

## Henry George Committee for Legislative Action

### LEGISLATORS' REACTION TO THE FRAMEWORK

Over a thousand copies of "A Legislative Framework for the Philosophy of Henry George" have been sent to various legislators and public officials throughout the country. Many acknowledgments and expressions of interest have already been received from federal, state and local authorities. William Hildebrand, Jr., Executive Clerk for the State of New Jersey, has requested ten more copies of the Framework. Three acknowledgments have come from the U. S. Treasury Department, two from Acting Secretaries John L. Sullivan and Herbert E. Gaston, and one from the Legislative Counsel, Thomas N. Tarleau. Mr. Sullivan wrote to the Committee as follows:

"This will acknowledge receipt of the copy of your pamphlet . . . which outlines constitutional amendments and enabling legislation to permit the taking through taxation of the full annual value of all land, exclusive of improvements.

"It is the purpose of the Treasury to cooperate with the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives in the formulation of a tax program which will be borne equitably by all citizens.

"Permit me to thank you and the members of your organization for their recommendations and to assure you that they will receive careful consideration in our current study of tax revision."

Walter Fairchild, Counsel for the Committee, has replied to Mr. Sullivan as follows: "Our advocacy of a uniform land value tax is based upon the proposition which we consider to be an economic fact, that the taking of land value in taxation is the only tax which in its effect bears equally upon all citizens. The enclosed statement which follows the language used by Henry George deals with this point and shows the basis for the truth of this proposition. We believe that equity must be based upon equality." (The statement referred to was taken from "Progress and Poverty," Book VIII, Chapter 3, wherein Henry George tries a land value tax by the canon that a tax should bear equally.)

Herbert E. Gaston wrote as follows: "President Roosevelt has referred to this Department for consideration the copy of your pamphlet. . . The Treasury Department always appreciates the advice and suggestions of organizations devoted to the study of tax matters. Permit me to thank you on behalf of the President and myself for submitting the pamphlet. I am sure that it will prove very helpful in our current study of the tax structure."

### PROGRESS MADE WITH THE FRAMEWORK

Mr. Charles A. Kee introduced the Legislative Framework at a meeting of the Resolutions Committee of Council 77 of the Civil Service Forum, on May 13. Resolutions

adopted by the Forum are recommended to the Annual Convention of the State Association of Civil Service Employees. Mr. Kee, a member of the Committee, reports as follows:

"At this meeting there were four resolutions for the Committee of twenty-six to consider, and after these had been disposed of in quick succession, I introduced the Legislative Framework. The immediate reaction to such a far-reaching resolution was to sidetrack it as not within the realm of the organization. Even the labels 'red' and 'communistic' were applied by a few, and my fellow Forum member, Frank Berman, bore the brunt of this. However, we persevered for more than a half-hour in defense of the single tax philosophy. As the hour grew late, the members asked that they be given a chance to study the bill, and so discussion was postponed until the next meeting, May 20.

"At the May 20 meeting, our resolution was the first item of business, and the result of a week's study by the members amazed such an old campaigner as Frank Berman by the intelligence displayed by both our opponents and supporters—for in the short interval, we had gained both!

"An interesting sidelight of the discussion was the attention paid to the provision in the State Constitution that the land shall forever remain 'allodial.' The members, having a great reverence for the Founding Fathers, were sold on the idea that the Fathers never meant to have private ownership of land for speculative purposes.

"After more than an hour's discussion, a vote was called for. Feeling that we had had fair success in exposing the Committee to the philosophy contained in the Framework, and feeling also that the resolution would stand a better chance of being passed next year, after more careful study, I withdrew the resolution so that it could be re-introduced at the next meeting. In the interim, Frank Berman and I intend to carry on a propaganda campaign so that the members will be better informed."

Mr. Hugh Wilson, of the Committee on Legislation, Local 23 of the Oil Workers International Union, wrote to the Henry George Committee for Legislative Action: "I am in favor of the proposed Committee. And I am in favor of affiliation with other reform groups. If these organizations then affiliate or back one of the major political parties or a strong competent progressive third party, so much the better. Can you tell me what the general opinion and prospect of such action is among liberals?"

Mr. Fairchild's reply to Mr. Wilson helps to clarify the functions of the Committee: "It is the purpose of the Henry George Committee for Legislative Action to encourage the introduction and passage of legislation placing the tax burden on the site value of land exclusive of improvements and removing taxation from labor products of all kinds. It is not the policy of the Committee to join in political party

action. We will, however, be glad to furnish our literature and argument to all parties."

Mr. Jim Busey of Valdez, Alaska, hopes to make use of the legislation contained in the Framework, in Alaska. He writes as follows: "To carry through a Georgeist program in Alaska, we must have statehood. Territory is at present run under Organic Laws set by U. S. Congress and practically immune to change. Alaska is on the threshold of statehood. A statehood bill calling for a referendum passed the House in the last legislative session, but was tabled in the Senate. If we can have a definite legislative framework ready, we might be able to accomplish something. We have contacts which can put such material before the legislature. Could you draw up the sections of a new State Constitution which would bear on taxation?"

The following is Mr. Fairchild's reply: "I do not feel competent to draft constitutional or legislative enactments suitable for Alaska. If your Committee will arrange for local counsel to prepare a draft which will cover the local situation, we will be glad to go over it and give the benefit of our suggestions as to the application of the land value tax provisions."

This invitation is extended to all who wish to introduce land value tax bills in local legislatures. The Legislative Framework contains a model amendment for the United States Constitution, with necessary enabling legislation, and also a similar model amendment and enabling legislation for the State of New York. These may be used as guides in drafting other state and local amendments, and the Committee would be glad to examine them and offer suggestions. It might be added that the Committee has placed a copy of the Legislative Framework in the hands of every member of the New Jersey Senate and House of Assembly, where the Sanford Bill, Assembly No. 233, has been introduced as a home-rule measure for putting the Georgeist plan into effect in New Jersey municipalities. Messrs. Charles H. Ingersoll, John Allen, and Harry Haase constitute the spearhead of our forces in the New Jersey campaign.

Any inquiries concerning the Henry George Committee for Legislative Action or the Legislative Framework for the Philosophy of Henry George should be addressed to the Central Committee, care of LAND AND FREEDOM, 150 Nassau St., New York, N. Y.

### American Alliance to Advance Freedom

The expanding activities of the Alliance, now functioning almost exclusively in New York, include a plan to organize on a national scale, with the ultimate purpose of coordinating all Georgeist efforts in the United States.

With this in view, the Alliance recently accepted invitations from leading Georgeists in Philadelphia and Boston to confer with them on the question of uniting their efforts with the Alliance. In both cities the matter is now under

advisement. Sidney J. Abelson, Chairman, represented the Alliance in these conferences.

Since its formation last January, the Alliance has concentrated its efforts on unifying Georgeists and preparing them for bringing the Georgeist message to the public. Enough of a nucleus of active workers has been organized to warrant inauguration of a campaign directed toward non-Georgeists. Plans for the Fall include activities of this nature.

The American Alliance welcomes inquiries from all sources. Pamphlets, handbills and other descriptive literature will be mailed without charge to all who inquire. Address Elbert E. Josefson, Secretary, American Alliance to Advance Freedom, Suite 505, 22 W. 48th St., New York, N. Y.

### Great Britain

Mr. Douglas J. J. Owen sends us the following news:

The Henry George movement in all countries will be greatly concerned at the total destruction by enemy action on May 10th of the offices at Knightrider Street, London, which were the headquarters of the International Union for the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade. All records, manuscripts and the library are lost. A duplicate mailing list which was not burnt enabled the May issue of *Land & Liberty* to be posted to the usual subscribers. Fortunately, also, the precaution had been taken of dispersing the stock of publications for sale to a number of addresses in other parts of the country, and these publications are still available. Another piece of good luck is that the safe has now been retrieved, opened after much effort and the contents found intact. Our secretaries, Messrs. Madsen and Douglas, were quickly at work and at once found alternative accommodation, and the new offices are now at 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1. These offices adjoin the printers of *Land & Liberty*, and are also near the Houses of Parliament, and on both counts and in other respects are very convenient. The June number of the journal has inevitably been delayed, and so has the publication of the new 2s 6d booklet: "Why the German Republic Fell." This contains twenty-eight of the best articles from *Land & Liberty* in the past eighteen months, dealing with the economic cause of war and with economic freedom as the basis of social justice and world peace. It comes in remarkably useful at the present juncture and does in a sense make up for the loss of our back numbers in the fire that took place. This will be out by the time these words are in print.

[The book of which Mr. Owen speaks, "Why the German Republic Fell," has just arrived, as we go to press. It will be reviewed in our next issue.

Also arrived by recent mail—too late, unfortunately, for inclusion in the current issue—is an interesting article from Mr. J. W. Graham Peace, whom we take pleasure in welcoming back to the fold of LAND AND FREEDOM Correspondents after an absence of some years. (See News Notes and Personals in this issue.) Mr. Peace's article will appear in our next number.—Ed.]