

running a number of candidates at the municipal elections which are held in November. The result is not yet known.

A proposal for an increment tax on the increase in the value of land influenced by the building of railways has been introduced in Congress. As may be imagined, our Argentine colleagues do not favour this complicated and ineffective method of dealing with the land question.

### Brazil

A valuation of the land in the City of Rio de Janeiro (population 1,000,000) has been made, and the Mayor has presented a plan to the municipal council for a tax on land values to commence at the rate of 1 per thousand, and to be increased until it reaches 8 per thousand.

It is hoped that a radical change in the finance of the State of Sao Paulo will soon be carried out. An excellent report made by Dr. Luis Silveira on behalf of the Government has recently been published by the Ministry of Finance. This report contains a plan for amending the valuation so as to show the true value apart from improvements, and advocates a tax on land values. The Minister of Finance has announced that it is proposed to adopt these suggestions and establish a tax on land values apart from improvements in place of the present oppressive taxes on the export of coffee. The proposal is backed by the Sociedad Paulista de Agricultura, a very powerful organisation with more than 30,000 members. This body has addressed a letter of appreciation to Dr. Luis Silveira, congratulating him on his report. This remarkable letter is too long to quote, but we extract the following passages:—"From the value of the land alone, apart from improvements, should come the revenue for public services and the expenses of government. . . . The truth is that the land tax applied to land values and not to improvements will be the Magna Carta of agriculture, freeing it from the enormous burden of taxation which it has to bear. . . . No class will benefit more from the new system of land taxation than agriculturists."

The Congress of the State of Minas Geraes (the largest and most populous of Brazil) some time ago appointed a permanent commission of five members "to consider the fiscal legislation of Minas Geraes, and suggest to the legislature measures of reform advantageous to the economic and financial interests of the State." This commission has presented its first report which declares that a valuation of the land is urgently needed. The object is to facilitate the imposition of a tax on land values and remove the oppressive taxes on exportation and production. A determined and intelligent campaign for this reform has been started by the large agricultural associations of the State.

### Uruguay

The elections in Uruguay have resulted in the defeat of the late Government, but this is not likely to result in the repeal of its land value legislation. One of the senators of the victorious party has publicly said:—"We are not going to set back the new formula of financial justice. If we abolish this creation we shall be running after an illusion and a chimera, for when these new ideals are triumphant in the four quarters of the globe it is impossible to believe that they do not answer to a greater justice and a greater civilization. The reform known as the single tax is not the patrimony of any one political party."

### MEXICO

In describing the reforms effected in Yucatan under Governor Alverado the Latin American News Association quotes Modesto Rolland. A public school system has been inaugurated in charge of able teachers. There are now 2,400 such schools. Land has been redistributed so as to give the head of each family 40 acres. Of 50,000 heads of

families, 40,000 have taken up farms and successfully conducted them. Labour laws have been enacted based on those of New Zealand. Mr. Rolland states further:

Prior to the revolution all that the 2,000 land owners paid toward the support of the State in taxes for their exclusive use and ownership of something over 70,000 square miles of land was \$50,000 a year! Taxes from the land now amount to \$3,000,000 a year, paid on an equitable basis both by the 2,000 old land owners on their much-reduced holdings and the many thousand new owners on the forty-acre tracts which they received under the provisions of the new agrarian laws put into effect by Governor Alvarado.

### AN OWNER OF 14,539,200 ACRES

Three weeks ago there died in San Francisco an aged millionaire whose possessions, consisting of 14,539,200 acres of California land, stretched along the Pacific Coast from the Oregon line to Los Angeles and on to Arizona. In the days of the "Forty-niners," when the gold fever burned highest, as a penniless German emigrant he had come to San Francisco with other youths eager to secure a fortune. Others lost no time in staking claims and digging and sluicing for the yellow metal. But not he. He saw a more golden opportunity in the rich lands lying about him. Possessing nothing but a knowledge of the butcher trade, he engaged in that business, all the while investing his small profits in land and yet more land. Soon he abandoned the butcher shop, associated with himself a partner and bought land and cattle and more land. Land, always land, and never did he sell an inch of it, for he realized that the increasing population would double and treble its value without any effort on his part toward improvement.

So, insuring with each bit of land the water rights, sometimes by purchase of swamps deemed by others worthless, he turned his herds loose upon his range—and bought more land. His foresight was vindicated by events. The "worthless" land, through the influx of immigration and the industry of his tenants, so increased in value that he became the ruler of an empire twice as large as Belgium and potentially as rich as was two years ago that now unhappy country. Though he realized that his purchases had made him wealthy beyond all needs, he was too energetic to live in luxurious idleness; wherefore he spent his days and oft times his nights in driving from one end of his vast estate to the other. With true German methodicalness he divided it into sections, and these into farms and camps. On his land were produced for his own use every kind of staple, fruit and cereal grown in the West. He bought traction engines by the dozens, alfalfa seed and barbed wire by the trainload. He established packing houses in San Francisco and a chain of slaughter-houses in the Joaquin valley. And at the head of each department placed a specialist.

Four years ago he tired of his labours and retired to his daughter's home, his wealth—the greater portion of it California land—estimated at twenty millions. And all the while there were, and are, poor people in that great State anxious for an opportunity to get to the soil, anxious for just a semblance of that golden opportunity open to Henry Miller in 1850. Little brown men, so skilled in the cultivation of land that in five years any one of them could make a modest fortune off one acre, thus increasing the wealth of the nation, are looked upon askance and barred from the country—largely because of the "scarcity" of land! Even where land is available the water rights are held by the Miller estate in an iron grip which hard-fought court battles have been unable to release. It was such conditions as these that inspired Henry George to the declaration of the remedy for the monopolization of land.

Miller was a good citizen. He employed thousands of men and invested millions of capital. But he hoarded that which is the common property of all. Had all of his land been taxed at its true value, if the state had taken the increment in Miller's land not due to his own labours upon it, he would have relinquished the unused portion to the use of others and those others would have duplicated his success. Miller as producer was valuable in California. In his capacity of landlord, holding land out of use, he was an enemy of society. The tax upon his land per acre was upon a valuation but an infinitesimal part of the value at which he held it. His tenants paid much more per acre for the land than the price at which he held it. They did the developing. He took the profits of their labour save in so far as he was a user of the land, but his money was chiefly made out of land holding rather than land using.

WILLIAM MARION REEDY, in REEDY'S MIRROR.

### THE LABOUR PARTY AND LAND VALUES

At the meeting of the Conference held at Manchester, January 25th, the following resolutions were considered and adopted:—

#### TAXATION.

(1) That in view of the enormous debts contracted during the War, and of the necessity to lighten national financial burdens in order to enable the country to compete successfully on the markets of the world so soon as peace comes, this Conference demands that an equitable system of conscription of accumulated wealth should be put into operation forthwith, believing that no system of income tax or excess profits duties will yield enough to free the country from oppressive debts, and that any attempts to tax food or the other necessities of life would be unjust and ruinous to the masses of the people.

(2) That the only solution of the difficulties that have arisen is mainly from direct taxation and imposts upon luxuries, and that the taxation upon unearned incomes should be substantially increased and graded so that on the higher scales it should be no less than 15s. in the £.

(3) That the whole system of land taxation should be revised so that effect should be given to the fact that the land of the nation, which has been defended by the lives and sufferings of its people, shall belong to the nation and be used for the nation's benefit.

(4) That as during the war the Government has had to come to the assistance of the banking institutions of the country, and that it has been found necessary to pay very high rates for the money raised, adding considerably to the annual burden resulting from the war, every effort should be made to nationalise the banking system of the country in order to free the community from private exploitation.

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This Conference, recognising that the huge national expenditure, caused by the War has to be met by increased taxation, declares that those who claim the ownership of the land of the country should be required to make a special contribution towards its defence. It therefore calls upon the Government to impose a direct tax on land values in the next Budget, and, to enable this to be done, to use the powers conferred by the Defence of the Realm Act to compel all owners of land to furnish an immediate declaration of the present value, extent, and character of all land in their possession.

This Conference affirms that such a tax, in addition to providing a large amount of revenue, would open up the land to the people, increase the production of home-grown food, and thus materially reduce the prevailing high cost of living, tend to raise wages, and lessen the evil of unemployment which threatens on the close of the War.

### WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

(Reprinted from THE HERALD, January 20th)

While the members of Parliament enjoy their well-earned and well-paid rest, and the men discharged from the army starve until Mr. Barnes discovers where to get the money for pensions, we may remind ourselves and him of some statements of his own which should help him to solve the problem. Perhaps he has not forgotten, but, as the memories of office-holders are notoriously short, a little reminder may assist him in getting his erstwhile principles put into practice.

In the City Hall, Glasgow, on April 2, 1909, he advocated a tax on land values, "not merely as a means of raising revenue but as a great moral and economic lever," and concluded with an appeal for "pressure on the Government to include the taxation of land values in the forthcoming Budget."

The need for raising revenue, especially for pensions, is enormously greater than it was in 1909. Is it too much to hope that Mr. Barnes will have the courage to demand his own solution of the problem? Or will others have to take up the task of putting pressure on the Government?

Schemes are being developed for training disabled men in handicrafts so as to fit them for earning an independent living. But the real difficulty is to find employment for them after they are trained and for the hundreds of thousands of whole men who will need it when the Army is disbanded. Mr. Barnes has a remedy for unemployment. At a special conference on that subject, held at the Guildhall (April 24th, 1909), he said that "there was no mystery about the cause of unemployment. The real primary and fundamental cause was that land was in the hands of a few people. He proposed that there should be taxation of land values." And, speaking in a debate on this question in the House of Commons (February 17th, 1909), he said that "he thought the time had come for fundamental remedies. He would tax them (the landlords) through land values."

The Scots are proverbially economical, and here is a fine opportunity for Mr. Barnes to kill two birds with one stone. At one fell swoop he can get revenue to pay pensions so large that no disabled soldier need want, and at the same time provide employment for those who will be able for it on their return from the war. And lest he think these two aims not worth so much ammunition, let him remember that a tax on land values will "get landlordism on a slippery slope down which it would inevitably slide to the bottom."

Mr. Barnes need not be afraid to raise his voice in asking for this reform, for is not the Prime Minister supposed to know a great deal more about it than anyone else, and is he not the Superman who will stick at nothing in order to save our country? We are beginning to find out that there are more from whom we need saving than the enemy. What about those who are making money because of the Government restrictions on imports, and the great landlords who collect the value of the land while the soldiers fight for it? We know that they are entertaining wounded soldiers to tea, and walking to their clubs occasionally, in order that a wounded man may have a run in their cars, and, above all, they are subscribing to war loan or Exchequer Bonds, and all this is due recognition of what the soldiers have done and suffered. Unfortunately, some discontented people think that this is not enough for men who have risked their all in defending the property of others. But Mr. George will have no difficulty in having all this put right now that he is in such favour with the Lords and Dukes, ("Oh, these Dukes, how they harass us!"). They will no doubt consent to paying the cost of pensions out of their rents as readily as they assented to the passage of the Military Service Acts.