

INTERNATIONAL UNION NOTES AND NEWS

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Triumph and a Welcome

South Australian opponents of land value rating constituting themselves as a "Municipal Association" and led by Messrs. Shephard, Burnell and Lewis have had to realize that their agitation has collapsed. They had striven for an amendment in the local government legislation whereby it would be mandatory on all local authorities to levy their rates on a composite basis, that is on the capital value of land and buildings taken together. This would have meant that the option allowed to local authorities (and exercised by many of them) to levy rates on the value of the land alone, exempting all buildings and improvements, would be abolished and all local authorities now rating on land values would be compelled to abandon the system so favoured by them.

The agitation of the "Municipal Association" was successfully countered by the vigilant action taken by Mr. E. J. Craigie. The Association was canvassing the support of the 143 councils concerned. To all of those bodies and to the members thereof Mr. Craigie sent his circulars branding the Association's proposals and upholding the principles and practice of land value rating.

In the result, the response to the appeal by the Shephard-Burnell-Lewis "Municipal Association" was as follows: In favour there were 8 municipalities and 18 district councils, 26 in all; against, there were 28 municipalities and 57 district councils, 85 in all; not taking the trouble to reply were 32 councils. This is the third time that the Association's proposals have been rejected and the fourth time that Mr. Craigie and his friends contacted the councils to oppose it. The campaign has been an arduous one and it is good to know that all the work entailed has not been in vain.

It is somewhat significant that this hostile Association has now turned in its traces. It is admitted with regret that "due to an earlier oversight" the composite method of assessment was not made optional to the councils, a factor that "undoubtedly affected" their replies! An audacious post-mortem avowal, since the chief speakers, Shephard and Burnell and Lewis, have consistently from all their platforms declared that their composite system would be mandatory and that land-value rating would have to cease.

Furthermore the Association now proclaims that it does not desire to interfere with the councils that have elected to rate on the (capital) value of land apart from improvements. As for the old "annual value" system (of rating land and buildings together) which elsewhere still persists, the Association is impressed by the opinion of many councils rating under that system that "vacant building blocks in their areas do not contribute an equitable amount to local government revenue"; and it is actually prepared to submit an amendment to the law, towards rectifying that state of affairs. All this indicates that the Association has decided to throw the towel into the ring, and the effort to abolish land-value rating is OFF.

The Local Authorities in South Australia that levy their rates on land values, by virtue of the option available under the law, include eight Adelaide metropolitan

municipalities (although not Adelaide City itself), ten country municipalities are nine country district councils.

In prosecution of the campaign to bring other local authorities "into the fold" these are some of Mr. Craigie's recent activities: On September 17 he addressed the annual meeting of the Mid-North Local Government Association at Riverton, with 50 delegates present from about 24 district councils in the area. On February 4 he went to Clare, 90 miles from Adelaide to debate with Alderman A. R. Burnell; resolution was adopted favouring a poll of ratepayers, and the local paper, *The Northern Argus*, gave a whole page report. On February 12 a public meeting addressed in Payneham where petitions are in circulation demanding a rating poll. Various visits, as to Campbelltown, Marion and Unley, considerable correspondence and, on occasions as they arose, advertisements in newspapers and the sending of printed matter to every ratepayer in a district. Rating polls are now about to be held in Clare and Marion and Payneham and Mr. Craigie will be exceptionally busy till the moment of his departure on his voyage to Europe.

Most Welcome Visitor. Coming for the 'rest and recreation' he so well deserves, Mr. Craigie sails from Melbourne by the "Moreton Bay," on May 6, due to arrive in Southampton on June 13 or 14. He will be staying in England for several months.

A German Author's Work

In his new book *Die Bodenrente in Raumwirtschaft und Raumpolitik*, Dr. Martin Pfannschmidt has made an exceptionally brilliant contribution to the study of the Rent of Land as a factor in the economic structure of society and as indicator of the fiscal and financial policy which being pursued would, through the wise and unhampered use of land, redound to the welfare of all. He deals, if we can fairly translate his sub-title, with "space economics" and "space politics," that is to say with all that relates to the standing place or working place that men must have if they are to live and provide for their sustenance. That leads to the recognition of the rent of land, namely the greater or less *natural* advantage which one piece of land affords as compared with another owing to its situation or its inherent qualities, and there follows the proof of the dominant part that land-rent plays in the destinies of society, making for weal or woe according as it is rightly or wrongly handled.

The book comprises 230 pages with an appendix of 26 pages containing 60 graphs, diagrams, maps and illustrations. The bibliography of authorities consulted occupies 12 pages and it is interesting to note to what extent the author (himself a Vice-President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade) has drawn upon no fewer than 60 of the papers presented at the International Conferences in Oxford, 1923, Copenhagen, 1926, Edinburgh, 1929, London, 1936, New York, 1939, Derbyshire, 1949, and Odense, 1952; and the files of *LAND & LIBERTY* have been an unailing source of information. Among the writers cited are Henry George, Alfred Marshall, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo