

The very good French translation of *Progress and Poverty* by J. L. LeMonnier was recently re-issued, in a well printed edition, and our friends in France have been active in bringing this book to the attention of the press and political economists.

The honorary president of the new league is M. Charles Gide, professor at the College of France, and author of an article on Landed Property in the Zionist Colonies, which appeared in the *Revue d'Economie Politique* in December.

M. Gide describes the method by which lands are bought by the National Jewish Fund (a private enterprise) in large tracts, and then ceded to groups of colonists who can organize communistically, co-operatively or individually. But the individual holder must pay a rental readjusted every 10 years for urban land and every 25 for farm land; and if he or his descendants cease to use the land they cannot rent it out to someone else but must relinquish possession, being compensated for expenditures on improvements by the new occupier.

Our Australian Letter

EASTER PROBLEMS

EASTER has again come round, and with it the problems that always come to the front at this season of the year. On this occasion they were ventilated by two Prime Ministers—the reigning one, Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Hughes, who was at the helm a few short years ago. Both are men of outstanding ability and extremely eloquent, while the latter has also a very happy way of wielding the pen. Both are politicians of a very high order, but politicians, which means that they would not move a step in advance of popular prejudice and current thought. Mr. Bruce, who was by far the most prominent figure at the luncheon on the opening of the Sydney Agricultural Show, made a splendid speech in which he emphasized the importance of enlisting the aid of science if our primary and secondary industries are to make the progress which they ought, and he appealed to the different industries to cooperate with the Government in order to achieve this most desirable result. He pointed out that 10% of the crops of the world are destroyed by insects every year and another 10% by weeds, so that there is plenty of work for science to do in diminishing, if not altogether eliminating, such a tremendous loss. Mr. Bruce further emphasized the absolute necessity of rapidly populating Australia if we wished to retain it as a continent for desirable whites; but, in saying that the scientific development of our resources so as to most rapidly increase our power to absorb new citizens would solve the greatest problem facing the people of Australia to-day, he omitted one very important factor which would go far to solve the problem by itself without the aid of science, important as the help of science would undoubtedly be, but the omission of which will prevent the problem from being solved at all.

THE MAN ON THE LAND

Mr. Hughes made a similar omission when dealing with the same problem at the opening of the new lecture hall at the Agricultural Show. Millions have been and will be spent, he told his audience, in schemes of migration with unsatisfactory results, and he had been forced to the conclusion that we had been going the wrong way about it. He did not, however, tell us what the right policy was. He might have done so, however, for years ago, when he was Prime Minister, he made a memorable speech in which he pointed out that over £31,000,000 had been spent in repatriating our soldiers, the bulk of which had gone to enrich the land owners to the detriment of the settlers, and declared that he would not be a party to any such method of procedure again. Yet the very same policy is being pursued by his successors now as was pursued with such ruinous results then. Under the British agreement, £34,000,000 may be, and most of it is being, obtained by the States on loans for development work, almost every penny, certainly the bulk, of which will go to enrich the land owning class. It must also be remembered that £250,000,000 has been spent in Australia on railway construction, and that £35,000,000 is now being spent, or is about to be spent, by the different States on the construction of roads, all of which has the same effect of enhancing the value of land, and making it more and more difficult under the present system for settlers to obtain it on reasonable terms. The whole of this extra value given to land, not by the exertions of individuals but by the increase, or expected increase, of population through the expenditure of public money, forms a proper source of public revenue, and it should certainly be appropriated by the community to meet the expenses incurred by the community. If this economically sound policy were pursued it would have the immediately beneficial effect of making land more easily accessible to labor, and thus very materially help to solve the problem of the unemployed. At the same time, by increasing our revenue from a legitimate source, it would enable us to take off some of the heavy taxes on industry which are preventing its proper expansion, and forcing up the cost of living on every hand.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

Mr. Hughes very rightly described the man on the land as the basis of the pyramid of society, and he very justly remarked that "to put people on the land and keep them there we must make agriculture profitable." But how can that be done when we do all in our power to enhance the value of land for the owner, and, by exempting all land under £5,000 in value from federal taxation, foster land monopoly and prevent would-be settlers from getting suitable land on reasonable terms? What is wanted is a complete reversal of our present policy of exemptions and graduations, and the imposition of a uniform rate, applicable to all alike. And the rate should be reasonably

high so as to recover for the State some portion of that immense increase in land values caused by the expenditure of public money in railway construction and land development of every kind. Mr. Hughes was again right when he said that "any policy which endeavors to single out the agriculturist for especial advancement is doomed to failure," but the same remark applies to the manufacturer, and our present policy of advancing secondary industries at the expense of the primary ones is bound to have a similar effect in the end. If we must encourage an infant industry let us do it by a bounty, and when the infant stage is passed let the bounty automatically stop. Then we shall know what we are doing, and exactly how much we are paying for our whistle. Under the present system we know nothing except that everybody is being fleeced to pamper a few. If we were to give the man on the land a fair chance by getting off his back, and leave off coddling the manufacturers at his expense, and at the same time put our land value taxation on a uniform and equitable basis, we need not worry about the problems which continually confront us at this season of the year, for they would gradually solve themselves.

—PERCY R. MEGGY.

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Sydney.

Single Tax Work In Australia

A NEW and unique development in our propaganda work was inaugurated this year when the broadcasting principle, which has proved such a success for concerts, lectures, and entertainments of all kinds, was utilized for the purpose of spreading a knowledge of the Single Tax. There is always a lengthy programme in the Press stating what items can be heard during the day. On June 29, the programme included for the first time a lecture on "Henry George, the founder of the Single Tax," by Mr. E. J. Fletcher, the President (at that time) of the Free Trade and Land Values League of New South Wales.

Three other addresses were broadcasted in July and August, only one of which has so far been published, that by the President, who gave a graphic account of Henry George's remarkable career, of his early vicissitudes, of his marriage (to a Sydney girl, by the way) when he only had a dollar in his pocket, of his struggle not only against poverty but on one occasion against actual starvation, and of the various incidents in his career which culminated in his dramatic death in the campaign for the mayoralty of New York. The other addresses were on "The Principles of the Single Tax," by Mr. E. Hogg, "What has been accomplished," by Mr. Huie, and on "What is aimed at and Hoped for," by Mr. W. Finch.

These addresses attracted so much attention as to provoke a reply, which was also broadcasted, from ex-Alderman Lock, author of a book on the "Nationalization of Credit,"

published in 1919, which he claimed to be "the only cure for industrial unrest." In this book he stated that "Land is a human necessity like air, water, sunshine, and other elements which are essential to our existence. A monopoly of any one of these vital elements is inimical to the welfare of the world's inhabitants," which is as Georgian a statement as even George himself could have made. He further stated that "Land being one of the means by which producers are compelled to surrender to non-producers a large portion of their earnings, a continuation of the present system of private proprietorship in land is unthinkable." Nevertheless on the very next page the same author states that "The abolition of private ownership is undesirable," because, as he added, "if it were entirely abolished we should have no real security to offer to the Commonwealth Bank to secure the repayment of loans."

"A WORD ON BURGLARY."

A very clever reply to Mr. Lock's address was published in the September issue of the *Standard*, written by Mr. S. V. Larkin, one of our very ablest members, who speaks with unusual clearness and force, and writes humorous and at the same time vigorous articles under the initials of S.V.-L. In his reply he quoted the above extracts from the book, which he characterized as "a remarkable conglomeration of facts, fads, and fancies." In the course of his address Mr. Lock claimed that the Single Tax would make land valueless so far as the legal owner was concerned. "That, of course," wrote Mr. Larkin in his reply, is "absolutely false. The land will be as valuable for use—indeed, much more so—after the land values tax as before it. If a man simply holds land for the purpose of pocketing the values created, not by him but by the whole community, then the Single Tax will stop that. It will make such a pernicious privilege valueless. But if he holds it for use, its value is unimpaired for that purpose, and he can acquire another site, without first paying ransom to 'a fellow worm' at a fictitious price, and hanging a mortgage millstone round his neck for the term, very often, of his natural life.

The Single Taxer maintains, as a proposition which squares absolutely with the dictates of justice, that the value of the benefits rendered by organized society shall be the measure of the beneficiary's contribution to the necessary expenses of government. But the amazing Mr. Lock calls this burglary! And more amazing still, this same gentleman (in his book), in putting forward his pet scheme, says: 'The all-important thing to be remembered is that, with the nationalization of credit, rent and interest would be practically abolished.' So Mr. Righteous Lock had better deal with Mr. Burglar Lock. Anyway, his lock is apparently not burglar proof!"

HOW TO DEVELOP AUSTRALIA.

Broadcasting was recently resorted to for the first time for propaganda purposes by the Free Trade and Land

Values League in South Australia, where Dr. Paul Dane had "a talk" to the listeners-in on "How to Develop Australia." He ridiculed the idea so prevalent throughout the Commonwealth that the best way to do so was by restricting trade with other nations. This was commonly advocated on the ground that "we could not compete with other nations in the production of goods required for human consumption—i.e. that it cost more to produce goods here than in America and Europe. Consequently, it was said, 'Let us put a tax on goods from America and Europe of such an amount that the price of goods from those lands in Australia will be the same as we can profitably manufacture the same goods and sell them in Australia.' So that we are to tax ourselves so many million pounds a year in order that we may manufacture our own goods, thus granting a special privilege to some of our people.

Capital in the shape of machinery of all kinds was needed for the development of the country, yet we deliberately increased the cost of the machinery we required and reduced the net return to us in trade with other countries. In the item of machinery alone, said the lecturer, we had imported about £188,000,000 worth since 1922, on which we had been foolish enough to saddle ourselves with a direct tax of about £22,000,000, while the cost to the consumer was estimated at between two and three times the cost of the tax. The ultimate cost to the people of Australia on this item alone had been therefore something like £70,000,000 for the last six years, which could hardly help us in developing the country.

"COMPOSITE MAN."

One of the most original addresses ever delivered at the Single Tax rooms in Sydney, and one of the best attended was on "Composite Man and his laws of Order," by Dr. W. R. Reece, of the United States. In the course of his address he showed that individuals, whether vegetable or animal, were composed of cells, that communities and nations were composed of individuals, and that the earth, the solar system, and the infinite universe were inseparable atoms of a great and concrete whole, and that whole the image of its Maker. As an injury to one part of the body affected the whole, so an injury to one part of the human race affected all mankind. Cancer, he instanced, was a disease due to the greediness of one part of the body in absorbing for itself nutriment meant for all parts. In like manner land monopoly, which enabled individuals to appropriate for their own benefit what morally belonged to the community as a whole, was a cancer on the body politic which would ultimately prove its ruin unless cut out in time.

Protection, being an interference with natural laws and conferring benefits on one section of the community at the expense of the rest, necessarily produced inflammation, which led to wars and injury to all with final benefit to none. The most important conclusion of the address

was that the doctrine of Henry George was the only one in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, and the only one, therefore, capable of permanent benefitting mankind. All the other movements were cursed with self-seeking, oppression, hatred, and the setting of man against man, both individually and collectively, and were therefore doomed to failure. —PERCY R. MEGGY
International Press Bureau, 65 Market Street, Sydney, December, 1926.

The Single Tax at the Geneva Conference

THE *Birmingham (Eng.) Gazette* of May 26th prints an interview with Mr. A. W. Madsen on the progress of land value taxation throughout the world, with special reference to the Memorandum addressed to the Economic Conference. After giving a summary of the arguments for free trade and land value taxation contained in this document, Mr. Madsen is quoted as saying that he and Mr. Douglas were not able to have the Memorandum presented as an official document, but it was given to every member.

The delegate from Columbia, Dr. Restrepo, when taking part in the discussion on agriculture, called upon the conference to consider the economic and fiscal system of a Single Tax on land values, particularly with reference to those land owners who took rent from land without contributing anything towards its productivity.

Similarly, Mr. Weber, general secretary of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, told the conference that whatever might be done to help agriculture by way of tariffs, co-operation, credits, and so on, such schemes would inevitably have the effect of increasing rents, thus benefiting the land owner without benefiting the farmer, as such.

Showing how the system of land value taxation was growing in favor Glasgow recently called a conference of the local rating authorities in Scotland, and is determined to petition Parliament for powers to rate land values. Cardiff decided the other day to call a conference of the Welsh rating authorities to discuss the matter. Sheffield Town Council has appointed a special committee to inquire and report; and at Newcastle-on-Tyne similar action is being taken.

THE truth is that if this Economic Conference is to be of any value whatever it must sooner or later grapple with the tariff problem. As long as tariff barriers exist between members of the League of Nations that League becomes more or less of a joke. That has been clearly pointed out in the admirable memorandum addressed to the Conference in Geneva by the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade. "The very existence of a tariff or other artificial obstacles to trade is an implicit betrayal," the Union correctly asserts, "of the spirit of the League of Nations."

The Nation (N. Y.), June 1,