

The Land Question in History

PARTLY by direct evidence, and partly by results, we gather that the lands of Egypt in the earliest times were parcelled out, not with the object of obtaining the best possible economic results from the fertile valley of the Nile, but for the purposes of maintaining the authority of the dominant Power for the time being. Of Greece we know hardly anything apart from the history of Athens. But we do know that the land question in ancient Greece, as in the modern world today, was almost purely a political question, and the economic consequences had to adjust themselves to the political views of the dominant faction as best they could. The history of Rome and the history of the Empire in ancient times is very largely a series of civil wars over the land question, with the result that, infertile as the land of Italy is for the most part, the difficulty of wringing a living from it was intensified by the fact that agriculture has at all times been treated as a political, as distinct from an economic, question. Throughout the middle ages in Europe the methods changed but the principle remained. The great feudatories regarded the land as it affected the interests of the dominant races for the time being which from time to time swept over Europe. During the 18th century the ideas which had led to a series of civil wars in ancient Rome were revived, and today throughout the world which draws its civilization from Roman ideas the principle is maintained that the land question is primarily and economically a political question; and that economic consequences must adjust themselves as best they can to the dominant political ideas for the time being.

—*The Statist*, London, Eng.

Everywhere the Land Problem

LATELY I have been struck with the great international importance of a right solution of the Land Problem. In reading your last issue I have been reminded of this constantly by allusions to "right of foreigners," Mexican oil and land laws, jealousies regarding the Albanian oil fields and the rich mineral resources of North Africa, and the "problems of migration," on which Mrs. Swanwick writes so well, but without offering any lead, excepting to say vaguely migration and racial problems must be tackled and settled by agreement.

We come to Chinese and Indian affairs, in which internal, as well as international, harmony is required. The land problem is seen to be ignored in Ireland. Roumanian difficulties reflect the problem of putting men and the source of their existence into a right relationship with each other. Kenya is a good example of what happens to the natives and their country when the natives are divorced from the land, and Dr. Norman Leys hopes that a leader will be found to demand equal rights for all, but does not show any means of getting them.

After viewing both international and internal affairs from this angle, it is quite clear that it is the same problem all over the world, and that we must obtain a formula that can be applied everywhere. Both international and internal harmony, and the establishment of equal rights for all, and a proper relationship between men of any color and creed and the natural resources needed for man's sustenance and enjoyment, can only be achieved when each country collects the rent of its natural resources, admitting all comers on equal terms. Rent is a natural balancer of natural advantages, and when fully collected for public purposes eliminates speculation, which is one of the biggest factors in international strife.

England is beginning to realize that the land problem is at the root of its domestic difficulties, and therefore it should be the proper member to advocate world action in this direction in the League of Nations. The problem of free land versus private ownership will not brook long delay. The writing on the wall is becoming very, very plain.

—J. W. MARSH in *Foreign Affairs*.

Speech Day at Canberra

THE opening effort of the Prime Minister was worthy of the occasion—and himself.

With the really responsible people—Arthur Rae and Henry George disciples—duly censored and excluded by Senator Sir G. Pearce, he was open to spread himself before the Prince, get on speaking terms with the Almighty, and tell everybody what a really fine man he was.

"He himself hath said it, and as an Englishman it does him great credit."

"We remember," he orated, "the fostering care of the mother country and the 'protection' (blessed word) of the flag."

As these noble words were caught by microphone, despatched by the radio plant, and mussed up long before they got to "the sea", the tariff board in Sydney was trying to devise means to make trade with the aforesaid old gray mother as hard as possible.

"In the future millions of the British race will people this land." Unless every land agent who controls real estate outside of the Territory is untruthing, this part is correct, and the future millions will be called up to pay pretty smartly for not being far-sighted enough to come earlier.

That is, unless the Consultative Committee and good people who rule our destinies change their tactics, and allow legislators to "Govern with justice, reason and equal favor to all . . . in humility and without self-interest."

Anticipating this change of heart, we now await a reply to our many courteously worded requests regarding recognition of Henry George, the real founder of Canberra as a community-owned utility.—*Standard*, Sydney, Aus.