

the public estimates, hitherto subject to oscillations of every kind, always to the evident disadvantage of the good working of the administration.

Any other program would certainly not justify an initiative in tax law reform, nor respond, we are sure, to the thought of any legislator in the State of Minas Geraes, called, as he is constantly, to reflect upon the subject by the just and repeated protests of the producing classes of the State.

This implies that the deliberations and agreements of the Commission must be subordinated to the purpose of elaborating the whole plan of reform entrusted to it, principally in connection with the land tax, the basis of the future tax regime.

But an equitable and rational reform of this tax can only repose upon the sound criterion of a survey and assessment of the land of the State, as far as the conditions of the moment will permit. Without having, if only in a summary form, this primary factor, the land survey, the approximate value, extent and classification, according to its selling value, it will not be possible to decree a tax reform, with any certainty of success.

Accordingly, the judgment of the Commission is that, before all, a land survey and register of the State should be made out, within the limits, naturally, imposed by the necessity of realizing the tax reform within the shortest term possible.

In order to carry out this preliminary work, it is desirable that the Executive be given the special means for the work, and that Congress draw up the general rules to be followed in making the land census, so that the interests of the State and the legitimate interests of the proprietors may be entirely safeguarded.

Amongst these regulations, the Commission considers absolutely essential that the proprietors be represented in the land valuations, and in the courts of appeal against classifications and assessments carried out by those whom the law may designate.

Other regulations there are which will have to be adopted by the legislator, when the subject comes up for treatment.

The Commission awaits, therefore, the resolution of the Legislature, authorizing the land census to be carried out, in order that it may be able to carry to completion the task already begun and to fulfil the mandate with which it was invested.

It is quite certain that Congress will proceed forthwith to take the measures it may judge best for the purpose indicated, so that, in the shortest time possible, the just aspirations of the people of Minas Geraes may be translated into realities and the tax system established upon equitable basis of protection for capital and labor, and of stability for the estimates of the public treasury, all in accord with the permanent interests of the State.

(Signed) VIRGILIO DE MELLO FRANCO,

ENRIQUE DINIZ,

BAETA HEVES,

NELSON DE SENNA,

ALBERTO ALVAREZ,

(Informing member of Commission).

Dr. Alberto Alvarez, in accordance with the conclusions of the Mixed Commission of Tax Reform, presented in the Legislature the following amendments to the estimates:

ART. . . . With a view to the reform of the tax regime in force, the Executive shall proceed with the land census of the State, according to the dispositions of this law.

ART. . . . The land census referred to in the preceding article, shall be made by the official assessor of the municipality and by one of the ten largest contributors of the land tax, in each respective classification.

ART. . . . In the calculation of the areas of land and the selling prices, it is necessary to take into account the records of property transfers *inter-vivo* or *causa mortis* in the past ten years.

PARAGRAPH APART. The valuations within a given rural property shall be made, taking into account the different characteristics of each section, which in value may be different.

ART. . . . The computation of landed property shall be stated in hectares ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres), with corresponding metrical measurements, and without taking into account the value of improvements.

ART. . . . Against the valuations carried out under the present law appeal will be granted before the Finance Secretary of State, within the first three months after notification to the parties interested.

The members of Congress forming the above Commission presented a bill, granting a credit of one hundred contos for the execution of the land census. The sum was immediately voted.

## Significant Argentine Initiatives

FIVE conspicuous members of the Radical or Government Party in the Argentine National Congress (Carlos J. Rodriguez, Melo, Reibel, Riu and Bonifacio), have introduced a bill modifying the existing tax regulations in the Federal capital and the National Territories:

"All land held as private property in the capital of the Republic (the City of Buenos Aires), and the National Territories shall pay so many mills on the dollar, on its value exclusive of improvements, according to the following scale:

Eight mills on the dollar up to a value of 50,000 dollars; 12 mills from that to 250,000 dollars; 16 mills from that to 500,000 dollars; 20 mills from that to 1,000,000 dollars; and 25 mills upon all value above that amount.

From the product of this tax in the Federal capital, 20 per cent. shall be deducted and handed over to the municipal treasury.

From the First of January, 1918, Sections 1, 3, 4, 22 and 23 of the first article of the existing law, which fixes the sources of the revenue of the municipality, shall be derogated."

The proposed Land Tax is to take the place of the present General property Tax, the present rate of which is only 6 mills on the dollar. The rate is increased progressively in the bill, beginning at 8 mills. The extra revenue antici-

pated is allocated to abolish certain charges affecting the market services and the sale of food products.

The ancient Province of Tucuman (Argentine), has ordered a new valuation of all the land within its area, excluding all improvements. When completed, the valuation is to form the basis of a pure land tax to take the place of the present general property tax.

The above initiatives are further confirmation of the new economic prospective of South American governments. The glamour and authority of European economics have definitely departed. Left to their own good sense, responsible statesmen appreciate the absurdity and injustice of discriminating against the user, and in favor of the non-user of the soil. The Open Door to Opportunity, achieved by the removal of artificial fiscal obstacles, will, as it is attained in the southern continent, compel similar legislation in the North. It is idle to suppose that, in such circumstances, industry and commerce here will consent to go about shackled and hampered in their tasks.

## Notes from Buenos Aires.

THE 2nd of September, the anniversary of Henry George's birth, was celebrated in Buenos Aires this year by a public meeting in Congress Plaza, organized by the Argentine Single Tax League. The Board of Directors of the League, accompanied by representatives of affiliated associations, were present. The audience was estimated at three thousand.

### "LA PRENSA OF BUENOS AIRES

This most influential organ of Argentine public opinion, in recent editorial comment upon municipal and national taxation, makes the following declaration, which may be taken as representing fairly the dominant opinion in that country:

"But in one form or another, it is already definitely admitted that multiplicity in taxation methods is opposed to the aspirations of society for the freedom of the expression and results of labor and human activities from fiscal exactions and the simplification of the methods of tax collection liberating it as far as possible from fiscal pressure. In no other way can we leave the road open for the legitimate aspirations of the people, and the security of better justice and equity in its distribution...."

"The Single Tax, therefore, as we see, is not modern in its origin; but it is modern as a glorious revival of humanitarian thought—leading to the abolition of the privileges, taxation and inequalities that kill the spirit of enterprise and the energy for work amongst the people."

### DECLARATION BY THE MAYOR OF BUENOS AIRES

The following declaration of Dr. Llambias, mayor of the city of Buenos Aires, which we extract from the September issue of *Rivista del Impuesto Unico*, official organ of the Argentine Single Tax League, is interesting in itself, but is made doubly significant by the Land Tax Bill recently

brought into the National Congress by members of the Government Party:

"I have given considerable study to this most interesting subject of the General Tax, having regard to its legal aspect and the new ideas which, like a breath from new horizons, are penetrating all civilized centres. This (a note to the City Council in which he gave his consent to some budget changes of detail) is of course not the place nor the occasion for opening up a discussion of the relative efficacy of the Single or multiple Tax doctrines. The State cannot, and must not, approach such questions with the passion of the leaders of taxation schools. But that does not mean that it must not bring to the matter the material available for study.

"The unity of a tax, which excludes a whole series of taxes that are veritable burdens, and which rests solely upon the value of land apart from improvements, offers undoubtedly seductive aspects. Thus, supposing the surface of this Capital to be worth three thousand million pesos (a peso = \$0.44), a tax of one per cent. would give 30,000,000 pesos, an enormous sum, which would of itself cover the expenses of municipal administration, it being understood that a single collection would be simpler and therefore more economical. And it would oblige extensive areas, at present unproductive, to enter into production, that is, to invite the assistance of capital and labor.

"Moreover, the taxpayer would pay very little more. Thus, for instance, a property costing 30,000 pesos and giving a rental of 150 pesos monthly, pays now to the General Tax 45 pesos annually; whereas, if the land value of same were 10,000 pesos, it would pay 100 pesos under a 1% tax, it being kept in mind that no other tax would have to be paid.

"But, in the first place, the municipality, by its charter, cannot impose a land tax, and in order that the municipality might attempt this new form of tax, it will have to ask for a reform of its charter. But, above all, the National Constitution provides that State charges must fall upon 'all the inhabitants,' and not upon land owners only.

"It is undoubtedly more equitable and attractive to put the burden upon him who can and not upon him who must. But these insuperable obstacles, for the moment, prevent all attempts to do so."

### THE SINGLE TAX IN THE ARGENTINE CONGRESS

The speech of Dr. Carlos Rodriguez, introducing to the attention of Congress the Land Tax Bill signed by himself and four other leaders of the Radical or Government Party (a bill which we reproduce elsewhere in this issue), contains some bold and significant declarations:

"We believe," he says, "that the moment has arrived for initiating this fundamental tax reform, with clearness of vision, with energy, without precipitation, in order to facilitate the solution of our great problems of today: The more rapid settlement of our country; our agrarian problem, our incipient social and labor problem; and also in order that we may incorporate and give to ourselves the purest political institutions, so necessary to the greatest