district.

Secondly, he should be sufficiently literate and vocal so as to be able to give voice on behalf of those whom he represents.

He should be at least honest, sincere; of high ethical and moral standards — but only of such standard as the average of the electorate.

In brief, the councillor must be representative. This will be ensured if elections are conducted by that system known as "Proportional Representation."

The complete answer to the problem which will be more greatly appreciated the more deeply, and thoroughly, it is investigated is:

P.R. and SITE VALUE RATING.

Congratulations to Mr. Tindall for his constructive contribution and to the paper for its readiness to encourage readers to think progressively.

HENRY GEORGE "JUSTICE" PARTY

The "Justice Party" entered a team in the "A" Grade "Age and Leader Shield" debating competitions of the Debaters Association of Victoria. The first rebate was against the Young Liberals and was won by that body. Our team had to affirm "that the present dominance of political parties over the individual is in the best interests of democracy."

We were more fortunate in the next debate against the Constitutional Club when our team comprising Messrs. L. J. Hutchinson, A. R. Hutchinson and W. H. Pitt received the adjudicators decision. They successfully denied "That War has accelerated Human Progress" — I. A. Robinson, Hon. Sec.

SITE-VALUE RATING

CAMPAIGNS REACHING CLIMAX

Valuations in Sale City and Eltham Shire have now been completed and the comparative statements showing the rates payable under the respective systems have been sent out. Interest is markedly livening in these places. We have no information on the position at Benalla. Sale and Eltham polls will be taken on Saturday, 28th August.

Sale City.

Here the local Ratepayers Association had been pressing for a comprehensive survey to be made similar to the Warrnambool Survey conducted by the Land Values Research Group. The Town Clerk had protested that his whole efforts were concentrated on getting the statements out and he had no time to make such a survey. However he found time to make a biased report on the incidence of site-value rating which he submitted to Council simultaneously with the despatch of these statements.

This report was very effectively answered by Cr. G. L. Cameron in the next issue of "Gippsland Times" of 19/7/54. We quote it in full on page 5 opposite.

(As a sequel to this the Land Values Research Group is to be asked to make a comprehensive survey covering all assessments, similar to that at Warrnambool. This was decided by the Sale City Council at its last meeting).

Eltham Shire.

Here the rate notices have been distributed and as expected, householders would gain substantially by the change to site-value rating. However, in this Shire 58 per cent. of all holdings are devoid of any buildings and most of these are subdivisional vacant lots which will pay 3.8 times as much under the proposal. Compulsory voting applies in Eltham Shire.

Opposition has emerged primarily centred around Mr. E. Haughton, an estate agent who has taken an active part against site-value rating in past years. He hired the Shire Hall at Eltham and publicised that he would expose the fallacies of site-value rating. About 40 turned up to the meeting.

His address traversed the globe and reminiscences of past campaigns. However it was difficult to see his objections to site-value rating except that it was in accordance with the principles of Henry George which he stated to be abolition of private ownership of land. After the address Mr. A. R. Hutchinson asked if he would answer questions or permit discussion. He said he would not. He had found by experience that it was much better if one did not allow questions or discussion. Mr. Hutchinson asked if he would debate the matter. He again refused. He refused also to allow any further statement to be given saying he had hired the hall and it was quite open to anyone else to do so for the site-value side.

A debate was arranged by Eltham South Riding Ratepayers and Tenants Association at Montmorency for 15th July between Messrs. A. R. Hutchinson (Site-value) and A. H. Day (N.A.V.). The latter had valued two of the ridings and had prepared the N.A.V. case in a statement sent out to all ratepayers by the Eltham Shire Council together with a case for Site-Value.

This debate attracted an audience of 106. It was followed by a good number of questions to the speakers. It was noteworthy that Mr. Haughton availed himself to the full of the opportunity to ask questions though he had not been willing to allow them at his meeting.

SALE RATING REPORT

COUNCILLOR REFUTES STATEMENTS

Sir,—The report submitted by the town clerk cannot be accepted as an impartial and unbiased account of the incidence of site-value and nett annual value rating in Sale. It is not an exhaustive analysis covering all assessments such as the Warrnambool report prepared by the Land Values Research Group which body offered to prepare a similar study for Sale. It compares simply the lumped payments for properties in certain areas without distinction as to whether they are fully built, under-developed or completely vacant. The comparisons are therefore quite misleading and have all the deficiencies of the statement presented by the town clerk last year to which strong objection was raised in my letter published in the "Gippsland Times" of April 30, 1953.

Both the generalised information in the report and the detailed information in the tables are inadequate and misleading. Their defects will be seen from the following comments on the paragraphs of Mr. Ray's report.

IMPARTIALITY

It is not suggested that Mr. Ray has an "axe to grind," but it is pointed out that last year he went to particular pains to draw up a case against site-value rating. He then actively identified himself with n.a.v. rating in press discussions and therefore cannot be considered impartial. Nor has he widened his analysis to meet the objections raised last year that only token samples were given of residences and vacant lots although these were the most numerous types of properties.

SHIFTING THE BURDEN

No advocate for site-value rating has suggested that all ratepayers will save in rates. It is claimed that it will re-distribute the rate burden more equitably. Some will be relieved of part of the excessive charge now levied on them by n.a.v. rating on their improvements. Others, owners of under-developed properties and of particularly valuable sites, will lose some of the advantage they have enjoyed under n.a.v. and will pay a more equitable share of total rate revenue.

ANOMALIES

The alleged anomaly of the shopping section being required to contribute 27 per cent. of the rating of the municipality will not sustain investigation. Rates are an insignificant business cost to the well developed properties in the shopping centre. They are an all important item however to the householders who are the customers and who would spend their rate savings in the centre. But lumping of the figures for all business sites does not tell the full story. There are under-developed sites and even vacant land holdings in Raymond Street. The area as a whole pays more on site-value but the business premises do not pay the whole of these charges.

Properties should pay more to this area than at

present because the higher value of sites there is due to the concentration of the community provided and maintained services. But it is not necessarily the business premises that will be required to pay more. For example the seven vacant lots in Raymond Street as listed in Mr. Ray's statement alone would contribute £593 of the total increase and these are not all the under-developed properties.

Mr. Ray's statement that rates under site value will be increased on rural properties by 180 per cent. can be readily de-bunked by referring to his statement which shows 24 "selected" properties out of the large total of rural properties within the city boundaries. They may well be 24 of the least improved rural properties.

Mr. Ray is quite astray in his reference to differential ratings on rural properties. He is evidently unaware of the requirements of the Local Government Act which provides that a municipality may rate on either system but not on both. There is provision to permit council to levy a lower rate in the £ on genuine primary producing properties over five acres in area. But it would be a rate on the site-value and not the n.a.v. of these properties.

SUB-STANDARD HOMES

The statement that the old houses are owned by a class of ratepayer who cannot afford to better his or living conditions is sheer assumption. In fact they are often owned by substantial citizens who are holding as investments to cash in on rising land prices. Where owners of such properties are really unable to finance rebuilding they can solve their difficulties by selling to someone else able to put up decent homes. They will thus help themselves and the development of the city at one operation.

OTHER DWELLINGS

Although there are more than 1600 dwellings in the city Mr. Ray has selected only 157 for inclusion in his statement. Of these 112 are Government-owned and only 45 are private dwellings in which 15 are stated to be sub-standard, 15 "average" and 15 "better class."

These numbers are indicative of the degree of "impartiality" in the selection, but do nevertheless draw attention to the indisputable fact that normal homes benefit substantially under site-value rating.

On the 15 homes in the statement in each group the average rates paid under the systems can be set out as follows:—

	Site-value Rates	N.A.V. Rates
Sub-standard	£11 0 0	£5 5 0
Average	£14 6 0	£17 16 0
Better-class	£19 10 0	£54 10 6

The site-value rates are obviously more equitable and in proportion to the value of services provided in return for rates.

RESIDENTIAL STREETS

In the absence of detail it must be assumed that the figures given for the three residential streets include all assessments whether of vacant land or built properties. The two classes of property should be considered separately and not mixed. To the extent that there are

vacant lots the saving shown on dwellings in these streets under site-value is grossly under-stated although even on the published data is considerable.

In showing a £1000 saving on Housing Commission dwellings Mr. Ray makes no reference to the substantial increase in rates on vacant land held by the Commission. Housing Commission tenants surely are entitled to the same consideration as others in regard to rates. The rent assessed by the Commission for dwellings includes the cost of rates and there is no reason why they should be denied the opportunity of possible rent reductions.

VACANT LAND

The fears expressed in regard to vacant land are not justified when consideration is given to the fact that the average increase in the 197 building blocks quoted in Mr. Ray's statement is only £3 per annum. As Mr. Ray points out there are thousands of blocks held vacant in metropolitan areas rating site-value. At least these will not continue to be a financial burden on the municipality as at present. They contribute a fair share to the city revenue.

INDUSTRIES

There is no guarantee that site-value rating will cause new industries to be established. But it will at least remove the present impediments to their establishment with a rating system which imposes extra annual charges which may make their establishment uneconomic.

Mr. Ray expresses concern at the possibility of Sale losing a substantial sum of "government" money. As the total council revenue will be the same under site-value rating, it should be a matter of no concern to council whether their revenue is in the form of "government" money or "private" money.

DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

Mr. Ray puts forward an argument against site-value rating that any alteration or adjustment of Sale's municipal boundaries with a view to enlarging the municipal area would be difficult if not hopeless. Sale is already larger in area than 13 Victorian cities rating site-value. In these areas, the tendency is for rate-payers in adjoining shires to seek inclusion in the city areas rather than the city seeking to annexe adjoining municipalities.

Mr. Ray's report cannot be regarded as a proper survey. A true appreciation of the incidence of site-value rating can only be determined by an analysis of all properties in the city on the lines of the Warrnambool report. However, ratepayers will be able to gauge the effect of site-value rating as it affects themselves by a study of the comparative rate statements issued by the town clerk.—Yours, etc.,

G. L. CAMERON.

DEBATE ON SITE RATING

Our staunch Committeeman Fred Howden, met an old opponent Cr. R. T. Breen, in a debate arranged by the Kew Branch of the Ratepayers and Owners Association of Victoria and attended by about 50 persons.

Kew adopted Site Value Rating in 1948 and reaffirmed it with an increased majority in 1951.

Cr. Breen, who is almost to be admired for the tenacity with which he holds to out of date taxing systems, brought no new facts to light. He conceded

that Site Rating would mean lower rates for up to 65 per cent. of the homes in his own municipality of Brighton. He indulged in the usual misrepresentations such as Henry George having been a Socialist. Mr. Howden gave adequate reply. Cr. Breen had great difficulty when asked why, being a Liberal, he advocated taxation of private enterprise, for such is the effect of rating on improved value.

The feeling of the meeting was probably best expressed by Mr. A. McIntosh, who, in seconding the vote of thanks, said he felt that the system to be used was the one which brought the greatest benefit to the greatest number. He obviously had Site Value Rating in mind.

W.H.P.

SITE-VALUE RATING IN NEW ZEALAND

More Successful Polls

From the Annual Report of the New Zealand League for Taxation of Land Values we read of further successful polls not previously reported in this Journal.

Taieri County (31/10/53): Area, 902 square miles. Population 6,680. Rate revenue £19,960 (1953).

Voting: For Site-value—998.

Against Site-value—809.

Waitemata County (2/4/54): Area, 600 square miles. Population, 31,500. Rate revenue, £167,291 (1953).

Voting: For Site-value—5,349.

Against Site-value—2,420.

Otautau Town (28/11/53): Population 740. Rate Revenue, £2,560.

Voting: For Site-value—100.

Against Site-value—62.

Nightcaps Town (13/2/54): Population, 610. Rate Revenue, £1,645.

Voting: For Site-value—42.

Against Site-value—30.

Tirau County Town (31/10/53): Population 647.

Voting: For Site-value—66.

Against Site-value—19.

Ashburton Borough (22/5/54): Population 8,580. Rate Revenue, £37,196.

Voting: For Site-value—673.

Against Site-value—529.

SAMUEL LINDSAY

It is with deep regret that we hear of the death of our stalwart worker Samuel Lindsay who passed away on 22nd of June at the age of 94. Lindsay was born in Ireland in 1862 and came to Australia as a young man. Being a man of deep thought he soon saw the folly of our taxation system, so spent most of his life travelling around Australia distributing Henry George's works to try and make the lot of his fellow man better.

His first work after landing in Australia was in a chaff mill at South Kensington, Victoria, where he sewed chaff bags after first placing George's pamphlets in them. From there he went on to Townsville, Queensland, where he got work as a book keeper and storeman on the stations. He worked on most of the stations down through Central Australia. He was engaged in transport work when all freight was hauled by camel train. From that he went to Port Germain buying wheat. In 1908 he went to Denial Bay buying wheat for Geo.

Wills & Co. where he stayed until 1916 when he joined the first A.I.F. and served overseas until the end of the war. He claimed to be the oldest returned man from the first A.I.F.

In 1922 he stood for Parliament with Mr. H. Frick as Single Taxers for the district of Flinders. At the next election he stood with Mr. E. G. Craigie and was defeated again. He then went selling tea for Griffiths Brothers on the West Coast of South Australia. He travelled about 12,000 miles annually with two horses in a van selling tea and putting Georges works before the people all the time. In that way he paved the way for E. J. Craigie to be elected for the district of Flinders.

While travelling for Griffiths Brothers he was instrumental in forming the Kimba Land Reform League. After giving up travelling he went to live with his son for a few years, but the call of George's works was too strong for him so he bought a horse and van and went out selling George's works through the Murray and mid northern districts. But age was against him. After two years he gave it up and went to live with his daughter in Adelaide where he lived until he passed away. He leaves one daughter, Mrs. N. Magilp, Adelaide, and son, Mr. H. B. Lindsay, Adelaide.

Mrs. Lindsay passed away many years ago. Farewell to a good and faithful servant in the cause of Freedom and Justice.—G. BROOKS.

MANSFIELD SHIRE

Adopts Site-Value Rating by Resolution.

At the June meeting of Mansfield Shire Council a resolution to change to site-value rating by council resolution was carried unanimously. The Council will now advertise for a valuer and the Valuation will be completed next April. Site-value rating would not become operative until October, 1955.

Congratulations to Mansfield Council on their progressive move. We expect more councils will take this course in the near future.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES MARION MUNICIPAL RESULTS

This district includes McLaren Vale, part of Sturt, Tapley's Hill, Morphettville, Edwardstown, etc.

Tired of penalty rates on buildings the ratepayers secured a referendum on the method of rating their properties. Before the poll the news reporter wrote that the provisional assessment shows, for houses, a decrease of rates of £6 or £7, with new system of unimproved land values and rises on some vacant lots of £4.

[Ed.—That is from £1 up to £5 for vacant blocks, and down from £13 or £12 to £5 for houses].

The report goes on: a large number of absentee votes is expected from (vacant block) landowners living away from the district.

The poll was held on May 1st with this result.

For Land Value Rating	5,211	(71%)
Against Land Value Rating	2,126	(29%)
Majority for change	3,085	

As the reporter for "Advertiser" remarked:—"the new system was decided on by a big majority." We add: Democracy means rule by the majority, but most vacant block owners are anti-public.

RACECOURSE AS RATE DODGER

Valuation of unimproved site values disclosed the fact that land occupied by S. A. Jockey Club at Morphettville is so valuable that municipal rates may be £3,000 a year on a just system. But in the past this wealthy corporation has merely paid £800 year rates, thus dodging a just payment of £2,200 yearly. For ten past years the plunder amounts to (say) £20,000. However, it is not proposed to follow Canberra practice and make retrospective demand. Let bygones be bygones. There is no need for moaning. Yet the Jockey Club Secretary whines in the public press — "we might have to run (another?) race meeting to pay our rates" (Or for other reasons, Ed.).

On the other hand, Mr. G. T. Virgo, president of Marion Progress Association said of the change over:—"Average 5-roomed house would be rated £4 to £6 yearly as against former average of £11." That makes the position clear:—The Morphettville racecourse has been dodging its just rates because penalty rates were imposed on homes to raise requisite revenue.

SHEEP NEAR CITY

Leading pastoralist in Marion district, Mr. A. E. Sheidow said a meeting of sheepmen from O'Halloran Hill to Reynella would "probably" be called to protest that land now rated on £24 per acre will be rated on £128 an acre. The land in question was used for sheep and was worth less than the rateable value (for grazing sheep.—Ed.).

VIGILANCE FOR VACANT BLOCKS

Marion area has between 2,000 and 3,000 vacant blocks arising from sub-divisions of properties "ripe for development." Many of the absentee owners are "investors" living in other States. Mr. H. S. Laffer, President of the Vigilance Assn. said the new rating system would have an adverse effect on market garden production in Marion — one of the few remaining food-producing belts "near the City." There would be a meeting soon to enlist aid from other districts in urging the Government to protect and retain these food producing areas "near the City."

Perhaps Mr. Laffer does not realise that home owners who build in Marion will cultivate vegetables in the back-yard, or even in the front garden. Maybe Mr. Laffer has never heard of motor trucks bringing vegetables to market from the outer areas.

Vice-President of the Vigilance Assn., Mr. Syd Hamilton, fears that house-holders in other districts are likely to "force" polls (against reluctant councillors? —Ed.), to introduce rating on unimproved land values. Hamilton Shaheb says "Government intervention" is necessary to prevent these house-holders, ratepayers and citizens getting municipal justice.

So the Vigilance Association will ask the Playford Government to discard even-handed valuations. Instead land is to be rated on one basis and building blocks rated on another basis. Or else, to provide a compromise plan (Something on line of the Burnall-Shepherd discarded notion.—Ed.).

Another whine came from Mr. T. C. Paltridge, Tutt Ave., Kingswood. He moans "The alteration in the rating system at Marion, as approved by the vote benefits

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the many at the expense and perhaps ruination of the few." Yet the Paltridge "few" such as the Race Club, have been dodging much of the just rate payment for years past.

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

Playford is not the rightful Premier of S. A. At last election more votes were cast anti-Playford than votes pro-Playford. With the Upper House tycoon, Jude Shaheb in charge of Local Government, citizens and ratepayers must be alert. When West Torrens voted solid, for site value rating, the anti-public Playford promptly rushed into legislation an exemption in part for the Golf Club and Polo Club, spreading over West Torrens. Similar privilege for the Morphettville race-course may be mooted by Playford's Government perversion of Municipal Justice.

OBITUARY — Mr. S. LINDSAY

Many single-taxers will remember with gratitude the pioneer work of Mr. Samuel Lindsay for economic justice and social righteousness. This veteran, after three weeks' sleep, passed away on the 22nd June, aged 94 years.

Until he lost consciousness Sam Lindsay could recite a page or more of 'Progress and Poverty' on the slightest prompting and frequently astonished some hearers by his ability.

To his relatives we tender sincere sympathy.

PROGRESS & POVERTY

This book has sold in millions of copies and tho' written seventy five years ago is still good reading as a synthesis of ethics and political economy. A copy of the new printing, a condensed edition was sent to the reference library of the Melbourne "Age" newspaper. On June 12th the editor published on the leader page the following review.

New Look

One of the most enduring, if also controversial, economic writings of the last century, Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," has just been republished in an abridged version for modern times.

The book, published by the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, is a distillation and, to an extent, a modernisation of the author's theories on the land question and taxation.

Henry George, it is said, dictated much of his original work, so that its rhetorical style has more appeal to the ear than the eye.

By a careful process of revision, grafting passage to passage, and by dropping many of the author's purely local illustrations drawn from conditions in the United States of his day, the editors of this volume claim to have given a new appreciation of "the pure logic of George's economic reasoning."

HISTORY OF MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

We have been asked to supply material for a history of the Henry George Movement in Australia. We will be grateful if any of our readers have material bearing on the early history, which they can make available. If so, please contact the Secretary.

Notes from Various Sources

Common Complaint.—They believed in equality, but somehow fell into enormous inequalities of wealth.—Gilbert Murray in "The Listener," of 14/5/53, writing of the Greeks.

Many other nations have encountered the same difficulty. Henry George in "Progress and Poverty" gave the explanation and remedy.

Sovereign Remedy! — Napoleon Bonaparte was once told that the state of French literature was at a low ebb. His immediate reaction was "I must speak to the Minister for the Interior about it!"

[Ed's. Note.—The same pathetic credulity in the efficacy of government action persists today, but on a much wider scale.]

Famine Hits China.—Besides losing grain to feed the Chinese armies in Korea, China's farmers with their own families facing starvation must also feed the millions of Peking Government's civil servants who now comprise an eighth of the total population.—Herald, 9/5/53.

[Ed. Note.—The Welfare (?) State has been set up in China and requires a large staff of non-producers to allot the benefits.]

Hospitals, like all public services enhance land values. Therefore, it is only right morally and economically, that hospitals should receive some share of that vast fund which they assist to create. Thus hospitals would have ample funds, with no burden on any persons pocket or conscience (unlike a lottery) if hospitals were financed by a rate on land values.—W. Tindall in "Argus."

HENRY GEORGE LEAGUE OF VICTORIA.

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Next Executive Meeting, Tuesday, September 7, 1954 at 6.45 p.m.

Members' Evening, Tuesday, August 17, at 8 p.m.

HENRY GEORGE JUSTICE PARTY.

Committee Meeting, Friday, August 13, at 8 p.m.

Broadcast Session 3DB each Sunday, 12.10 p.m.