

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

ENCOURAGING HOME BUILDING*

In February, the Master Builders' Federation of Australia put to the Federal Minister of Housing, Senator Spooner, a plan to overtake Australia's housing shortage in seven years. The basis of the plan is taxation concessions to encourage private lending for home building and also investment for rent. The main points are that the Federal Government should grant an exemption from income tax to all income obtained from the rent of domestic dwellings. It also should exempt from income tax interest received from loans on houses.

The Federation stated that the necessary men and materials are available to build the houses, the only thing lacking is finance. At long last the Master Builders' Federation realizes that many people will not invest their money in housing if a large portion of the profit is taken by the Government in taxation.

The members of the Georgean movement agree that one way to help to overcome the housing shortage is to make investment in housing tax free, but we also say that the Master Builders' proposals only touch on the fringe of the problem and do not go nearly far enough. Why should taxation concessions stop at investment in housing only, surely we should remove taxation from the building materials as well?

The multitude of taxes increases the cost of every building by more than one third. Building materials are subject to tariff tax, sales tax, payroll tax and primage duty. The cost of timber is still further increased by petrol tax, road tax and a sales tax of 16 per cent. on the motor trucks bringing the timber from the country.

There would never have been any housing problem if the cost of buildings had not been boosted by taxation.

But what is the first and greatest problem in housing? Of course it is the almost prohibitive cost of a suitable site. A residential block with essential services and reasonably close to train or tram will cost more than a thousand pounds.

Why should a building block cost a thousand

pounds or more. Did the person getting the money supply any of the services available? Apart from a payment of £100 or £200 for construction of the road the land-holder has provided nothing.

There is a simple solution to both of these problems, the problem of taxation on building materials and the prohibitive price of land. Our policy is simply this. Take the taxes off all building materials and consumers' goods and raise the necessary Government revenue by a Land Tax. This tax to be at a uniform rate in the £ of selling value of all land in the State without any exemptions or graduations.

When assessing the land for taxation, the value of any buildings or other improvements supplied by the owner are to be entirely disregarded. As three-quarters of all the land values in the state are in the cities and towns, the primary producers would be relieved of much of their tax burden. City land is worth more per foot than rural lands are worth per acre.

Just consider the effects of our proposal. With a land tax to pay no one could afford to hold land out of use so there would be a buyer's market in home sites also factory sites and farms, because land speculators would be driven out of the market.

When the Melbourne Board of Works drew up its master plan they found that in the built up areas of Melbourne there were 40,000 vacant residential blocks with water available and over 13,000 of these also had sewerage available, nearly all the latter were facing made roads and at a conservative estimate it would cost the Board of Works 10 million pounds to make similar services available where they are now urgently required on the outer fringes of Melbourne. Just think of it! 10 million pounds of additional taxation on houses for the sole benefit of land speculators.

SUMMARIZING—At present the Government, by taxing the manufacturer, the investor and the home builder discourages home building while encouraging land speculation.

CONVERSELY—Our policy is to encourage the manufacturer and the home builder by removing the taxes on production and industry and to discourage the land speculator by taxing bare land values and so make the land available to genuine land users, whether for home sites, factories or farms.

*From a Broadcast Radio talk by Mr. L. F. Bawden.

THE PRESIDENT BATTLES ON

AMERICA BELIEVES IN FREEDOM OF TRADE

Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act since 1934 authorizes the President to reduce rate of tariff tax in exchange for reciprocal reduction by the other country of its import duties on United States goods.

This action President Eisenhower said is "a powerful force in waging total peace. It encourages greater trade each way. In asking Congress to grant a five-year extension of this programme the President said the extension must be enacted if the United States were to maintain its position in the free world, also to counter Russia's growing economic threat. There were prompt pledges of support for the President's proposals from members of Congress.

Monopoly Magnates Use Scholars

But also opposition came from "protected" investors such as the Dow Chemical Company which supplied magnesium metal to the Japs for building Zero fighter planes. In this wise, Mr. Lewis E. Lloyd took his degree of B.Sc. in Chemistry at Manchester College, Indiana then went on to D.Sc. at the University of Michigan. Then in 1937 he joined the staff and was entered on the payroll at the Dow Chemical Co. of Midland, Michigan.

As a thoughtful College student and University lecturer, untrammelled by an employer's business desires, Mr. Lloyd esteemed "freedom for trade" as one of the marks of the "free enterprise economy" which benefits the "free world" of the West.

Then Dr. Lloyd joined the "protected" profiteers and had years of successful business experience. Association with such leaders and the similarity of psychological atmosphere does condition such men to a uniformity of thinking that "protection" from oversea competition, bringing its enhanced profits for them is, therefore, good for the consumers and national security.

Dr. Lewis E. Lloyd has now come to think so as the result of his "business research" while a paid servant of the Dow Chemical Company which, post-war, is expected to compete with British and German chemical firms. His book is entitled "Tariffs — the Case for Protection" in which he, as "An Expert" examines Foreign Trade. Our readers will probably find similar Australian "experts" such as Latham Withall quoting as a United States authority this Dr. Lewis E. Lloyd.

Let Citizens Decide

Consumers' Choice is our ideal and our entire sympathy goes to President Dwight Eisenhower in his battle toward greater Freedom for Trade. And it is high time the Australian citizens began clipping the rank and prickly tariff hedge. This thicket of thorns prevents our citizens exercising their free choice in selection of goods for best value. Their earnings are in those printed paper pounds which suffer loss of value because of Canberra tariffs.

Reverse the trend! —Dikaiois.

RECOGNITION OF HENRY GEORGE

Prof. J. A. Schumpeter of Yale and Harvard is esteemed for his scholarship. In his recent extensive "History of Economic Analysis" published by Oxford University Press he traces the links of thought which make the web of economics.

Of the period at close of last century in America he says, "Men who prepared the ground for developments from the 1890's were simply good economists and good teachers who stood for straight thinking and were instrumental in raising standards all round. There were F. A. Walker, A. T. Hadley, W. G. Sumner, Simon Newcomb, J. B. Clark, Irving Fisher, F. W. Taussig and others."

Self Taught Economist

"But we cannot afford," continues Prof. Schumpeter, "to pass by the economist whose individual success with the public was greater than that of all the others on our list — Henry George.

"He was a self taught economist but — he was an economist. In the course of his life he acquired most of the knowledge and of the ability to handle an economic argument that he could have acquired by academic training as it then was. He was a very orthodox economist and extremely conservative as to methods — these were those of the English "classics"— Adam Smith being his particular favorite."

At Home in Scientific Economics

"But up to and including Mill's treatise he was thoroughly at home in scientific economics and he shared none of the current misunderstandings or prejudices concerning it. Even the panacea — nationalization of the rent of land by a confiscatory tax — benefitted by his competence as an economist, for he was careful to frame his 'remedy' in such a manner as to cause minimum injury to the efficacy of the private enterprise economy.

Professional Economists Hardly Just

"Professional economists who focussed attention on the 'single-tax' proposal and then condemned Henry George's teaching root and branch were hardly just to him.

"The proposal itself, one of the many descendents of Quesnay's 'impot unique' is not economically unsound except in that it involves an unwarranted optimism concerning the yield of such a tax.

Obvious Wisdom

"If Ricardo's vision of economic evolution had been correct it (the proposal) would have been obvious wisdom. And obvious wisdom is, in fact, what George said in "Progress and Poverty" (ch. 1 of book 9) about the economic effects to be expected from a removal of fiscal burdens — if such a removal were feasible."

Our Comment

Prof. Schumpeter's doubts would not discount the proposition that Government of Victoria could discard its Probate Tax, Motor Car (Registration) Tax, Stamp Tax, Tattersall Tax and also meet Railway Interest Bill by a levy on land-rentals. The State would flourish and "stand on its own feet."

IMPORT CUTS FOLLY

"The Bulletin" (2/10/57) contained some interesting information about the absurd administration of import restrictions. For example, though a merchant may have been an importer of a particular commodity for the past 50 years (except one), he can be excluded from the "traditional" category if the year in which he did not import is the one selected by the department as the vital one.

Again, "under the circumlocution of the Department's highly paid and multitudinous officials, the people who are copping the trade with Japan (as a result of the recent treaty) are those who dealt with countries other than Japan during certain post-war years." That is, the traditional trader with Japan in pre-war years has no specially good standing with the Department as regards quota.

"It is fact," states the "Bulletin" article, "that import-licensing, as administered, seems to have had the result of creating in business a class of spivs, go-betweens, and newly-fledged importers who are having a much happier run than many of the men who know their business and their products infinitely better than the Johnny-come-lately who has developed more as a speculator and a contact-man than as a merchant."

Then there is the newcomer to the importing field who has somehow acquired a bigger quota than he can manage, and who then imports for a well-established merchant whose quota is too small. The former consequently receives a substantial rake-off.

The only weakness of the "Bulletin" article was its failure to point out that import restrictions are utterly unnecessary.

60,000 EMPTY BLOCKS

The Melbourne Water Board has already laid water mains on the frontages of 60,000 vacant blocks in the metropolitan area. The owners put up the value of their blocks because water is available. This makes the block more expensive. Real estate operators work the trick. Looking out a slice of farming land they buy this, run rough road across the paddock and then sell blocks to men short of cash with a promise that Metro. Board will bring in a main before long. With 20 or so shacks run up on the blocks and inhabited by distressed families the real estate men get the Daily Trumpet or some other stunt paper to send out a camera man and a tear-jerker journalist to feature the plight of the people who have to fetch their water in buckets. There is no genuine sympathy, only an emotional appeal which conveys the false impression that the Daily Trumpet is the people's champion.

Metro. Board rates should be levied on site value basis — not upon improved values. That change of rating would bring on the market many of those 60,000 empty blocks already provided with a water main and so lessen the "sprawl" of this metropolis. But the big circulation papers will not advocate such a helpful measure. Ratepayers need to do the job themselves and should make their decision known to nearest municipal councillors.

COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

An interesting article on Communism, Capitalism, and Socialism, especially with reference to Christianity, appeared originally in the Y.W.C.A. News (our copy undated.) Certain parts of this article merit attention.

"Communist ideology puts the emphasis on economic justice and promises that economic freedom will come automatically after the revolution. Capitalism puts the emphasis on freedom and promises that justice will follow as a by-product of free enterprise; that, too, is an ideology which has been proved false. It is now the responsibility of Christians to seek new creative solutions which never allow either freedom or justice to destroy the other."

Besides the fact that in practice Communism never brings economic justice, we affirm that even in its ideological theory, its conception of economic justice falls short. Of course, we agree that the automatic advent of freedom after the revolution is sheer illusion. The trouble about the reference to capitalism is confusion about the precise meaning of the term itself (q.v.), and also of the precise meaning of the term "free enterprise." Unless this means freedom to produce on an equal footing with others, and freedom to exchange as one sees fit, including on an international scale, there is no genuine free enterprise, yet most people speaking of free enterprise are remarkably hazy about these two basic freedoms, and indeed seem often unaware of them.

We affirm that in the Henry George philosophy, Christians, and indeed people in general, can find creative solutions which never allow freedom or justice to destroy each other. For, by taking community created site-rents for Government purposes, the way is opened to achieve justice (equality of economic opportunity), and the consequent elimination of confiscatory taxes on the fruits of man's effort opens the way wide to economic, political and other freedoms. Restrictions on freedom which attempt to remedy the effects of existing injustice become unnecessary.

The article points out four basic faults of Communism, and as these are obvious to all but a dyed-in-the-wool Marxist, there is no need to mention them here.

Capitalism is then criticised on the grounds (i) that it tends to subordinate the meeting of human needs to the economic advantages of those with most power over its institutions, (ii) that it tends to produce serious inequalities, (iii) that it has brought about social catastrophes like mass unemployment, and (iv) that it has tended to produce a form of materialism.

We comment that a gross confusion exists concerning the terms "capital" and "capitalism." Capital, in the correct economic sense of wealth devoted to produce more wealth, is a good thing — the more of it the better. But there is also a false capital — spurious capital or "monopoly" capital, which is essentially a privilege to appropriate portion of the wealth produced by others. This spurious or "monopoly" capital is responsible for the evils of so-called "capitalism."

As long as monopoly and legal privilege without corresponding obligation exists, then the whole of the

economic sphere will have the appearance of existing for the benefit of the favoured few, and serious inequalities will indeed occur. Likewise social catastrophes such as mass unemployment will be present or imminent. Further, the natural harmony of the economic order as demonstrated by Henry George will be distorted, and a form of materialism is inevitable.

However, when Henry George's principles are implemented, and there is equality of opportunity to produce and trade, an economic life characterised by mutual service and exchange will take place, there will be no glaring inequalities, and the other evils associated with so-called capitalism will steadily disappear.

The article calls upon Christians to seek:

"Recapture . . . of . . . solidarity with the world's distressed people, not to curb their aspirations towards justice . . . They should recognise that many Churches are involved in the forms of economic injustice and racial discrimination which have created conditions favorable to the growth of Communism."

Again we suggest that those who are concerned or perplexed about these matters should direct their attention to the social philosophy of Henry George.

Concerning Socialism, the article contains the following:

"The Church cannot resolve the debate between those who feel that the primary solution is to socialise the means of production, and those who fear that such a course will lead to new and inordinate combinations of political and economic power, culminating finally in the omnipotent State. In the light of the Christian understanding of man we must, however, say to the advocates of socialisation that the institution of property is not the root of evil. We must equally say to the defender of existing property relations that ownership is not an unconditional right. Therefore, it must be preserved, curtailed, or distributed in accordance with the requirements of justice."

In view of the Church's insistence on man's bias towards evil, it is surprising that it seems oblivious of the dangers of entrusting to fallible men the power of directing and organising the State's economic activities. It is also surprising that it does not realise the force of an intelligent self-interest and the weakness of an altruism diffused throughout the community in general.

We agree that property is not the root of evil, but we do affirm that maldistribution of property and injustice in property rights are the main cause of many social evils. Failure to discriminate between what may be called community property (site rents or land values) and private property (the fruits of a person's exertion) is at the root of so many troubles. It is just because the Henry George philosophy so clearly differentiates these things that it is so vitally relevant.

As to ownership not being an unconditional right, we agree that this is so as regards natural resources or the rental value of sites of land, but otherwise (subject of course to such considerations as safety and morals) the producer should be free to use the products of his exertion as he sees fit provided he does not infringe the equal freedom of others.

Under the Henry George conditions of a "free field and no favour" property would be in fact distributed in accordance with the requirements of justice; but there would be little need for any coercive curtailing as mentioned in the article.

TAXING VALUE OUT OF THE A.£.

Production is the mainstay of commerce and the cost of obtaining it is, in all cases, loaded with overhead costs. No matter how many individuals are used, for what I will term "statistics" their cost, including their housing, plus distribution cost, becomes part of initial production cost.

Is it sufficiently realised that ALL monies, collected by governments, must become a part of whatever is produced?

Duties, Primage, Excise, Sales Tax etc., are additions that provide governments with "spending money" and it does not matter how it is "spent," or added to consolidated revenue, it must become an added cost to what has been produced.

Business in government would strive to avoid this added cost. People used for "statistics" are, perforce, non-producers and business in Government would strive to keep the maximum number of people engaged in production and its distribution.

Income is the first essential for government taxation and, for this reason, Business in Government would strive to expand REAL income by all possible avenues.

If we presume that government receives, from direct and indirect taxation, the amount of 18/- in the £, the abolition of indirect taxation could possibly give government that same amount of "spending money" by receiving only 16/- in the £. This would result in more value in the A.£ and, in turn, assist in the export of secondary production and result in still more funds being available for government "spending money."

To illustrate how indirect taxation snowballs I will use, for this purpose, Sales Tax on the basis of 12½%.

It is not possible for ANY Sales Tax to represent its % impost and I will show, in the case I have selected, that 12½% actually becomes 27.43%.

Nearly all local production depends upon some imported aid and, when this is used, then Sales Tax represents a still higher %.

Taking imported goods, complete for LOCAL sale and valued, at the port of export at £57/12/0 (which includes cost of outside packing) the added government imposts increases the cost of the goods by the sum of £47/12/4 making a total cost of £105/4/4.

This becomes the cost of the goods INTO STORE and includes the following inescapable charges: Outside packing, Freight and insurance, Exchange, Duty, Primage and local clearing charges.

On to the figure of £105/4/4 must now be added, by Government direction, a further 20% and then, on to this total must be added Sales Tax of 12½% so that the LOCAL cost of goods, valued at £57/12/0, at their port of export, becomes £126/5/2. On to this figure the retailer puts his mark-up, say 33%, so that the last buyer of these goods would pay the sum of £168 for goods with the original value of £57/12/0.

No government, or its opposition, draws attention to how INDIRECT taxation takes value out of the A.£ and, if it did, then the return of value to our A.£ would be on its way back.

—EDMUND G. BARKER.

SITE - VALUE RATING

MANY POLLS DEMANDED

When the statutory date (31st January) by which ratepayers in Victoria could demand site-value rating polls for next August had passed, demands signed by more than the requisite 10 per cent. of ratepayers and accompanied by the deposit had been lodged in Benalla Borough, Wonthaggi Borough and the Shires of Bairnsdale, Maffra, and Kerang. With the poll held over in Moe from last year and Ararat already committed to making the change by council resolution without a poll a record number of councils may change this year to the site-value basis.

Although ratepayers cannot now demand further polls till next September councils can still carry resolutions till the end of June and some may do so.

Notes on the position in these places and others moving for site-value rating are given below.

Bairnsdale Shire

Here the demand sponsored by the Bairnsdale Ratepayers' and Progress Association had remarkable success. Although the decision to press a petition was taken before Christmas the actual drive did not commence till 25th January. It was so well received that 535 checked signatures were received within 6 days and the sponsors claim they could easily have got over a thousand. Those gained form almost 15 per cent. of the total on the roll.

Since presentation the Council has been bitter in its attack on the move and it seems likely it will drag its feet on the necessary steps to valuation with view to deferment. However the sponsors will submit candidates opposing councillors on this issue at next August elections. A majority of councillors here are large holders of vacant land.

Bairnsdale Shire occupies 943 square miles and has 5,585 assessments of which only 3,500 are for properties with dwellings. The vacant land holdings form about 33 per cent. of the total.

Kerang Shire

Here the petition was fully signed early but was with-held till after 26th January to give the Kerang Council the chance to make the change by its own resolution. The opportunity was not taken so the demand was presented by Kerang Rating Reform League.

Instead of seriously considering adoption Kerang Councillors simply directed their talk to abusing the sponsors or talking them out of presenting the petition. The big point they made was that a valuation had been taken at cost £3000 last year under N.A.V. and would need to be repeated at alleged cost £9000. This figure is quite fanciful and simply designed to unsettle either people from signing or the sponsors from presenting the petition.

But it has been pointed out that responsibility for any expense must rest with the council for they were asked to have unimproved as well as annual values recorded at the valuation last year to avoid the need for a new valuation and refused to do so.

Now that they are committed to a poll some of the councillors may now be expected to inform themselves better on merits of the change to site-value. There has already been a great deal of press discussion and comment.

Kerang Shire occupies 1,286 square miles and has 4,560 assessments of which only 2,620 have dwellings on them. Thus vacant land holdings form about 40 per cent. of the total.

Maffra Shire

There has been interest in site-value rating in Maffra for many years but somehow it has lagged in the final steps. However, the petition was presented this year and Maffra ratepayers will get the opportunity to decide whether they want to change to a just rating system. Congratulations to the Maffra Ratepayers' Association on their success thus far.

Shire occupies 1,609 square miles and Maffra has 3,900 assessments of which only 2,200 are for properties with dwellings on them. Thus about 40 per cent. of holdings are of vacant land.

Wonthaggi Borough

Here, owing to some misunderstanding over date when petitions had to be presented, the drive was confined to the last two days of the month but resulted in sufficient signatures being obtained and the demand presented.

It was organized by Cr. J. McLeod and the Wonthaggi Ratepayers' Association.

Wonthaggi is a township founded originally on the black coal mining industry. Different to N. S. Wales the coal seams were thin initially and have progressively worked out being down to about 2 ft. worked now.

The town faces ultimate extinction unless other industrial basic industry can be attracted. It is in much the same position as many once prosperous gold-mining towns now existing as names only. With the sentence of death hanging over their heads there is reluctance for private persons or business to invest money in making improvements particularly with the high rates imposed on those of above average degree of improvement here.

Rates are particularly high on Housing Commission homes these being about the only considerable source of recent home-building in the Borough.

In such circumstances Wonthaggi desperately needs site-value rating to encourage people to build on the many fully serviced vacant lots within the town and to help encourage settlement of new industry either from local capital or attraction from elsewhere.

The analysis made by Cr. J. McLeod and publicised in the local press showed that 87 per cent. of the homes in Wonthaggi would carry lower rates under the site-value basis.

Flinders Shire

Here much interest has been shown in site-value rating but it is difficult to get united drive through the progress associations many of whose members are

vacant land holders whose idea of progress is confined to getting public improvements to enable them to sell their land at higher price.

The Council has actively opposed site-value rating and printed in the local press a paper by late F. A. Jenkins mainly against that system. This occupied a full page and has been answered by an article from A. R. Hutchinson in the "Southern Peninsula Gazette."

It is hoped that a move to form a Flinders Rating Reform League may emerge here to press a campaign.

Ferntree Gully

This Shire has had many protest meetings recently following revaluation in the East Riding and a demand for site-value rating is in circulation there. It cannot now be effective this year but it is believed that a petition will be presented next September.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES

THE RATING QUESTION AT PAYNEHAM

On 28th January, 1956, a rating poll was taken in the Payneham Municipality — a suburb of Adelaide. The poll was not effective because the statutory three-fifths majority was not obtained.

Recently the ratepayers decided to make another attempt to secure this just system of raising local revenue, and committees were formed in each of the five wards. Two delegates were appointed from each Ward committee to the Central organization, and a general meeting of delegates was held at the Payneham Institute on 6th December, 1957. Mr. E. J. Craigie was invited to be present and address the delegates regarding the land value principle of rating and the machinery clauses in the Local Government Act to secure success at the polls.

Petitions were circulated in every Ward for presentation to the council asking for a rating poll. Mr. Craigie addressed a special meeting of residents in Glynne and Wellington Wards in the Glynwell Theatre on 14th January, and a meeting of residents in Joslin Ward in the Scouts Hall on 20th January. Great interest was shown in the question, the only opponent that announced opposition to the proposal being at the latter meeting, when a member of the audience who informed us he was a builder, said he was opposed to land value rating. It was pointed out to him that his attitude was a peculiar one. Being a builder he should favour a rating system which removed the rates from buildings and by giving support to the annual value system which rates improvements he was actually restricting the building of houses and thus injuring his own trade.

Councillors Hostile to Ratepayers

On 20th January meeting of the Council, Councillor C.T. moved the motion to take a rating poll, and it was supported by Councillor Jamieson. Petitions signed by nearly 600 ratepayers asking for the poll were lodged by Cr. Haase. A majority of the councillors at Payneham, and the Town Clerk, are hostile to land values rating. Apparently as they did not wish to vote against the democratic right of the people who found the local revenue to determine by

poll the source from which the rate revenue should be obtained, they side-stepped the issue by adjourning discussion until the council meeting to be held on 17th March. It is a well known fact that prior to the meeting of council several members stated publicly they would not vote in favour of a poll.

Irregular Action by Town Clerk

At the poll held in 1956 the Town Clerk in the preparation of the tentative assessment showed that certain ratepayers would benefit from the urban farm land rate which provides for a reduction of 50 per cent. in rates on urban farm land. We pointed out at the time there was no legal authority for the Town Clerk to show these urban farm land rates in the tentative assessment. That section of the Act does not apply until a proclamation has been issued by the Governor-in-Council proclaiming the areas as being under Part III of the Local Government Act — the section relating to land values assessment. Before such a proclamation can be issued the council must petition the Governor-in-Council asking the proclamation be issued, and with the petition must be sent a record of the votes for and against the land values system cast at the poll. Seeing the poll was defeated, no such proclamation could be issued, consequently urban farmland rates could not apply. Moreover the Act states that before any ratepayers can get the benefit of the 50 per cent. reduction in rates they must produce to the COUNCIL evidence that "the whole or a substantial portion of their income is derived from the land on which they seek the concession rate."

No such evidence was tendered to the council, yet the Town Clerk took it upon himself to show urban farm land rates in the tentative assessment, which, if granted, would have meant a concession of nearly £3000 gained by these privileged interests at the expense of the other ratepayers. Most of those who would have received this privilege are people with garden land on the outskirts of the municipality, waiting for buildings to spread their way when they will enjoy the benefit of the difference between garden land values and values in a built-up area. Not only did the Town Clerk show these differential rates for farm land, but he also had differential rates for other land. There were seven differential rates shown, which is a complete violation of the land value principle. It cannot too strongly be emphasised where one area of land has an advantage over some other land, justice is done by assessing such land at a higher valuation. Manifestly it is unjust to grant a lower rate on top of the lower assessment. This injustice played a big part in causing the defeat of the principle at the 1956 poll. Ratepayers are now making arrangements to run candidates at the July elections to endeavour to get a council elected that will grant the poll to the ratepayers. —E. J. Craigie.

New Markets.—The country to which others look for their supplies will be the land which promulgates Free Trade for it will have power to sell its produce at prices lower than any of its competitors. A protected industry goes to sleep.—From H. de Balzac.

[Ed. Note.—The vendors have "cashed" the "incentives to produce" provided by planned economy while the purchaser has lost all such "income generating" incentives.]

PERSONALITIES IN OUR MOVEMENT

1. J. M. ATKINSON

It is appropriate that we commence this series with one of the most outstanding men still with us although at present seriously ill in Heidelberg Hospital.

Mr. J. M. Atkinson has earned esteem and respect from a very wide cross-section outside our movement as a capable and fearless advocate for our principles.

His boyhood scene was Gippsland and he took part in World War I at an early age. There he was seriously wounded several times and this has had effects in later life. While under treatment for these injuries he met his future wife. He also met Dr. Paul Dane who greatly aided his recovery and interested him in "Progress & Poverty." From that point he became an exponent of Georgist principles seeing in them the remedy for the depression then in the making.

He took an active part in site-value rating campaigns particularly in Brunswick, Box Hill and Sandringham and was a major speaker in the 1931 campaign when a Single Tax candidate Mr. P. J. Branagan opposed the Prime Minister, Hon. J. Scullin.

In the depression years he forsake the security of his post with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to become Secretary of the Henry George League at much lower salary and held this post from March 1932 to September 1942.

During this period he became in great demand as a lecturer and was a member of the Henry George League Debating team which contested the final for the "Age Shield" on three occasions.

Jack Atkinson was a member of the Country Party and played a strong role in its conferences. With the strong protectionist emphasis then evident in the Federal Cabinet he decided to oppose the Minister for Trade and Customs (Hon. T. W. White) in his own stronghold Balaclava at the 1937 elections, standing as an Independent and pressing a full Georgist campaign.

Most election campaigns fought by regular political parties work on the principle of saying as little as possible distrusting the electors' powers of reason. But Jack Atkinson, with a few helpers, appealed to their reasoning, distributing six pamphlets in successive weeks throughout the electorate. Each dealt with separate burning questions for which Georgist principles offered the remedy. One was exclusively directed to attacking protective tariffs and another dealing with our land revenue proposals.

There were many well attended public meetings at which Jack Atkinson was an extraordinarily impressive speaker. Indeed he always seems to have a convincing answer no matter what question is thrown at him.

The election resulted White, 36,537; the Labor candidate, 13,728 and Atkinson, 12,598. Commenting on the results, "Argus," (25/10/37) said "The Minister won his seat three years ago with a margin of 25,769 votes; today his margin is little more than one-third of that total . . . Had the election taken place a fortnight or even a week later, it is highly probably that

these significant tendencies would have been still more pronounced, more wide-spread."

The truth of this is evident when remembered that had Atkinson been a few votes ahead of the Labor candidate he would have received the whole of his second preference votes and would have won the seat.

A couple of days before the poll the Australian Industries Protection League put around a pamphlet against Atkinson. Had time permitted this would have been answered and would undoubtedly have cut strongly into White's support. There were libel cases over this pamphlet and an "Age" editorial published at this crucial stage. The "Age" settled out of court in Atkinson's favor.

A later venture was the "Heckle Hour" broadcast by 3DB with which Jack Atkinson became identified as an outstandingly successful Chairman. The session had extraordinary popularity for several years. Through it many leading Georgist debaters secured opportunity to put their constructive views.

In 1949, following adoption of proportional representation for Senate Elections, a Henry George team was submitted headed by Jack Atkinson. With a State-wide campaign our supporters were unable to match the organization and financial resources of the main parties.

Since then Jack Atkinson has continued to serve as Secretary of the Henry George Club and trustee of the Foundation. His pen has been active but health has deteriorated and he had to retire from his employment. We hope he improves to be able to resume his sterling work for just principles.

TASMANIAN MOVES

We have received enquiries from one of our Tasmanian readers on steps necessary to form a Rating Reform body there. We would be glad to hear from other Tasmanian readers interested in such a move. One of the best steps to facilitate it would be for our Tasmanian readers to get other friends and acquaintances to take "Progress" regularly and so keep them informed of the move for this reform both in their own and other States.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

From Rev. M. J. Stewart in England we frequently receive letters appreciative of "Progress" and the advancement being achieved for our principles in Australia.

His latest letter records that the Bodleian Library at Oxford has accepted his offer to donate his copies of "Progress" from 1954 onwards and to receive issues regularly.

This is most welcome, since this is the leading Library not only for Oxford University but as a reference centre for students visiting England from many other countries and in particular for Rhodes Scholars.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of League members was held on Tuesday, 18th February in the League Rooms, and was well attended. The President, Mr. L. F. Bawden, presented the report upon the year's work. Members expressed appreciation of the volume of activity recorded and at the encouraging build-up in the demand for site-value rating which is so clearly an application of the principles advocated by the League. Reference was made to the great amount of press publicity gained for the principles and totalling more than 2000 column-inches of newspaper space, mainly on site-value rating.

Regrets were expressed at the losses during the year of B. J. Parkinson and E. R. Pitt and of Royden Powell in January, while good wishes for early recovery were extended to Jack Atkinson.

Suggestions were made for increasing the effectiveness of our work and particularly towards developing tutorial classes in the School of Social Science to supplement the correspondence course. These were referred to the new Executive elected by Proportional Representation at the meeting.

Proceedings concluded with supper served by the ladies.

NEXT PUBLIC FORUM

MEETS FRIDAY, 14th MARCH

The subject to be discussed is "Democratic Socialism", discussion leaders being Mrs. Gwen Noad and Mr. S. H. Mitchell. Come along yourself and bring others.

A very successful Forum was held on 14th February when "Protective Tariffs" were discussed, leaders being Mr. Burgess (from Cotton Weavers' & Textile Association) and Cr. J. H. Morris, J.P.

PICNIC AT SEAFORD

Bring Your Family and Friends

Another informal picnic will be held at Seaford on Labor Day Holiday, Monday, 10th March. Have an enjoyable day at the beach with your family and meet other friends of our movement.

Color Photographs

Color photographs of those present are to be taken and shown later on screen at a Members' Evening in the rooms.

Where to Meet?

We will be located on the beach alongside Seaford Jetty from about 11 a.m. onwards. Bring your picnic basket.

Transport?

Will those with cars able to take more passengers please let us know as soon as possible? Those without cars but willing to go please contact us to see if we can arrange transport. For others handy to rail Seaford is on the Frankston Line. Phone MF 4635 or FF 8613.

Many questions were asked and statements of views given from the audience in the "Forum" part and the meeting conducted on a high plane.

A pamphlet publicising the Forum is available for distribution to friends or associations and supplies will be sent on application.

Radio Broadcast Session

Conducted twice weekly by speakers of the Henry

George "Justice" Party from

RADIO STATIONS 3DB & 3LK

Every Sunday at noon.

Every Wednesday at 10.15 p.m.

LISTEN AND ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO LISTEN

Donations to the Broadcast Fund are
invited

HENRY GEORGE LEAGUE

18 George Parade, (off 113 Collins Street, near Russell Street), Melbourne, C.I. Telephone: MF 4635. Office Supervisor, Mrs. Kerferd; Hon. Sec., Mrs. M. A. Hutchinson.

The Henry George League is a non-political educational body of men and women advocating that public revenues be drawn from public charges upon the site-value of land and taxes upon labor and capital be correspondingly abolished.

If your view accords with this you are invited to join. Annual Membership Fee is a minimum of £1 which includes cost of the Journal "Progress" posted.

Subscription for "Progress" alone is 2/- per annum posted (for which stamps will be acceptable). This is nominal only to extend our message to new contacts who we hope will later become members. If you appreciate the journal you are invited to obtain new subscribers.

MEETINGS

Held at 18 George Parade, (off 113 Collins St.)

EXECUTIVE:

Friday, 7th March, 1958, at 6.45 p.m.

MEMBERS' EVENING:

Tuesday, 18th March, 1958, at 8.00 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Friday, 14th March, 1958, at 8 p.m.

Subject: "Democratic Socialism."

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS