

franchises" (see LAND & LIBERTY, July, 1921, p. 119) the aggregate land value of both these assessments works out at 379.29 million dollars. If this sum is added to the assessed land value of ordinary real estate, the aggregate land value of the City (not including the land value of Federal, State and Municipal property and churches, hospitals, etc., exempt from taxation) was 5299.34 million dollars in 1921. The estimated population was 6,141,145, and the total taxable land value works out at 862.9 dollars per head, equivalent to about £188 at the present rate of exchange.

We are indebted to the Board of City Record for a copy of the official book of Land Value Maps of the City. These maps show the value of land per foot front on every side of every block and the value per acre of large tracts, and give full publicity to the land value assessments in every part of the City.

The tax rates in New York vary from borough to borough, the highest rate being 2.83 per cent. and the lowest 2.77 per cent. The total taxation levied on all real estate in 1921 amounted to 278.22 million dollars—equivalent to an average rate of 2.79 per cent. or 6.7d. in the £. It should be noted that vacant land, being part of the "real estate" assessed, is subject to this tax on its selling value.

"Personal estate" is also taxed at its selling value. The aggregate assessment in 1921 was 213.22 million dollars, and the total amount of the tax was 5.93 million dollars.

The aggregate municipal taxation levied on real and personal estate in 1921 amounted to 284.15 million dollars, equivalent to 46.27 dollars or approximately £9 10s. per head of population.

### True Annual Value, £80,000,000

The aggregate selling value of taxable land in New York City, exclusive of exempted properties and apart from improvements, is calculated as above to be 5299.34 million dollars. This sum is equivalent (at say 4 per cent.) to 212 million dollars, annual value. To get the true annual value (rent of the land alone apart from improvements) it is necessary to add the amount of taxation that falls upon and is taken from land value, so far as that can be calculated without raising the moot question whether taxes on improvements (as well as taxes on the value of land itself) cause the market value of land to be less than it would be in the absence of such taxation.

From the particulars of the assessments in each borough and the rate of taxation levied, a simple enough computation shows that the proportion of taxation levied on the value of land value apart from improvements amounted to 147.53 million dollars. If this sum is added to 212 million dollars (being 4 per cent. of the selling value of the land) it appears that the true annual value of the land of New York City is the immense sum of 359.53 million dollars, equivalent to about £80,000,000 in English sterling.

These are the facts as we read them. The rent of the land of New York is £80,000,000 a year. Of this sum, private landowners enjoy about £46,000,000, free of taxation, and the public authority takes the remainder (£34,000,000) for public purposes. A. W. M.

The Liberals, I am assured, have their door wide open for the return of prodigal sons, distinguished or otherwise. But, although they do not expect Mr. Lloyd George to say "The Coalition has been a fraud, and I'm out of it for good," they would make it a condition of his return to the fold that he should declare in favour of the abolition of the Safeguarding of Industries Act and a complete return to the policy of Free Trade, as well as the reimposition of the taxes on land values.—*The Political Correspondent of the STAR (London), 20th March.*

## ETERNAL POVERTY MEANS ETERNAL DAMNATION

### The Key to Plenty and Social Salvation

#### HOW GREAT MOVEMENTS ARE MADE

The prophecy of poverty was to him (Joseph Fels) the doctrine of eternal damnation. He had to fight against it, because, as he said again and again, there was no other fight worth while. In every man and woman he saw a possible crusader. He made no apology for urging their assistance; he could not understand a lack of enthusiasm for his ideal. If anything in the world aroused in him a sense of bitter antagonism—and it was rarely he could be so aroused—it was the sight of satisfied men and women. "So keen am I in the opinion that we are doing great things these days," he wrote to a friend shortly before his death, "that at the risk of making myself a nuisance, I am approaching every man who I believe has money, and whom I know to have a heart." It is thus that great movements are made.

It troubled him to see a system of taxation which had simply grown up by accident, in which there was neither method nor principle. He believed that this confusion lay at the root of public indifference to social questions. Men did not study the problems of communal life, simply because an artificial complexity made them seem dull by depriving them of their real vitality. "If a business man is asked," he said, "what principle is adopted in raising the revenue of his city, he will either be quite nonplussed, or else he will blurt out the ancient shibboleth, ability to pay. Imagine him trying to carry on his business on these lines, and yet that is the method we are told to adopt in taxation." This fact made him eager to preach the doctrine to business men. He believed that with them it would make the greatest progress because it (the Taxation of Land Values) was, as he urged, in accordance "with sound and honest business principles." It should make a practical and immediate appeal to manufacturer and worker alike. As he once expressed it, "it is the key that opens the door of their common interests."

This is one more stirring passage from "The Life of Joseph Fels," by Mrs. Fels (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 6s. net). It is a book to read, if only to get acquainted with the man, to learn what he strove to accomplish, how he kept going with so much spirit in the fight for the abolition of poverty. The Single Taxer who reads this book will find encouragement in whatever he is about to promote the cause, and it may be, find also some of the inspiration that moved Joseph Fels to point with so much assurance and insistence to the "Key that opens the door to manufacturer and worker alike." If there is another and better key for this purpose, it's about time it was produced. Since the passing of Joseph Fels, events have but shown that the Taxation of Land Values, which he so ably and persistently advocated, is the *Key to opportunity.* J. P.

Speaking in a debate at the Oxford Union on 9th March against the motion "that in the present state of affairs the principles of Conservatism are of paramount importance to the country," Mr. J. S. Collis (Balliol) dealt with the question of property. "Conservatism said a man should have the fruits of his labour; so said the Labour Party. But Labour would take away what was not the fruits of a man's labour, such as royalties and urban ground-rents." —WESTMINSTER GAZETTE, 10th March.

"It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism, while the wolf remains of a different opinion."—Dean Inge.