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THE GREAT AFFAIR GREAT TO US ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE ON OUR KNEES - LET US ARISE.

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The Land Revolution in Yucatan

The land revolution is under way in Mexico stronger than the day when Francisco Madero issued his San Luis Potosi proclamation in 1911. It is stronger than, when he was murdered shortly after the flight of Diaz from Mexico City.

The land revolution is the main question in everyone of the states of Mexico just as much as it is the major question in such states as Texas and Oklahoma. Here is the latest proof coming from the state of Yucatan. It is the form of an official manifesto from Salvador Alvarado, governor and military commander of the state of Yucatan, Mexico.

This document that bears upon its face the evidence of its profound study and thought that has always been the result of years of revolutionary effort, sets forth the land and all that is thereby implied, including water, forests, minerals, just like the atmosphere, a public utility.

The governor of Yucatan expresses the position of himself and his people in the land question in these words:

"IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FACT THAT NO ONE IS EXCLUSIVE OWNER OF THE LAND IN LIKE MANNER AS NO ONE CAN BE EXCLUSIVE OWNER OF EITHER THE LIGHT OR THE ATMOSPHERE - THIS LAW RESPONDS TO A MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE AND SATISFIES A SOCIAL NECESSITY, MAKING IT UNAVOIDABLE AND INEVITABLE."

This statement from the governor of Yucatan would appear to an inhabitant from Mars as trite, cheap, silly, because it is an axiom that when we are on this side of the Rio Grande realize that every governor from Ferguson on our southern shores to Johnson on the Pacific and Whitman on the Atlantic seaboard and in fact every governor in the nation stands in direct, open conflict with Governor Alvarado, the Maritan may well wonder at such a surprising state of affairs.

Governor Alvarado proposes the confiscation of the landlords and the making of use and occupancy the title to land and as well as the following paragraph, he demands and with the power of the sword, if necessary, will put through with the aid of the President of the Mexican republic a decree to that effect.

In line with this fundamental democratic proposition the first step taken is to name a state Agrarian Commission of five persons. Subordinate to them are local commissions for each communal district with the provision that political authorities, soldiers in active service or those who possess land with a surface of 500 acres are not eligible to serve on any such commission.

This provision is respectfully passed over to the Donk boneheads who, while meeting at the Mexican and "graves," ask plaintively: "How are you going to do it?" The foregoing paragraph shows how the Mexican is going to do it, even in the throes of a revolution.

This commission is empowered, according to Article VI of the Agrarian Law to see that:

"Every Mexican or foreigner, residing in the state, older than 17 years, has the right, provided that he wishes to devote himself personally to cultivate it, to possess a parcel of land, from which, by means of work, he may be able to obtain sufficient in order to subsist with his family, succeeding by such means in securing his economic independence and the necessary comforts for living peacefully, according to his social condition."

According to Article 13 the lands are to be divided into two classes:

The first class is to be land adjoining the towns within a distance of 8 kilometers (5 1/3 miles) as the bird flies and it may be 16 kilometers distant by actual measurement. These are to be called Suburban lands.

The second class are called Pastoral lands situated more than 8 kilometers (5 1/3 miles) distant from towns or cities.

Every individual as indicated in Article 6 (above quoted) has

the right of possessing one lot of land whose area will comprise, of the Suburban lands, from 50 to 62 1/2 acres or 500 acres of pastoral lands.

In case the land is found to be planted with henequen the maximum area which will constitute one lot will be 25 acres. In explanation of this it may be said that henequen is a plant that produces the fibre that produces the best rubber twice in the world and is indigenous to the state of Yucatan, and once planted continues to grow, hence makes the land in which it is already growing much more valuable.

The next important article provides for the disposition of lands by reason of PUBLIC NEED. This is done under the order of the First Chief of the Constitutional army, C. Venustiano Carranza, with the exception of land which may be in cultivation and which will be purchased at its ACTUAL, not speculative value, which value will be fixed by the Agrarian Commission, and based on the tax valuation as rendered by the landowners.

Article 18 provides that when "land is needed in any town, for extending the town, the municipal government unanimously with the agrarian commission, will dispose those lands necessary by reason of public utility."

In conformity with the decree of January 6, 1915, providing for the disposition of the lands for reconstructing the commons, if there shall be found a piece of property whose acquisition may not be justified in accordance with the said decree, it shall be reclaimed, provided that it does not exceed 125 acres in cultivation. If it is not under cultivation it shall be confiscated.

Lands which are needed in addition when the commons are not sufficient and are not cultivated, shall be promptly confiscated by the Commission.

When the lands needed for extending the existing towns, or for forming new towns, are national lands, the agrarian commission in the state, shall at once take steps for obtaining them.

Lands will be distributed every six months, beginning the first of February and the first of August of each year.

All corporations, mercantile and civil societies formed for working in agriculture shall be considered as individuals and will only be allowed one lot.

"In the state there will not be given a lot of land to any person who possesses any country property in any other part of the republic," so says Article 28.

The order of division will be: A. The commons whether cultivated or not. B. The uncultivated lands in the state. C. The lands of great extent, although they may be under cultivation. D. Lots of 500 acres of pastoral lands and the lots of 125 acres of the suburban lands.

Article 35 makes it plain that the big hacienda owners will be allowed a lot of 125 acres in which the buildings of the estate are to be enclosed. The present proprietor may continue in the possession of this present lot. The rest of the estate is forfeited to the state for cultivation by actual home builders.

The assignments will be made by personal election or by drawing lots, when a single lot may be desired by two or more persons. In all land divisions there must be reserved an area for roads, schools, public safety and works of art.

Article 39 is the most democratic provision ever penned by a human hand. It provides: "The distribution of lands of the estates having been made, the PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO DAY LABORERS who may be working in them at the moment of distribution. After the said day laborers have taken their respective lots, the preference is to be given to the individuals comprising the Municipal or Communal District; in the third place, entrance will be given to outside settlers.

Article 43 provides for the establishing of new towns on the despoised land when ten or more individuals desire to work at agriculture, provided that none of them is a rural proprietor in the republic. These shall form a colony and there will be given to them 12 1/2 acres as a town plot out of which will be taken the necessary

ground for schools, markets, etc.

Article 47 provides for the great question of taxation. It provides that land for distribution already divided into lots shall be valued by the tax list, and each lot owner shall pay to the state an annual tax equal to 1 1/2 per cent. of its initial intrinsic value.

Article 50 provides that during the first ten years of occupation the possessors must introduce gradual improvements consisting of fences, wells, houses, machines, instruments of labor, etc., equal to 50 per cent. of the intrinsic value of the land.

Article 51 demands that he who does not introduce the improvements or does not pay the tax on his lot of 1 1/2 per cent. shall forfeit all rights to his land and the state shall assign it to another person who wishes and can cultivate it. Having lived up to these provisions the actual farmer will receive a title of use and occupancy good for 999 years.

Article 54 says: "For the payment of the property rental and land tax of 1 1/2 per cent there are to be established these principles: A. The lands in cultivation and production will be paid for from the moment of allotment. B. The distributed suburban lands will begin to pay one year after the allotment. C. The pastoral grounds will be exempt during two years.

Article 61 provides for the payment of lands which are distributed by reason of public need and one which the individual owner had an honest title. It provides that the valuation shall be that actually ascertained in the tax list. Such dispossessioned property shall be paid in agrarian bonds redeemable in 50 years with 4 per cent. interest annually with the guarantee of the land tax of the state being over to the dispossessioned land owner the same as each. These bonds will be redeemed by the state as funds accrue from the land tax. The value of these bonds is never to exceed the initial value of the lands.

Articles 75 and 76 deal with advance payments by the government to the actual farmers through agricultural banks to be established at once, on stock, future harvests, etc., thus eliminating usury entirely. And then, to protect the state, these articles provide that no mortgage, rental or sale made by the occupants of the distributed lands shall be of effect, and every operation for speculating with the lands is prohibited. Also it is not attachable, nor is it subject to any intervention, judicial or administrative. Pending the establishment of the state agricultural banks, the actual farmer may secure loans through the agrarian commission.

Article 77 provides that the state will start irrigation works for the benefit of the farmers at cost to the users.

Further the state will make every effort possible to encourage the small farmers to produce for education, which shall be co-operative for production and consumption. These societies shall join together to buy machines and other farming equipment on a large scale.

Henceforth being the major crop of Yucatan, the state has established a commission to fix a minimum price for the great staple, and the said commission after the crop is made will handle it for the small farmer and will market it for him at the best possible prices. The state even goes so far as to charter steamers to carry the henequen to New Orleans and warehouse it and appoint special state selling agents at that port and in New York.

Article 78 revokes a measure of statecraftship unknown to be sided of the Rio Grande. It says: "The Agrarian Commission will be obliged to lend all kinds of aid to the small proprietor, and very especially to those who may have been delivered lots, in order that they may form co-operative societies or agricultural syndicates, to the end that the earth may give the best results possible, by the accumulation of richness and intensive cultivation, by which the condition of the small proprietor may be improved, who, by this means, will save more for the land, devoting himself to it by affection and interest."

Article 84 provides for the way in which transfers of land can be made from one individual to another. It says: "The owner of a lot may be able to elect freely his heirs among his predecessors or successors, in a direct line without limitation or rank, even order of birth. Failing those he may choose among his relatives of the same generation to the sixth grade, and failing them, he may freely choose a stranger."

The next article limits landholding in these few words: "None will be able under any title to become the beneficiary of more than one lot of land in the state."

One of the most important articles that may be read with intense interest by residents of East Texas and western Louisiana declares: "The forests of the state are a public utility, and it will be proposed to the federation that the state should take a direct participation in their protection and propagation."

It is with feelings of shame and mortification that The Rebel prints the above abridgement of what we believe to be the most remarkable proclamation issued by governmental authority since the dawn of written history.

The shame is not our individual shame, for God knows we have trodden the thorny path leading to the land revolution for many years. The shame lies in this that we, living in the wonderful Southland that possesses traditions and records of learning, culture and valor, surpassed by no nation in the world, do not possess today the spirit, character and mental attitudes to produce such a marvelous state paper as that issued from the case-houses of Yucatan, born out of the pain and agony of a Mexican-Indian revolution.

It may be that the greatest American that ever lived, Thomas



FIRST DISTRIBUTION OF MEXICO LANDS.

GOVERNOR ALVARADO,

of Yucatan.

1998

