

## 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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## CURRENT COMMENTS

### FREE TRADE AND FREE INDUSTRY

Freedom of trade is a gauge by which the prosperity of nations is commonly measurable. Commerce, like all other developments of human energy requires training and directing only. Confined in fiscal trammels (shackles) it becomes distorted, stunted and weakly.

And for what purpose are these trammels imposed? To supply the reckless exigencies of faithless rulers, to satisfy the demands of favoured monopolists, to extort indirect contributions for the support of extravagant government, to spite a foreign state, or rob a home people.

The necessities of war may be alleged as excuses, they can never be admitted as reasons.

The absorbing character of our late contest paralysed for a time the organs of trade emancipation. But now that contest is ceased, we may surely hope that our latent energies will be again revived in prosecuting national and international improvement in the reciprocal development of our resources.

The imposition of duties, exposing the feebleness and poverty of the imposers, the inaction and indifference of the imposed upon, is a desperate attack on the nation's industry. The history of all tariffs reveals the corruption of their birth, the injustice of their growth and the injury of their consequences.

—“The Engineer,” 16th May, 1856.

### THOSE IMPORT RESTRICTIONS!

Further tinkering with the present import restrictions has been announced. From the press we learn that new firms will not be permitted to enter the Australian import trade and import quota adjustments will no longer be made on grounds of hardship.

These provisions, according to the Minister for Trade (Mr. McEwan) have been made “necessary” by the position of Australian oversea funds. As if the new policy was not enough, the Minister said that

the establishment of a special committee in Sydney to deal with appeals against decisions by the import licensing branch of his department did not connote any relaxation in the present licensing restrictions.

Mr. McEwan said he was anxious that the committee should pay particular attention to (a) Cases where there appeared to be sound ground for the claimant considering that the circumstances of his case warranted a review of policy and (b) Cases where the claimant considered a ruling of the licensing branch inconsistent and would result in inequity to particular firms.

Apparently the Government is fearful that its grossly restrictive policy is not sufficiently water-tight, hence its latest high-handed move. We deeply sympathise with any poor importer who tries to surmount the steep hurdles imposed by (a) and (b) above.

As a further measure to restrict development of Australia and prevent citizens making progress this impudent Minister for Trade announced that in future “New firms will not be permitted to enter the Australian import trade.”

—W.A.C.

### BOOST FARM OUTPUT

The Victorian Government has launched a drive to increase primary production and to examine the matter a sub-committee of Cabinet rank has been appointed. Enquiry will be made as to why Crown and privately owned land is not producing to the extent it should.

There are at least three obvious points to which the committee should direct its attention. First is the incidence of municipal rates in regard to improvements. Why penalise the means by which greater production can be obtained. This surely is an unnecessary burden and can be removed by using the site value basis for rating.

Secondly, at present, outward goods and inward produce bear the whole of railway freight. Manifestly this is a burden which adds to the cost of implements, manures and all the accessories used in production. As if that were not enough, the producer must bear the full freight when he comes to market his goods.

The remedy is simple enough — a tax on land values to meet operating costs with consequent reduction in rates.

Then the crowning folly is achieved. Restrictive boards impose their will of which the potato board is a lamentable example. What are its principal achievements? An artificial shortage, higher prices and black markets!

Here are three hindrances, obvious and unmistakable. Why not dispose of them logically as a preliminary move. Their removal would go a long way towards the goal of full production.

—W.A.C.

## DANISH ELECTION SUCCESS

The Danish elections resulted in a substantial increase in the representation of the Social Justice Party devoted to our principles. It will have 9 members in the new parliament compared to 6 in the old.

This is gratifying particularly since the election system has been altered since the previous election and makes it harder for small parties to secure representation.

The Social Democrats, Radicals and Social Justice Party have now agreed to form a coalition Government. The Social Justice Party will have three Ministers in the cabinet.

The composition of the new Riksdag is as follows:—

Social Democrats (70), Radicals (14), Conservatives (30), Liberals (45), Social Justice Party (9), Communists (6), German Minority Party (1), Total (175).

## THE BUILDING RECESSION

In April, two important bodies put to the Prime Minister their concern at the development of a recession in the building construction industries and pressed for urgent remedial action.

One was the Building Industry Congress representing most of the bodies connected with the construction of buildings or supply of the raw materials. The other was the Building Workers' Industrial Union, representing the workers engaged in the industry. Each rightly felt that their interests were threatened by the recent trends in the industry.

The facts they cited are alarming. In the year ended December last the number of persons working on houses fell by over 3,700, which is more than 11 per cent. of the previous total; the number of dwellings commenced fell by 9 per cent. In production of building materials cement building sheets were down 11 per cent.; terra cotta tiles 6 per cent. less; native sawn timber down 20 per cent. on the previous year.

Any decline in the scale of building construction should concern every citizen. The building industries are basic in their importance to the welfare of all others. Decline in demand for building materials means loss of employment or short time for workers in those industries. It then has chain reaction upon other industries because curtailed incomes of building workers result in lack of ability to buy the products of workers in other industries.

The need for a high dwelling construction rate continues unabated. Dwelling construction has barely kept pace with the population increase since the war. We have made no progress at all towards rebuilding in the inner suburbs where more than half the houses are over 60 years old and should be replaced.

Both the Building Industry Congress and the Builders' Union have sought easier credit for house-building. There is no doubt that restrictions on home finance are a major factor in the situation. Imposition of such restrictions in 1951 had an immediate effect in reducing building. Yet this is not the full or even major remedy. Indeed, if reliance is made on easier credit alone this has seeds of later trouble for the industry.

There is another cause of the decline in the building industry. Indeed, this should be obvious since the home-finance limitations this year are not much different from last year. The other cause attacking the building construction industries is the price of land. This is now so high that potential home-builders cannot afford to build. Quite generally home-sites are priced in the region of £1,000 except on the outer fringes and not so much less even there. Easier credits for home finance would soon be capitalised into still higher prices for sites.

Higher price of sites restricts potential home-builders to a higher income group and cuts the demand for housing. The young couple wanting a home must save up for several years longer to get a site than if land cost half as much. The high cost of sites is a dead weight operating against the interests of architects, master builders, building workers, and those engaged in making building materials. Their interests are best served by keeping the price of land down to the lowest level possible so that more people can be brought into the home-building market. Their interests and those of the whole community lie in turning whatever funds are available into building instead of sites.

The only effective means of reducing the price of sites is taxation of land values. The aim of all engaged in the building industry should be to shift taxes off buildings and onto sites for this will work doubly to stimulate building construction. It will cause land now held under-developed to be released to potential builders at lower prices. On the other hand removal of taxes from buildings will reduce their cost and in turn enable more people to build.

This policy should be pressed in the Federal, State and local government fields. With local government ratepayers already have an option to make this change. This should be exercised. The practice of rating site-values instead of building values should be made mandatory and extended immediately to the Board of Works and Water and Sewerage authorities throughout the State. A State development fund should be established financed by a rate upon site-values and applied to reduce railway and tramway freights and fares and other charges for services.

## SALES TAX v. LAND TAX

### WHICH RAISES PRICES OF COMMODITIES?

Awaking to real conditions the Australian Labor Party proposes to abolish the unjust sales tax and raise equivalent revenue by taxation of the public value of land. Part of this proposal already appears in its platform but there is a clause which allows £10,000 exemption of land values before assessment.

Hence at the Federal conference of A.L.P. held at Brisbane, March, 1957, Mr. Clyde Cameron, M.H.R., for the Hindmarsh Division (Adelaide) in South Australia, moved the motion to strike out the £10,000 exemption and suggested that the revenue obtained by the unjust sales tax now levied upon commodities required by wealth producers should be collected by a tax on the unimproved value of land.

Mr. C. Cameron produced such sound arguments in favor of the proposed change that his motion for (a) deletion of the £10,000 exemption and (b) abolition of the sales tax was carried unanimously.

### Hostile Reaction

When announcement of the change of A.L.P. policy was made in the daily press, vested interests became alarmed at the prospective loss of their special privilege and commenced propaganda to confuse the real issue. This rapid reaction shows the keen incisive effect of the proposal on monopoly profits and the hostility of monopoly holders was prompt and virulent—so much so, that Mr. Ed. Ward, M.H.R., is said to have wavered before the storm. Mr. Jack Lang's "Century" said this battle would be a feature of the next Federal election.

### Key to Understanding

Why do vested interests react with hostility against a proposal that citizens should share the public component of land values? This is the reason: A land value tax stays where it is put — on the monopoly holders. There are no means whereby that tax could be transferred to others either (1) by land holders increasing rent or (2) by shopkeepers increasing the price of commodities.

Suppose there were such means of "passing on" the land tax, then the holders would not be so hostile!

### Hitler Tactics

Monopoly interests have expert advice from lawyers, psychologists, economists, and journalists to guide and advance their control of the public values of land by avoidance of a just "duty" (or land-due) payable at the Treasury.

Suggest a doubt, assert a negation, confuse an issue, raise fearfulness, pose as impartial news providers — the daily press prints this type of propaganda as "news."

Such tactics seek to make citizens believe that they would not derive any benefit from the proposed change and that wealth producers would not gain anything by the removal of £10,000 exemption from the land tax (merely a gain to the Treasury) while citizens gain nothing by the abolition of the iniquitous

sales tax (since the Treasury has to make up that loss of revenue some other way).

It is of such vital concern that "news" of the fight "Sales Tax v. Land Tax" should be widespread and our new booklet with that title will help to promote interest and information.

The author is Mr. E. J. Craigie, formerly M.P., Adelaide. Publication shortly — price four pence, three for a shilling, plus postage. Send your order now to this office.

## CLARENCE (TAS.) OPPOSITION SUCCEEDS

The vacant land holders in Clarence Municipality succeeded in their efforts to stave off site-value rating. We recorded that a writ had been lodged for an injunction to prevent the Council proceeding with implementing the resolution carried in favor of site-value rating.

The action claimed that the resolution was not valid because the requisite number of days clear notice of the resolution had not been given to all councillors. The court upheld this submission.

The opposition then concentrated on their next line. They had gained a year's delay with the above decision but still had a majority of councillors able to move their resolution for next year. The next step was to get rid of the council itself — a very extreme move but what matters when vacant land holders are faced with paying five times as much in rates?

They had secured the signatures to a demand for a poll with a view to supplanting the Council with a Commission and a poll was timed for June 1. They now concentrated upon building up an atmosphere of hostility to councillors in general. Writs were lodged by one of the defeated council candidates challenging the council elections on grounds of unsatisfactory rolls and charges suggesting corruption against certain councillors.

The charges were not fully discussed in court, the hearing being deferred till after the poll. But the main purpose was achieved of making the public confused and sickened over charges and counter-charges and desirous of getting rid of such a turbulent council. So much so that they voted for a Commission by a very substantial majority. This three-man paid Commission will take office for the next three years before it can again be put to the ratepayers.

In the meantime site-value rating cannot be introduced unless the Local Government Act be amended to give ratepayers facilities to demand polls on this subject as in Victoria.

Vested interests have again stalled the reform in Tasmania but we hope that those who have made such a fine fight and shown they have public opinion overwhelming behind them on this issue will not give up. They have to press home to ratepayers how their desires are being thwarted and home owners mulcted in far higher rates than equitable, simply to benefit owners of undeveloped property.

Above all there is need to develop a Tasmanian Rating Reform League to press for this change not merely in Clarence but in other Tasmanian municipalities. It is to be hoped those who have shown their

abilities so well in Clarence will press the formation of such a League.

## NEW ZEALAND SUCCESSES

The annual report of the "New Zealand League for the Taxation of Land Values" for year 1956 records considerable achievement.

### Local Government Commission Report

In particular the report of the Local Government Commission appointed by the Minister of Internal Affairs to enquire into rating problems is a milestone in the progress of the movement towards land value taxation in the realm of local government. The recommendations of the Commission included the following:

1. That there should be one universal system of rating applicable to both territorial and ad hoc local authorities.
2. That this system should be based on site-values.
3. That the Valuation Department should revise site-values every two years and capital values every six years.
4. That the local authorities at present rating Annual Value be given the option of either a period of five years in which to make the change over to site-value or seek special legislation to continue rating on the Annual Value until the ratepayers carry a poll for a change of rating to site-value.

The League submitted evidence to the Commission on three separate occasions and there is no doubt that this evidence had a definite influence on the report of the Commission.

However it appears improbable that the Government will bring down legislation in line with the findings of the Commission. Hon. S. W. Smith, Minister of Internal Affairs addressing the recent Municipal Conference said "It appears that the Commission's proposals are not generally acceptable to local authorities and it might be necessary to find some other answer to the difficult and important question."

### Further Successful Site-Value Polls

The following rating polls on proposals to change to site-value (unimproved capital value) rating were successful and have not previously been reported in this paper.

Municipality	Date of Poll	Votes for U.C.V.	Votes against U.C.V.
Waipatu County	17/11/56	550	202
Vincent County	17/11/56	1,046	521
Franklin County	17/11/56	2,245	1,641
Kaitangata Borough	17/11/56	160	132
Kaipoi Borough	23/2/57	368	183
Wyndham Town	17/11/56	78	28
Fairlie County Town	17/11/56	211	89
Kaikoura County Town	17/11/56	256	197

Polls in Lower Hutt City and Richmond Borough were unsuccessful.

Congratulations to our New Zealand friends on their very impressive results.

easily demonstrated to the economic advantage of individual citizens even though it is evident that some other forms of taxation must be higher without it.

## LAND VALUE TAX RATES SUMMARY

Australian States for Year 1954/55

RATE OF LAND TAX IN PENCE PER POUND

RATE OF LAND TAX IN PENCE PER POUND						
Taxable Unimproved Capital Value	Vic.	N.S.W. (1)	Q'land	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
Up to £250	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.75	2.00	1.00
At £499	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.75	2.50	*
At £5,000	1.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	2.50	1.42
At £10,000	1.0825	1.00	5.50	1.125	2.50	1.98
At £20,000	1.594	1.00	6.00	1.812	2.50	2.63
At £72,000	*	1.00	*	*	*	4.467
At £75,000	*	1.00	8.00	*	2.50	7.00
At £80,000	*	1.00	8.00	4.203	2.50	7.00
At £85,000	7.00	1.00	8.00	7.50	2.50	7.00
Exemptions below which above rates do not apply.	Farms £240 £3,000 Others £650	Farms (1) £1,900 Others £700	Farms None Others	None	"Im- proved land" 50% less "absen- tees" 50% less more than above	Rural land no tax £4,807 then £27 less than other land.

Note (1) N.S.Wales tax applied only to far western interior freehold lands of little value. However, N.S.Wales has since imposed a land tax on the pattern of Victoria.

\*Rate is on a sliding scale intermediate between figures above and below.

Herewith we summarise the land value tax rates levied by governments in the various Australian states during 1954/55.

Their basis and structure varies widely. The taxable value shown is not the full value but that left after deducting the exemption where specified.

West Australia alone applied a uniform rate over the whole taxable value. West Australia and South Australia were better than others in allowing no exemption.

By 1954/55 Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania had imposed tax rates steeply progressive on the higher valued holdings thus filling the field previously occupied by the Federal Land Tax when repealed.

Western Australia and New South Wales have now followed suit in 1956/57.

The exemptions and graduations give an appearance of class taxation about what should be regarded as a just due payable alike by all holders. While the higher rates undoubtedly have beneficial effect in curbing land values in the larger valued holdings, small scale speculation is equally objectionable.

What is not fully appreciated by ourselves is that local taxation of land values through municipal rating is a much more important influence in this country's present development than the State Land Tax, at least in Queensland, New South Wales and West Australia.

In Queensland the average municipal rate per pound of site value was 18d. which is more than double the maximum scale of State land tax. Yet there is no opposition to this municipal taxation as there is with State Land Tax. The reason is that the municipal application is clearly in lieu of the alternative of taxing buildings and cultivation.

On the other hand State Land Tax goes into general revenue and appears an additional tax not in lieu of any other specific tax. It is therefore not

## FAIRHOPE:

### SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT IN SINGLE TAX

(Fairhope: The Story of a Single Tax Colony. By Paul E. and Blance R. Alyea. University of Alabama Press, 1956. \$4.50.)

Fairhope, Alabama, the oldest and largest single tax colony in America was established on 15th November, 1894 by a small group of men and women who hoped to demonstrate the benefits of single tax in practice. Fairhope was developed not in a fertile savannah, but on sub-marginal land. The initial group of colonists consisted of 25 including children, and four were not members of the Fairhope Industrial Association and most of the members had made but one payment of \$5 on their membership stock.

Fairhope could not put the single tax to a thorough test, for as our authors explain "A private corporation obviously cannot have taxing powers, and thus cannot abolish all taxes except those levied on land . . . Literally all the colony can do is to prevent speculation on individual profit in colony lands and to use the rent collected for the (public) purposes of the community."

The colony had a plan which enabled it to refund all State and County taxes on land, improvements and personal property.

In seeking members Fairhope drew to it non-single taxers including some socialists. In steadily pursuing Henry George's objectives, it thus met a considerable amount of dissension. It was by observing the freedom of expression cherished by George that it was able to maintain its principles in spite of some objectors.

The first land purchased was but 120 acres. "It consisted of 2800 feet along Mobile Bay, about half the distance between Montrose and Battles Wharf" . . . a location of importance. In spite of difficulties which confronted Fairhope at the beginning, and those which came later, as for example the effects of the Florida Boom, the Depression of 1929 and the two world wars, Alyea can say:

"The Fairhope Colony survived this and many other handicaps and shortcomings. It not only has survived but has grown increasingly strong in a material or financial sense. And a curious thing has occurred: instead of shedding its single tax characteristics, as the general public lost interest in the doctrine, the colony purged itself of non-single tax impurities in its functions, its policies and its procedures. The Fairhope Single Tax Corporation of 1954 is very much a going concern. At least from the point of view of its small membership it is anything but an anachronism; rather it is viewed as one of the more realistic and soundly rooted reform organizations in existence."

The progress of this community is such that the Alyeas who have long been familiar with it can say, "The results of the Fairhope Colony experience appear to these observers as quite superior to those obtainable in comparable areas. The values accepted in reaching this judgment are those of the community as a whole, as opposed to the values of individuals as speculators or as seekers after absolute privacy, irrespective of the costs to them or the group."

In speaking of the rapid growth of Fairhope the Alyeas make these significant comparisons:

"Over the years the Fairhope colonists made much of the fact that Fairhope grew steadily and more rapidly than any of her sister communities similarly situated on Mobile Bay such as Daphne, Montrose, Battles Wharf and Point Clear. All of these are much older, some of them having been established village centres for more than 100 years before Fairhope was founded. Daphne was formerly a county seat and had the further advantage afforded by the presence of a normal school. None of these communities enjoyed any protection whatever from land speculation which, from the point of view of a single taxer is a "retarding and growth destructive influence . . .

"The relatively rapid growth of Fairhope as contrasted with the much slower growth, or even the long term stagnation with some retrogression of other Eastern shore centres, may, with considerable certainty, be attributed to the colony plan."

The very success of the management of the Corporation has caused a lack of interest in its affairs among some of its members. The Alyeas consider this unfortunate and propose a way to correct it. They also recommend an educational programme for the people now in Fairhope who are not familiar with the single tax policy. They say:

"If we are correct in our understanding of the nature of the survival value of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation and if our suggestions are adopted, the result should be a renewed vitality of the experiment and with this new life should come renewed community interest and a widespread conviction that the Fairhope colony can demonstrate certain beneficent effects resulting from a community expropriation of economic rent in lieu of other taxes and charges for the financing of the community household."

This is very strong endorsement by the authors, who say they are not single taxers, though find Henry George fascinating. We can be grateful to them for a very objective and comprehensive study.

—"The Georgist," March, 1957.

### ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CHEMICAL INSTITUTE

By-law 44 has been amended to read, in part, "the counting of votes shall be carried out by the Nanson system of preferential voting in elections for the positions of president, vice-president, honorary secretary, and honorary treasurer — and, by the single transferable vote system of proportional representation in elections of committee men." Proceedings, Oct., 1956.

[On notice of motion Mr. J. F. Wright, supported by Mr. W. R. Jewell, had pointed out that the Nanson system was unsuitable for the election of a representative body.]

\* \* \*

Communism is: Socialism carried to its ultimate outcome where it becomes indistinguishable from Fascism; both of them are totalitarian in essence. In fact, communism is socialism with freedom left out. Democracy is an experiment we have not yet tried, democracy will survive but it has a long hill to climb. —Prof. Murdoch's Answers. "Herald," 27/4/57.

[Ed. Note.—Those interested may secure from our office the booklet "Dictator-Democrat" for 9 pence, posted.]

## SITE-VALUE RATING WANGARATTA BOROUGH

Wangaratta Borough is the first municipality in Victoria to place its Water and Sewerage rates as well as the general rates upon the site-value basis. The valuation figures for the whole municipality were: N.A.V., £354,794; and U.C.V., £2,390,864. Of the U.C.V. the portion under the Water Trust is £1,852,432, while that under the Sewerage Authority is £1,552,022.

The U.C.V. rates struck for the various authorities are: Borough 8d. (equals 4/- N.A.V.); Water, 3d.; Sewerage, 3d. Minimum rates of £2 per vacant lot and £5 for buildings were fixed for water and sewerage.

The rates at a total of 1/2d. on lots fully serviced are beginning to pinch holders of undeveloped land. The McCormick-Nolan family have held undeveloped a very large block in the heart of the town. Some of this was in course of subdivision for business purposes last year.

Mrs. McCormick has now lodged a writ on the council challenging the rate poll held last August. Grounds are the council did not allow postal voting; did not enforce compulsory voting; did not advertise the result of the poll within 21 days. The Council has entered a defence against the action.

## MILDURA CITY

This city shares with Wangaratta the honor of being first Victorian municipality to exercise the option to place its sewerage rates on site-value basis. The general rate on U.C.V. is 6d. in the £, and the sewerage rate 2½d. in the £. The water rates remain on annual value since the water authority serves the Shire as well as the City.

## SWAN HILL BOROUGH

We have received confirmation that Swan Hill Borough Council carried a resolution to adopt site-value rating. The valuation is now complete and the comparative rate notices are understood to have been sent out. It is not known yet whether a poll will be demanded. If not within a month of distributing of the notices the council can make the change without need for a poll.

## WODONGA SHIRE

The valuation is now complete and comparative statements will be distributed shortly.

## MOE BOROUGH

The Moe Borough Council has not yet appointed valuers and is seeking permission to defer the rating poll to next year. It claims that as the petition was presented on the last day of January it did not allow sufficient time.

## KEILOR SHIRE

Activity is well under way here. Meetings have been held since our last report at Avondale Progress Association (Cr. A. Skewes, Messrs. J. Wilton and L. J. Hutchinson); Wilcolator Canteen, Niddrie (Messrs. Harcourt Bell, L. J. Hutchinson and Cr. A. Skewes); Maribyrnong West (Hon. S. Merrifield); St. Albans (Cr. A. W. Skewes and A. R. Hutchinson). Pamphlets have been printed for distribution.

## TRARALGON SHIRE

The Rating Reform League is now preparing for a stepping-up in activity and will soon distribute pamphlets for the information of ratepayers.

## NORTHCOTE HELPERS WANTED

Northcote Rating Reform League would appreciate help from persons in or near the city in a drive for the signatures to a new demand for a site-value rating poll. A petition last year failed by 21 votes so that a larger safety margin will be needed. A revaluation is due next year so that now is the logical time to commence collection of approximately 2,000 signatures needed.

Will any willing to help please contact Mr. L. W. Brown, hon. sec., General Council of Rating Reform, G.P.O. Box 955 G., Melbourne, or Mr. P. Stammers, 62 Newman Street, Thornbury, N.17.

## OPPONENTS' NEW TECHNIQUE THE "CROCKETT" REPORT ON S.V.R. IN WONTHAGGI

A new technique has appeared by opponents of site-value rating. First inkling we had of it was a letter in "Age" 7/2/57, from Mr. J. I. Crockett following some press discussion on site-value rating in Malvern. Mr. Crockett said before changing their system rate-payers should have the benefit of full and unbiased advice from experts on how the burden of rates will shift and the effects on the municipality.

Next news is from Wonthaggi. Here the Council had agreed to take a poll next August on site-value rating in response to pressure from the Ratepayers' Association. The poll would not have been binding, not being fully in accordance with the Act, but it was expected the Council would honor the ratepayers' decision. Unimproved capital values were available from last year's valuation.

The Council arranged with Mr. J. I. Crockett, Town Planning and Rating Consultant, to make a report giving "advice" on which system was best for Wonthaggi. Fee was £75. The advice covers 15 pages of text but little actual analysis of Wonthaggi data. It is adverse to site-value rating. As result the council will not take a poll this year.

The nature of its deficiencies will be evident from the comments of the Research Director, Land Values Research Group below. It is evident this type of biased "advice" will be offered to various councils in lieu of genuine factual surveys.

It is noted that a firm of Collier & Madge offered their assistance and advice to Clarence Municipality in Tasmania recently when considering rating systems. We wondered how this Melbourne firm happened to be interested to make the offer. It becomes clearer now that we find Mr. J. I. Crockett is a member of this firm.

## Criticism of Crockett Report

The following comments upon the report were made by the Research Director, Land Values Research Group to Wonthaggi Council and published in "Wonthaggi Express," 6/6/57.

"Where a poll of ratepayers is to be taken on a proposal to change from annual value to the unimproved capital value rating basis each ratepayer must receive from the council before the poll a statement comparing the rate payments for his property under the two alternative systems. Thus there is no doubt whatever in his mind where he stands financially under the change.

"The only need or justification for any further survey by the Council or anyone else is to establish facts about the incidence of the rate change upon various groups in the municipality and future development which may help those citizens willing to take a wider view than cash saving to reach an informed decision.

"The essential part of any genuine survey must be that it cover every assessment else it will be open to suspicion of partiality in selection. It must also establish clearly how many houses benefit in lower rates under the respective systems and by what amounts; similarly for business properties; and similarly for vacant land. In brief, it requires a balance sheet to be produced showing how the rates will be distributed between these two types of property according to system used."

Any report that purports to be a survey of a municipality yet does not give at least this minimum information cannot be



taken as a serious contribution. Unfortunately Mr. Crockett's report does not fulfil any of these conditions nor supply any of the above listed items which councillors and citizens are entitled to expect.

The major criticisms of this report are:—

(1) It does not establish how many houses, business properties or vacant lots are benefited by the unimproved capital and annual value systems respectively, the proportions benefited nor the magnitude of the rates payable by them — hence is not a genuine factual survey.

(2) It does not cover all assessments in Wonthaggi, but only about one-sixth of the assessments.

(3) The cross-section given by this token sample is quite unrepresentative of the numbers of the various types of property in Wonthaggi and the degree of impartiality in the selection is therefore doubtful.

(4) The only factual data given on Wonthaggi valuations and rates under annual value and unimproved capital value systems is contained in one table covering six selected areas.

(5) The comparisons of total and average rates on the areas given in that table give a completely false idea of the rates payable under either system since they lump together rate reductions on one type of property with increases on another and the net figure is not related to any system.

(6) The use made and conclusions drawn from this misleading data in the table are wrong, the errors being particularly serious relative to the business properties.

(7) Only six pages of the 15-page report are even remotely based on Wonthaggi valuation data and a large part of these pages is devoted to other districts and is not relevant.

(8) The first part of the report is not appropriate to a factual survey, and the citation of opinions is drawn from sources opposed to site-value rating, while the views of authorities favorable to that system are excluded.

#### Unrepresentative

Although Wonthaggi is a small borough with only 1,783 assessments capable of ready analysis, Mr. Crockett has not made a complete survey at all. He has based his observations on a mere 313 assessments. This is barely one-sixth of the total and is a mere token quantity. The personal factor in their selection is important.

These samples have been taken in six areas of the town which he "feels is a representative cross-section of development." That they are not a representative cross-section at all will be evident from the following comparison of the numbers and proportion of his samples to the totals of the main types of property.

Property Type	Total Assmnts.	Asmnts. in Report	Proportion in Sample
Houses	1440	140	10%
Business	166	166	100%
Vacant Land	177	7	4%
Totals	1783	313	16%

These criticisms were supported in greater detail but space does not permit more extensive reference.

#### Mr. Crockett's Reply

Mr. Crockett replied to these criticisms in the "Express," 13/6/57, with the following amazing answer to the major criticism:

"... the purpose of my report was to inform your council, and through them your ratepayers, as to the likely effects upon the Borough as a whole, and the advisability of making a change to unimproved value rating. ... The majority of ratepayers are the householders and the majority of householders customarily pay less under unimproved value rating. It is obviously of advantage to any body of persons dedicated to the unimproved system to provide such information because they can thereby show the majority that a vote for unimproved value rating is to their personal advantage. A very good tactical move, but I submit, outside my terms of reference."

From this we conclude that Mr. Crockett was not interested in getting and presenting the facts but only in playing a game of "tactics." He had decided his report would be adverse to site-value rating and therefore to avoid any analysis that he felt would prove favorable to the site-value rating case.

## FORUM ON WORLD PEACE

The monthly Henry George League forum was held at 18 George Parade, on Friday, June 14, on the subject "Means for Promoting World Peace."

First of the two opening speakers was Rev. Robert Green, Vice-President of the Victorian Pacifist Movement, who impressed all present with his powerful presentation of the pacifist case. He affirmed that war must be regarded as something intrinsically evil, and not merely an effect of other things. He stressed the need for an international outlook, and stated that nationalism is the main cause of war. He elaborated various aspects of the non-violence creed, which he considered to be the best means for promoting world peace.

Second main speaker was Mr. G. A. Forster, of the Henry George League, who affirmed that free trade and equal right of access to natural resources were essential to achieve world peace. He pointed out how overseas tariff walls had contributed to Japanese military expansion in the thirties, and mentioned some serious details regarding Japan's external trade in recent years. He showed how land monopoly in Germany contributed to the rise of the Nazi party and hence to the advent of World War II; pointed out how the land question was at the basis of bloodshed in China and Kenya; and referred to land monopoly in relation to inter-racial strife in South Africa. He showed how the Henry George method most effectively secured equal right of access to land.

A stimulating and enlivening discussion followed. Several members of the audience considered the two approaches to be complementary. The chairman, Mr. L. J. Hutchinson, thought that it was necessary to get back to the question of human rights.

#### Next Forum—July 12

The next forum, on July 12, will deal with the recession in the building industry (and will include references to the housing shortage). Three speakers have been invited: A unionist from one of the building trades, a representative from the building industry congress, and Mr. A. R. Hutchinson, of the Henry George League. There will be ample opportunity for contributions from members of the audience.

Readers are urged to come along and participate, and to tell others.

## MR. F. C. KEEN (S.A.)

We regret to record the death on June 5, of Mr. Frederick C. Keen, of Victor Harbor.

Educated at Fort Street School (Sydney) he went farming and was a student at Wagga Experimental Farm before coming to S.A.

A pioneer at Black Valley in 1913, he developed his property by growing vegetables, planting an orchard and, later, by dairying. With such practical experience Mr. Keen knew the tax burdens on primary producers and the great value of exempting improvements from municipal taxes. In 1941 he stood as an Independent candidate for Stirling district and was narrowly defeated.

Mr. Keen was a great help to the campaign which

carried site-value rating to success in polls at Victor Harbor and nearly won Encounter Bay.

We tender the sympathy of reformers to the relatives of this stalwart apostle of justice.

### SUMMARY OF PRESS PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of press reports and letters rating which have come to our attention since our last summary. Figures in brackets are column-inches of space occupied. Readers are requested to co-operate by sending details of any press publicity coming to their notice.

#### VICTORIA

##### "Age"

- 8/2 (6) (L) L. W. Brown on S.V. rates in Malvern.  
21/2 (6) (L) J. H. Morris answers Mr. Fagan, S.V.R.  
23/2 (4) (L) J. M. Atkinson scientists and L.V. taxes.  
5/3 (5) (L) J. Watson effects S.V.R. in Malvern.

##### "Malvern Advertiser"

- 14/2 (14) (L) A.R.H. on effects S.V.R. in Malvern.  
14/2 (9) (L) "New Ratepayer" on S.V.R. in Malvern.

##### "Essendon-Kellor Gazette"

- 21/2 (51) Report Rating debate in Broadmeadows.  
21/2 (4) (L) Cr. E. Angel on rural rate B'meadows.

##### "Traralgon Journal & Record"

- 17/12 (7) Report Sth. Side P.A. Meeting S.V.R.  
20/12 (9) Statement by Traralgon R.R. League S.V.R.  
31/1 (31) Report demand lodged for S.V.R. poll.  
10/1 (12) (L) A.R.H. explanatory re poll petitions.  
4/2 (8) (Ed) S.V.R. will be decided by poll.  
18/2 (20) (R) South Siders discuss S.V.R.  
14/2 (21) (R) Valuers appointed and cost.  
7/3 (2) (R) A.L.P. Branch supports S.V.R.  
11/4 (12) Poem on Rate Reform.  
11/3 (2) (R) Polling day fixed for Saturday.  
25/3 (16) (L) A.R.H. on farmers and S.V.R.

##### "Warragul Guardian"

- 12/3 (10) Anon. poem on rating reform.  
23/4 (62) (R) Public meeting S.V.R.

##### "Warragul Gazette"

- 2/4 (9) (Ed.) on impending public meeting S.V.R.  
23/4 (52) (R) Public meeting S.V.R.

##### "Latrobe Valley Advocate"

- 26/3 (9) (L) L. W. Brown on S.V.R. for Moe.  
29/3 (18) (Ed.) Will S.V.R. affect rents in Moe.  
17/5 (18) (R) Council silent on poll.  
7/5 (12) (R) Rating poll may be put off.  
7/5 (15) (R) Labor to look into S.V.R.  
21/5 (19) (R) Ratepayers seek answer on poll.  
5/4 (79) (R) Public meeting forms R.R. League Moe.

##### "Bendigo Advertiser"

- 22/3 (11) (L) G. Forster on L.V. Taxation.

##### "Wangaratta Chronicle"

- 10/4 (24) (L) L. W. Brown rate poll upset unlikely.  
7/6 (17) (R) Writ challenges rate poll.  
19/6 (3) (R) Borough to enter defence.

##### "Belgrave Free Press"

- 21/2 (52) (R) Upwey A.L.P. debate for S.V.R.

##### "Benalla Standard"

- 3/6 (8) (R) Castlemaine progress under S.V.R.

##### "Wonthaggi Express"

- 16/5 (24) (R) Rating system unchanged.  
30/5 (12) (R) Valuer answers R'payers Sec.  
6/6 (20) (R) L.V.R.G. criticises Crockett report.  
13/6 (34) (R) Mr. Crockett replies.  
13/6 (27) (R) Council clash on Crockett report.

##### "Wonthaggi Sentinel"

- 2/5 (6) (R) Council votes on poll Monday.  
23/5 (15) (L) Mr. Sopitt R'payers Assn. will press poll.  
13/6 (30) (R) Council clash on Crockett report.

##### "Albury Border Mail"

- 12/6 (12) (R) Wodonga rate poll steps.

##### "Bulletin"

- 23/1 (13) (L) G. Forster on Free Trade.

##### "Building and Construction"

- 18/6 (24) Article by A. R. Hutchinson on exempting buildings from local taxes.

The above includes 620 column-inches of press reports, 59 of editorial comment and 170 of press letter from correspondents making a total of 849 column-inches in Victorian press.

## Radio Broadcast Session

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#### TASMANIA

##### "Burnie Advocate"

- 28/2 (7) (L) E. H. Churcher on S.V.R. for Devonport.  
25/2 (12) (L) G. Forster on S.V. Rating.  
16/3 (8) (L) G. Forster on S.V. Rating.  
16/3 (9) (L) L. W. Brown (GCRR) on S.V.R.  
23/2 (5) (L) J. B. Heckley on Henry Geo. publications.  
11/7 (12) (L) G. Forster development under S.V.R.  
21/5 (5) (L) A. G. Huie on P.R.  
4/6 (3) (L) J. B. Heckley on Free Trade.  
25/3 (6) (L) A. G. Huie on rating systems.  
14/3 (10) (L) E. H. Churcher on S.V.R.  
23/4 (7) (L) A.R.H. on site-value rating.  
24/4 (7) (L) A. G. Huie on S.V.R. Devonport.  
13/4 (9) (L) E. H. Churcher on S.V.R. Devonport.  
18/5 (2) (L) J. B. Heckley on S.V.R.  
11/4 (9) (L) A. G. Huie on S.V.R.  
18/4 (7) (L) A. G. Huie on S.V.R.  
21/6 (4) (L) J. B. Heckley against poll taxes lieu rates.

##### "Launceston Examiner"

- 21/2 (12) (L) G. Forster on Free Trade.

##### "Hobart Mercury"

- 9/3 (6) (R) Clarence council debates S.V.R.  
2/3 (8) (L) Cr. Parrish advocating S.V.R.  
2/3 (2) (L) P. Wright advocating S.V.R.  
2/3 (2) (L) S. Mulcahy advocating S.V.R.  
9/3 (21) (R) Clarence council meeting S.V.R.  
6/4 (8) (R) Cabinet may have committee Rating Systems.  
9/4 (12) Public notice to Clarence R'payers S.V.R.

The above includes 146 column-inches of press letters and 47 of reports making a total of 193 column-inches for Tasmania.

MEMBERS' EVENING at LEAGUE ROOMS,

TUESDAY, 16th JULY, 1957

## HENRY GEORGE LEAGUE

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Melbourne, C.I. Telephone: MF4635. Office Supervisor, Mrs. Kerford.

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Next Executive Meeting, Tuesday, 2nd July, at 6.45 p.m.

Members' Evening, Tuesday, 16th July, 8 p.m.

Henry George "Forum," Friday, 12th July, at 8 p.m.

HENRY GEORGE JUSTICE PARTY.

Broadcast Session, 3DB each Sunday, 12 noon.

NOTE CHANGE IN BROADCAST TIME