

Six weeks after his election in Hanover as President of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade, the San Francisco Examiner published this tribute to Mr. Joseph S. Thompson.

## Mature Living

By ANITA DAY HUBBARD

Joseph Sexton Thompson has lived a very full life ever since he was born in San Francisco on June 16, 1878.

He is still pouring new excitements and adventures into it, out of sheer joy of living, at his youthful 81.

Just now he is writing a properly challenging book on economics, to be published sometime this fall, tentatively titled "Taxless America."

Last July, at Hanover, West Germany, he was elected president of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade.

He is presently chairman of "London Week," which will be celebrated here beginning October 25.

His chairmanships and committee memberships in a vast gamut of civic betterment projects are as the sands of the sea, and he is active and constructive in all of them. He is in constant demand as an after-dinner speaker.

After a sketchy schooling, his father encouraged him to go into the chicken raising business at 15. It didn't work out, and he was variously employed as office boy, "electrician and bell hanger," lineman, draftsman and superintendent for the Bay Counties Power Company now the P.G. & E. Co.

Then he lost his left arm in a railroad accident, and decided to start his own company. This was in 1906. San Francisco was in ruins by the earthquake and fire, but young Thompson founded the Pacific Electric Company that September with a borrowed capital of \$1,000 and two partners. It was a prudent investment. He bought the partners out, after a while, and became sole owner. The company sells about \$50,000,000 worth of electrical equipment annually now.

A year ago, he resigned as president after 52 years "on the same job without a raise in status" and became chairman of the board.

He moved his office to his home at 2411 Broadway, where he has a full-dress view of the Bay. His wife is working there, too, translating a book on economics from English into French. They keep pretty busy.

He feels that a well-rounded life, with lots of diverse activities, is the secret of contentment. He quotes an old sea captain friend who referred to a good ship, "all parts bearing equal strain." His father left him a priceless design for living, "Cultivate habits of industry." It has been his motto ever since.

Joseph Thompson has always had an original mind. It made him a successful pioneer in the electrical industry, when electric power was still a hardly proven project. Having no formal, disciplined education to limit him, he went ahead in a free-wheeling sort of way and did many "things that couldn't be done" by inventing ways to do them. He remembers that when he started, electrical

workers were classified as "electricians and bell hangers". Most people still used door bells pulled by a lever, instead of the new fangled electric door bells run on a small battery. Electric lights were still a novelty, in that gas-lit age.

The Thompson clan still is a well-knit, loyal group of siblings. With the exception of one sister, Theresa, who died young, all are still living and flourishing. Kathleen Norris, famous author, Mrs. C. C. Hartigan, of Washington, D.C., Frederick Thompson of this city, and James A. Thompson of Marin County, all get together as often as possible to recall their youthful shenanigans as youngsters in pre-earthquake San Francisco.

Because both parents died early, Joseph and Kathleen took over the care and direction of the younger ones. Everyone who knows them agrees they did a very sound job, and most particularly a devoted and loving one, always seasoned with gaiety and laughter as a barrier to any sort of disaster.

Joseph Thompson, for all his success as a nationally important industrialist, his professional rating as Fellow of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and all his myriad other honours and attainments, is little concerned with the past.

He has no intention whatever of resting on his considerable laurels. The future is his challenge, and from all indications, it will never be a dull one.

For one thing, he detests the idea that by coining pat phrases and slogans, or naming a problem aptly, one can safely file it in a neat pigeon-hole and feel content about it.

He is afraid that in the welter of professional "Disciplines" we may grow smug in our lack of original thinking, accepting status quo merely because it is labelled and catalogued.

He feels that the older generation should stop being so critical of the younger ones, and look to their own challenges as leaders and responsible counsellors.

He loves the city he helped build anew out of the ruins of 1906 and sees a great future for it as a world centre.

He is certainly a good example to his fellow citizens, if boundless energy, a fertile and inquiring mind, and a deep enduring sense of humour are what is needed.

His multitude of friends and admirers are certain it is, and that he is a perfect example.

---

THE MILLENNIUM IS POSSIBLE

READ

NATURAL LIBERTY

PRICE 1s. 3d. POST FREE

John C. Cook, Box Bush House,  
Henton, Nr. Wells, Somerset.

LAND & LIBERTY