

in a very creditable manner and to the amusement of the audience introduced the various acts. His ability as a Master of Ceremonies was supplemented by his rendition of several songs in an excellent voice. More than five hundred attended. The receipts were very encouraging. The profits were contributed to the School funds. A sight to warm the hearts of "Old Timers," was the great preponderance of the young new adherents to our Cause.

Albert Jay Nock, noted essayist, author of "Our Enemy, the State" and a number of other well-known books, addressed the spring graduating classes and their friends at the exercises held at Engineering Auditorium, 29 West 39th Street, June 6, at 8 P. M. His subject was "The State."

Francis G. Goodale of the Boston faculty, spoke on "The Way Toward Freedom," and Michael J. Bernstein of the New York faculty, on "Socialism vs. Democracy." Mrs. Signe Bjorner, visiting from Denmark, reported on the excellent progress being made in her native land. More than 600 students were graduated.

Thirteen thousand announcements of the summer classes have been mailed out to New York City High School students, and an additional twenty-five thousand have been mailed to other prospects. Classes in Fundamental Economics will be conducted from Monday to Thursday, at 3 to 5 in the afternoon, and at 7 to 9 in the evening. Special classes for high school and college students will be conducted in the mornings at 10 to 12 and in the afternoon at 1 to 3. These classes will cover the course in six weeks, two sessions each week.

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On April 26 a resolution "authorizing the Postmaster General to issue a commemorative stamp in honor of the one-hundredth anniversary of Henry George" was introduced in the House of Representatives by Mr. Sweeney. The resolution, which eulogizes George's contribution to socio-economic thought, concluding with the well-known estimate of his place in philosophy by Dr. John Dewey, is now in the Committee of Post Office and Post Roads. A number of Georgeists have written to Postmaster General James Farley, to their Congressmen, and to President Roosevelt, urging the issuance of this stamp. Persistent effort of this kind will be helpful. Write at once!

How It's Done in The Antipodes

EVIDENCE of the existence of oil fields in New Zealand has been recognized for years, yet, nothing was done about it, for a number of reasons. In the first place, oil operators were reluctant to reveal such deposits on *occupied land* because, under the law, developers possessed no interest in the land. Secondly, the oil country is situated, in part, in the most valuable dairy sections of the Dominion. The treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, between the Maoris and the British Crown gave the

rights to all minerals beneath the land to the native owners of such lands.

The desire to develop the oil resources of New Zealand and the attendant objections on the part of the developers, caused an impasse. In August, 1938, the Labor Government introduced legislation in the Dominion Parliament to give the Government ownership of all mineral oils found. The bill provided for exploitation to be by private corporations, subject to the payment of a 5 per cent royalty to the Government, and compensations to private land owners for all surface damage. Considerable opposition was advanced by the National Party; a strong effort was made to obtain at least 50 per cent of the royalty payments for the private owners of the land upon whose property the oil was produced. To support their contention, the National Party invoked the Waitangi Treaty, but, without success.

The principal argument, culminating in the final passage of the Labor Government's Bill, was advanced by Patrick Webb, Esq., the Minister of Mines for the Dominion. He succeeded in maintaining, that, unlike other minerals, oil deposits are admittedly migratory. Geologists have been able to prove, beyond doubt, that oil drawn through a bore, does not necessarily proceed *only* from directly beneath the drilling location. Therefore, the Waitangi Treaty was not applicable, inasmuch as a fair allotment was not feasible. Mr. Webb, proceeding along this line, held that it was *more equitable that the entire community should benefit*. It should be added that two of the four Maori representatives in Parliament supported the Minister of Mines in defeating the National Party amendment, and declined to undertake *any* distribution to private land owners. Their attitude in this respect is greatly to their credit, since they might have been expected to defend a questionable provision directly affecting their own constituency, however unfair it might be to others.

With the impasse abated, The New Zealand Petroleum Company was organized with a capital of about one million and a quarter dollars, for the purpose of developing the oil resources of the Dominion. About one-half of the capital has been contributed by American interests. The directors include some Australian business men, who are also associated in a similar venture in their own nearby homeland. Presently, the principal source of supply of oil is from the Netherlands East Indies. In 1937 New Zealand imported oil to the value of about fifteen million dollars. The Australian oil needs are likewise supplied, principally, from the same source.

If the exploration work, now in progress, proves as promising as is now believed, the resultant benefits to the sister Dominions should be of inestimable value. It is not presumptuous to believe that their production of oil may well exceed their own needs. In that event they will be in a position to export the surplus, a highly desirable commodity, the demand for which is annually

increasing, and in exchange receive from others such of the products of labor for which they have need. However desirable the processes of exchange of wealth may be, however fortunate for a people to possess within their boundaries, the blessings of natural resources, what does it profit them if they be subject to unfair and disadvantageous exploitation by others? Evidently there are places where people not only know how to end an impasse, but definitely do so on an equitable basis.

There may even be some Georgeists who will disapprove the dispositions of these oil lands. They should not, however, fail to appreciate that the prime factor to consider, is, who will benefit? If the question is moot or debatable, it may be difficult to satisfactorily convince either side. Nothing is debatable in the science of economics! One needs only to state the facts, for their acceptance by an open mind! Can there be any question as to the rights of the community to benefit from the presence of oil, or air, or sunshine?

Patrick Webb, Minister of Mines for the Dominion of New Zealand deserves great credit for the *equitable* disposition of an important question.

Public Hearing For Graded Tax Plan

A LOCAL law to amend the Administrative Code of the New York City Charter was introduced by Charles Belous and Hugh Quinn, Councilmen from Queens County. The bill would impose "90 per cent of the total amount to be raised by taxation upon real estate to be raised by the tax on land values, and the remaining 10 per cent to be raised by the tax on improvements." The bill would also change the phraseology in the existing tax law, whereby the words "valuation of real estate" now appearing, would be made to read "valuations of land area and of the improvements thereon." It may be well to explain, that while the land and the improvements thereon are listed separately on the tax books of the City of New York, they are treated under the general terms, real estate, as the law now stands.

The City Council's finance committee granted the proponents a public hearing on April 20, 1939, and decided that forty-five minutes would be all the time the committee could spare for entertaining the opinions of those who favored the legislation. Of course, such a short period was insufficient to cover the ground necessary to convince the committee that the measure had merit.

In behalf of the idea appeared William J. Schieffelin of the Citizens Union, who warmly urged its adoption. He was liberally interrupted by Joseph E. Kinsley, Chairman of the Committee. Other speakers in favor of the measure were, Vincent McLean of the Central Queens Allied Civic Council, a private body of civic minded local

taxpayers; Andrew J. Wright of the Metropolitan Taxpayers of Ridgewood, Walter Fairchild of Sunnyside, Walter Carmak of Maspeth, Charles Le Fevre and William Quasha of Jackson Heights, all voicing their approval as representatives of the local communities wherein they reside, and all being within the Borough of Queens.

Walter Fairchild, Chairman of the Graded Tax Committee and Harold S. Buttenheim, editor of the magazine, *American City*, both well known to many readers of LAND AND FREEDOM, gave a good account of their knowledge of the realty tax laws and their reasons for fostering the legislation.

The principal arguments advanced by those who opposed the bill were singular, to say the least, if not unique. Quite naturally, the opponents were the direct representatives of the organized real estate groups. They charged that it was "the old Single Tax theory—which for a time had great popularity—but—was dropped, having been proved to the satisfaction of most everyone to be unworkable and improvident." They also maintained that the "scheme is socially unsound." We do not here intend to despoil the time, the ink, nor the paper, nor even to waste the reader's time with a rebuttal to arguments like these. However, to an entirely new angle, we will devote just a little attention; that is, to what was referred to as the unique portion of the reasons advanced to defeat this bill. They endeavored to show that the public utilities corporations would be the main beneficiaries, if the bill is enacted into law. They cited figures to show that in the case of the "Consolidated Edison Company and the New York Telephone Company's properties in the Bronx, there would be a reduction from their 1938 tax of \$1,385,046 to \$499,700." Why they coupled the names and the figures of two enterprises not in any wise affiliated, the nature of whose business is wholly unlike, only *they* will know. They go on to say that in the case of "such public utility corporations as The New York Steam Corporation, Third Avenue Railway System, Western Union Telegraph Company, Manhattan Railway Company and Interborough Rapid Transit in Manhattan, there would be a reduction in their taxation from \$1,678,204 to \$715,815, a reduction of more than one-half."

This sort of argument would seem to convey two implications. One, that the average citizen and home owner would prefer *not* to be benefitted rather than to receive a mutual benefit with the utilities. The other, that the utilities were behind and sponsoring the legislation and therefore it must be considered most undesirable. To the second implication we would point out that the utilities are so *far* behind in their sponsorship that they were nowhere in evidence and that none of *their* representatives spoke at the hearing.

It may well be, that some day, the utilities will appreciate that the "advantages" to be gained by them, if the figures cited in their behalf are correct (though wholly