

of their land; it would in no wise diminish, but would in fact increase their incomes.

They would pay under this system less taxes than they pay now. The clerk or mechanic or business or professional man who owns a house and lot in which he lives might pay more taxes on his lot than now, but in return for this he would escape the taxes now levied on his house and its contents, and through the medium of indirect taxation, upon everything that his family consumes. And so with the farmer.

Our present system of taxation falls with peculiar severity upon the farming class. Not only is improved land all over the United States taxed higher than unimproved land of the same quality, but the taxes which so largely raise the prices of all the farmer has to buy do not, and cannot, so long as we are exporters of agricultural produce, raise the price of what the farmer has to sell.

And, further than this, to put taxation solely upon land values would shift the weight of taxation from the sparsely settled agricultural districts to those populous centers where land has a real and a high value.

As it would destroy the speculative value of land, the result would be that many farmers would have no taxes at all to pay, for, no matter what might be the value of his improvements, no farmer would have more taxes to pay than could be collected from unimproved land equal to his in quality and situation.

Manifestly it would be very greatly to the relief of the farmer to abolish all the taxes which now fall upon his improvements and his consumption, and to substitute for them a tax upon the value of bare land, which is always higher in populous centers than in agricultural districts, and in sparsely settled agricultural districts hardly exists at all, except as the result of speculation.

And from the effects upon the diffusion of population the farmer would greatly gain. Just as the city population would gain from the destruction of the system which now builds tenement houses amid vacant lots, so would the agricultural communities gain in productive power and in social enjoyment when settlement should become closer, from the fact that there would no longer be any inducement for any one to take up or hold more land than he could use.

Further than this, it must be remembered that, although the selling price of land would diminish, this, since it would affect all land, would not affect the exchange value of the homestead, lot or farm, as compared with other homesteads, lots or farms. It would be, to the man who wants for himself and his family the security of a home in which to live, or land to cultivate, a purely nominal and intangible loss, to offset which would be great and actual gains; and, as his children grew up, it would be very much easier for them to get homesteads or farms of their own.



Ye build! ye build! but ye enter not in.
Like the tribes whom the desert devoured in their sin;
From the land of promise ye fade and die,
Ere its verdure gleams forth on your wearied eye.
—Mrs. Sigourney.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

POLITICAL POINTERS IN AUSTRALASIA

Corowa, N. S. W.,

Australia, August 21.

For a conservative ministry, the proposals of the Massey government in New Zealand seem rather progressive.



The trend, both in New Zealand and Australia, is to impose graduated taxation on land values, with a high exemption, in order to compel owners of large estates to sell their land. This method of taxation can be evaded to some extent by bogus subdivisions among children and others, but it appears to have had the desired effect in many cases. It thus makes more land available for farming, and it provides revenue for the government. It has not, I think, reduced the price of land in Australia, owing to the exemption. As no other taxes were remitted when it was imposed, it has been of no benefit, as far as I can judge, to the ordinary wage earner.



The Federal Parliament of Australia is now sitting again.

The only new proposal of the government of any outside interest is the payment of a bonus of five pounds for every baby born in the Commonwealth. With regard to this, the Women's Single Tax League of New South Wales, publish a letter in which they say:

We consider that the proposed bonus is simply a clumsy effort to blind the eyes of many people to the true causes of the unjust conditions which oppress them. It will do nothing to remove those causes. In fact, it is likely to intensify them. In many cases the chief beneficiary will be the landlord. The bonus will be one of the sources from which he will get his rent, and consequently it will strengthen his position.

We wish to point out that the Federal Government is not in earnest in its professed desire to help mothers. If it were in earnest it would propose to take the present unjust taxes off the food and clothes and shelter that the baby requires. That would be far more useful than a Federal dole of £5 upon which the landlord will have first claim.

In the Federal Parliament, the Liberals—a curious mixture ranging from extreme conservatives to advanced radicals—appear to have adopted a “stand pat” policy, while the Labor party is trades-unionist and socialistic. Both parties seem hopelessly Protectionist.

Since the Labor party has been in power, it has passed two tariff acts largely increasing the duties on many articles. These were hurried through with little opposition, even from members who formerly professed to be Freetraders.

For the last few years Australia, owing to good seasons and high prices of wool and wheat, has been very prosperous.

There has been a great demand for labor of all descriptions, and wages have risen; in some cases naturally, in others artificially through the awards of wages boards appointed under Arbitration Acts. But the cost of living has increased very much;

rents, especially in the cities, have risen enormously; so that wage earners are probably worse off than before.

It works in a "vicious circle"; wages are raised by the wages boards; the employers if possible raise their prices; protected manufacturers demand increased duties, and generally get them; and the cost of living mounts faster than wages.

ERNEST BRAY.



THE SINGLETAX IN MISSOURI.

Kansas City, Mo.

A debate on the Missouri Singletax amendments came off here on the 15th at a banquet of the Merchants' Association. The debaters were the Secretary of the Land Owners' Protective Association, Mr. Silvers, and Vernon J. Rose.

Mr. Rose opened the debate with one of the most effective explanations of the George philosophy I ever listened to. After a clear presentation and explanation of the proposed amendments he gave a splendid account of Henry George's doctrines, emphasizing the moral and human side of the question. He was frequently and vigorously applauded. Especially pronounced was the applause when he made his plea for securing for every child born into this world—rich and poor alike—an equal right of access to the natural bounties of the earth. This, he said, is the object that inspires every follower of Henry George.

Mr. Silvers quibbled some in reply, but was in no way offensive. He is young, rather slender, smooth-faced, and would seem boyish were it not for an air of ease that he assumes. He said some very foolish things, considered from our point of view. For instance, that the just principle would be to tax every man alike because we are all citizens alike and are protected alike by the government. Some of the well-fed, with fat faces and bald heads—must have been as bald inside as out,—heartily applauded that sentiment. Mr. Silvers won frequent applause from Singletaxers for his correct statements of the George teaching, but the objections he offered were pitifully weak.

The cities and mining districts may make a good showing in favor of the amendments. The farming districts wherever I have come in touch with them, are, or seem to be, solidly hostile. But no matter if defeat comes, the favorable reaction will come. The educational work that has been done in the cities

has awakened a faith that can not long be held in check.

ROBERT CUMMING.



MORE CAMPAIGNING IN MISSOURI.

Topeka, Kansas.

Once upon a time when Frederic C. Howe was a McKinley Republican largely, I said this to him: "Why does a man so busy as you are, and of such steel-like sense, live down here in a settlement to do good to these foreign and ignorant folk?"

His answer was a direct denial of "doing good," and made claim "that he was being educated."

For the last seven years I have thought I was a well grounded advocate of land value taxation. But now I really am, for I have spent a week in Cass Co., Missouri, and got educated.

Letters already published in The Public have given dramatic pictures of what is doing. Yes, dramatic—pictures to make the heart bound by the unbreakable chain of Henry George's forging, leap up with joy. My picture is not of quite that kind; we did not win exactly.

To not have won exactly, does not prevent one who is bound by that sacred chain, from having seen things—from being better educated.

In Pleasant Hill, Missouri, I saw some things good

In Missouri.

Cartoon in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

