

## BOOKS

### THE SINGLE TAX IN MOTION.

**Land Values Taxation in Practice.** A Record of the Progress in Legislation of the Principles of Land Values Taxation. By the late Max Hirsch, author of "Democracy versus Socialism," etc.

Many questions about the extent of the actual application of Singletax principles, such as are often asked, could not be better answered with reference to the progress made down to 1908 than by this little posthumous volume.

Max Hirsch\* was the Singletax leader in Australia. Among the Freetrade leaders of that Commonwealth he was easily in the front rank, and probably not farther down the line than second. In some of his recognized qualities of leadership he was not only unsurpassed but unequalled. The manuscript of this book, which he left unfinished, has been edited by competent hands. But as an authoritative record it is not intended to serve needs for information regarding progress subsequent to 1908, which leaves out much of great value—the Lloyd George Budget, the Vancouver experiment, and the Oregon movement, among the rest. Yet the book offers more complete and later information of practical progress in Australia and New Zealand than anything else in a form so convenient and trustworthy.

Its character is well described by the editor in his preface, where he writes of it that it "is the outcome of much laborious research, and forms an admirable summary of the attempts made throughout the world to deal with the problem that everywhere is imperatively pressing for solution, viz., How best to conserve the inherent rights of the community as well as of the individual in relation to the land and improvements thereon."

In describing his purpose Mr. Hirsch warns his readers that the work "is intended not so much to make propaganda for the taxation of land values as to hearten those who are in the movement by showing them how much has already been achieved." How much has been achieved, would surprise even the most enthusiastic followers of Henry George, as they turn the 120 pages of Mr. Hirsch's book. To be sure there are followers of George who don't consider the difference between paths to a place and the place itself; or who are so intent upon the goal that they can't see the path, though myriads of feet are treading forward on it. To these Mr. Hirsch's book will reveal nothing. Similarly there are those who know not Henry George and his ways, some of whom would be among his followers if they did know. Others wouldn't, for they like not either the path or its

\*See *The Public*, volume viii, page 22; volume xii, pages 361, 471, 493, 497.

goal. But all are in a tangle of ignorance or worse that hides from them the significance of the facts that Mr. Hirsch's book reveals to others.

Apart, however, from such followers of Henry George as are enthusiastic for the goal but indifferent to the path, and from the irrationally hostile, there is a large body of reasonable persons, some friendly and others unfriendly, to whom the contents of Mr. Hirsch's book will be big with meaning. Here is the story, in narrative and statistics, of New Zealand as the pioneer in land value taxation. Here also is the story of New South Wales, which has taken New Zealand for an example and gone farther. South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania are all treated compactly in the telling and fully in the figures. The story of Great Britain and that of Germany are also told, although there was much less to tell of them when Max Hirsch laid down his pen than there is now. Of the United States, Fairhope figures in the book, as do similar colony experiments, including Arden.

There is nothing more, because there was only that much to tell. The Oregon movement had begun but a little while before—too recently for Mr. Hirsch to have got the facts. Canada gets as much attention as could be given to it in Mr. Hirsch's day. Denmark also appears, and Switzerland, and Rome, each with its mite of contribution to the treading of paths toward the Singletax goal.

When all these advances in legislation are considered, observant and thoughtful readers will be ready to say with Mr. Hirsch, that "whoever knows the mighty forces of self interest, prejudice and inertia which stand in the way of legislation embodying even one step towards the goal of social equity, must realize that the change in public opinion extends far beyond the change in legislation." This is more obviously true today than it was when Mr. Hirsch wrote the words, though all who had eyes to see and ears to hear were, like him, well aware of it even then.

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### AN EXPOSURE OF "REPRESENTATIVE" GOVERNMENT.

**The Minnesota Legislature of 1911.** The Writing of which was Made Difficult by the Masks which Men Wore. In Half the Crucial Events of the Session "the Voice was Jacob's Voice, but the Hands were the Hands of Esau." Published by Lynn Haines, 919 New York Life Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn. Price: Paper, 60 cents; cloth, \$1.

If you would understand some of the ins and outs of that "representative" government which the corporations love so well and for which their legislative hired men work so faithfully, read this book. It is not a treatise. It is a simple story—a story with the proof—of how the legislature of