

All very well, but if in competition the big corporation were to offer higher rentals for all the "channels" available and all the wavelengths, what then? Must the commission use its judgment and rent to a lower bidder to prevent monopoly?

Soviet Russia is having no end of trouble with persistent selfishness in human nature that insists upon creating and holding to monopoly.

*Rocky Mountain News, Denver, Colo.*

## Mobile Register on the Single Tax

IN celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of Henry George's famous "Progress and Poverty," there will be held this summer at Edinburgh the fourth international conference of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. It is reported that more than twenty-six nations will be represented at this conference, the object of which is to measure and discuss the progress of the Single Tax idea since its elaboration by Henry George. It is said that no country has yet accepted and applied this principle in its entirety. In fact, according to the Christian Science Monitor, quoting Joseph Dana Miller, editor of LAND AND FREEDOM: "There is no community in the world in which the entire system promulgated by Henry George is being worked out practically." However, it is the general idea that the system is not departed from in any important particular in the Single Tax Colony of Fairhope, Baldwin County, Alabama. Perhaps, however, the scope of this colony is not sufficiently broad to accommodate all the plan, a complete working of which would demand a larger political unit, and a measure of independence from a tax system already imposed by a higher political authority.

According to Mr. Miller, New Zealand has progressed further towards complete application of the George plan than any other country. However, we find that "Sydney, Australia, with a population of more than 800,000, exempts improvements from all taxation, nor is there any tax on personal property. In Queensland the policy of land value 'rating' has been in full operation since 1902; in South Australia it has been adopted in 16 municipalities for about 12 years, and in Victoria it has been adopted by about 15 councils. Canberra, the new federal capital of Australia, is administered on Single Tax lines." It is also mentioned that in Argentina and Brazil, in Uruguay, and in the Transvaal in South Africa, in Germany, Denmark and Canada the plan has been applied more or less completely, with evidence of continued spread in some of them.

One of the noticeable features of the Henry George idea is its remarkable vitality in spite of the tardiness of its adoption. Its converts are as devoted and loyal as the adherents of any religion. It seems that there are

rarely any backsliders. It is predicted that the Single Tax principle is going to gain much more ground within the next ten years. Whether it will ever be largely applied anywhere without modifications is a question only time can answer. But that the idea has now more vigor than ever before is hardly to be denied.

—*Mobile Register.*

## Pittsburgh Organizing For Further Tax Advance

A FORMIDABLE movement is now under way to extend the scope of Pittsburgh's famous "Graded Tax," and for the first time the idea of its extension is receiving serious attention on the part of influential citizens of Pittsburgh. The initiative in this matter was taken by officers of the Henry George Foundation, but has met a cordial reception from many citizens and taxpayers, resulting in the organization of the Pittsburgh Taxpayers' League as the medium for prosecuting the campaign.

It is now fifteen years since the Graded Tax Law of 1913 was put into effect and the first small shift of taxes from improvements to land values occurred, and it is just four years since the Graded Tax law became fully effective and the tax rate on land values was fixed at double the rate on improvements. The law of 1913 has weathered the storm of several attacks which followed closely upon its adoption, the most severe being in 1915, when it was actually repealed by the Legislature, but saved through a veto of the repealer by Governor Brumbaugh. Since then opposition has become less and less until it appears now that Pittsburgh has definitely adopted the policy of concentrating the principal burden of municipal taxation upon land values.

While the Graded Tax plan, as it now stands, has meant substantially lower taxes for the home owners and owners of other well improved real estate, and has given real encouragement to building activity, it is felt that to afford a real demonstration of the merits of land value taxation, Pittsburgh's present tax policy must be carried further. Many citizens believe that the time is now ripe for the further exemption of improvements from taxation. With the total tax on land values now more than 4 per cent. of assessed valuation, opposition is, of course, built up to insure the success of this latest undertaking.

A booklet setting forth many interesting facts and arguments in favor of the Graded Tax plan and its extension has been issued in the name of the Pittsburgh Taxpayers' League and is being widely circulated. This little publication contains many strong expressions of approval from the city officials of Pittsburgh, newspapers, business men and civic organizations, indicating the extent to which Pittsburgh has come to recognize the idea of discriminating between land and improvements in the levying of taxes.

The first legislative move was the introduction on February 19th by Representative Joseph C. Marcus of Pittsburgh, of a bill in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, known as House Bill No. 1205. This bill, drafted by Attorney Ward Bonsall, extends the Graded Tax plan to the levying of school taxes by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, which is not subject to city legislation and therefore has continued under the old flat rate plan. If this bill is enacted into law, the gradual process followed in the case of city taxes would not be required, as the bill is so drafted as to at once place the school taxes on buildings on the basis of 50 per cent. of the land tax, resulting automatically, of course, in a considerable increase in the land tax to make up the difference.

Representatives of the Taxpayers' League also appeared recently before the Metropolitan Plan Commission and urged the extension of the Graded Tax Plan to apply to the whole County of Allegheny. Several members of the Commission indicated a favorable attitude, but expressed the fear that the farmers and ruralites would vote it down. The Commission did, however, report a charter providing for the complete exemption of all machinery from taxation, and also providing another increment in land values through the district benefit assessment system to pay for public improvements.

#### INTEREST GROWING IN THIRD CLASS CITIES

Following up the advantage gained when the Graded Tax bill for third class cities was unanimously endorsed by the Pennsylvania League of Third Class Cities at New Castle, the leaders in that state have been prosecuting an active campaign through the winter months with the object of more fully acquainting the people of the forty-two cities of that class, with the merits of the Pittsburgh Plan. The task of effectively reaching so many cities scattered throughout the state is a large one, but there is evidence of a growing interest.

The fact that the Legislative Committee of the Third Class City League is not giving the active cooperation which might reasonably be expected in view of the League's endorsement, has left the burden of prosecuting this state campaign upon the shoulders of those city officials and citizens who more fully appreciate the benefits of this progressive step in municipal taxation. The Legislative Committee appeared willing to support an optional bill, but President John M. Moore of the Fair Taxation League and Councilman John J. Bair, of Lancaster, Chairman of the Executive Committee, have consistently adhered to the mandatory bill as originally drafted, preferring to enter into an extended campaign if necessary, rather than accept an optional measure at this session of the Legislature.

Some opposition has arisen from vacant land owners in certain cities. This, together with a good deal of

public ignorance of the significance of the Graded Tax plan, has caused some of the city officials to hesitate about exerting themselves in behalf of the measure. But the benefits of a policy which increases the tax upon land values and reduces the taxes upon improvements, are coming to be appreciated in many of the Pennsylvania cities through the educational campaign that has now been going on steadily for more than a year.

#### PHILADELPHIA AWAKENING

Perhaps the most encouraging development in Pennsylvania during the past few months has been the awakening of Philadelphia to the need for reform in methods of assessment and taxation. That city has been extremely backward and has adhered to the antiquated method of assessing real estate without any separation of land and building values. However, quite a demand has now developed for improved methods of assessment and a bill has been introduced by Senator Woodward, of Philadelphia, which would require not only separate assessment of land and buildings in the future, but set up certain scientific standards for measuring land values. The agitation has resulted in the Philadelphia Assessment Board announcing that it will put the separate assessment plan in operation in two of the more important wards "as a test," whether the bill is enacted into law, or not.

The movement has attracted considerable comment from the Philadelphia press and has been referred to on several occasions as a step toward the possible introduction of the Pittsburgh Graded Tax plan, some of the editors evidently looking upon the Pittsburgh plan with much favor. Incidentally, Deputy Controller Wilson of Philadelphia has declared himself in favor of the Pittsburgh Graded Tax plan and has incorporated a plank along this line in the platform of a new Citizens' League, in which he is an influential figure.

William N. McNair, of Pittsburgh, has given some special attention to the Philadelphia situation and his recent address before the Real Estate Board there received wide publicity and served to stimulate interest.

#### WILMINGTON PUSHING FORWARD

The Delaware campaign, under the energetic leadership of Frank T. Stirlith, is being pushed forward vigorously through the distribution of literature, speeches before civic organizations and personal work with members of the State Legislature in behalf of the bill which has again been introduced to give the City of Wilmington the option of adopting the Graded Tax plan similar to that in effect in Pittsburgh.

Secretary Percy R. Williams, of the Henry George Foundation, visited Delaware in March, addressing a large luncheon gathering of the Wilmington Kiwanis Club and also speaking to the radio audience over Station WDEL. In February, William N. McNair spoke to the

Real Estate Board and the Civic Association of Wilmington. The Chamber of Commerce has authorized the appointment of a special committee to investigate and report on the Pittsburgh plan. This committee will probably visit Pittsburgh and go into the subject rather exhaustively.

Mr. Stirlith reports the enlistment of many influential recruits during the present legislative campaign, and much newspaper publicity has also resulted.

P. R. WILLIAMS.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### JUSTICE AND JUDAISM\*

This is a notable essay which won the Kaufman-Kohler prize in 1917 and appears now slightly revised. The judges in awarding the prize commented on the unusual and novel character of the thesis.

And indeed it is all of this. Rabbi Silver boldly challenges Christianity on the ground that its inferiority as compared with Judaism consists in the fact that it elevates Love as the fundamental principle in human life and society, whereas Judaism in placing Justice first, establishes the necessary foundation for Love as the accompanying basis. In other words, that Justice must precede Love; that if Love alone is made to constitute the first imperative demand we are deprived of the instinct to resist oppression and the necessary coercive measures to overthrow it. Judaism in placing Justice first makes resistance—forcible resistance—to oppression incumbent upon the individual and upon society, whereas Christianity, by laying the chief emphasis upon Love, counsels the passive acceptance of injustice. Such was not the attitude of the early Hebrew Prophets in their thunderous proclamations against evil practices and the abuses of privilege, nor is it the underlying doctrine of Judaism. "Resist not evil" is a Christian, not a Hebrew slogan.

Rabbi Silver makes a striking and eloquent defence for his thesis. We wish we had room to quote many of the striking passages in this book. We cite the following from page 21:

"A sanguine struggle, forsooth, man was compelled to wage before he had acquired his liberty of person, his freedom of conscience, his political rights, *and is yet waging for his still to be acquired economic rights.*" (The Italics are ours).

And from page 27 we quote the following, the Italics in this case being Rabbi Silver's:

"We cannot, therefore, say with St. Paul that the greatest thing in the world is love, but rather, however great and necessary love is, *the greatest thing in the world is not love but justice for only justice functioning as the fundamental principle can establish for humanity what love as the fundamental principle must ever, because of its inherent weaknesses and failings, fail to achieve—the socialized State, Law, Morality, character, aye, even the universal establishment of love itself.*"

The main contention of Rabbi Silver in this finely reasoned and often eloquent little volume is not entirely new. It has received equally eloquent confirmation from Henry George. We desire to call Rabbi Silver's attention to this from "Progress and Poverty," Book X. Chap. V:

"As far as we can see, when we view things upon a large scale, justice seems to be the supreme law of the universe."

And even more explicit is the following from "Social Problems," Chap. IX. p. 86 (Memorial Edition): It might well have served Rabbi Silver as a text for his really great "sermon," and we call his attention to the fine utterance of this later Prophet. It reinforces in that wonderful diction of which Henry George was master, all that the distinguished Rabbi says so well and forcibly:

"That justice is the highest quality in the moral hierarchy I do not say; but that it is the first. That which is above justice must be based on justice, and include justice, and be reached through justice. It is not by accident that, in the Hebraic religious development which through Christianity we have inherited, the declaration, 'The Lord thy God is a just God,' precedes the sweeter revelation of a God of Love. Until the eternal justice is perceived, the eternal love must be hidden. As the individual must be just before he can be truly generous, so must human society be based upon justice before it can be based on benevolence."

J. D. M.

### POOR JOHN MITCHELL!\*

In these days of the "debunking" school, when biographies seem to be written with the sole purpose of raking up unsavory details in the lives of eminent men, it is a relief to turn to a life written with a loving but not indiscriminating touch and the sole desire to tell a plain unvarnished tale of a man who strove according to his lights to make a better world for his down-trodden fellow workers.

John Mitchell was the least vulnerable of labor leaders. He was the most admirable of all in devotion and self-sacrifice. He inspired friendships and loyalty in others. He was a man of his word; he impressed upon the union he called into existence the necessity of sticking to agreements and he won a wide popular adhesion to his cause. He worked though a Protestant at the time—he afterwards joined the Catholic church to which his wife belonged—the affection and cooperation of eminent Catholics like Bishop Hoban, of Scranton, Father Power of Spring Valley, and Father Curran of Wilkesbarre. It is not too much to say that these men of another religious faith loved and honored him and faithfully served his cause.

He was, as Prof. John R. Commons says in his introduction to this work, "a leader out of bondage." But despite his sacrifices and despite the fact that his life was like an open book, he did not escape charge reflecting upon his personal integrity. These he met with a courageous consciousness of his own honesty and sincerity. It is not a pleasant recital—the contemptible accusations made against one who, whatever his mistakes of judgment—and they were very few—were at least singularly free from self-seeking.

It is not, we repeat, a pleasant recital—the contemptible politics of the labor unions, their frequently despicable rivalries and insane jealousies of the groups struggling—not for liberty—but for a few more crusts from the table of Dives, a few more hours in the week for leisure and recreation. Mitchell was ever willing to compromise for some slight concession. He did not see that all compromise with monopoly in the end must gain little. He nevertheless struggled to gain that little—that pitifully little!

Did he know better? We know that Gompers did, or said he did. Miss Elsie Gluck who has written this fine and self-revealing life of the leader, tells us that Clarence Darrow, goaded by the sight of all the misery he saw, wanted to demand a new social order, but Mitchell stayed his hand. If he did he lived to regret it.

Beginning his leadership at 17, and retiring defeated at 38, this remarkable man at 41 said in his lectures that he had not solved the labor question, that it would never be solved, but that the union was the only safeguard against a return to the days of greater suffering (p. 24).

Poor John Mitchell! His life, begun amid tragic surroundings closed in a tragedy of futile achievement. Our author seems to set off Mitchell's conservatism with what she calls "the evangelising methods" of Debs or Emma Goldman. But she who has made us see so clearly the cause of John Mitchell's failure cannot herself be oblivious to it. Mitchell was fighting those in control of the monopoly of the earth. The most he could win for his fellows out of such an unequal fight was the little that he did win, something to be sure, but hardly worth the tremendous

\*Justice and Judaism. By Rabbi Maxwell Silver. Clo. 73 pp. Price 1.50. Bloch Publishing Co., N. Y. City.

\*John Mitchell, Miner. The Bargain with the Gilded Age. Clo. 270 pp. Price \$3.00. John Day Company, N. Y. City.