

jects: (a) The separate assessment of the value of land, apart from improvements; (b) The taxation of land values, upon this assessment, both in rural and in urban districts; (c) The taxation of land values for national and local purposes? (2.) Will you support the taxation of land values as a means of opening up to industry the agricultural, mining and building land now held out of use, thereby helping to solve the unemployed problem? (3.) Will you support the substitution of a rate on land values for the present rates on building values, which tend to discourage building, and thus to make houses "fewer, worse and dearer?" (4.) Are you in favor of abolishing the taxes on tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, etc., and all other taxes on food, substituting a tax on land values?

#### African farmers and the land tax.

From the Natal Advertiser of September 21, we learn that the Inanda Agricultural Association, a county organization of Natal farmers, has been agitated deeply over the question of land monopoly and of land value taxation as the remedy. This agitation is traceable to the work of Henry Ancketill, a member of the provincial parliament. At the agricultural meeting in question, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

That this association advocates a universal taxation of land values, remission to be given to lands beneficially cultivated, occupied or built upon.

Commenting editorially upon this action of the farmers, the Natal Advertiser of the following day, September 22, disclosed the prevailing sentiment of the colony by saying:

What is wanted is a general land tax which will operate in the direction of bringing all uncultured or unoccupied land into beneficial use. We do not go so far as to say that it should be on the Harry George principle of appropriating to the state the whole of the land values; but it should be sufficient to bring in a good revenue and to form a substantial inducement to land owners to put their land to use. It is acknowledged on all hands that the system of holding large areas of uncultivated land is a curse to the Colony, and it is time effective measures were taken to remedy the evil. . . . The importance of the question arises from two considerations. One is the necessity of the policy as an economical measure. Without it we shall never get the full and legitimate usufruct of the land. We must have a

land tax, accompanied by compulsory expropriatory powers, if we are ever going to do anything substantial in the way of closer settlement, and increasing the agricultural population. . . . The second reason why a land tax is important is that it is, or soon will be, necessary as a source of revenue. There is little doubt that, before long, we shall have to make up our minds to a large diminution of revenue from our railways. Throughout South Africa the cry is for a reduction of the heavy transport charges. . . . Yet there is small reason to believe that the expense of administration can be reduced in proportion. Consequently some new sources of income must be opened up. One of these is a land tax, which is far preferable in many respects to an income tax—though there is more than a possibility that we may have to put up with both. But the land tax, if regulated on a fair and reasonable basis, is a thoroughly legitimate means of raising revenue, and when we see it advocated, as at Verulam on Wednesday, by a purely agricultural body, we may reasonably hope for its adoption in the near future.

This indication of a tendency toward Henry George's remedy for the evil of withdrawing land from labor and thereby creating a relative oversupply of labor and labor products, is widely observable—not only in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, but also in the municipal politics of Germany and the national politics of Great Britain.

#### How prosperity is diverted.

At the meeting of the League of American Municipalities at Toledo last Summer, Mr. Oscar Leser delivered an address, published in the October number of American Municipalities, which discloses some remarkable economic effects of the destruction of Baltimore by fire. Most important of them all is the effect upon site values. "Strange as it may seem," said Mr. Leser, "land in the burnt district increased perceptibly in value almost immediately after the fire. The sudden opening of opportunities for development upon modern lines by the enlargement of building sites and the erection of structures adapted to modern needs; the high civic spirit displayed after the fire; the prospect of a municipal dock system; wid-

ened, regraded and better paved streets—all these considerations portended increased activity and enlarged prosperity in the near future." So great was this effect that "in spite of the fact that about one-eighth of the private property in the burnt district was absorbed for public purposes, the taxable basis in that portion of the city, considering the ground alone, has been raised by about \$6,000,000;" and "a very considerable part of this represented enhancement after the fire." The singular thing about such phenomena is the common obtuseness to its significance and the common indifference to public duty in the premises. Yet a candid answer to one question ought to cause an awakening. Why should the values of a city's site, when enhanced by increased activity and enlarged prosperity, why should they be diverted from the whole population to whose activity that prosperity is attributable, and poured into the coffers of mere appropriators of space? Why, in other words, should we allow prosperity to be diverted from land users to land-owners?

#### Charles Frederic Adams.

A remarkable character who is about to take the place of secretary of the Borough of Brooklyn in Greater New York, a place second in authority to President Coler who appoints him, is Charles Frederic Adams. Mr. Adams's peculiarity is not his natural ability, though that is of an order unusually high, nor his accomplishments as a lawyer and publicist, though they are exceptional in their completeness, but his rigid probity. He is honest with every one, including himself, and about everything, including his own competency—so honest that he has possibly been less useful than he might have been, from underrating his own power of usefulness. One of a coterie of Brooklyn young men of a generation ago, of which Wm. M. Ivins was another, and all of whom have made their mark, he grew up professionally in one of the largest law offices of New