

values of the state might be written off and the assessment rolls would still show all the actual wealth in the state.

While the extraordinary increase in real estate values goes on, advertising the state as it does and inducing vast numbers of people to come there, it is not likely that the legislature will look favorably on the increased taxation of land values. Florida is not at the present moment a fertile field for the Single Tax. But it may well come about that the whole question of the taxation of land values will be taken up in Florida before many years have passed. The state presents a striking instance of a vast available source of revenue created by the community as a whole and by the bounty of nature. There are only one or two states without an inheritance tax. With this familiar source of revenue closed and with her extraordinary increase in land values in the true economic sense Florida may prove a pioneer state in scientific taxation.

A tax on industry retards industry and to that extent is self-destructive, but a tax on land values does not tend to destroy the value. It merely appropriates it to that extent to the state. A tax on buildings makes the erection of buildings less attractive in competition with other possible enterprises to which one contemplating building may turn. But if residential property along the sea coast commands a high value because it is swept by ocean breezes that value would be unimpaired by a tax on the land.

A land tax would discourage development by real estate promoters, and without such development much potential value would remain undiscovered. The ultimate value to a community of such development is a subject that has not been adequately surveyed. It is a pity that Henry George himself did not give it consideration. It presents practical angles on which there is much to be said on both sides.—*Commerce and Finance.*

New South Wales

THOSE interested in tax problems will find food for thought in the fact that in New South Wales, where all the councils now raise their ordinary revenues from a tax on land values, there is a strong agitation to get the water and sewerage rates levied on the same basis. According to *Melbourne Progress*, fifty-nine progress associations have also petitioned Parliament for such power to be given to the councils. Also in 1923 more than 130 petitions were presented to the New South Wales Parliament in favor of rating on land value only for water and sewerage. *Melbourne Progress* also states that, while opponents of rating on land values for municipal purposes never tire telling of councils which have adopted the new system going back to the old one, in reality, when examined, these tales are found to have no foundation.

Christian Science Monitor.

The Land Question In Mexico

WHEN Cortez first brought the flag to Spain to fly over the palace of Montezuma he found the original Mexican, the aborigine, the Indian, holding land in common. After the conquest the Spaniards continued this communal way of life by granting to the Indian villages an area of land right outside the town to be owned and worked in common. These communal holdings were called "ejidos."

The republic inherited this policy and continued it for one generation.

But when the republic had existed for one generation it realized that something was wrong, something was sick within its body politic. This republic so carefully made up from the best republican formula was not thriving—it was sick, very sick, and it made the same diagnosis then as it is making now—"land for the Indian"—not the Indian himself, be it remembered, but his economic status. It was felt that his community existence was the cause of his backwardness, and that once given the stimulus of responsibility and private ownership he would immediately acquire initiative, industry, enterprise, dependability, and whatever other qualities it was found were the crying needs of the moment for a citizenry of the republic.

So, in 1856—Mexico's independence dates from 1820—a law was passed (Mexico is not alone in seeking a cure—all in the passage of laws) providing for the distribution of the Indian community lands, the ejidos, among individual owners in small lots of the value of no more than from 200 pesos down.

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Before the Madero revolution the famous holdings of General Luis Terrazas, given to him by President Diaz, composed over 5,000,000 acres. Another Mexican gentleman, Jose Escandon, owned a piece of land as big as the whole country of Costa Rica. Three companies in Lower California owned a single area bigger than Ireland. The entire State of Morelos, when Zapata went to "work" belonged to only thirty-two men.—Sophie Treadwell in *New York Herald-Tribune.*

PROSPERITY Riches Pour Into Metropolitan Realty—Fifth Avenue Leads With New High Prices for Land, is the heading of an article on the Real Estate Page of the *Sunday World*. New High Prices for Land are an evidence of prosperity to the few, but they are a tax on prosperity levied for the benefit of the few. Why is the obvious so hard to discern?

THAT part of the produce which goes to the owner of the land is rent, (net rent).—HENRY GEORGE.