

### EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA

The revaluation of East London was lately completed. Councillor E. J. Evans reports the results which compare as follows with the last general valuation made in 1943 and which stood until 1948 with only interim valuations occurring in the interval.

	1949 after Revaluation	1948 Valuation, based on the 1936 general valuation
Total site value ...	£4,435,485	£2,217,038
Total building value	£12,000,108	£8,745,820

In 1948, the rates had been 1s. 9½d. in the £ of site values and 2½d. on building values. As a result of the new valuation the rates for 1949 have been struck at 1s. 3½d. on site values and ½d. in the £ of building values. It appears from this that whereas, before the revaluation took place, the annual revenue raised from land values was £196,300, it is now £291,080—an increase of £94,780. On the other hand, the taxation of buildings, as the result of the revaluation and the altered rates in the £, has decreased from £77,437 to £37,500. This certainly marks progress. The next step should be to eliminate the buildings tax altogether and obtain the whole of the rate-revenue from land values.

Greatly encouraging was it to know from Councillor Evans that at the September, 1948, municipal elections, the "Site Raters" obtained a majority, the first real one since the policy of Site Value rating, to relieve buildings from rates, was adopted in 1919.

Councillor Evans has been visiting other towns in Cape Province to interest Councillors and the public in the Site-Value rating reform. The important newspaper, the *Saturday Post*, of Port Elizabeth, January 29, gave prominence to his views as expressed in a special interview.

### BRAZIL

We are indebted to Mr. Jose Maria dos Santos for copies of his new book, *A Terra e os Problemas do Homem* (The Land and Mankind's Problems), published in October, 1948, by Editora Brasiliense Ltda, Rua Barao de Itapetininga, São Paulo. The inspiration of the book is the Bill for the Rating of Land Values which is now before the Corporation of Rio de Janeiro, to which we have made reference in recent issues. It is a statement expounding the whole principle and policy of the Henry George social philosophy, an invaluable text-book to aid the protagonist at this testing time. Any interested reader acquainted with Portuguese may have a copy on request.

### FRANCE

"News from the Georgeist World" is a frequent feature in the building journal, *Journée du Batiment*, published in Montpellier. On January 17 the announcement of our forthcoming International Conference was given in full, and among other interesting notes was the invitation from Mr. Svend Hansen (Porsevaenget 19, Lyngby, Denmark) to young Georgeists to communicate with him and thus build correspondence groups. In that journal of March 3, M. Pavlos Giannelias (translation from LAND & LIBERTY) reported the latest news on the rating of land values in Kenya and on the Bill which is being promoted in Rio de Janeiro. On December 20, M. Daudé-Bancel had a long contributed article comparing Switzerland and Denmark from the fiscal and financial point of view, with informative statement on the progress of the "Georgeist reform" in the latter country. In the *Cité Nouvelle*, the Rouen paper, M. Daudé-Bancel wrote to good purpose on the land question in Russia, about the liquidation of the kulaks and the enforced creation of the collectivist farms.

The latest issue of *Terre et Liberté* includes articles by A. Daudé-Bancel (Editor), P. Giannelias, and T. Gracques. One of these is a reprint of a letter addressed by M. Bancel to the members of a Parliamentary Commission on Taxation Reform, evoked by an article in the *Conservative Temps*, contending that a rent tax would be an anti-capitalist measure. M. Bancel explains

that a similar tax was proposed in France after 1870 by the chocolate manufacturer, Menier, and is in operation with beneficial results in Denmark, where its extension is proposed. He reveals the wasteful and burdensome absurdity of taxes as at present levied in France and insists that a land value tax should be introduced, not as an additional tax, but in place of existing taxes and should be accompanied by extensive economies in administration. M. Giannelias uses the Rockefeller gift of land to the United Nations as an apt illustration of the necessity for such taxation.

*La Journée du Batiment*, in its "Open Forum," March 17, again gave M. Giannelias good opportunity. He wrote a description of the local taxation system in New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand, largely taken from A. G. Huie's (Sydney) reports and justified to builders the exemption of all buildings and the levy of taxation on land values only.

Mr. Arthur McDougal, member of the Berwickshire County Council, writes: "The Town and Country Planning Act is a horrible Act. In County Council work we are coming up against it and its awful waste of money. Its interference will stifle development worse than any landlord. Even on farm development charges will be paid. What inducement has an owner to sell land for building when he only gets 'existing use value.' He won't sell unless he gets more, so the actual developer will have to pay blackmail in price to the owner and development charge to the Central Land Board.

Mr. E. J. Craigie, President of our International Union, who has been member of the South Australian Parliament for eleven years, visited Tasmania to address the economic section of the recent Hobart Science Conference. Among his other engagements was an address to the Fifty Thousand League in Launceston, which was extensively reported in the *Launceston Examiner* of January 25.

As an unrepentant Liberal may I express regret that my Party appears to have cast away its two sheet-anchors, viz., free trade and the taxation of land values. No wonder it has not regained its former position at the polls. Seeing that we maintain a magnificent Navy to keep our ports open in time of war is it not lunacy to pay an army of officials all round the coast to close or partially close these in times of peace? And is it not unjust to penalise house-owners with the burden of excessive rates and to allow the land (the value of which is increased by the rates) to go free.—Edward Haselden, in the *Torquay Herald*, March 25.

"The (apparently) utter unconcern of leaders of the Labour Party with the *real* problem—or is it an utter unfamiliarity with the principle involved, almost inevitable in the case of persons indoctrinated with Fabianism?—is most discouraging. I wonder whether a slashing attack on them as *betrayers of the masses* to landlordism might not be much more effective than sweetly-worded pleas with them to reform their ways? And similarly, might it not be effective to attack the Tories as *pretended* friends of or believers in 'free enterprise who very evidently do not *really* believe in it since they are willing to compromise with regimentation (and a large degree of Socialism) that is *entirely inconsistent* with it and are altogether *unwilling* to support the kind of taxation that is of all kinds the *most consistent* with it?"

—Prof. H. Gunnison Brown, Columbia University.

Sir Matthew Decker, business magnate and politician, who died 200 years ago to-day, finds honourable mention in the history of economics on account of two pamphlets in which, much in advance of the times, he advocated single tax and free trade, but in his own day he was credited with a work of vaster importance. According to Horace Walpole, Sir John Germaine bequeathed £200 to Sir Matthew Decker in the belief that he was the author of the Gospel according to Matthew, which the testator "had read and greatly admired."—*Manchester Guardian*, March 13.

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