

## The Ralston-Nolan Bill

THE Ralston-Nolan Bill providing for the substitution of a tax of one per cent. on land values (irrespective of improvements) over \$10,000, which would reduce the tax burden on enterprises about \$1,000,000,000, is being actively urged by the Committee of Manufacturers and Merchants on Federal Taxation.

Mr. Otto Cullman, of Chicago, is Chairman of this Committee and Mr. Harry H. Willock, of Pittsburgh, is Vice-Chairman. The headquarters is at 1346 Altgeld Street, Chicago. This bill has been endorsed by over 21,000 individual business houses besides 141 commercial organizations.

The Committee state:

In the first place justice demands it., Present federal revenue methods are grossly unfair. To attempt to collect practically all of the revenue from the EARNED values of industry and enterprise (the result of the joint action of capital and labor), and practically none of the revenue from the UNEARNED values of land ownership (the result of community growth and development only), is a policy that is morally indefensible.

In the second place, equity insists upon it. According to official reports the privilege of land ownership represents half of the property values in the United States. Yet industrial property values—worth \$140,000,000,000—bear more than five-sixths of the total federal revenue burden, while the privilege of land ownership—also worth \$14,000,000,000—bears altogether less than one-sixth of the total burden! Between \$50,000,000,000 and \$60,000,000,000 worth of vacant land pays not one cent of federal tax, either direct or indirect! Such flagrant inequality in the raising of our stupendous revenue load is repugnant to every sense of human justice.

In the third place the proposed revenue measure will do much to simplify our ponderous federal tax machinery, to reduce the cost of collection, and to give us a firm and stable revenue system, practically free from the innumerable difficulties and demoralizing features inherent in the system we now have. For "land lies out of doors," its value is readily determined, no inquisitorial methods are necessary, and the revenue to be secured can be collected with the greatest ease and cheapness.

In the fourth place it will tend to encourage and not discourage industry, thrift and enterprise; first, by lowering the excessive tax load on business; second, by reducing prices, enlarging the consumer's purchasing power, and increasing demand; and last, but not least, by stimulating the use of vacant land, and the development of idle natural resources.

THE Single Tax Party of Massachusetts will maintain headquarters at 79 Milk Street, Boston. M. C. O'Neill is Chairman, H. C. Joy, Secretary, and A. J. Orem, Treasurer. In a circular issue from headquarters the Party outlines a programme for raising funds. The circular says, "Make Single Tax propaganda a business, instead of a charitable institution or a diversion for leisure moments."

CHICAGO speculators advertise that by buying Michigan land "you can be independent for \$395."

## Argentine Single Taxers Want A Party

THE struggle for independent Single Tax action in the Argentines is being fought out with increasing vigor by those who are dissatisfied with the progress of the movement in that country. C. Villalabos Dominquez, in *Revista Argentina de Ciencias Politicas* says:

"An error, injurious from the standpoint of propaganda, lies in the almost invariable policy of maintaining Georgism isolated from the conflicts of politics. And yet certainly Henry George himself did not abstain from politics. He was surprised by death (Oct. 29, 1897) in the midst of an important electoral campaign, in which he was candidate for the mayoralty of New York.....

"Nor was that his only intervention in political contests, for eleven years before, in 1886, he was invited by the labor authorities of New York, in a petition signed by 34,000 electors, to accept nomination for the same office, and was defeated by the union of the corrupt and the almost omnipotent Tammany Hall and the County Democracy; but he obtained 68,810 votes against the 60,465 for Theodore Roosevelt, who ran third in that memorable contest."

"Isolation from political action has done immense harm to the progress of Georgism. Perhaps, without this error, Georgism would already have been realized or well advanced toward realization, in one or more nations..... It is indeed widely diffused through the world (and why should it not be!), but only on the soft pedal and in small though numerous groups.

"It is painful to see that while imperfect ideas like Socialism, by means of political action, have advanced far in the popular mind and have been the first to seriously influence governments—in part for good and in part for ill—our Georgist doctrine so grand, potent, clear and exact, remains pitifully sterile.....

"It is a great grief that when in the unrest which the war has brought on the world and with the increasing inspirations for economic freedom which all peoples are feeling, every class, whether from hope or fear, are anxiously investigating the methods proposed by the thinkers for solving the social question, we find the saving doctrine, the grandest of them all, to be not even up for discussion, because its proselytes have not known how to put it there.....

"If a frank, radical, audacious Georgism had entered the political field in democratic contest, it would have forced itself, willingly or not, upon public attention. And Georgism needs only to be known to be adopted, provided one has no personal interest against it, which is not the case with the majority of men and women. I know men, including landlords, whose contrary personal interests have not prevented them from being swept into the ranks of radical Georgism. The reason is that they had read George through and at first hand.

"Moreover, since Georgism is a doctrine of economic government and since governments in all modern States

are formed by methods of political propaganda and action, it has been an absurdity to keep Georgism isolated and to prevent it from using the very instrument best fitted for its realization. It is as if some sportsmen set out on a hunting excursion, but with the declared intention of not using guns or any other of the weapons most suitable for their purpose.....'

"Georgism must come to pass by law. And who best qualified for the task but Georgist legislators?"

"But, apart from mere considerations of an executive character, and keeping in view only the preparation of the electorate by propaganda, there is no doubt at all that, for the work of diffusing a doctrine, a political party has an immense advantage over every kind of purely doctrinal associations.

"The action and excitement of electoral competition rouses passion and attracts the attention of the masses. Every elector, having to choose between various parties, would be obliged to take more or less into account the Georgist party. (And this should be its name, so that there should be no misunderstanding as to what it stood for.)

"We, who have lived till the day when the prophesies of George are beginning to be fulfilled, should let Georgism be attacked. That need not worry us. Georgism is the truth, and can only gain by opposition.

"Every Georgist must endeavor to grasp the vast, profound and irresistible sweep of George's doctrine, and exhibit it and teach it in all its amplitude, thus satisfying the universal yearning for a solution of the social problems, since whatever anyone may say, from nowhere else can that solution come. A good many intellectuals are beginning to suspect *there is something* in this George theory; something which they think they understand, but do not, because as yet they have not taken the trouble to study it; and they are inclined to suppose Georgism to be a kind of semi-socialism or a semi-bourgeois compromise for fear of an avalanche of communism."

## Argentine

**L**A NACION, an important daily of Buenos Aires, in its issue of August 24, gives the following account of an interview with Mr. E. T. Bell, member of the Queensland Parliament, who was at that time on a visit to the Argentine:

"Mr. Bell stated to us that for some years he had been interested in the similarity of climate and products between Australia and the Argentine Republic. There is however, he added, one great difference in the matter of landed property.

"In Australia, only 4% of the land is private property; the rest belongs to the State, which, for terms varying between seven and twenty-one years, lets it out on lease. This lease is conditional, and the government reserves the right of total or partial annulment, whenever the growth of population may require it, so that it is not possible for large areas, even if leased, to prevent the better use of land.

"At first, the large leaseholders protested against this official right of cancellation, which is frequently put in force; but then the curious case was seen of leaseholders, who found themselves obliged to surrender voluntarily a third of the land they occupied and which, owing to its extent, they could not properly exploit. From the balance remaining in their hands they managed, by more intensive development, to earn greater profits than before. A further result is that the land, by more intensive working, is improved and increased in value, so that an estate, which before gave a certain return to one person, now gives double to two persons.

"In my opinion, this system should be applied to all countries where large landed estates hinder the best possible development of the land."

The *Revista del Impuesto Unico*, Buenos Aires, announces a Spanish version of "Progress and Poverty," edited by the Association Pro League of Nations. The League of Nations, itself, could build on no sounder economic foundations the permanent peace and goodfellowship of the world.

Our Argentine friends have appropriated very neatly, in a good cause, one of our most conspicuous national monuments. On the subscription coupon of the *Revista del Impuesto Unico*, official organ of the Argentine Single Tax League, appears a striking and suggestive emblem: The Statue of Liberty holding aloft her flaming torch. The beam of light radiating therefrom is seen to be the *Single Tax* and, as it falls, it sheds *Justice* over the Earth. Our artists seem to have been caught napping.

## The Single Tax Before The Housing Congress In The Argentine

**T**HE closing session of the Housing Congress, which has been conducted so successfully in the Federal Capital, was fittingly crowned by a resolution which, as the declaration of principles of a numerous body of educated citizens, and as the vote of a convention highly versed in social questions, will have consequences well worthy of attention.

"A motion had been submitted to the Housing Congress, according to which the Single Tax system had been proposed as the most effective means of solving important labor and economic problems. The debate was prolonged, but the members of the Commission of Social Action finally gave out their report, which was then submitted to the Congress in full session and approved with slight modifications.

"The Resolution adopted reads as follows:

- "1 Tax land according to its assessed value, free from improvements and incorporated capitals.
- "2 Reduce gradually the taxes on food products and replace them by an increase in the amount of the tax on land values.
- "3 Establish a tax on the increment land values produced by social action.