

in the £ is imposed to cover all services. Councils have ample powers to enforce payment. Experience shows that it is easier to secure payment of rates on land values only, than on improvements.

In the Sydney suburbs there are 40 municipal councils, and the land values were £23,486,535 in 1909. To-day they are probably £30,000,000 owing to the new valuation, but details are not yet available. The whole of the revenue required from rates except about £800 this year, will be drawn from land values. In the city portion of Sydney this year, the estimated revenue is £95,000 from land values and £222,000 from rental values. This rental value rate in the city, when it has been abolished elsewhere, is the subject of much caustic criticism. The city council is not to blame. The fault is with the Governments which have been in power since the retirement of Sir Joseph Carruthers. They appear to have been nobbled by the big land monopolists. The following statement was drawn up and signed by 90 suburban mayors and aldermen some months ago:—

UNIMPROVED VALUE RATING IN THE SUBURBS.

In response to a request for an expression of opinion, we wish to say that the system of rating on unimproved values which came into force under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1906 is working remarkably well.

It has reduced the rates of a very large proportion of the ratepayers, although we are raising a larger revenue. It has stimulated the building trade, employment is more constant, and business generally is on a much sounder footing. It has induced a number of ratepayers to build or dispose of land which they are not willing or able to use themselves, and has promoted the subdivision of land hitherto withheld from use for speculative purposes. It is fair to all ratepayers, as it simply requires from each his due proportion of the rates. It specially benefits those ratepayers whose use of land is most effective and creditable to the municipality, while it has put effective pressure upon a number of owners of idle or partly used land to change their tactics.

As far as we can judge, the new system has the emphatic support of the bulk of the people. There is no public demand for a change. It is but fair to admit that rating on unimproved values is working as well as its advocates claimed that it would before it was adopted. Our experience is so satisfactory that we have no hesitation in saying that the new system could be adopted with great advantage in the city.

At the last municipal elections some ratepayers in a suburban municipality thought that one of the new candidates was not sound on taxation of land values. So he was questioned on the point at a public meeting. His answer was deemed satisfactory. He said that he considered that the matter was settled, and that anyone who would now propose to tax improvements was fit for Callan Park (a local lunatic asylum).

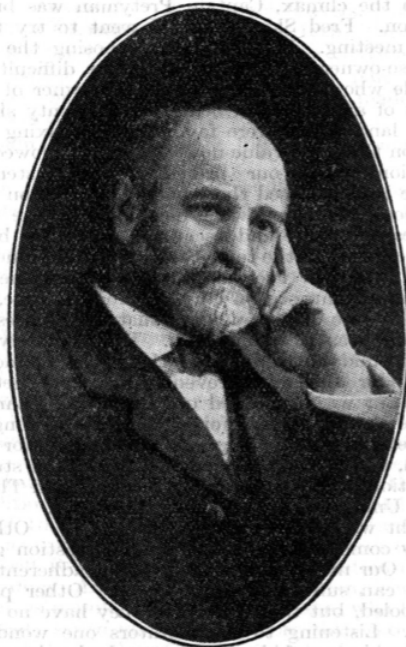
VICTORIA.

Mr. F. T. Hodgkiss, Melbourne, writes, 21st May:—

“Mr. McHugh's work up to the end of March was largely in Melbourne. He has held a good many meetings, but the Press has practically boycotted our movement in the city for a very long time. However, last month he started on a country campaign, and the country papers are giving him splendid reports and this must prove of great assistance to our cause. Mr. McHugh's coming has greatly helped to stir things up in our ranks. We are having a large output of literature, and the workers in our ranks are increasing besides becoming well organised. Shortly we are shifting into much better equipped offices. Our task is, however, a very heavy one, and we are really working more for the future than the present. Under the guise of ‘Protection’ (to talk of ‘tariffs for revenue’ is not popular) this small body of people is paying about £13,000,000 through the Customs and Excise. The Land Values Taxation we have is treated by the politicians as an additional tax instead of a substitutionary one, and from that standpoint, is not in good odour with working farmers and other direct producers. The hybrid cry we have to face is ‘Do not touch Protection, and we need less taxation, not more.’ This is the tangled skein McHugh and the rest of us have to unravel. It is only one more illustration of the ill results which flow from the Protective policy. To unite in the people's mind the twin

policies of Free Trade and Land Values Taxation is our great task. It is a great undertaking, but we are making steady progress. Our Federal elections are next year. We do not expect to score much, if anything, as the two Parties are both going to the country with the cry, ‘More Protection.’”

THE MOVEMENT IN FRANCE.



JOSEPH FELS.

Joseph Fels is indefatigable in his propaganda for the Single Tax, and after a strenuous campaign during the past few months in Canada and the United States and a short stay of a few weeks in England, he commenced a tour of the Continent. He first visited Paris early in June.

It is only a year ago the doctrines of Henry George were first seriously introduced to the French people, but, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Fels, a Single Tax League has already been formed and a periodical published, viz., LA REVUE DE L'IMPÔT UNIQUE.

Through these agencies Henry George's philosophy has been brought to the notice of the French people, many of whom realise the necessity for a drastic change in economic conditions. The general situation is very far from being satisfactory. Taxation is crushing; it is unjustly levied and unequally distributed, and for the most part indirect; accordingly falling upon the most industrious portion of the population. The taxes, besides being onerous in their collection, necessitate the maintenance of an immense and ever-growing army of officials.

On the other hand, prohibitive legislation is carried to such lengths that living has become a well nigh insoluble problem for the greater portion of the population. It must also be borne in mind that military expenses are continually increasing and that population is decreasing to an alarming extent.

The doctrines of Henry George which offer the only possible remedy for this unbearable state of things, ought therefore to find a warm welcome in the country of the old Physiocrats. And there is no doubt whatever that in due time they will appeal to the majority of the people or, at any rate, to those of them whose influence upon the national life is most marked.

Such a movement as ours is inevitably of slow growth, and “first steps” in all great reform movements are proverbially the most difficult. At the same time we have good grounds for believing that the fallow ground has been broken up and good seed sown; and that the way is now paved for a wide diffusion of the new principles. Hundreds of adherents have already joined our ranks and are firm believers in our propaganda of justice and common sense.

It was on June 2nd, 1912, that Mr. Fels, accompanied by his devoted wife, arrived in Paris. On the following day the French Single Tax League carried out a big meeting at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales, at which Mr. and Mrs. Fels were present. This meeting was both interesting and successful—and showed how much during the course of one short year our ideas had gained ground and active and intelligent supporters. Many men occupying high positions in all the branches of human activity see now, in the application of the Single Tax, the only method for the regeneration of our country.

The large hall was filled by an intelligent and attentive audience drawn, not only by interest in the Single Tax, but also by the fame of its great apostle. And they came to listen to the millionaire who, instead of using his wealth to pander to personal fads, is putting it to a more noble use.

Mr. Fels spoke in English and was translated by the Secretary of the League, Mr. Georges Darien. The latter had previously presented the speaker to the audience, and explained the views he held and so energetically and disinterestedly advocates.

Mr. Fels' address was entitled "How to Get Rich Without Working." He pointed out that with our present social system, immense fortunes are only made by land speculation, and all land speculation depends upon land monopoly for its successful issue. He showed by typical examples how the speculator buying unused land at a low price, keeping it idle wilfully, and selling it only when the needs and expenditure of a growing population have caused land values to increase enormously, realised a huge profit—a profit to which he was not entitled, as it was gained at the expense of the community and by no work on his own part. The two most crying evils of the present system were shown by Mr. Fels to be: land withheld from use for the purpose of speculation (or put to inferior use), and the taxes placed on the work or on the industry of individuals. The only practical means of establishing a normal state of things, says Joseph Fels, is to place a tax on the value of land, that is to say, to compel landowners to cease speculating in land value increases and to make the best possible use of the land, relieving industry now unjustly crushed by taxation.

Quoting two personal experiences he showed how he himself had taken advantage of the present system to realise wealth which he was entitled to by law and custom, but which he had done nothing to produce. "But," he went to say, "the money I have pocketed in this way I do not wish to keep, but I shall not give it like many others to charitable institutions; for charity is no remedy—in fact it only aggravates the evil. Philanthropy is but a prop to an unjust economic system. This money, which I do not wish to keep, I shall devote to propagating the grand doctrine of Henry George; I shall consecrate it to implant in every country the sense of logic and justice which will free humanity, and I shall spend it in an endeavour to make it impossible for me, or any one, to continue to gain money as I have gained mine!"

Enthusiastic applause greeted these words—applause which was renewed when, after having shown how he had so far supported the movement throughout the whole world, Mr. Fels stated that during the present year he would still help the "Ligue Francaise," and engaged himself to double all the sums, whatever they would be, that were collected in its favour.

A discussion followed Joseph Fels' lecture; and so great was the excitement and interest caused by the words of the speaker, that it was impossible for Dr. Levenson of New York, an old friend of Henry George, to speak, although he had remained in Paris expressly to be present at the meeting!

Numerous questions were asked, and Mr. Fels gave a clear and convincing reply to each one; his explanations were in all cases eagerly followed.

The meeting ended by a unanimous vote of thanks to Mr. Fels for his devotion and generosity towards the cause.

Mr. Fels spent the remainder of his stay in Paris in discussing the work of the League and how best its activities could be furthered.

Before his departure, a social gathering was held at which it was decided to strengthen the organisation of the League and to form a Committee entrusted with the mission of widening its field of operations, for it is obvious that the "Ligue Francaise pour L'Impôt Unique" must rapidly

grow strong if it is to occupy the position to which it is justly entitled.

Mr. and Mrs. Fels left Paris followed by the hearty good wishes of all their friends to continue their tour of propaganda through Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

GEORGES DARIEN.

MR. FELS IN NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

Writing from Christiania, Norway, on June 20th, Mr. Fels says:—

"Both Mrs. Fels and I are having a good time, and I am as busy as I want to be. I had a good meeting last evening at the Polytechnic Institute. The audience was principally of business men, engineers and professional people. The meeting to-night will be at a "People's Hall," and I hope for a large audience. Have to-day interviewed the President of Norway's Parliament, the President or Chairman of the new Tax Commission for investigating conditions of taxation, big business men, &c.

We get the best possible attention from our colleagues every place we visit, and are fêted more than is good for us.

We stay here until Saturday, and then go on to Arvika, a small place in Sweden where a big Midsummer Celebration is on for Sunday and Monday. I speak there, and then on to seven other Swedish towns, winding up by arriving at Stockholm 1st July, staying until 5th, and after a day again at Copenhagen will return to London."

DENMARK.

Mr. P. Larsen writes as follows:—

"We have had the pleasure of having Mr. and Mrs. Fels with us here in Denmark last week. On Sunday, June 9th, Mr. Fels lectured at Kolding (Jutland) to an audience of more than 300 people, and the meeting was most successful. He lectured also at two other places in Jutland. On Friday and Saturday, June 14th and 15th, Mr. and Mrs. Fels were in Copenhagen. On Saturday evening Mr. Fels spoke at the rooms of the Union of Liberal Young People. The large audience attentively listened to the story of "How to Get Rich Without Working," which Mr. Fels told in his brilliant, humorous way. On Sunday morning, June 16th, Mr. and Mrs. Fels, accompanied by some of their Danish friends, went to Helsingborg, Sweden, where a meeting was to be held in the afternoon.

"We in Denmark love Mr. Fels for his plainness and warmheartedness, and we admire him for his indefatigable and unselfish work for our cause.

"The Land Values Taxation movement here is going steadily, though not rapidly, ahead. It is true that powerful forces are against us—on one side the Conservatives and on the other the Social Democrats. But we are hopeful, nevertheless. Things now and again indicate that our ideas are pressing constantly forward. In the beginning of this year the town council of Copenhagen debated the question how to dispose of lots of ground owned by the municipality. In the course of this debate several interesting observations were made. A special committee was appointed to consider the question, and at the motion of Councillor Ove Rode (editor of POLITIKEN) the following resolution was carried: 'The assembly requires the committee to devote its attention to the introduction of an arrangement by which the disposal of the lots in the outer districts may be made so as to secure a ground-rent based on periodical valuations.'

"You know, of course, that the results of the trial valuations have been published. This publication had made it evident that the valuations, with the exception of a few cases, have not been satisfactorily carried out. But some members of Parliament of the Radical Party proposed that a parliamentary committee be appointed for further investigation of this matter. The proposal was unanimously carried, and a committee of 15 was selected.

"We have reason to believe that new supplementary valuations will be made upon more adequate principles."

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