

the chief work of Henry George maintains a sure, steady popularity among library patrons throughout the country. It should be remembered that the "open shelf" system, to which libraries of reference are tending, leaves us without statistics as to the frequency with which the work is consulted in this way, so that comparative figures are misleading. One of the most prominent libraries in one of our smaller cities writes that they have eight copies of *Progress and Poverty* in constant use, and these were taken out twenty-one times in 1920. In addition the work was consulted in the Reference Department, but of this no record is kept. The New York Public Library keeps no statistics. The same is true of the Crerar Library of Chicago, which is a reference library, but it reports a frequent use of *Progress and Poverty*. In Brooklyn, twenty-nine branches have copies of *Progress and Poverty*, and these are constantly circulated. The University of Pennsylvania has three copies of the work which they have been compelled to rebind, so worn have they become by constant use. The copies of the work in the Denver Public Library have in like manner become worn out from use, and their places supplied by new ones. The Library of Jersey City reports its three copies called for many times during 1920.

The Cleveland Public Library says *Progress and Poverty* was called for thirty-two times during 1920. Seven other works of Henry George were taken out eight times for each of the seven titles. The Portland Oregon Public Library, says that it keeps no record of how many times *Progress and Poverty* was called for, but concludes as follows: "The fact that we have seventeen copies of the work is more of an indication of its popularity than anything else."

Further statistics could be given, but they would be wearisome, and in the nature of repetition. It is necessary to remind the reader that no public library keeps two or more copies of a book which by any latitude of definition can be called "forgotten." *Progress and Poverty* in this respect takes its place with the standard novels of which libraries usually contain two or more. Single copies of books not generally asked for are all that public libraries feel called upon to place upon their shelves.

A Voice From Calcutta

WE acknowledge receipt of a pamphlet on the "Problem of Healthy Towns and a Healthy Industrial System," by Capt. J. W. Petavel, lecturer at the Calcutta University. These essays on a momentous problem are printed from the *Englishman* for the Calcutta University Poverty Problem Study Fund.

The author has a scheme of town planning. He seems to find some good in all plans of social regeneration. He seems to imagine that they can be kept moving side by side. Recognizing that the population as well as the activities of a great city are heaped together without regard to convenience, beauty or efficiency; that land values tend to

distribute themselves out of all proportion to the kind of communication that would secure the best results and the highest comforts of the citizen, he proposes a public control of the sites rent and a system of cheap transit. The details of this plan the Captain appears to have worked out with some care. We have not the space to go into them more fully.

Our chief reason for calling attention to the pamphlet is that the writer shows some knowledge of the land question. And he realizes, too, what all those who contemplate the building of the better city and a better civilization realize, that the land speculator stands in the way. He says:

"Making towns healthy is a matter of clearing up sites to erect more open spaces, or to improve communication and sometimes to relieve congestion. This is always rendered enormously costly now by the compensations that have to be paid to owners.

And again:

"With Bolshevism and physical deterioration staring us in the face it is evidently sheer madness to attempt to go on with the system of land ownership under which no improvements can be made in the towns without scattering bounties to lucky landlords—the owners of the silver turned into gold, copper into silver and new copper created; unhealthy towns being the result.

At the very beginning of the article Captain Petavel says:

"A Blue Book just issued on the results of the medical examination of recruits for military service during the war, has revealed the fact that our industrial system has produced an amount of physical deterioration which the official document describes as "appalling," and shows to be threatening, not only to render a large proportion of our manhood unfit to defend the Country, but to make them also too weak to be efficient workers. Now, what are we going to do, faced with such a situation as this? Never in the whole course of history has a nation been confronted with a graver problem.

It is not possible, of course, that Captain Petavel fails to see that the industrial system which has caused this alarming physical deterioration and the abnormal and unnatural growth of cities by which healthy progress is arrested, is due to the lion in the path, the toll gatherer of civilization, the lord of the land, the landlord.

The fine spirit of the author, and indeed the constructive value of much that he proposes, lead us to deplore the lack of temerity which prevents him from facing the full consequences of the solution for the evils which he so clearly sees. For on page 8 of this most interesting pamphlet he shows that he does see it:

"Very far thus from being necessarily a bad thing, industrial progress has rendered it possible to give the workers the conditions of life that have been proved to be the best of all. The fatal thing is not industrialism, but our having persevered in an industrial age with a land system that simply prevents matters from going their natural course, and evils remedying themselves in the natural ways.

On the fly leaf of this pamphlet appears a pregnant sen-

tence. We cannot forbear quoting it, for every letter is golden:

"However complicated and perplexing the social or labor question may seem, we must never lose sight of the fact that there are a few simple and fundamental principles which, if understood, show the way clear to peaceful and evolutionary progress."

Vancouver's Troubles

WE are afraid that Prof. Robert Murray Haig, will have to be called in again as an expert on Vancouver's fiscal disabilities.

Its troubles, as diagnosed by the professor, arose from the tax exemption of improvements. Unfortunately, things have not turned out thusly. With a 50% assessment on improvements, pleasantly called "broadening the basis of taxation," the municipal deficits continue piling up; and, somehow, the ideas of further increasing the tax on improvements is far from popular. Here is what the Vancouver *Daily World* has to say about the situation, in an editorial of February 9, 1921:—

"With all the present sources of taxation utilized practically to the limit, Vancouver faces a deficit of over one million dollars, according to the tentative estimates presented to the civic finance committee this afternoon by the chairman, Alderman Owen. The mill rates have practically reached the limit allowed by the charter. There remains the possibility of taxing improvements to the full amount of the assessed value, instead of only fifty per cent. as at present; but the burden already carried by property owners makes it extremely doubtful that the council, in face of the storm of protest that would be aroused, could carry such a project through, even had the aldermen any idea of suggesting it,"

Apparently Vancouver is in need of another Haig tonic to restore enthusiasm for the special fiscal privileges of the vacant lot.

New Land Settlement Scheme

W W. HUSBAND, the new Commissioner General of Immigration, announces an interesting plan for distributing our incoming population. It has the approval of Secretary of Labor Davis. Indeed, most of our readers will sympathize with the wholesome and politically wise purpose of the scheme, however much they may question the methods proposed.

Commissioner Husband states his plan as follows:—

"There is land enough in this country for millions of small farms, land that the Department of the Interior is opening in the West for entry, land in the South and elsewhere that is now swamp but that can be drained and put to use, and still other land in the East that has been abandoned for farming by the draft of our population to the cities.

"Our plan is not to replace American farmers with for-

eigners, but to create new farms and make new farmers, thereby increasing the resources of the nation. Our immigration problem is largely a problem of distribution of the immigrants.

"The majority of our immigrants are peasants, and essentially farmers. American labor, under present conditions, would never take up in large tracts the land now idle, but by cutting them up into small farms and offering them to the immigrant, we will offer him a chance to realize his life's dream—to own land—and at the same time we will be rendering an economic service to the country.

"Our plan is not to scatter these people out in sparsely settled sections and put them up against the problems that our pioneers went through. Neither do we plan to start foreign settlement communities in the strict sense of the term, but we plan to group them, somewhat on the European village plan, and offer them the advantages of expert agricultural demonstration instruction through the Department of Agriculture, and to aid them in taking advantage of the Farm Loan act.

"By handling the immigration problem in this manner, we will do away with the 'red danger.' The farm, with the advantages we can offer, will be the best sort of an Americanization school.

"We must divert immigration from the crowded industrial centres. The change from European rural life to conditions in some of our big factory cities is too much for human nature to stand.

"Our employment service, which has been shot at so often, but which Congress saw fit to continue, can be made to be a great aid to the immigration service.

"The flow of immigration to the cities has been a matter largely of 'follow the leader.' A few of the early arrivals from each European district, have stayed in the cities and the bulk of the others, following naturally, lodged there. We believe the current can be diverted to the farming sections by the same process."

High ideals undoubtedly inspire the above plan and policy. But some very practical difficulties seem to have been left unconsidered.

On the one hand, for instance, the captains of industry will scarcely look with favor on a plan which proposes to draft away to the rural districts the imported labor so long considered as the rightful perquisite of manufacturing centres. On the other hand, American agriculturists are today clamoring for higher prices for their product, certainly not for more and lower-priced production at their very doors.

These are two big lions in the way. Is the Commissioner's pet lamb likely to survive the encounter?

But more serious than the opposition of selfish sectional interests are the economic laws that finally decide the success or futility of such schemes.

Mr. Husband laments the waste places in the country. Apparently he does not see the waste places in the city. The vacant lot and the uncultivated acre are twin offspring of the same evil,—a fiscal system that favors and stimulates with preferential bounties the unproductive holding of land, while it condemns and penalizes by tax discrimination the productive use of the land.

The drift from country to town is of the same origin as the drift from suburb to slum. It is also as conspicuous in