

ARTICLE 7. In the Capital of the Republic and in the National Territories, a new valuation of real estate shall be made, the fields and lots being valued separately on the one hand and the existing buildings and other improvements on the other.

ARTICLE 8. The expenses occasioned by the execution of the present law shall be paid from, and imputed to, general revenue."

Israel, the organ of the Argentine Zionist Federation, Buenos Aires, has published the article of Mr. Norwalk, which appeared in the *Jewish Forum* of this city, February 1919, and which now is published in pamphlet form by the Zionist Organization of America.

A CONCISE and vigorous little pamphlet of 74 pages, entitled "The Single Tax Within the Reach of All," by Jose F. Menchaca, has just been published by the Argentine Single Tax League. We congratulate the Argentine League on this practical little instrument of diffusion of economic education amongst the masses. The author, who for 23 years served as stenographer in the Senate and Congress of the Argentine nation, has graduated from a good school of debate. He has placed that special experience at the service of the Single Tax.

A Bullock In A China Shop

A commission of citizens (or subjects) of the Province of Manitoba, appointed by the Executive Council, was created in July, 1918, to study the tax question in the Province. They reported in December, 1919. There is no indication of the identity of the compiler of the Report, though we should judge he was not unacquainted with Professor Bullock, of Harvard, whose name appears no less than ten times in seventy pages and always under circumstances indicating the incontrovertibility of his dicta. One would probably not be far wrong in concluding that the compilation must have been made by some pupil, who has a reverence for the Professor's omniscience almost equal to that which the Professor entertains for it himself. For the benefit of the uninformed, it may be stated that he is more than once referred to in the Report as Professor Bullock, Professor of Political Economy in Harvard University—all in "Caps."—just like that.

Well, after a statement of the importance of an expert body to be known as a tax commission to supervise the work of local assessors and agreeing that "to properly appraise real estate is a very difficult matter," we come to what may be regarded as the real core of the report. In the judgment of many conservative persons the Western Provinces of Canada had been betrayed into an unwise policy of exempting improvements from taxation and levying taxes on the value of land, exclusive of improvements. We shall not be far from the truth if we conclude that the

real purpose of this report was to combat and overthrow this policy.

Part 2 of the report is entitled "Single Tax." A commission in search of information on the subject might be expected to approach it without bias, but as no member of the commission deemed it necessary to file a minority report, it must be taken that the report as printed represents the undivided sentiment of the commissioners. At the beginning the statement is made that the Single Tax has had enthusiastic supporters. Then appears this gem: "Few persons, however, have any well defined idea of what it really involves, while others, with a species of **mental** indigestion, and carried away with alluring statements of its advocates, have neglected to inform themselves as to the **problem** from the standpoint of modern economic science." Truly we might stop here our perusal of the report. A mind capable of framing such a sentence would find little difficulty in rending such a frail tissue as the Single Tax theory. How a person can contract mental indigestion from absorbing information which he has neglected to acquire puzzles our comprehension. Then what is the *problem*? We have viewed the Single Tax from many angles, but never as a problem before.

But let us proceed. There follows a very fair statement of the Single Tax theory, not problem, we beg to remark, and then we come on the following impartial, considerate statement made in advance of the submission of any evidence: "We quote the following in support of our view that the so-called Single Tax theory is a veritable Will-o'-the-Wisp, and lacking the essentials for practical use in any scheme of taxation." This attitude is reminiscent of Speaker Sweet's method of dealing with the five Socialist members, whom he caused to be ejected from the Assembly, after which action he appointed a Committee to determine whether they had done anything to justify his action.

Here follows two paragraphs from Professor Seligman. No reference is given to any work in which they appear, so they may be presumed to be extracted from a letter specially written to the commission. They contain reflections on the Single Tax which will surprise and perhaps hurt some Single Taxers, who, in spite of the life-long quibbling and hair-splitting which have marked the Professor's economic utterances, have assumed that it proceeded from his fear of the social and academic ostracism which his profession of the truth might entail. If he was ever open to the suspicion of harboring friendly views on the Single Tax he has now made a full and complete recantation. He anathematizes it—"fiscally, politically, morally and economically." We wish there were space to quote it in full in order that our readers might see how palpably erroneous and misleading it is. It concludes with the statement which fairly summarizes his whole argument: "It (the Single Tax) seeks to put the burdens of the many on the shoulders of the few." *Vale* Seligman.

Then comes Bullock of Harvard—not very exhaustively. He says the Single Tax has failed where it has been tried in other parts of Canada but saves himself by referring to

the "so-called Single Tax in Vancouver and Victoria," showing that he knows that the system there experimented with was only Single Tax in name. He suggests that what Manitoba needs is to *broaden* the basis of taxation. As the land value tax system would apply to the whole area of the Province, we wonder how far he would extend it into the Pacific or over adjacent territory.

Professor Adams, of Yale, does something more than make assertions; he dignifies the subject by argument. He makes the following assertions, whose value we leave to our readers to decide.

1. The Single Tax has been *vigorously* championed for more than a century, during which time taxes have become steadily more diversified.
2. Time proves there are several sound theories of taxation—not only one sound theory. (Illustrations are not offered.)
3. Single Taxers admit this by approving inheritance and income taxes.
4. Progressive income taxes based on ability to pay are more serviceable than Single Tax proposals based on a half truth.
5. Concedes that there is justification for heavier taxation of land than improvements.
6. Makes the point that since the war there has been an unearned increment in buildings due to increased cost of producing new buildings, therefore any attempt to exempt them would merely result in giving owner increased profit.
7. Why penalize the investor in land more than in building. He often makes no more profit than the other man.

Such are the contributions to the solution of the social problem made by the Big Three—Columbia, Harvard and Yale. "Having eyes to see, they see not; and having ears to hear they hear not," and having brains to understand—but this is making an assumption which we do not feel justified in following to its presumptive conclusion.

A few more extracts from the report will throw some light on the frame of mind of its compiler. It says, solemnly, "Our investigation of the principles involved in the Single Tax theory has convinced us that it is impossible to properly value land without having regard to the buildings upon it When a house is erected surely the site and building are one. (At this point one expects someone to say 'Whom God hath joined, let no man set asunder.' But no one did, perhaps, because he did not think of it.) "

It is gratifying in the discussion of so dry a subject to find an author capable of perpetuating the following and doing it quite seriously. Referring to Vancouver, the report says: "*When land was soaring, fortunes being made daily in land speculations, and general prosperity reigned throughout the West, the Single Tax publications and supporters were boasting far and wide of the success of the theories of Henry*

George in Western Canada. All went well until 1912, when prosperity began to wane and the *chilling frosts of a monetary* stringency began to be felt. Then taxation again became a *burning* question."

Further on there is a reference to the "few years Single Tax nightmare of Vancouver and Victoria," and later on to the "Single Tax bogie in Victoria." Alas, not one redeeming feature does the author find. The summing up is in the words of Professor Plehn, of California, who finds private property in land the very root of civilization and the Single Tax the sum of all iniquities. One can almost observe the tear in his eye and the break in his voice when he says; "It taxes the poor man's land and exempts the rich man's personal property, mansions, skyscrapers and factories. It is not based on income or any other good general measure of ability to pay. It exempts nearly all monopolies and trusts. It discriminates against the small home owners, mostly the working men."

O, Universities! What idiocies are perpetuated in your names! After reading these dicta one is tempted to exclaim "Quos vult perdere Deus, priusquam obfuscat."

Part 2 of the report concludes with the figures of the Oregon and California referenda and the malediction is by DeYoung's San Francisco *Chronicle*, which describes the Single Tax proposition as "shockingly wicked and absurd."

There are other matters of interest in the report to which we would wish to advert did space permit. The commission finally recommends taxation of land at full value and improvements at two-thirds of their value and that value of land and improvements be made in separate columns. It urges business, income, special franchise and license taxes. The taxation of rural land to be on value of land only, but in village areas tax must be much as in towns previously set forth. Church exemption to be limited to building and land on which it stands, which, however, may be sold for arrears of taxes due on non-exempt portion of site.

Europe's Malady

THE New York *Commercial* recently published a new and up-to-date map of Europe which is the most frightful thing I have looked upon for many a day, when the significance of the new boundaries is considered. These are not like our own State boundaries, mere delimitations of legal jurisdictions and administrative areas, but are barriers against the economic co-operation of these nations, new and old, and as such are obstacles to the economic recovery of the continent.

That Europe is far from peace and is sick unto death is the dictum of all. Political and economic doctors alike are at their wit's end to effect a cure. A sign of hope appears in the summary of economic conditions and one of the prescriptions offered recently by the Supreme Allied Economic Council. It is the first truly radical (as distinguished from the false "radicalism" that occupies the stage and disgraces the true) utterance we have seen from any International body of responsible men, for it declares that the