

insurance. Encouragement is thus at last offered to those social workers who have labored so long in a seemingly hopeless effort to turn the attention of influential charitable organizations toward fundamental principles. The action appears to be similar to what was urged by Joseph Fels on the Conference of Charities which met in 1911 in Boston. Mr. Fels' suggestion embodied in a letter to the members was as follows: "If it is a fact that charity workers are anxious to learn how to remove the cause of poverty, would it be unreasonable to ask this conference to take some action in the matter? Why not, for instance, appoint a committee to report to your next meeting, the duty of the committee to be a thorough investigation of the merits of different proposed plans to put an end to poverty?"



No action was taken at that meeting on Mr. Fels' suggestion, but he sowed some seed, no doubt, that since has sprouted. This year Mrs. Mary Fels sent the Memphis conference a letter urging that her husband's suggestion be given attention. The idea was ably advocated by such workers as Alexander Johnson of New Jersey, Benjamin C. Marsh of New York, Judge A. B. Pittman of Memphis and others. Now that a start has been made it seems reasonable to look for further progress each year. Is it too much to hope that these meetings may yet become conferences, not of organized charity, but of organizations for justice?

S. D.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### SOUTH AMERICAN NEWS.

Buenos Aires, April 20.

Another link has at last been added to the chain of Republics or Provinces of Republics which in South America have declared for a system of taxation based on reason, equity and justice.

Readers of "The Public" already know that the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul was the first to break new ground, closely followed by the President of Paraguay.\* Since then the Department of Montevideo, including the city of that name, has presented a bill to the Uruguayan Chamber decreeing that after the passing of the measure all taxes for city purposes shall be based on a tax on land values exclusive of improvements.

Now we have Governor Carcano of the Argentine Province of Cordoba presenting and strongly supporting a similar measure for the Province over which he rules.

True, neither the Montevidean nor the Cordoba measures are on the statute book, but those who, living in these Republics, have borne the heat of the

battle for fairer methods of taxation, believe that brighter days are at hand.

The rapid spread of ideas in favor of replacing the existing chaotic systems of taxation with one based on Land Value Taxation is largely due to the liberality of the late Mr. Joseph Fels. This gentleman assisted by placing 300 copies of the Spanish Singletax paper ("Impuesto Unico") at the disposal of a well known enthusiast who has been for years visiting the southern parts of South America and placed the paper in the hands of men, who, if convinced of the fairness of a proposed reform, and of the benefits of its adoption, could, off their own bat, do much to help get the reform on the statute book.

In addition to assistance from Mr. Fels, such enthusiasts as Dr. Felix Vitale, Dr. Manuel Herrera y Reissig, Professor Lasplaces, Sr. C. Cotello, all of Montevideo, have done splendid work; while in Argentina Sr. C. C. Vigil, Editor of "Mundo Argentino," Dr. T. Varsi, Dr. S. Barada, and Sr. J. Oliva Nogueira are always, along with Mr. Robert Balmer, busy with the Argentine section of the cause.

Another helper who has done good service is Sr. Baldomiro Argente, that enthusiastic Singletax journalist, who, writing from Madrid for a number of important South American papers published in Spanish, has sown seed broadcast, some of which is taking root in most unexpected places.

C. N. MACINTOSH.

### PROGRESS IN CANADA.

Matsqui, B. C., April 28.

Vancouver has taken a step forward instead of backward. The City Council voted 11 to 4 to continue the policy of exempting improvements from taxation, and 10 to 5 to increase the tax rate 10 per cent, making the municipal rate 22 mills net.

Talking to real estate men in Vancouver yesterday, some of them declared that local land values had shrunk 50 per cent in the past year. As the assessment on land values was increased over 4 per cent over 1913 and the tax rate 10 per cent, this would be equivalent to an increased burden of 130 per cent on the planet grabber—provided that values have declined 50 per cent. Of course central business sites have not depreciated much, but in some of the outlying districts the decline has been even greater than 50 per cent.

But values are still abnormal—are still several times as high in proportion to population as in New York or Chicago. At the usual calculation of \$4 per head of population as the value of the choicest acre in the community, land on the corner of Hastings and Granville streets should not be worth more than \$700,000 per acre, yet I saw a sign board—beginning to look aged now, for want of paint—it looked fresher eighteen months ago when I struck Vancouver—on a corner several blocks from Granville and Hastings and not on a business street, bearing this magic legend: "This valuable corner for sale; buyer can assume the \$100,000 mortgage." The lot is a short

\*See Publics of February 20, page 175, and of April 3, page 321.

twentieth of an acre in extent and its only improvement is a decadent frame building.

A real estate man told me yesterday that no one would lend exceeding 30 to 40 per cent on a mortgage on Vancouver lots.

The next progressive step for the city to take is the adoption of the Somers system of assessment. There is considerable clamor for a more equitable assessment, and the current year will see commendable efforts in that direction on the part of the civic administration. Mayor Baxter declared recently that if Vancouver land values were assessed on a straight 60 per cent basis, the assessment would reach \$300,000,000, or double what it now is. In other words, the Mayor estimates Vancouver land values at \$500,000,000, whereas the assessment is only \$150,000,000.

Editor Taylor is doing a good work. His editorials are scholarly and on a high plane. Few days pass that he does not call attention to the Singletax in his editorial columns. His paper, the World, is quite easily the peer in all respects of the average daily in American cities of equal size, and far superior editorially. Its price has been reduced to 2 cents.

Considerable active opposition to improvement exemption in Vancouver was in evidence the past few months. It was led by F. C. Wade, K. C. president of the Burrard Publishing Company, publishers of "The Sun," the morning Liberal (?) organ. Mr. Wade is a heavy land gambler. The Balkan war caused a temporary tightness in the money markets. This was all that was needed to prick the highly attenuated Canadian land boom bubble. The suckers ceased to bite. They rarely even nibble now. Hence the wild ravings of such as Wade.

In Calgary, Alderman William Ross led the fight on exemption until the local faithful got a proper line on him. They dug up his assessments and found him to be burdened with the ownership of \$400,000 worth of city lots. That was a few months ago. Since then he has been gathered to his fathers.

A. FREELAND.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### HOW NEWSPAPERS MISREPRESENT FACTS.

Chicago, May 23.

There is abundance of evidence to be found in the late Governor Altgeld's, "Live Questions," containing reprints of his state papers, and in the report of Carroll D. Wright made after his enquiry here as United States Commissioner of Labor, to disprove almost every statement in the Chicago Record-Herald and Inter Ocean by John Howard Todd dealing with the great strike of 1894. The only authorities he can muster are the news columns of the daily papers comprised in the so-called Publishers' Association, which included all the English dailies of Chicago with the exception of the Times. These, let me say from personal knowledge, completely gave over their functions as disseminators of correct intelligence to the general managers of the railways centering in Chicago, who established a news bureau from which all the information printed was derived, even when staff reporters on the trust papers presented

to their city editors personally gathered facts completely contradictory.

Let me cite a personal experience. I was then the labor reporter of the Herald, in the fourth or fifth month of service as such. Returning one night from a Debs meeting on the west side with another reporter, we observed a disturbance on the Panhandle tracks under the viaduct we were crossing on the Lake street elevated road. We left at the first south side station and ran back. Descending to the tracks we heard the locomotive engineer of a passenger train roundly berating a green switchman, who had so mismanaged his apparatus that the forward wheels of the engine were on the main track, and the rear wheels on a switch—a preliminary to an accident, avoided in this case by the presence of mind of the engineer. I duly presented to my office a written report of the occurrence, which showed that the railway authorities were imperilling the lives of their passengers by employing switch tenders wholly unskilled in their important duties. The next morning, on opening my paper, I saw that my report had been killed, and there had been substituted for it the report written by the news agent of the general managers, which stated in effect that the strikers had deliberately derailed the train in question, thereby placing the lives of all on board in danger. It was an absolute misstatement, known to be such, put forth to deceive by both railway and newspaper authorities.

Similar gross perversions of fact were the ordinary daily babulum of all newspaper readers at a time when telling the truth was imperatively necessary if justice was to be done. I say all the papers, for even the Times, which was seeking to present the cause of the strikers, found the general preservation of order throughout the city so dull, in comparison with the sensational accounts of disorder presented by its contemporaries, that it, too, was forced into similar sensationalism nearly every day. The truth can only be learned today from men, like myself, who were personally familiar with the facts, from Wright's official report, and from Altgeld's pages, which contain first-hand information supplied from wholly disinterested sources for the purpose of enabling him to do his sworn duty as Governor in preserving order. From this last may also be obtained the official reports of the Chicago post office on the movement of mails, which completely strip from the federal authorities the pretense that they sent detachments of the regular army into Chicago for the purpose of securing the prompt disposition of the mails.

It is men like Mr. Todd, who prefer to disregard authentic and unprejudiced sources of information for gross lies made maliciously and for personal gain, who write the capitalistic histories from which American children obtain their information about the past. I do not see that this offers any excuse for Mr. Todd's similar perversions of fact, nor do I see why the new management of the Herald should care to maintain its ancient attitude toward the truth.

Allow me, also, to set your editorial comment right in a minor particular or two. The right of cross-examination was not denied the defense in the contempt proceedings before Judge Woods, and the