

NEWS—FOREIGN

A Single Tax Advance in the Argentine—Mendoza A Single Tax City

THE May issue of the *Impuesto Unico*, official organ of the Argentine Single Tax League, makes the following important announcement:

The City Council of Mendoza, at its meeting of May 18th, voted a measure presented by the Socialistic member, Santiago Castroman. This measure establishes for next year the payment of municipal services by a tax on land values apart from improvements.

The land values of the City of Mendoza are not less than 130,000,000 pesos.* The tax rate is fixed at 8 mills, so that the revenue therefrom will not be less than one million pesos per annum. That is to say, the revenue will be about 80% of the amount collected last year, which was 1,300,000 pesos.

The new ordinance has already been signed by the Mayor, and it is well to state here that both the Mayor, as well as the Radical councillors, who form the majority in the Council, supported this measure, by which the important Western Capital begins an era of real economic liberty.

The Argentine Single Tax League, through its Executive Committee, sent the following note of congratulation to the author of the measure, Councillor Santiago Castroman:

“BUENOS AIRES, May 18, 1923

Senor Santiago Castroman
City Councillor
City of Mendoza

SIR:

The Argentine Single Tax League, which I have the honor of presiding over, has noted with very special satisfaction your Council's approval of the measure presented by you with a view to establishing the system of taxing land values apart from improvements in the City of Mendoza.

By the sanction of this timely and patriotic initiative, your important and progressive City of the West offers a salutary example to the other municipalities of the Republic. We hope it will be quickly imitated. And when the effects of the adoption of just taxation in your Capital City are known, no one will be able to hold back the final victory of the ideals for which the followers of Henry George are fighting.

Mr. Councillor, in offering you our most cordial congratulations on the success of your initiative, may I ask you to extend them to all who have stood by you in your noble purpose.

We congratulate our Argentine Single Taxers on this tangible and conspicuous fruit of their campaign. The Western province of Mendoza, of which the City of Mendoza is the Capital, is the center of the wine industry and may be called the Argentine California.”

*The peso = 44cts. gold.

As we advised our readers before, the Argentine Socialist does not seem to be cast in the Marxian mould. In Buenos Aires, Mendoza and other Argentine cities, we find the Socialist leaders striving to free industry and enterprise, instead of deadening and shackling them. That is the true American spirit. But our North American Socialists still cling to retrograde German ideals.

It may also have some significance that the Radicals, mentioned in the above announcement of the Argentine Single Tax League, belong to the Radical Party, which actually sustains the present Government of the Argentine.

A Lost Ideal

THE *Wilmington Star*, of Sunday, July 15, gives a page to the story of Arden and its founder, Frank Stephens, on Mr. Stephens' departure for the Single Tax Conference at Oxford. It says “attention is being directed to the wonderful development of Arden as the center in Delaware of literary and artistic activity.”

An interesting part of the interview with Frank Stephens is the following:

“In retrospect, Mr. Stephens, can you say that the colony has been an unqualified success?” was the query.

ARDEN SUCCESSFUL MATERIALLY

“No, I cannot say that,” was the reply. “From a material point of view, it is a great success. The rentals have raised until now they total \$6,600 yearly, out of which \$2,500 is paid in taxes. We have various community enterprises which represent considerable capital, such as the water works, the Raffeisen Guild, the Building and Loan Association, and so on. The colony has grown and prospered without doubt from a material standpoint.

“But that it has been a success from the point of view of the ideals of the founders, I cannot say with a degree of truth. Arden was founded as a Single Tax colony, and based on the idea that the colonists would follow the example of William Morris and make their living by craftsmanship and from the soil.”

SHATTERED IDEALS

“As I stated some time ago, it is true that many people have come here, and coming here have returned to live here, first for the Summer and then the year through, until for years past there has been no land upon which newcomers could settle. True, they have forced up land values until it is easier for the Trustees to lease an acre for ninety dollars than it was to lease it for six at the beginning. But the pity of it is that people have not come here for that which Will Price fondly hoped, a better opportunity to give. They have come because there is a better opportunity to get, come for the most part because there is no purchase price demanded for the land, come because of low rents and low taxes, of cultural advantages to be had, as one of the most cultured scholars in Wilmington said to me, more cheaply than in any other place in the United States.

“But for the vision of the founders, for the ideal, for the old-time high and knightly quest, ‘But I, Sir Galahad, saw the Holy Grail,’ they do no longer come for that. They come for Economic Determinism, not as we at first came, believing, as I still believe, that we were taking the first faltering steps along the road that should some day lead

those who will follow after when we have fallen into the opening gates of the new civilization which is in very truth to be the Holy City, the City of Peace. Men have not even come as we hoped they might out of mere curiosity to learn and test the scientific basis of our high faith we learned from Henry George. The overwhelming majority here know nothing even of the economics of the Single Tax and have no wish to know, and to them our Gospel of Deliverance is as was the earlier gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of all His children, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Gentiles foolishness."

In this record of a disappointed ideal there should be a lesson for those who are tempted to travel the same road. The great economic world-forces have been too much for the success of this high hearted experiment. As Miss Guiney said of Brook Farm, compared

"With such failure so high-hearted
All success is mean beside."

That may be. But it is written that no man nor group of men shall alone and of themselves withdraw from the great stream of human progress and demonstrate an economic principle, even in miniature.

Land Reform

PROGRESS IN ENGLAND AND GERMANY

THE ideas developed more than forty years ago by Henry George in his famous book "Progress and Poverty." ideas, which in Germany are designated under the term "Bodenreform," are slowly but surely winning recognition everywhere. Anyone who has not heard of the great movements inaugurated by Henry George should also read Damaschke's book, "Bodenreform."

The main theme of both books is as follows: 1. Just as the air is the common property of mankind, so the ground is there to be lived on and wrought by all men. It must pass from the hand of the speculator into that of the State, which must not sell it to the individual settler but let it out to him as heritable holding. 2. Indirect taxes should be abolished, and a light tax on cultivated, a heavier on uncultivated land take their place, so as to bring the necessary income to the State without burdening the individual. The latter should then live much more cheaply and each family could have its own house without any great difficulty.

Professor Damaschke is a man of the people. As a young teacher in an elementary school, he read Henry George's book and was inspired by it to consecrate his life to the spreading of its message throughout Germany. He made studies in political and rural economy, and became more and more convinced that an improvement of social conditions could only be achieved by a radical change in hitherto accepted views, and by a practical application of the principle of land reform.

He was confirmed in these opinions when, in 1897, Kiatschau was organized according to the principles of land reform. Great was his joy and that of his colleagues over the practical realization of their long cherished opinions. The rapid prosperity of this colony, now snatched from

Germany, was without doubt due to the working of these measures of land reform.

For 25 years Professor Damaschke has led the Land Reform Society in Berlin. By speeches and pamphlets he has carried out a great pioneer work for the last quarter of a century. Today, as a result of his campaign, the Society counts its membership in hundreds of thousands, among whom are many eminent men and women.

From the point of view of land reform, the most important elections of recent date were those for the Saxon Landtag. The different trade unions, the civil servants' union, the great organizations of ex-service men drew up a proposal for the formation of a State law embodying the principles of land reform, a proposal which received the support of all parties, from the extreme right to the extreme left.

ENGLAND

In England, too, these ideas have made headway. Lloyd George owes his position not a little to his support of the policy formulated by Henry George.

At the British general elections in November 1922, 24 candidates, belonging to the Asquith and to the Labor Parties were returned as pledged supporters of land reform. But the influence of the movement has a far wider sphere, for all members of the Liberal and Labor Parties are bound by party principles to work for the main idea of land reform. In England that idea is expressed thus: "Comprehensive reform of the present land laws, including State and local taxation of ground rents."

The great work of land reform incorporated in the budget of 1909, and held up by the war is being taken up anew. May it achieve a triumphal procession through the whole world, and thus form a bridge of understanding between nations.

European Press, Munich, Bavaria.

When Bob Smillie Damned Lloyd George

MR. JOHN VINCENT, writing in last week's *Forward*, tells the following story of Bob Smillie's encounter with Lloyd George during the war:

Smillie had been summoned to Downing Street to meet the Cabinet. Mr. Asquith at that time was Prime Minister, Lloyd George, Minister of Munitions. To all requests of the Ministers Smillie stood firm.

Then Lloyd George unmasked his final intimation: "Do you know, Mr. Smillie, that under the Defense of the Realm Act we can compel you and your Union to——"

Quick as lightning came the retort from Smillie—"Damn you and your Defence of the Realm Act," and he walked out of the room—or, rather, thrust his way out.

Arthur Henderson was sent after him, and it was only on the guarantee that the Minister of Munitions would apologise and *withdraw his remarks* (which the Welsh Wizard did) that Bob Smillie returned.

The Town Crier, Birmingham, England.