

find methods by which the land can be recovered for public benefit and by which men who live on farms can be made to realize the satisfactions of community life. Moving picture shows, newspapers, telephone and mail service are just as real demands for modern man and woman as clothes and shoes."

"When should this work be started?"

"Now," answered the Secretary, with emphasis; "it is an immediate duty. It will be too late after the war is over, and the prospect that the war will end next year adds to the urgency of the situation. There is much preparatory work to be done that requires time. By the time the war ends we should know not merely how much arid land can be irrigated, but how much swamp land can be reclaimed, how much cut-over land can be cleared, how much grazing land there is and how many cattle it will support, but also we should know with definiteness where it is practicable to build new irrigation plants, what the character of the land will be, the nature of the improvements needed and what the cost will be.

"About the other classes of land, swamp, cut-over and grazing, we should have the same definite information as to the amount of land practicable for reclamation, the cost, what crops they will raise. All this should be put on the basis of definite plans. That is what I mean by thinking ahead—applying the idea of the General Staff to working out in advance the solution of the greatest problem that will face us immediately after the close of the war."

## Argentine

WE record the interesting fact that a new political party has been formed in the Argentine, under the name of Reform Party (Partido Reformista). A postal card from the headquarters of the party at Esmeralda 91, Buenos Aires, has just reached us. On one side it shows a photo-reproduction of a bust of Henry George, executed by an Italian sculptor, Mario Giovanetti. On the other side is a declaration of principles and of progress, which is a model of condensation. It reads:

"PRINCIPLES: The value of land, apart from improvements, is a social product and belongs rightfully to the community by which it has been produced, increased and sustained.

"PROGRAMME: To obtain the progressive and methodical change of our tax system, in the municipal, provincial and national spheres, until we have obtained the complete removal of taxes on commerce, industry, agriculture, cattle breeding, professions and other useful factors in the economic life of the people, including their food and other necessities; and the maintenance of the public administration by revenues derived exclusively from values attaching to land and other national sources of wealth, apart from improvements."

We understand that the Reform Party has presented a full list of candidates for the next municipal elections in Buenos Aires, upon the above principles and programme. We shall be interested in learning what support they receive from the electors.

"I HAVE the utmost faith in Henry George and his Single Tax."—V. ULLMAN, former president of the Norwegian Parliament.

## Important Action by the Mayor of Buenos Aires

THE significance of the following project of law presented by the Municipality of Buenos Aires, a metropolis of about 1,750,000 inhabitants, the capital of the Argentine Republic, and certainly the largest city in the southern hemisphere, will not escape students of the economic evolution now in full swing. It is no isolated phenomenon. Buenos Aires only takes its place beside Sydney, as a city where industry can perform its civilizing labor without fiscal penalty.

But American Single Taxers cannot be content with contemplating the progress of sane taxation abroad. In no American city has the fiscal principle sanctioned by the mayor of Buenos Aires, been as yet officially recognized. And yet this is the country of the great apostle of economic liberty, the incomparable democracy.

Perhaps this item of news from South America may cause some heart-searching amongst our Single Tax leaders as to the soundness of the methods adopted in the United States for advancing fiscal reform. It is not possible to be satisfied with the sterile results of more than thirty years of propaganda.

Readers of the SINGLE TAX REVIEW will have noted the circumstance that fifteen commercial, industrial and professional associations of the city of Buenos Aires are affiliated officially with the Argentine Single Tax League. This one fact shows upon what a body of influential opinion the mayor of that city can rely when making his proposal to the National Government. Does any similar body of opinion stand behind the Single Tax in this country? If not, what is the reason? This is no academic question such as those we Single Taxers love to debate. Our methods of action are challenged by the progress made in South America. Are things to go on in the same old way?

### THE MAYOR'S REPORT

After a year's serious examination of the city's sources of revenue, the mayor of Buenos Aires has addressed to the National Government a project of reform of the city's charter, which he asks the government to submit to Congress for approval. In his communication, the mayor says:

"After an impartial and careful study, this municipality has recognized the necessity of suppressing the numerous tax burdens that weigh upon the community, many of which are repeated upon the same business. Thus, for example, besides the general tax for lighting, street sweeping and cleaning, businesses pay another tax of the same character, a charge for analysis, a charge for inspection, an advertisement tax, and, when electric or other motors are used, yet another contribution. It is easy to understand the justice and legality of the taxpayer's protest against such a multiplication of imposts which fall for the most part upon the small merchant.

"In the subjoined project of law, the municipality proposes to suppress all the taxes and substitute for them an additional one which will fall upon all within the city,

taking into account only the unimproved value, exempting buildings.

"By this method we reconstruct the municipal tax system upon more modern and scientific lines, simplifying the collection and freeing the community from a series of imposts and fiscal handicaps which, under the name of licenses or as retribution of inspection services, tend to increase the cost of living."

#### PROPOSED CITY CHARTER CHANGES

ART. I. Article No. 87 of the Municipal Charter shall be modified as follows:

The municipal taxes and revenues are declared to be:

- 1 Licenses for private vehicles.
- 2 The tax on street cars.
- 3 The tax on city telephone, gas and light companies and others that exploit public services.
- 4 The rental of municipal properties and establishments.
- 5 The sale and renting of land for burial.
- 6 Revenue from hospitals and asylums.
- 7 The sale of residuals from the city garbage.
- 8 The fines established by law or municipal ordinance.
- 9 The share in the net profits derived from the National Lottery, according to the Law of Nov. 2, 1895.
- 10 The tax for use of the subsoil of the streets.
- 11 The share of 30% of the Direct Tax collected by the National Government.
- 12 The share of 30% of the Business Licenses collected by the National Government.
- 13 The tax on the hippodromes.
- 14 In substitution for the General Tax of Lighting, Street Sweeping and Cleaning, an additional tax for public improvement and hygiene, which shall affect all real estate in the city, without taking into account the building thereon.

ART. II. For the purposes of the tax named in Art. 14, above mentioned, the municipality shall proceed to make a valuation of the land by zones, fixing the average value per metre.

ART. III. The rate to be collected by the municipality annually upon the value of the land shall be fixed by the municipality, as well as the way of collecting it.

ART. IV. This Law shall come into force in January, 1920, and the valuation must be made in time for that date.

ART. V. The determination as to who shall pay the tax on the land free of improvements is not obligatory on the municipality; and collection will be made by legal process, after summons in the public press, with a term of grace of one month. If at the end of this term the owner should not appear in court, execution will be proceeded with, by auction of the property if necessary to cover the tax dues.

ART. VI. For the current year and as indemnization for the suppression of taxes effected by Law No. 10,342, the National Government shall deliver to the municipality the sum of five million pesos, paper (about \$2,266,000 gold), in bonds or treasury notes."

The mayor of Buenos Aires is the nominee of the Minister of the Interior and depends, therefore, directly on the National Government. It is to be presumed, in consequence, that the above project of law has been prepared with the cognizance and implicit approval of the National Government. It is indeed identical in principle with one already presented to the Argentine Congress by a group of deputies of the Radical or Government Party, exempting

improvements from the effects of the Direct Tax (which is a realty tax) imposed by the nation. This coincidence of views on the same subject in the National and municipal Governments may lead to a consolidation of the two realty taxes now collected separately under different names by the two authorities. It has already been proposed that one valuation be accepted as the base for both taxes. It seems not improbable, therefore, that the unification of the work of valuation will be followed by a unification of collection. Logically, too, in both cases the improvements will be exempt.

The only tax upon legitimate enterprise which will survive for a time the operation of the new revenue system proposed by the mayor, is that on business, imposed by the nation, thirty per cent. of which is passed to account of the municipality, considerably less than 10% of the total municipal revenue.

Of the total revenue for the year 1914 (the latest treasury report we have at hand is for that year) gives the total income of the city as \$51,615,400, paper, of which the sum of the two contributions from the National Government, under the two headings of Direct Tax and Business Licenses, only amounts to \$5,055,000, or less than 10% of the total revenue above quoted. That makes the new revenue system proposed by the mayor a pretty close approximation to the Single Tax. It is, indeed, as far as the municipality can go without a modification of the two taxes still imposed and collected by the National Government, and affecting the municipal income.

The *Revista del Impuesto Unico*, official organ of the Argentine Single Tax League, appreciates the initiative of Dr. Llambias, the mayor of Buenos Aires, in the following terms:

"Of all the events that have happened this month and up to the present in the history of Georgeism in this country, by far the most important is the communication addressed by the mayor of this capital to the National Government through his immediate superior, the Minister of the Interior....."

"The innovation proposed will, if realized, be received with more than satisfaction, rather with enthusiasm; the whole of the city's commerce, the press, the representative institutions of producers and consumers, have evidenced with sufficient clearness the almost unanimous satisfaction caused by the mayor's action; and we say *almost*, because a protest has also been heard against the change in the tax system, from a limited number of private persons and societies, who in their extreme self interest have not wished to take the trouble to analyze thoroughly the project above mentioned. Had they done so, they would have found that it really benefits them, instead of injuring them as they suppose."

THE wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing left but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitation they roam from place to place with their wives and children.—Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Grachus*. (From a speech of Tiberius Grachus.)