

ADVANCE AND ADVERSITY IN AUSTRALASIA

Unprecedented Victory in New Zealand

Waitemata County, one of the most populous counties in New Zealand and lying north and west of Auckland, adopted the Rating of Land Values last April 2. As reported in our August issue, the voting was: For R.L.V. 5,349; against 2,420. Because the eastern coastal belt of the county was created a Borough with effect from April 1, some of those who had been foremost in the campaign for the change and who had petitioned for a poll to be held, were denied the opportunity to vote on the issue. Evidently they lost no time in organising a petition for a poll of ratepayers of the new Borough. This was held December 4 and resulted in a momentous, five-to-one victory for Land-Value Rating. The voting was:—

For R.L.V. Against

East Coast Bays Borough ...	1,033	188
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Mr. Geo. M. Fowlds, in sending the news of this emphatic decision, remarks that it is thought to be without precedent since provision for local option polls on the issue was introduced nearly sixty years ago. It is of interest to note that the new Borough has as its first Mayor, Mr. R. H. Greville whose valuable work and co-operation received special mention in the last annual report of the N.Z. League for the Taxation of Land Values.

Successful polls were held the following week in two townships in Manukau County, which does not itself rate land-values and which lies just south of Auckland. The results were:—

For R.L.V. Against

Buckland's & Eastern Beaches	453	141
Mangere Bridge	369	228

Australian State Land Taxes Increased

The Australian Federal Land Tax instituted by the then Labour administration in 1910, was repealed by the Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, in his Budget of August, 1952. Although it was a charge on the value apart from improvements, yielding an annual revenue of approximately £6½ million, it was so seriously blemished by exemptions and graduations that it was anything but "an equal tax on equal land" and was in fact a travesty of land-value taxation. Announcing his decision to "vacate the land tax field," Sir Arthur remarked that it was for each of the several States to occupy if they so wished.

By an amending Act passed in December, 1952, the South Australian Government decided to take such action and to obtain more revenue from land values by altering the rates of tax then existing (L. & L., October, 1954). We now learn from Mr. A. R. Hutchinson that similar action has also been taken by the Governments of both Victoria and Tasmania, each increasing their State Land Tax on a sliding scale so as to absorb approximately three-quarters of the land value revenue from their respective States foregone by the Federal Exchequer. Details are not available. Mr. Hutchinson remarks that no publicity was given to the passing of the amending Acts and that it was only by chance that he became aware of the increases now in operation.

Correction

Dandenong, Victoria. This is one of the shires where the rating of land values is in operation. It has been consistently referred to in our columns as "Dandedong." Mr. A. R. Hutchinson informs us that the correct spelling is *Dandenong*.

Valuation Reform in Victoria Delayed

Last September an important Government measure, the *Valuation of Land Bill*, was given its first reading in the Victorian parliament. It sought powers to establish a central valuation authority under the control of a Valuer-General similar to those in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Mr. A. R. Hutchinson, editor of *Progress*, informs us that the Bill was not passed in the session which ended before Christmas. For technical parliamentary reasons it may have to be re-introduced as a new Bill when Parliament reassembles.

Landlord Triumph in South Australia

Local Government Act Amended

The contents of a Bill to amend the South Australia Local Government Act, and its passage through the Legislative Council last Autumn, were described in our December issue. Designated the Local Government Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) (General), this measure has now completed all stages of the parliamentary process through the House of Assembly, the Lower House. Although in certain particulars, it is now less reactionary than when it left the Council, the Bill presents a serious threat to the rating of land values. Two inseparable and fundamental requirements are set aside, namely that there shall be a common basis of assessment and a uniform rate of tax.

The Bill has many provisions. Clauses affecting the principle and operation of the rating of land values grant concessions to those who hold statutorily defined "urban farm land" and to organisations holding ten acres or more of land for purposes of sport. Their effect will be to undermine the independence of local authorities and to facilitate speculative withholding of land from use or from its most economic use. They flout the wishes of ratepayers democratically expressed at rating polls, and pave the way for opponents, when they feel strong enough, to attempt to sweep away the rating of land values.

The Bill defines "urban farm land" as a parcel of land more than two acres in area which is wholly or mainly used for grazing, dairying, pig farming, poultry farming, bee-keeping, or agricultural or horticultural purposes and from which industries or businesses the occupier derives the whole or a substantial part of his livelihood.

Within the municipalities (but, specifically, *not* within district council districts) there is to be discrimination in favour of "urban farm land" so that the general and special rates levied on it are to be not more than one-half of the rates levied on other land.

A temporary concession granted in 1951 is made permanent by the Bill. Parcels of land exceeding ten acres held for sporting purposes, and from which no pecuniary profit is derived by club members, is assessed at 75 per cent of its value. In the House of Assembly the Government successfully moved the deletion of two sub-clauses which would have extended the concession to clubs holding two acres or more, and would have reduced the assessment to 50 per cent.

Another unjust provision was negated after the Minister had asked the Assembly in committee to oppose it. This clause would have required the general rate in townships within district council districts to be at least

twice as much as the general rate on other land in the area.

Opposition came from Mr. E. J. Craigie and the Land Values Rating Committee, of which he is the honorary secretary. The vigorous campaign conducted before the Bill came to the House of Assembly and the pamphlet written and widely circulated by Mr. Craigie have been described in our columns. Arguments then advanced were echoed by Labour speakers during the Assembly debates, speaker after speaker affirming his belief in the wisdom and justice of the rating of land values.

The following points from opposition speeches on the clause defining "urban farm land" during the committee stage, December 9, admirably summarise the underlying purpose of the land value clauses of the Bill, and make clear what their effects will be: "It is a camouflaged way of crippling the most fair method of rating"—Mr. Davis. "The main purpose is to defeat the land values system of rating. It grants a special privilege to a certain section and will assist those who purchase land for speculation . . . it will react to the detriment of councils and represents a retrograde and undesirable step."—Mr. Hutchens.

"It will force other citizens to pay heavier rates for the provision of services. It will force people to build dwelling houses further out of the metropolitan area and add greatly to the cost of providing water supplies and sewerage. I do not think that is economic"—Mr. Dunstan. "If we pass this Bill the land values system will be changed so materially that its effectiveness will to a large extent be destroyed. Urban farm land will eventually be subdivided into building blocks at greatly enhanced values. The owners should pay the same rating as those in the township around it. To say that those living near this

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The sixteenth annual Summer School and Conference of the Australian School of Social Science (Director: W. A. Dowe, M.A., Box 666, GPO Sydney) was held at Newport, N.S.W., during the four days January 28 to 31. Among those who took a leading part by way of papers presented for discussion were Mr. E. B. Donohue, the Secretary of the School; Mr. Henry R. Nowoty, a well-known Queensland economist and writer; Mr. Brent H. Evans, who as Secretary of the Joint Commission for Tariff Revision, is doing a valuable work for the free trade cause in Australia; Mr. and Mrs. Don Young of the W.E.A.; Mr. Das Gupta from India, and Mr. Peter Leow from Malaya, both studying in Australia under the Colombo Plan; Mr. Maynard Davies, lately returned from his world tour; and Mr. W. A. Dowe. It was a comprehensive programme, the discussion on the various topics proving most helpful. Mr. Donohue on "Privilege or Progress?" exposed the amazing and far-reaching effects of privilege created by law, and the legal robbery that takes place under its cover. Mr. Davies's description of what he saw and learned in his travels was the more informative because it was accompanied by coloured pictures. Mr. Evans spoke instructively on G.A.T.T., trade balances and allied subjects. Mr. and Mrs. Young, Mr. Gupta and Mr. Leow explained the Colombo Plan revealing many important matters, not least with regard to the land question particularly in India and Malaya. Mr. Dowe's theme was "The Great Trap for Politicians and Economists"—the trap into which they fall unless they realise that legislation must never benefit one section of the community at the expense of another section. Most modern legislation does offend in that way and is inevitably anti-social and injurious; yet the temptation to yield to the pressure of vested interest seems to have become irresistible. Books drawn on to support the argument were *Economics in One Lesson*, by Hazlitt and *The Law*, by Bastiat.

The four days were well spent. The attendance was good, despite the very wet and unpleasant weather, and many were present who had come to this annual event for the first time.

land should pay more is ridiculous, for they are the people who have made the gardening land so valuable"—Mr. Quirke.

"The Government is trying to nullify the decision made at local government rating polls. Members opposite have said that owners of primary-production areas near the city might go bankrupt if a uniform system of rating were adopted. Under differential rating the value of such land would be vastly increased mainly as a result of the rates collected in other parts of the district"—Mr. Jennings. "This provision breaks down every principle underlying the land values rating system"—Mr. Frank Walsh, deputy leader of the Labour Party.

Ambitious Development in Barcelona

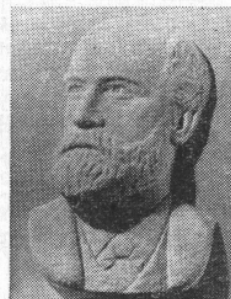
The unflagging devotion of a group of our readers in Spain is already well-known, and a report on the intense press campaign they are conducting appeared in our previous issue. We have since received from Mr. J. Paluzie-Borrell details of recent, current and planned activities by a number of them in Barcelona. He has himself recently addressed cultural, religious and co-operative societies in Barcelona. A most promising development is the formation of a Georgeist section of the Handweavers' Co-operative in that city which will conduct study courses and give lectures, convene conferences and publish literature on economics and social philosophy.

One study course is already well under way, having opened on January 14 with an enrolment of 23 students, of whom eight were women. Under the auspices of the section, Mr. Santiago Serra is to address the Handweavers in March on the economic enigma of civilisation. Directors of the section are Messrs. Anglada, Barcelo, Coll, Deltell, Serra, Soler-Corrales and Paluzie-Borrell. Arrangements are in hand for the recruitment of new members. Friendly contact has been established with three co-operative organisations, a cultural society, and a manufactory in Barcelona. A preliminary programme of lectures to be given before members and employees of these entities has been agreed and a series of economic study courses has been planned.

Gracing the rooms of the Handweavers' Co-operative and placed in a most prominent position is the bas-relief bust of Henry George as pictured above. It is the work of a young sculptor, Jaime Deltell, a member of the Co-operative who after studying George's works under the able tutelage of Mr. Paluzie-Borrell is now an enthusiastic advocate and a valuable colleague and, as reported above, a director of the Georgeist section of the co-operative. Engraved on a panel beneath the bust are the words—in Spanish—"Political economy is a science and must follow the rules of science and seek in natural law the causes of the phenomena which it investigates." They are taken from Henry George's *Science of Political Economy*, Book 1, chapter 8, concluding paragraph.

PROGRESS AND POVERTY IN FRENCH

Our readers who would like to obtain copies of the French Edition of *Progress and Poverty*, translation by P. L. Le Monnier, should communicate with *Terre et Liberté*, 3 bis, Rue Pasteur, Mesnil-Esnard, Seine Inf., France, making payment (by Money Order) of 12 shillings per book.



SCULPTOR—JAIME DELTELL