

below the actual selling value of the land. The 1955 periodic valuation is now being undertaken and it will be interesting to return to this kind of calculation when its results are made available.

### Opportunities in Victoria

Ratepayers in six municipalities in Victoria will have the opportunity in August of voting for the adoption of land-value rating. Petitions for polls to be held were lodged by a specified date (January 28) in respect of the following places: Malvern City, Castlemaine Borough, Broadmeadows Shire, Keilor Shire, and Cobram Shire, the petition in the case of the latter having been sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce. By resolution of the Council, Mansfield Shire has decided to change over to land-value rating. Consequently no poll will be necessary. Reporting this the Melbourne journal *Progress*, March issue, remarks that there is a likelihood of other Councils taking similar action before June. Canvassing will continue during the summer in Doncaster-Templestow Shire and a petition for a poll to be held in 1956 will be presented in September. Other petitions may also be presented then.

### Active Italian Vice-President

Dr. Natale Pulvirenti, principal of the "Ethos" Technical College in Milan and a Vice-president of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade had a timely article in the January issue of the magazine *L'Officio Moderno*, published in Rome. A director of this magazine is the Hon. Tremelloni, the Italian Minister of Finance. Dr. Pulvirenti took as his title "Henry George—or Concerning the Just Tax." He began by referring to the new additional taxation which had been imposed to provide increased salaries to the staffs in government departments. "Thus," he said, "the employer 'the State' passes on the new heavy burdens in its budget to its patient 'customer,' the taxpayer. In his turn the latter will try to pass on the burden to his own customer, the importer to the exporter, the manufacturer to the wholesaler, the wholesaler to the retailer and the retailer to the ultimate consumer.

"Are we then to have for ever this vicious circle like a dog chasing its own tail—with wages pursuing the cost of living, prices increasing in geometrical progression while wages rise only in arithmetical progression? It is notorious that with a 10 per cent increase in money wages, there goes a 40 per cent increase in the cost of living.

"The Minister of Finance, whose name is linked with the historic parliamentary investigation in thirteen volumes, though aware of remedies other than the usual palliatives worn out by use, evidently cannot shake himself free from these.

#### SLUMS, POVERTY AND SPECULATION

"The social condition diagnosed by the Hon. Tremelloni and the M.P. Vigerelli, which has revealed the existence of millions of Italians who still live in wooden shanties, or five to a room, and who cannot afford sugar, meat, wine and other necessities of life, certainly deserves a radical cure. The remedy for social ills cannot be one that provokes a further rise in costs.

"It is known that there is being studied legislation to deal with the industrial areas. Press and radio have told us that such areas have in five years increased the value of land ten-fold in Rome, and five-fold in Milan. That means that the man who in 1947 invested ten million lire

in the purchase of land in Rome has seen the value of that land increased to 100 million in 1951. The profit of the 90 millions is exempt from tax. There are hosts of speculators legally exempt. Is it moral to exempt those who (so profiting) give no value to the land, who neither build on it nor cause it to be built on?

"In his masterpiece *Progress and Poverty* (translated into many languages) Henry George shows why riches are always accompanied by poverty and most obviously in urban centres. The growth of population causes an increase in the value of land. This increase in value does not go to those who created it, but to the landowner, who does nothing to give the land any value . . . Local authorities and states should raise an annual tax on the actual real value of land, the revenues from which should serve for the expenses of administration of the community, without recourse to the taxes on industry and trade. In other words, the tax ought to replace those which bear on labour, and George shows that this land-value taxation cannot be passed on to the ultimate consumer as is the case with all other taxes."

Dr. Pulvirenti concluded his article with apt quotations from *Progress and Poverty*, described how the cause is being advanced in a number of countries, naming in particular the International Union's work and that of the Henry George Schools; and he recalled the recent series of talks in Esperanto from Radio Rome under the title "The Prophet of San Francisco." Also appended to the article was the full text, in Italian, of the International Union's "Declaration of Human Rights Based on Equal Freedom." A similar extensive article by the same author was published in the January issue of the Milan financial paper, *Finanza Nazionale*. By appearing in such influential periodicals these articles form a valuable contribution to public discussion, for which the author deserves to be congratulated.

In a covering letter, Dr. Pulvirenti mentions three classes conducted by him at his College where his pupils were made interested in the principles expounded in *P. & P.*, the *Henry George News* of U.S.A. and the French journal *Terre et Liberté*.

### Campaigning in Pennsylvania

Businessmen in Pennsylvania were recently invited by Mr. George F. Hellick, writing on behalf of the Graded Tax League in that state, to study the benefits to be derived from levying local taxation on the value of land with consequent relief of buildings, machinery and other improvements. Such taxation would attract industry, give greater security to home owners, and preserve economical home rule. A number of documents supporting these contentions were sent as enclosures.

One described the Graded Tax legislation in the "second-class" cities of Pittsburgh and Scranton whereby since it came into full effect in 1925 (it was introduced in 1913) the city tax rates on buildings have been imposed at one-half of the rates levied on land values. Similar but superior enabling powers had been conferred in 1951 on the 47 "third-class" cities, without setting any fixed ratio between land value and building taxes, so that they are free, if they wish, to go further than the two second-class cities in relieving buildings.

Most pertinent was the extract from the 1951 report by the Scranton City Controller, George C. Beck, which included these words: "If the people of Scranton wish to escape continuing penalty on their productive efforts, the public revenue should be taken more largely from the