

'Condition of Labor,' although prior to that I had assented to the doctrine under the enthusiastic Single Tax ministration of my friend Fowlds. Finally, you will understand, that it was Henry George's fine presentation of the ethical side of land reform that won my full acceptance of the teaching."

Mr. Spragg, besides being a Vice-President and a member of the Executive Committee of the New Zealand Land Values Leagus, is fellow Deacon with the Hon. George Fowlds of the City Congregational Church, Beresford Street, Auckland; President of the New Zealand Alliance for the Abolition of the Liquor Traffic; President of the Auckland Province No License Council; Vice-President of the Y. M. C. A., and a Trustee of its new Building Fund; and a Trustee of the Costly Boy's Home Bequests. He was the originator, and is still the Managing Director of the New Zealand Dairy Association, Ltd., a farmers co-operative business, the largest dairy concern in New Zealand, and the third, if not the second largest butter-making concern in the world.

He, with Mr. Fowlds, established the *Liberator*, which, under the able editorship of Mr. R. A. Hould, has kept the flag flying for the past twelve years, and, doubled in size some twelve months ago, is now "going stronger than ever."

ARTHUR WITHY.

Mr. Arthur Withy, whose father was the founder of the Hartlepool shipbuilding firm now known as Furness, Withy & Co., was born at West Hartlepool in 1870. He was educated first at Ashville College, Harrogate, and afterwards at Auckland Grammar School and University, his family having gone to New Zealand in 1884. He was destined for a legal career but an inclination to journalism and his enthusiasm for the Single Tax proved too strong for him. For two years he edited an advanced Liberal monthly on Single Tax lines; but, feeling a strong inclination to try his luck in the Mother Country, he returned to England in time to do a little work for Liberalism in the general

elections of 1892, and in September of the same year he joined the staff of the *Portsmouth Evening News and Hampshire Telegraph*. In 1895 Mr. Withy stood as Liberal candidate for the Southern Division of Herefordshire—a quite forlorn hope, as the candidate only arrived in the constituency ten days before the election, and had to fight a gentlemen who had held the seat for 30 years; but he succeeded in polling 2,828 votes.

In the following year Mr. Withy returned to New Zealand to act as associate editor of a weekly paper of advanced Radical views, but was unsuccessful in an attempt to secure a seat in the House of Representatives. Mr. Withy fought the contest on Single Tax lines, and was awarded the high testimonial of being described by the *New Zealand Herald* (the leading Conservative paper in the colony) as "one of the very worst of the cranks, faddists, and assorted idiots" then turning the country upside down. Early in 1897 he married the third daughter of Mr. R. A. Hould and returned to England and to the *Portsmouth Evening News*. On the eve of the general election of 1900 Mr. Withy went to Hartlepool to assist Sir Christopher Furness in a by-election contest, and which resulted in a sweeping victory in a walk-over for Sir Christopher at the general election. After a year's work as political secretary to Sir Christopher, Mr. Withy became lecturer to the Northern Liberal Federation, embracing Northumberland, Durham, Mid-Cumberland, North Westmoreland, the Richmond Division of Yorkshire, and Middlesborough. The result of his five years' work was made manifest by the many victories gained throughout the federation area at the election of 1906.

In August, 1900, Mr. Withy returned to New Zealand with his wife and family to act as the Fels Fund Missioner to the Dominion. Since his arrival he has been kept very busy lecturing and organizing, besides writing a "Land and Labor" column each week which appears in half-a-dozen papers in as many of the chief centres, acting as Co-Editor of the *Liberator*, and writing many letters to the Press. At the general election of

1911, he stood for Auckland East against the sitting member, a wealthy brewer and monopolist, but was handsomely beaten in this his third forlorn hope.

HON. GEORGE FOWLDS.

The Farmers' Weekly and Land Agents' Record under the heading, "Men Worth Knowing," printed some time ago a sketch of Mr. Fowlds which in view of the fact that the paper is opposed to Single Tax principles is especially interesting. The article says in part:

"Although members of Parliament are not always spoken of respectfully by the man in the street, and in spite of the fact that noisy agitators pour contempt and contumely upon them at election times, some very sterling characters have found their way into the New Zealand Parliament, and will again face the electors at the coming elections—men of high moral character, irreproachable antecedents, and honorable dealing, whose presence in either the Upper or Lower House of the State Legislature is a distinct gain to the community. Amongst such men the Hon. George Fowlds, Minister for Education and Public Health, stands conspicuously forward. The hon. gentleman is one of those of whom it may be said that he, according to his own views of the best governing conditions, served his country faithfully and well. But, as a business man of many years standing in the city of Auckland, as a public man serving the interests of the ratepayers on local bodies, as a member of the State Legislature honorably associated with the political life of Auckland, and more recently of Grey Lynn, and as a Minister of the Crown, Mr. Fowlds has shown himself to be a man of high principle and—we say this in face of his known adhesion to and advocacy of Single Tax doctrines—moderate views on all other questions than those involved in land tenures and taxation. With a universal land tax, levied on such a scale as would cover all the expenses of the State, Mr. Fowlds believes the country would gain immensely, as all existing Customs duties and other forms of taxation could be swept out of

existence. Recognizing, as a true democrat, the right of the majority to rule, Mr. Fowlds does not, however, force his views unduly upon the party to which he belongs, nor, so far as we are aware, has it ever been charged against him that he has used his position, either as a member of Parliament or a Minister of the Crown, to place undue disabilities upon the man on the land by enforcing the Single Tax principles in which he so sincerely believes.

Mr. Fowlds is a native of Ayrshire, Scotland. He was born in 1860, and thus is now in his fifty-second year. His father, the late Mr. Matthew Fowlds, was a weaver, who celebrated his centenary in 1906, Mr. Fowlds travelling to Scotland to be present at the centenary celebration, which, it is somewhat interesting to remember, were also attended by Sir Joseph Ward, who was visiting Rome in connection with the Postal Congress of 1906, and found time to proceed to Kilmarnock to pay his respects to the old gentleman, and to assure him of the esteem in which his son was held in the country of his adoption. He was also for several years a member of the Mount Albert Road Board, and in 1899 stepped into the larger sphere of political life, standing as one of the candidates for Auckland City, which then returned three members to Parliament. At that time he was known as an earnest advocate of Single Tax principles, and he encountered a good deal of opposition on that score. He was, however, returned to the House as one of the representatives of the city, polling 5604 votes, or 840 more than the next successful candidate. He soon made his mark in Parliament, and came to be recognized as one of the most sincere and earnest-minded members of the House. In 1902 he stood for Grey Lynn, which had been created out of the old city electorate, and was, on that occasion, opposed by the late Mr. T. T. Masfield, whom he defeated by 118 votes. Again in 1905, when Mr. Fowlds sought re-election, he was opposed by Mr. J. Farrell, the then Mayor of Grey Lynn, who stood in the Opposition interest. On that occasion Mr. Fowlds was elected by a majority of 248 votes, and when Sir Joseph Ward accepted office as Prime