

prevail, so that even Real Estate Boards will repudiate the special fiscal privileges which have been so long their stock in trade. The traffic in opportunities of access to American soil will then go to the discard, as have not a few other unworthy practices in the past, by grace of a roused conscience and by force of new and better laws.

## Wanted—A Single Tax Budget

WE heartily commend to Single Taxers the following statement by Mr. Eugene M. Travis, New York State Comptroller:—

"The scope and method of raising revenue for the support of our State Government presents one of the greatest determining factors in the life of our people. The ignorance and willful disregard in the past of the methods of raising revenue have powerfully encouraged a widespread belief that our citizens should look to their Government for support rather than that they should support the Government. To this defective education may be attributed the common confusion between the payment of taxes and the benefits or profitable returns therefrom. We grow up from youth and find roads and bridges, schools and churches—in short, all the necessary State government provided as free as the air. We have but to live to experience their benefits. Yet the problems connected with the raising of necessary revenues are seldom discussed.

"Consequently, we enter upon our duties as citizens and exercise our franchise rights not only in ignorance of the principles or methods by which the cost of these privileges is defrayed, but also with a positive disinclination to receive instruction upon the subject. In brief, it is one of our most singular habits of mind that we continue to neglect the study of the most vital subjects that concern the welfare of the citizen. Probably not one citizen out of a hundred can be induced to think about how much State government costs annually. As long as this is the situation, it is difficult to see how our State Government can be wisely or more economically managed."

If our Single Tax movement suffers from one defect more than another, it suffers from a mental aversion to the study of the details of the present fiscal system, with municipal, state and national budgets so miscellaneously provided for. As a general rule, the task is evaded and the easier course adopted of proclaiming pure principles, economic and moral, with an occasional illustration or two.

What is as much needed as anything is an analysis of the budget of each of the states and a reconstruction of same upon the basis of a redistribution of taxes according to the nearest available estimate of land values, accompanied by comparative tables illustrating the differences in fiscal incidence. The business community would quickly appreciate the significance of such a demonstration. We suggest that in each state a duly qualified technical committee be charged with the task of preparing such a Report. It could not be done too soon, considering the increasing gravity of the problems of taxation.

The formation of a national committee for the specific purpose of preparing a similar report on the federal budget is an urgent patriotic duty.

It is time, too, that a few representative municipal budgets should be similarly treated.

Material of the kind above described is perhaps the best ammunition for campaign work. It is needed for the self-education of our movement. It is needed to give greater definiteness and clarity to our aims. It is needed to dissipate once and for all the impression of vague social revolt and yet vaguer social aspirations with which, in the popular mind, we are too often identified.

Let us have, then, as soon as possible an authoritative document illustrating the Single Tax system as applied to the budget of any one of our states with a comparative demonstration of its advantages over the system now in force.

The present chaotic, oppressive fiscal system survives simply by grace of the mental indolence of the tax payer before the drudgery of giving to the public budget the same careful examination given to his private budget. Mr. Travis deserves our thanks for his plain speaking on the subject. The forces of reaction do not need his warning. They are fully alive to their present advantage. The warning should be heeded by productive industry and trade, which, consciously or unconsciously, are the forces of progress.

## Lloyd George on Trial

I SAY to labor: You shall have justice; you shall have fair treatment, a fair share of the amenities of life, and your children shall have equal opportunities with the children of the rich. To capital I say: You shall not be plundered or penalized; do your duty by those who work for you, and the future is free for all the enterprise or audacity you can give us. But there must be equal justice. Labor must have happiness in its heart. We'll put up with no sweating. Labor is to have its just reward. And when the whole world sees that wealth lies in production, that production can be enormously increased, with higher wages and shorter hours, and when the classes feel confidence in each other, and trust each other, there will be abundance to requite the toil and to gladden the hearts of all. We can change the whole face of existence."

These big words are from one of Lloyd George's recent pre-election speeches. They promise "equal justice," "equal opportunities," "just reward," "amenities," "happiness," "higher wages," "shorter hours," and "we can change the whole face of the existence." Does he mean it? Is it a mere electioneering bid? Why does he speak of labor and capital, and make no mention of the landed interests which, behind fiscal privileges, exploit them both? Do the terms of the political coalition to which Lloyd George is pledged, saddle the landed interests as firmly as ever upon the backs of labor and capital? These are dangerous times to play false with the people. Better had he spoken the brave, true, wise words of not so many years ago, when he fought to break down the fiscal bar-

rier between Englishmen and their own land. Those words held the key, the only solution, to the life-and-death problem with which European civilization is now irrevocably face to face. Down with the fiscal and economic barriers to the use of the earth; and democracy and civilization can be saved. Otherwise, after a frantic orgy of fantastic experiments, the world must go down into yet a darker valley of humiliation and terror. The responsibility of the statesman was never greater than at this hour. Woe to him and his time, if he face not the Sphinx with the true answer to her riddle. "The struggle that must either revivify or convulse in ruin, is near at hand, if it be not already begun," said Henry George, with prophetic vision.

## The Mexican Situation

THE attempt of the Mexican government to control the Mexican Oil fields, whose ownership has almost entirely passed to foreign interests, has excited the alarm of those interests and provoked the energetic protests of the British and American governments on behalf of the menaced interests. The argument is much used that "foreign development" has been manifestly and entirely to the advantage of Mexico. Some candid comment on that claim is made by Prof. Frederick Starr, of the University of Chicago, in the September number of the *Journal of Sociology*, 1918:—

"The trouble with the solution is that 'development' is always primarily for the benefit of the outsider . . . . Instead of uniting the capital city with every part of the country, as real railroads should, they connected absolutely separated and disunited producing areas with the cities of the United States. In case of war with us, the railroads of Mexico would be of little service for the transportation of Mexican troops; but they would enable the United States to flood the central plateau, the west coast, and the gulf seaboard with forces. In other words, the much-vaunted railroad development of Mexico was more advantageous for Americans than for Mexicans."

"So, too, the great petroleum fields of Tamaulipas and Vera Cruz are of little real benefit to Mexico. They increase the business of Tampico; they furnish labor to a certain number of hands; they produce a valuable material for world-use; they make fortunes for a few Americans and English speculators; but they contribute little to Mexico's upbuilding; they lead to political corruption, to local unrest and disturbance, to meddling and interference, to constant fear of intervention."

## Theodore Roosevelt

THE death of Theodore Roosevelt marks the passing of a most unique and interesting personality, and, in many respects, an eminently useful citizen.

He was as remarkable by reason of his limitations as by his many great qualities. But, when all the former are

noted, there remains a residuum of useful achievement that entitles him to a high place among American public men of his period.

At the beginning of his career he was the close friend of Ernest Howard Crosby, and it was this chapter of his work for the reform of the civil service in association with the man who later became one of the high-minded leaders of the Single Tax movement, that can now be recalled with especial honor to the memory of the ex-president.

Single Taxers should hold him in high if qualified esteem. As Governor of the great State of New York he jammed through the legislature the special tax on franchises against the will of many of his most influential friends. This aimed, at all events, to take for the people's use the value they contribute by their presence and activities to their roads and highways.

Later he sought by energetic fostering of the conservation movement to retain as much of the natural resources, the forest and mineral lands, as had not already been alienated. He was the only president of the United States, we had almost said the only office holder in high place, who urged that the experiment of the Single Tax be tried, and he was the only one who openly endorsed the taxation of land values for municipal purposes. In this he went further than many democrats whom Single Taxers have supported for office, and much further than Bryan who took occasion to openly repudiate the doctrine for which we stand.

The language in which he urged the taxation of land values for cities we quote from an article which appeared in the *Century*, for October 1913:

"We believe that municipalities should have complete self-government as regards all the affairs that are exclusively their own, including the important matter of taxation, and that the burden of municipal taxation should be so shifted as to put the weight of land taxation upon the unearned rise in value of land itself, rather than upon the improvements, the buildings; the effort being to prevent the undue rise of rent."

Col. Roosevelt possessed a marvelously quick intelligence, but his mental powers were not profound, and the vast material that he left in the shape of books and magazine articles is, for the most part, ephemeral and of slight value. His "Life of Cromwell," which he wrote soon after the appearance of Morley's great work, pales by comparison with that of the great Englishman. His estimate of American statesmen was singularly wrong-headed at times, and his judgement of his contemporaries was often quite as faulty.

But with all his great limitations he left a wholesome impress on American life and politics. His services to the cause of radicalism consisted in starting a trend of thought in the United States that prepared the way further for advance. As times goes on we shall profit by the work he did. If America owed him nothing more, this is enough on which to base a demand that his name be held in lasting and grateful remembrance.