

We are indebted to Mr. B. A. Levinson, LL.B., member of the United Committee and himself an Australian, for the following note:—

Sir Frederic Eggleston is an elder statesman above the turmoil of politics. In his time he has held ministerial office in the State of Victoria and has represented Australia in Chunking and in Washington. Recently he wrote his *Reflections of an Australian Liberal*, in which he criticized candidly past and present policies and politicians. There is no one who could speak on such subjects with the authority he commands. His book was sold out within three days.

The land question in Australia is only one of the subjects he deals with. He is not a Henry Georgeist, and yet his observations on the failure to apply the right policy in relation to the land read like a postscript to LAND & LIBERTY.

In the early years of settlement in Australia, the vacant areas were vast and the settlers few but gradually increasing. How was the land to be distributed? The Colonial Office realized that the sale of land meant that future generations would be held in pawn. Accordingly, while it was in control, it adopted the policy of licensing or leasing for pastoral purposes, reserving the freehold for the future when the land would be needed for agriculture. Governor Gipps had to stand up against the whole of the then population to carry out the policy.

When local government began, the pastoralists fought for grants at 2s. 6d. per acre, and the freehold was let go. Sir Frederic Eggleston writes: "Eventually all the best and most accessible land was alienated in fee simple into the hands of large holders who harvested the unearned increment. For nearly 100 years the land question dominated Australian politics. The gospel of Henry George was seized with avidity by land reformers; it was too complex for the average voter. Much land had to be bought at many times the price paid for it. When the process had gone on long enough and the balance of political voting turned in favour of the smallholders the land question became politically dead. Queensland adopted a leasehold system for all land undeveloped at the time it was instituted and it is the only State which made any real attempt to tackle the problem."

The time came when there was none of the better and more accessible land available for more intensive settlement and the Government had to buy it back at enormously enhanced values and at "terrific public loss." Railways and roads and irrigation had been provided. Population had grown and with it the demand for land. The farmer took to harvesting the increase in the value of his land rather than its productivity. Sir Frederic says, "No attempt had ever been made to prevent land values becoming a burden on the community and the problem is as urgent as ever."

IN THE SPANISH PRESS

The propaganda output of our colleagues in Spain has always been notable in quantity and quality, but a recent mailing is even more impressive in the new press openings which they discover or create. The important weekly review *Nueva Economia Nacional* of Madrid has almost every week matter of high philosophic and practical value. A series on the State and its Economy by Alvarez Ossorio Barrau is full of wisdom in its review of an essay by Padre Marriana, who wrote about the year 1600, and it is supplemented by relevant material from the pens of

Baldomero Argente and Gonzales Gomez of our own day. Another fine series is that by Francisco Alvarez on the Responsibilities and Limitations of the State. In another issue, E. Lemos Ortega reviews a recent study by the Buenos Aires Professor Villalobos-Dominguez of the plans and principles of the Physiocrat Bernardino Rivadavia, the first President of the Argentine, in 1826; and in this, mention is made of a number of authoritative writers including especially the Uruguayan Dr. Manuel Herrera y Reissig. A remarkable series of articles has appeared in *Flores y Pajaros*, organ of the society for protecting plant and bird life. Front page is given to an article entitled "The Verdict of a High Moral Authority" in which the anonymous author expands upon the declaration by the Archbishop of Barcelona in his recent pastoral letter, stating that among the causes of the faulty ordering of our modern social and economic world is the unjust distribution of wealth. In other issues of this periodical Baldomero Argente speaks to the readers of the equal duty to uphold human life and dignity; and Lemos Ortega, expounding the Georgeist philosophy, offers the same exhortation. In the daily paper *Sevilla*, of November 14, Ortega traces the historical background of the movement in Spain for land value taxation (the "Impuesto Unico") naming many writers from Juan Luis Vives to Flores Estrada, a contemporary of our David Ricardo. Another influential humane society "for the protection of animals and birds," in its finely produced quarterly Bulletin, reprints in full one of the articles on social philosophy by Baldomero Argente in the Barcelona newspaper *La Vanguardia Espanola* to which he is a regular contributor. It is gratifying to think that this good educational effort reaches a wide public. Such brief reference as we have given cannot possibly do justice to it, but warmly we extend our congratulations to our Spanish friends for their vigilant devotion to the cause we and they have at heart.

M. J. S.

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