

tion that a tax on land values bears on production, it is evident that it has never occurred to Mr Nock that rent-collecting involves far more interference by his *bête-noire*, the state, than taxation of land values does.

Yet, though all this and more may be said in criticism of Mr Nock's essay, it is a book to be read and re-read. His opinions are sincerely and strongly held, and the very strength of his disagreement with some aspects of George's actions throws into higher relief his admiration of George's contribution to human thought. Take for example this passage on *Progress and Poverty*:

"It is to-day, in point of circulation, the most successful book on economics ever printed; its sales have run to a total of more than two million copies. In two respects it is unique in economic literature; it is the first and only serious attempt to establish the cause of industrial depressions, and the cause of involuntary poverty; and it is the only book of which the author could say, after eighteen years of white-hot controversy, that he had not seen a single objection to any position taken in the book which had not been fully met and answered in the book itself. Its reasoning has never been successfully impugned, and its economic premises are of course beyond question; they are a matter of common observation, common knowledge. Count Tolstoy said most truly that 'people do not

argue with the teaching of George; they simply do not know it: and it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree.'"

Or again this on *The Condition of Labour*:

"All his battles were fought to vindicate the natural rights of man as against those who would deny or over-ride them. In its eloquent attestation of this purpose, and of the ethical sanction which he invoked upon this purpose, his letter to the Pope has great permanent value. As an *apologia pro vita sua* its value even exceeds that of the section which ends *Progress and Poverty*. Probably no one can quite complete his understanding of George, or quite round out an appreciation of him, without a sympathetic reading and re-reading of this letter."

There are many other passages which one would like to quote, but the reader must be referred to the book itself. (In the United States copies of the special paper bound edition at the price of \$1 post-paid may be obtained from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 32 East 29th Street, New York. In Great Britain copies of this edition may be obtained from the Henry George Foundation, 34 Knightrider Street, London, E.C.4, at the price of 6s. post free.)

F. C. R. D.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr E. J. Craigie, M.P., after attendance at the New York Conference and Centenary, had intended to remain in the States till 13th October fulfilling a number of speaking engagements. Owing to the war, however, he had to alter his plans and get home sooner. He made for Los Angeles to reach the "Monterey" sailing on 13th September. His train was 19 hours late. By 30 miles motor drive to the Wilmington Pier he arrived to find the boat out in mid stream, but by a handy tender and a final clambering up on the rope ladder, he got safe on board. Mr Craigie writes from Adelaide, 16th October, expressing great appreciation of his election as President of the International Union, not only as honour to himself but as a compliment to the Australian movement. Immediately upon his arrival home he visited his Flinders constituents and addressed their Henry George Centenary celebration. The election of himself as President of the Union has pleased them and the city and local papers have featured it.

The *People's Advocate*, of which Mr Craigie is editor, has produced in its August number an exceptionally fine centenary edition, with art cover, its contents being of permanent value. The biographical articles are well done. In the "Interesting Stories of the Author" of *Progress and Poverty* by San Franciscans who knew him, credit is given to James McClatchy, founder and editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, for having inspired Henry George to write the book. There is an informing description of the visit to Australia in 1890, supplementing the information given in the *Life* by details of the tour in South Australia and Western Australia. It was in Adelaide that he met Mr L. H. Berens and Mr Ignatius Singer, who themselves afterwards came to England and are known by their work *The Story of My Dictatorship*, besides for many other and abiding services to the movement in this country, Mr Berens being the Hon Treasurer of the English League for many years. Mr Berens presided at the second Adelaide lecture and he and Mrs Berens were hosts to Mr and Mrs George during their stay. Other features in this excellent issue

of the *People's Advocate* include a convincing statement on principle and policy and a summary of the paper *The Taxing and Rating of Land Values in Australia* presented by Mr Craigie at the New York Conference. The Journal is the organ of the Henry George League of South Australia, George Parade, Adelaide; subscription 2s. a year in Australia and 3s. to other countries.

The *Adelaide Advertiser* has been carrying a series of weekly articles, which the League has contributed, advertising at the same time the literature it has for sale and enlisting support for its work.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

The August issue of *The Standard*, "An Australian Journal to Advocate the Rights of the People in the Land," is a double number of 40 pages containing matter of exceptional interest. The Journal is in its thirty-fourth year, being published monthly by the Henry George League of N.S.W., editor A. G. Huie, at Daking House, Rawson Place, Sydney, subscription 2s. a year within the Commonwealth and 3s. a year to other countries. This is a Souvenir Memorial number celebrating the Henry George Centenary, and appropriately one of its main features is the account it gives of the land values legislation in New South Wales and the influence of the League and its many active members in achieving so much. It is an inspiring statement which is a tribute to these men and women and particularly to the constant industry and vigilance of Mr Huie himself. The long list of co-workers and the notes on their contributions by voice and pen, and in many cases by financial help and sacrifice, is very impressive.

The Sydney Single Tax League as it was first called, preceded by that formed at Darlington, was inaugurated in September, 1901, and after the early years of struggle *The Standard* was successfully launched in 1904, since when it has never failed to appear each month. Already in 1901 proposals for a comprehensive Local Government Bill which would embody the rating of land values were in the forefront of Parliamentary discussion and the League made it its business by deputation and other

efforts to push that forward. Close contact was made with the Minister, the late Sir Joseph (then Mr) Carruthers, whose name should ever be remembered for the Act that was passed in 1906 during his Premiership of the State. The Act provided for a compulsory minimum rate on land values and for local option whereby Councils if they wished could transfer all rates to land values, exempting buildings and improvements. Propaganda was required to get the municipalities numbering as many as 192 to take full advantage of the option, and the story is told how that was conducted and with what success, so that to-day, save for some minute exceptions in one or two localities, local taxation throughout New South Wales exempts buildings and improvements and falls entirely on the value of land alone. There is however one other exception, namely, the rates that are levied, by autonomous boards, for water and sewerage in the Sydney and Hunter River (Newcastle) districts, which are still on the old basis of the annual value of land and buildings taken together; but the agitation to have them transferred to land values alone is maintained with the greatest vigour. The City of Sydney, as distinct from the 40 Sydney metropolitan boroughs, had been outside the provisions of the 1906 Act. Several years of intense campaigning were needed before, in 1916, the Act was passed (Mr Meaguer the Lord Mayor and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly being the moving spirit) under which all the *City* rates, although not yet the water and sewerage rates, are levied on land values.

Another step in the right direction, in which the League played an important part, was the passing of the Land Valuation Act in 1916, for which the credit goes to the Minister the Hon Arthur Griffith. It set up a department charged with making triennial valuations throughout the State. But the department has since not had a fair deal from the Government in the matter of necessary expenses and staffing; and landlord pressure in the Shires (where local valuations had been too complaisant to the interests and the department had begun to rectify anomalies) forced an amendment whereby the Shires may if they wish make their own valuations. The League is of course alive to the necessity of overcoming that obstacle.

An episode in domestic history is that in 1913, after a referendum of the members, the title of the League was changed to the "Free Trade and Land Values League" which continued till 1929 when the executive altered it to the "Henry George League of N.S.W." The *Standard* puts on record that "the Secretary opposed the alteration for two reasons: first, that the executive was not justified in altering a title established by referendum of members; secondly, he did not approve of the proposed title as it did not convey to the ordinary man anything to indicate the character of our proposals."

The endeavours of the League, which has been conducted by Mr Huie as secretary since its inception, and the personal activities of so many as here recounted make us hope that this issue will have a wide circulation. It will be deserved.

### VICTORIA

Under the Act passed in 1914, local authorities are enabled to rate land values. Eleven cities, towns and boroughs (they do not include Melbourne) and three shires have made use of these powers. One of them, the Borough of Portland, adopted the land values system in 1920. Recently the interests got busy and caused the Council to resolve to abandon the rating of land values and revert to the taxing of improvements. *Progress* in

its issue of August reports that Mr W. B. King of the Melbourne League, with Mr Charles French, a local enthusiast, discussed the matter with many of the Councillors and at the following meeting of the Council, by a rescinding resolution and with a larger majority, it was decided to stand by the well-tried system of rating land values alone. Congratulations to these co-workers on their timely and effective action.

The September issue of *Progress* is a centenary number with interesting articles on Henry George and it gives verbatim report of Henry George's address in Melbourne, 26th March, 1890. The issue announces the Centenary Banquet in the Hotel Australia, oration by Mr Hamilton Lamb, B.A., and address by Sir George Beeby, Chief Judge of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, latter being relayed over the National Broadcasting Stations. Annual subscription to *Progress* is 2s. in Australia and 3s. to other countries. Editor is Mr F. T. Hodgkiss. It is the organ of the Henry George League of Victoria, Secretary Mr J. M. Atkinson, 18 George Parade, Melbourne.

### NEW ZEALAND

A New Zealand correspondent sent us the *Commerce Journal* of July, 1939, which gives figures of the taxation in that Dominion for the year ending 31st March, 1939, and the three previous years. The tax revenue 1938-39 was £37,764,912, of which £10,650,428 came from Customs tariffs; £9,368,028 from other indirect taxation; £9,303,495 from income tax and £1,058,499 from Dominion Land Tax; besides other revenues. The Land Tax was increased after 1936 when it produced £458,873. It is a tax on land values, the standard rate being 1d. in the £ of selling value. Unfortunately its beneficial effect is marred by provisions for exemption of values below £500 and by provisions also for grading the rate of tax upwards to a maximum of 6d. in the £, where the assessments are in excess of £5,000. These exemptions and gradations vitiate the principle of land value taxation.

In 1938-39, the total rate-revenue of the local authorities was £7,234,538, one-half of which, our correspondent says, can be estimated to come from rates levied only on land values.

The latest complete account of Land Value Taxation in New Zealand is that provided by Mr G. M. Fowlds in his New York Conference Paper (International Union publication, price 2d.) in which he explains that the rating of land values is in operation in 59 of the 129 counties, in 80 of the 124 boroughs and in 30 of the 63 town districts. Actually 58.75 per cent of the total population is living under the dispensation of this wise and just system.

### DENMARK

The journal *Vejen Frem* (The Road Forward) gives a page to the Henry George Celebration that took place in the hall of "Grundtvig's House" in Copenhagen on 2nd September, from which we are glad to see that Dr Victor Bredsdorff's radio play and dramatization of George's life was broadcast entire, only interrupted for a moment by a news bulletin. There was a large assembly. Doors were closed to hear the play. Mr J. L. Bjørner presided and Mr F. Folke made introductory remarks on George's life and work. After the radio transmission, coffee was served and addresses were given by, among others, Dr Viggo Starcke, Assistant Fr Madsen and Mr K. J. Møller. The radio play, which must have been heard by many thousands of Danish listeners, was of exceptional value as education.