

The document emanates officially from the International Union for Free Trade and the Taxation of Land Values of which Charles O'Connor Hennessy of this city is president. A committee representing the Union consisting of Messrs. A. W. Madsen and F. C. R. Douglass is present at the Conference at Geneva. The Memorandum was posted to three hundred delegates in English, French and German, and the English Committee has called for immediate translation by members of the committee in other countries for their publicists at home.

The Single Tax City of Canberra

THE April number of the *Atlantic Monthly* gives an account of Canberra, the Federal capital of Australia. The article is by John Reay Watson.

The writer tells us that it is to be the most beautiful garden city in the world. "It lies in an amphitheatre of hills, with an outlook toward the North and the Northeast . . . The chief eminence has been named Capital Hill, and there, in imitation of Washington, the Parliamentary buildings will be erected."

The Federal capital will be moved from Melbourne, and 600 new houses will be ready for the influx of population. Over 600 civil servants will be transferred to the new capital as soon as possible. The Federal Capital Commission has built twenty-seven standard types of houses. The rents will range from \$4.50 per week for a four roomed cottage suitable for a workman and his family up to \$15 a week for a better house suitable for civil servants who have incomes of upward of \$4000 a year. The purchase price of these standard houses built by the Commission will range from \$4,500 to \$9,700.

The ownership of 900 square miles of Federal territory is vested in the government and not a foot of it will be alienated. The land is put up at auction and the bidder pays an annual rent of five per cent of his bid for twenty years after which the value of his land is subject to a periodical ten year re-appraisal.

How well the Commission has guarded against the exactions of greedy landlords whose land is wanted for federal sites, the writer informs us as follows:

"In order to avoid having to pay an extravagant price for the purchase of private lands within the selected territory, it was fixed by statute that the price paid by the Commonwealth Government to private owners must not exceed the value of the land on the date that the Act was passed. The highest price thus paid as compensation to private landowners within the Federal territory for the resumption of land has been \$15 an acre. For some of this land within the city site, which has been leased by the Federal Capital Commission to private persons for building purposes, rents aggregating \$4000 an acre per annum are being received by the Commission. It will be seen that the building of the capital promises to be a very profitable enterprise for the Commission as trustees of the nation."

"Some of the business blocks in the centre of the city—which for the most part is still unbuilt—realized at auction \$400 per foot frontage. The bidding for some of the best corner blocks, consisting of one-sixth of an acre, reached \$18,000. This represents the unimproved value of the land, and the bidder pays the Commission an annual rent of 5 per cent of his bid. Eventually the Commission will have an annual income of millions of dollars from the rents of business and residential blocks in the new city. This income will wipe out the cost of construction, including the cost of many large public buildings, and will eventually provide a surplus that will be paid into the national treasury."

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"Steps have been taken to prevent land speculators from making money out of the Federal Capital. The fact that not a foot of land can be sold outright by the Commission eliminates the speculator to a considerable extent, but it is also desired to eliminate the speculator in leases. There is a provision in every lease that building operations must be begun within twelve months of the purchase of the lease, and completed within another twelve months. No lease can be sold by the original purchaser until the building conditions have been fulfilled. But so rapid has been the increase in land values that some original purchasers of leases have been able to sell out at considerable profit."

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"The remainder of the Federal territory outside the city area—with the exception of 150 square miles reserved as a belt of open country round the city, and 170 square miles forming the catchment area of the chief river providing the city water supply—is being leased as farms and grazing areas."

The writer thus summarizes this great and unexpected advance in the direction of the practical application of Henry George's teachings:

"The leasehold system with regard to land at Canberra gives the nation, instead of the individual, the unearned increment arising from increased values of land."

And he says again:

"Blocks of land cannot remain vacant while leaseholders wait for a rise in values; nor can huge unsightly buildings of many stories be erected in the business quarter. It is doubtful if Canberra will ever become an important industrial city, but the design provides for an industrial area, separated from the business, governmental, and residential districts.

It was in 1911 that the Australian Commonwealth government instituted a world-wide competition for the design of a model city. The first prize was won by a Single Taxer, Mr. Walter Burley Griffin, well known architect of Chicago. The second prize went to Mr. Eliel Saarinen of Helsingfors, Finland, and the third prize to M. Agacha of Paris.

And in May of this year the new capital was formally dedicated by the Duke of York.

America in The Dock

AMERICAN democracy is on trial. From many quarters and from many authorities come accusatory voices. Viscount Bryce, surely no unfriendly witness, recanting from his earlier enthusiasm for American democ-

racy, Mussolini, and now Wells. Our democracy has been tried in the balance and found wanting; friends and foes alike are questioning the permanence and value of our experiment.

And it cannot be said that the defenders of American democracy have contributed much of value to the discussion. It is no answer to these critics of our institutions to indicate our notable material achievements. Emerson's query to those who would exalt our prosperity is still pertinent, "Does the human soul prosper here?" The indispensable condition for the success of that form of government which in America is now on trial is what Henry George declared to be the law of progress, "Association in equality."

Without it political institutions must decline, the ballot be wrested to the service of privilege and interest in public questions tend to diminish as the voters' sense of the consciousness of their weakness increases. Elections will then continue to revolve more and more around questions which are in themselves of temporary importance, shibboleths of contending factions, or governmental favors to particular interests.

The latest eminent person to enter the ranks of the defenders of our democracy is Senator William E. Borah. There are few men in American public life today whose utterances are more entitled to thoughtful consideration. His splendid sincerity, his great courage, and his ability to embody political truths in arresting and striking phrases, have singled him out from the men of lesser judgment and greater timidity who sit in the seats of the mighty.

Wells attacks our democracy for its economic shortcomings, confusing the political with the economic status; Borah replying to Wells, indicates certain material triumphs and achievements in America as a convincing proof of the value of our democracy. But in so doing he abandons the ground to Wells.

Both are in error, of course. Both limit their concept of democracy, now to a too narrow and now to a too inclusive definition. Wells assays our low cultural standards, and cries, "Behold the failure of democracy;" Borah exhibits the achievements of Ford and Edison, and cries, "Behold the success of our democracy."

The civilization of Athens of which Senator Borah speaks admiringly, did not spring as a consequence out of its democracy; rather the high peak of democracy which it attained was the result of its highly civilized status. Where so great a number of its citizens had attained to an intellectual standard, society became an association of equals. A democratic form of government was quite the natural thing—it is difficult to see how any other form of government could have prevailed.

If Senator Borah could only see that where democracy has failed, such failure is due to economic inequality he could smash back at Wells' very superficial indictment a reply that would be conclusive. The nearest he comes to it,

however, in this article in the *Sunday Times* of May 15, is where he says: "The real test of any government whether it ought to be permitted to live, is this: What does it do for the average man? What about the common people? What of their comforts, what of their opportunities?"

We might reply that all it can do for the average man is to leave him alone, and mind its own business. But this might seem flippant, and perhaps would not touch what our Senator has in mind. Government can at least secure equality of *natural* opportunity, though it can do nothing else. Is this what Senator Borah is thinking of? Evidently not, for further along he says: "In the midst of the gathering of wealth and the hoarding of great fortunes the pathway from poverty to power has been kept open and is still well trodden." No thanks to government, we would say, and such reply to Wells and other critics of democracy is just no reply at all. Nor is it sufficient to say, as Senator Borah says, that Calvin Coolidge started as a workman and is now president of the United States, and that David Willard started as a brakeman and is now president of a great railroad system. For these are not the average men of whom Mr. Borah is speaking, and the statement may only prove that certain exceptional individuals have been able to overcome the economic handicaps. But what has this to do with the form of government known as democracy which is now in question by Wells and others?

The weakness of Borah's defence is that he ignores the fact that the doors of opportunity are slammed tight against men politically free, who are thus made economically slaves, with the portentous disaster involved for our whole civilization. Henry George's clear and unanswerable warning could have no more appropriate moment for re-statement.

In *Social Problems* (Doubleday, Page edition, page 16) Henry George says:

"It behoves us to look the facts in the face. The experiment of popular government in the United States is clearly a failure. Not that it is a failure everywhere and in everything. An experiment of this kind does not have to be fully worked out to be proved a failure. But speaking generally of the whole country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the lakes to the Gulf, our government by the people has to a large degree become, in a larger degree becoming, government by the strong and unscrupulous."

Elsewhere in the same work (Doubleday, Page edition, page 14) Mr. George says:

"The rise in the United States of monstrous fortunes, the aggregation of enormous wealth in the hands of corporations, necessarily implies the loss by the people of governmental control. Democratic forms may be maintained, but there can be as much tyranny and misgovernment under democratic forms as any other—in fact they lend themselves more readily to tyranny and misgovernment."

In *In Progress and Poverty* (Doubleday, Page, edition, page 528) Mr. George says again:

"Where there is anything like an equal distribution of wealth—that is to say, where there is general patriotism, virtue and intelligence—the more democratic the government the better it will be; but where there is gross inequality in the distribution of wealth, the more democratic the government the worse it will be; for, while rotten democracy may not in itself be worse than rotten autocracy, its effect upon national character will be worse."

There is much more that Henry George has written in this connection. It is a sufficient answer to what is troubling Mr. Wells; it will also furnish the Idaho Senator something that will clarify his own conclusions.

Some Solution Must be Found

SPEAKING at a recent agricultural conference held at Columbia University, President Nicholas Murray Butler, urging the establishment of a research bureau to deal with the problems of farm life, said:

"The drift of population to city centers and the distaste of the younger generation for rural life and the work of the farm, are rapidly bringing about conditions which will gravely affect not only the economic basis of modern life, but also social and educational interests and ideals. Since men must live agriculture cannot be displaced as the basic industry. Therefore the land, in the largest sense of the word, challenges modern scholarship and modern human interest in a score of ways.

"A generation ago, Henry George saw this and pressed it upon public attention with marked eloquence and vehemence. His proposed solution for the problems growing out of the land is not one which either economist or public opinion has been disposed to accept. The fact remains, however, that some solution for the problems of the land and its relationship to human life should and must be found."

California Losing Its Shore Frontage

ASSEMBLYMAN Eddy, of California, has introduced a bill in response to a wide spread alarm at the continued loss of the ocean frontage:

Representative Eddy points to the alarming seizure of beach frontages by private interests, and warns that if California is still to make a bid for tourists as the world's playground it must see that the ways to the ocean are kept open.

The rush for beach frontages by private buyers is an alarming situation in California," says Eddy. "In Los Angeles county, for instance, there are 38 miles of fine beach front and all but six miles has been taken up. The cities of Los Angeles county have spent \$600,000 to buy back small strips of beaches for playgrounds that should never have been released from the public domain. Last fall that county placed on the ballot a bond issue of \$8,000,000, half of which was to buy back beach bonds. The issue received a big vote, and was defeated only because of the number of measures on the ballot. The county is paying as high as \$350 per lineal foot for such lands.

"The better beaches of Orange county are going the same way. San Diego county, seeing the inevitable has just passed a county ordinance embodying the same provision as my bill. Ventura county anticipates the same measure.

"In England, Edward Everett Hale tells of having ridden for from nine to twelve miles along the beaches and never seeing the ocean because private estates have shut the view from the public. It is to prevent such a situation in California that this measure has been introduced."

The Schalkenbach Foundation

AT the annual meeting of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation the following officers were elected: President, Chas. O'Connor Hennessy; vice-president, John J. Murphy; secretary-treasurer, Walter Fairchild; executive committee, the officers and Arthur C. Pleydell and Edward Polak. Resolutions were adopted expressing appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. Chas. T. Root as president during the past two years and by Mr. Richard Eyre who retired from the vice-presidency. Among the activities of the past year were: reprinting Protection or Free Trade; obtaining the publication of Louis F. Post's book, "What is the Single Tax;" placing LAND AND FREEDOM in public and college libraries; securing a wide newspaper publicity for articles based on current tax problems. The pamphlet containing Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown's address (reviewed in our Jan.-Feb. issue) has been in great demand for distribution among students and a second edition has been printed.

Plans for the coming year include further republication and circulation of Henry George's works and pamphlets; and aiding the distribution of the Memorandum to the Economic Conference reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

Dinner to Antonio Bastida

ABOUT twenty of Antonio Bastida's old friends gathered on the evening of June 3d at Rosoff's Restaurant, 43rd Street, this city, to welcome him on his visit from Cuba. Mr. Bolton Hall presided and short speeches were made by Stephen Bell, Whidden Graham, Oscar Geiger, George Lloyd, M. Van Veen, Miss Amy Mali Hicks, Mrs. Julia Goldzier and others.

The state of the Single Tax movement was discussed from different angles, and the concensus of opinion seemed to be that while events are not moving as rapidly as we could wish, many significant things are happening which may give us heart of hope. Miss Hicks voiced the more general sentiment when she declared that whatever victories are won in distant parts of the world are as much our triumphs as if achieved much nearer home.

A letter was read from George Edwards of Youngstown, Ohio. Mr. Bastida, whose devotion to the cause, has covered a period of 41 years, sailed for Cuba on the following morning. He carries with him the good wishes of hosts of friends in this city after an absence of several years.