

former president of the N. Y. State Bar Association, was read on constitutional limitations on the power of taxation. He pointed out that constitutions generally referred supreme power to the legislature. He said, referring to the question of exemptions, that there were stronger arguments for exempting homes from taxation than for exempting churches, but he said that in a few years we would cease exempting churches. Said that the real remedy was not constitutional limitations but growth in economy. Indicated the advantages of the secured debt law. Urged his hearers not to distrust the people. Considered the general property tax as probably having the faults alleged against it by tax experts. But said that it did not follow that Henry George was right. The Single Taxers would have to do much more work before they had a majority in this State or any State.

Henry M. Powell, author of "Powell on Taxation," condemned the secured debt law on the ground that exemptions were inadmissible and tended to create a favored class of property. Mr. Powell said that there was no valid argument why any class of property should be immune from taxation.

Mr. William H. Sullivan of the State Tax Commission, addressed the convention in advocacy of a State board for the assessing of railroad and other property.

Randal J. LeBoeuf, former justice of the Supreme Court, advocated a modification of the home rule provision that would permit a State assessment of railroads, telegraph and telephones, etc., instead of assessment by local assessors.

Less than fifty were present by actual count at the conclusion when resolutions were put to a vote. One of these advocated the repeal of the secured debt tax law of this State. For the benefit of some of our readers it should be explained that this law is one that places a tax of a half of one per cent. on all bonds issued on mortgages recorded outside of the State of New York with exemption from further taxation during the life of the bond. A unanimous vote was called for on this resolution by Francis N. Whitney, who is

Tax Attorney for the Western Union Telegraph Company. It was given.

Some Single Taxer from Boston had written a card to the convention urging those present to read the handwriting on the wall, and suggesting that idle land made idle men. Its reading was greeted with a certain restrained hilarity by the gentleman then occupying the chair, Mr. Alfred E. Holcomb, who is assistant secretary of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

The conference adjourned at five o'clock Thursday evening. The State Board of Taxation having emitted its swan song will await appropriate decapitation at Governor Whitman's pleasure.—J. D. M.

NEWS FROM ARGENTINE.

We have recently taken the step of initiating a petition to the city council of Buenos Aires and another to the national government, asking in the first for the concentration of all our city taxes on ground values and in the second for a new valuation of the city land (the present one being absurdly out of date) and for the exclusion of buildings and improvements in the computation. These petitions have been in circulation for only a few days and the result has been most satisfactory. Practically 99 per cent. of the business men have signed on presentation of the petition. We have formed a strong central committee which in turn has proceeded to name the local committees in the 40 Police Districts into which the city is divided. In my own district we have a good representative committee and have been invited by the Tax Payers Association to use their rooms as our headquarters. This has been followed by a suggestion from the same association that a congress of rate payers associations in this city be called to consider if united action may not be taken to hasten legislative measures by the government and relief measures by the City Council.

Our task has been relatively easy from the very nature of existing taxes. In the first place the National Territorial or Real

Estate Valuation is already made in a manner that separates clearly land values from buildings and improvements, the two being stated in parallel columns. Your readers will understand the tactical advantage arising from such a disposition.

In the next place the burden is not distributed over three or four types of property, but is divided into such a multitude of petty items that, the details of which would surprise you as they bewilder and irritate the people here. You are taxed on your door plate, on the awnings over your doorway, on your windows, on your coach. You pay a general tax which turns out to be not a General Tax at all, but only covers street cleaning and lighting. Your drainage tax and water tax are paid separately. All the meat, fruit and vegetables coming in from the outlying farm pay an octroi or customs tax, according to an elaborate scale. For every trade or business a license is required, some very heavy indeed. Even the little bootblack pays his five or ten dollars a month. At your death the city still follows you as tax collector. To pass from house to cemetery, the lowest charge is \$3., rising according to the number of horses attached to the hearse, to \$250.00. This has nothing to do with the expenses of the funeral, being a tax pure and simple. Should the city have to pass the city limits, either inwards or outwards, a special import or export duty of \$100. is charged by the city. And so on, *ad nauseum*.

You can understand how easy is the attack on such a rotten system. Its only friends are the myriad of tax collectors and those who live on the fines into which such an intricate system traps the unwary, a bonus of forty to fifty per cent. on the fines being allowed those who denounce and collect them.

Under these circumstances the marvel is not that an occasional revolution breaks out, but that the country is not in perpetual revolution, as in Mexico.

In the province of Cordoba an advance forward has been taken. In all the rural districts the buildings and improvements and *products* of the farms have been exempted, and amount hitherto raised from

those sources is now raised by a tax on the land values alone. A great rumpus followed, of course, from the large landed proprietors. But the government, satisfied from the reports coming in from actual settlers, decided to ignore the protests; and now has announced its intention to extend the total exemption of buildings and improvements to the towns and cities of the province.—R. B., Buenos Aires, Argentine.

U. S. COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS.

The commission appointed by congress to investigate the causes of industrial unrest in the United States sat in New York City for two weeks during the month of January and heard a number of witnesses including prominent bankers, financiers, statisticians and others discuss the subject from various points of view.

There seemed to be a general opinion that there was too much concentration in industry and that one of the greatest evils was absentee directorship of large corporations, the directors being entirely out of touch with the labor conditions in their respective industries.

Sickness, old age, unemployment and other forms of insurance were favored by many, while profit-sharing was regarded as the missing link to solve the problem by some, notably by Geo. W. Perkins and Henry Ford.

"Industry must be democratized," was a favorite phrase with many of the witnesses, meaning that the workers must have a voice in the affairs of the industries they help to create.

A feature of the hearings was the very thorough and conclusive plea made by Congressman Lewis of Maryland, for the postalization of the telephone and telegraph and the socialization of coal mines by the government. Public utility commissions, he thought, might be called in to decide strikes in the coal mining industry. Our postal service, he declared, was the most efficient in the world, the addition of the parcel post department having increased its ef-