

Tremendous Agricultural Resources---Great Wealth in Animal Industries---Facts About Buenos Ayres, the Fourth City of the Western Hemisphere

By ROGER W. BABSON.

FIRST let me say that it is foolishness for me or any one else to judge of Argentina or even a city from information obtained in a visit of only a few days. Before I went to Argentina I had the country's statistics of agricultural, industrial and commercial growth. To these statistics I have now added many others. From such statistics it is possible to judge Argentina and Buenos Ayres; but it is never wise to base opinions on what one learns during a short visit, even though one meets the most prominent people. Hence I urge people to study a country's statistics before judging it, rather than to depend upon what any one says, whether that person has been there ten days or ten years.

One day I talked with a Buenos Ayres representative of a certain concern well known in the United States. He laughed at me and my business friends for attempting to pass judgment on Argentina after such a short visit.

"I have been down here several months and have traveled many thousands miles and yet I know little about Argentina. How can you expect to learn anything during such a short visit?"

"My friend then turned to him and said: "By the way, Mr. Blank, have you seen the Boletín Oficial Resumen, which gives each month the failure statistics, bank clearings, unemployment figures, etc. for Argentina?"

"To this question Mr. Blank replied: "No, I have been so busy on special work here in Argentina that I have not yet had time to read any dry statistics. After I get acquainted and thoroughly informed as to conditions here I may have time to study the country's statistics."

Just think of this man's ignorance! And yet this is the attitude of many of the North Americans, English and Germans located in Buenos Ayres. They think they know all there is to know about this country because they live here. I live in Boston; yet if you were to spend one day in studying the commercial and other statistics of Boston you could tell me far more about it than ever I knew.

Hence my first message is that you give less attention to what people say about Argentina and more to its statistics, which can be obtained in English for the asking. Just write my friend Señor Ricardo Pillado, Director-General of Commerce and Industry, Buenos Ayres. My only request is that you put a 5 cent stamp on your letter instead of letting it go with only a 2 cent stamp. I don't want Señor Pillado to be obliged to pay fines for short postage such as were assessed on me for letters received from the United States.

Another thing: Don't depend upon Americans, English, French or Germans for your information about Argentina. The Americans here have worked hard to get a foothold and do not want competition. Hence they talk discouragingly. The English are very polite and sociable, but when it comes to our doing business in Argentina they will knife any one of us in the back.

Certainly we should not expect encouragement from the natives of French, German, Spanish, Italian or other races who are now well located there. These people are not our friends. They do not want us to butt into the South American field. Hence they talk pessimistically and discouragingly. Therefore, in my investigations I have depended either on official statistics or else upon information obtained from Argentine friends, whom I count among my best in the world.

In the old geographies Argentina was called Patagonia, and was described as a barren land, sparsely inhabited by wild aborigines of great stature. The coast is still bleak and uninteresting, the rivers still flow to the sea and the winds continue to blow, but otherwise there is a great change. Year by year more and more land has been cultivated, and now blooded and the future is bright.

After leaving Punta Arenas we did not stop at any Argentine harbors, such as Puerto Madrin or Bahia Blanca, but continued steadily northward. Traveling for three days and nights along this shore and knowing that when we came to the mouth of La Plata we were in the very middle of Argentina, we began to realize the size of this South American Republic.

The mere figures of area—1,129,400 square miles—do not give one a very definite idea of the extent of this country, but a comparison helps us to realize it. If transferred to this northern continent Argentina would cover the Pacific coast territory from the Canadian line to the southern extremity of Mexico, including the States of Washington, Oregon and California and all the States of Mexico to the east. In the eastern part it would cover that section of the United States east of the Mississippi and the first tier of States beyond it.

I would make twenty-five Pennsylvanias. Its coast line is equal to a line drawn from Key West, Fla., to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and its wide range of climatic conditions is indicated by the fact that its territory stretches over as many degrees of latitude as there are between the most southerly point of Florida and the centre of Hudson Bay.

The climate therefore is mostly temperate with slight variations, but it must be remembered that the northern tip of the republic is within the tropics and that the southern extremity, at latitude 50 degrees south, is swept by cold Antarctic winds. Hence Buenos Ayres is in the same latitude as Cape Town, Africa. The region from the estuary of the Rio de la Plata to the outlying foothills of the Andes, a territory about 600 miles square, is like west central Europe as the heat is great only during the middle of summer and the winter cold is moderate.

The most northern and southern parts have a very rainy summer season. In the western and central portions there is little rain. This especially applies to the western section, so that much of this region is too dry to be cultivated except by irrigation. The streams descending from the Andes snows provide water, and though many of them are lost in the arid ground before reaching the sea, they supply sufficient moisture be-

low the surface so that wells may be successfully dug. The population of the Argentine has increased from 3,954,000 in the census year of 1895 to an estimated population of 7,704,296 in 1913. Preliminary returns from the recent census taken in June, 1914, indicate that the estimate for 1913 was too low, and that when the count is completed the population of the country will be found to amount to at least 9,000,000.

Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine, with a population as shown by the census of 1914 of 1,560,163, ranks as the fourth largest city in North and South America, being surpassed only by New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. The area of the Argentine comprises about 738,000,000



Train on the Transandean railway from Buenos Ayres to Santiago and Valparaiso.

acres, or considerably more than one-third of the total area of continental United States, with its 1,937,146,000 acres. The Argentine from the standpoint of climate and soil is said to present the most nearly perfect area that the world contains for the production of wheat, corn, oats and meat products. Evidence of this is seen in the rapid growth in the cultivated area of the country, which has increased from about 12,700,000 acres in 1895 to the present total of 56,700,000 acres, or over 200 per cent. The progress made in the last ten years gives an interesting insight into the possibilities of future growth. During this period the cultivated area has doubled and the value of the four principal Argentine crops (wheat, corn, oats and flax), estimated at the average export prices, has increased 59 per cent, from \$218,127,424 to \$370,063,647.

The Argentine probably produces per capita a greater excess of foodstuffs than any other country in the world. The total value of the agricultural exports in 1913 amounted to \$290,632,365, as against \$145,021,931 in 1904, an increase of over 100 per cent. The development of agriculture is much more rapid than the development of the animal industry. Since 1904 the relation of agricultural exports to the total has increased from 57.4 per cent. to 62.2 per cent., whereas exports of animals and animal products have fallen from 40 per cent. to 34.3 per cent. of the total.

The estuary or bay of the Rio de la Plata is about 200 miles long from the point where it is formed by the junction of the great river Uruguay and the larger Parana to its entrance into the Atlantic. Buenos Ayres is 152 miles up this estuary, which is here twenty-eight miles wide. Not much can be seen of the city from the wharves, for it lies only thirty feet above high water mark, and for miles beyond it there is nothing but flat prairie, with not even a rock to break the monotony.

Twenty years ago seagoing vessels had to lie several miles off Buenos Ayres, discharging their cargoes by lighters and their passengers either by small boats or by curious high wheeled carts which carried them through the shallow water to the shore. With great enterprise and courage a long, deep channel, which is kept open by constant dredging, has been dug, so that large steamers can now come to the very edge of the city. In fact the city has the finest system of artificial docks that I have ever seen.

Whether or not the cleanliness of the city is due to the fact that it lies in the temperate zone I do not know. Certainly Buenos Ayres (good air) is well named, for the air is clear and keen. There are no large manufacturing plants which pollute with smoke. The water supply, electric light and gas facilities, the police force and fire department, the various intellectual factors like museums, art galleries, public schools and libraries, as well as such social factors as clubs, associations and societies, are all present and developed according to the modern type. The hotels are equipped to receive the most exacting class of the travelling public and other conveniences for the transient or permanent resident place the city on a par with the best capitals of Europe and America.

Though Buenos Ayres is often described as a cosmopolitan place its population does not include as many nationalities as would be found in most large cities of our own country. There are English and German colonies, composed mostly of business and railway men, each keeping rather exclusively to itself as far as social re-

lations are concerned. Of the so-called Latin element probably about half is Argentine born.

The parks of Buenos Ayres especially appealed to me. They are well laid out and exceedingly well kept. The park Palermo with its rose garden and tea house is most fascinating, while the Zoo and the Botanical Gardens are likewise very interesting. The city although not so large as Paris and hence not so spectacular is newer and fresher. At first glance I have personally been more impressed by Buenos Ayres than by any of the Old or New World cities that I have ever visited.

The commerce of the whole Argentine Republic centres in Buenos Ayres and it is a common sight to see scores of merchant vessels flying the flags of all important countries except the United States loading and unloading along its waterfront. Right here it may be well to remark that before our civil war there were in this harbor 600 vessels carrying our flag, or more than double the number from all other nations combined.

In those days the influence of our people over the commerce of South America was predominant. A Pennsylvanian, William Wheelwright, was looked upon as his father. Would that he might be resurrected! A writer comments on the fact that in 1910 out of the many thousands of ships that transferred cargoes here only four bore the Stars and Stripes. Thanks to the energy of Charles H. Gates of Toledo our ship carried the American flag.

The docks, designed by a celebrated American engineer, are most impressive, consisting of rows of massive masonry and cement wharves, behind which spreads a network of railway lines. The docks are not arranged in a series of slips, as along the waterfront in New York city, but are basins, so that vessels can moor in them on all four sides. The cargoes are unloaded by enormous cranes and cars are operated directly alongside.

Yet extensive as is this docking system it is already inadequate, for there are always a number of ships lying at anchor outside in the river, waiting their turn for a berth. Immense warehouses and giant grain elevators add to the impressiveness of the scene.

Over these facilities are not sufficient and there is talk of enlarging the capacity of La Plata and Bahia Blanca to relieve the congestion. In fact, Argentina now has three additional growing ports and centres, Rosario, Bahia Blanca and La Plata. All these are fine cities. One who thinks Buenos Ayres is the only city of Argentina is very much mistaken.

Skyscrapers are not common in these cities of the south, though a few tend in that direction, and one boasts of fourteen or fifteen stories. Many public buildings are four or five stories, or even more, as there is not the danger from earthquakes here that there is in the West coast countries. Many of the dwellings are low and in the outskirts, which may be called the slums, the homes are little better than shanties, a great contrast to the rest of the well built, well lighted and very clean city.

Buenos Ayres can boast the finest newspaper building in the world for the sole use of a single publication, that of La Prensa. Buenos Ayres also has La Nacion, which is perhaps the most independent newspaper in South America, its proprietor, Señor Georg Mitt, taking personal charge of the direction, while its editor is now the Foreign Minister of Argentina. This man, with whom I talked at the Government House, is much interested in most practical peace plans. He believes in the work of the Society for Eliminate Economic Causes of War and the extension of neutralization of the sea to include both Americas.

The Capitol Building in Buenos Ayres is very much like our own in Washington in general appearance and in front of it is an extensive plaza. This plaza was constructed in celebration of the centenary of the republic and don't forget the short space of ninety days! In that time four solid blocks of buildings were torn down, ground was filled in, levelled and grassed, walks were laid, trees, shrubs and flowers were planted, fountains with colored waters, obelisks, canals and stairways erected at a cost of \$5,000,000; and everything was ready to receive the guests at the celebration.

Much is said about the people of Buenos Ayres. In many ways it is the same relation to many ways to Buenos Ayres. In fact Chicago bears to New York, large ships go direct from Rosario, loaded with grain and cattle, to all the important ports of Europe.

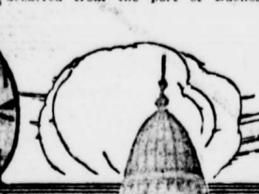
Being inland the city is hotter in summer and cooler in winter than Buenos Ayres. However, the climate is healthful and the people have considerable energy. Hence, in many ways, Rosario presents as good opportunities for making money as any city in Argentina.

In the extreme west, next to Chile, Mendoza is the chief city of importance, about 650 miles from Buenos Ayres. It was founded by Mendoza in the middle of the sixteenth century, and was a flourishing place when, in

to consider, all the Latin American countries as having the same characteristics. They are naturally divided into two groups, the temperate group and the tropical group. To the former belong Argentina, Chile and southern Brazil, and in these countries are the opportunities for money making. In fact the first lesson for the young American business man to learn is that during his lifetime the big opportunities will be in the temperate zones.

Thirty-four miles by rail from Buenos Ayres down the river is La Plata, a city of more than 100,000 people and capital of the province or State of Buenos Ayres. It is a made-to-order city like our own Washington and is well planned with rectangular blocks; also many diagonal boulevards, and with parks and plazas.

On account of the wonderful growth of Buenos Ayres, so near, the development of La Plata has not equalled expectations. It possesses, however, two claims to consideration: first, as the political centre of the largest and wealthiest province of the republic; and, second, as a great transshipping port, both for handling trade originating in the province and for shipping debarraded from the port of Buenos



New Capitol at Buenos Ayres, Argentine Republic.



Buenos Ayres' mounted police.



Mayo avenue, Buenos Ayres.



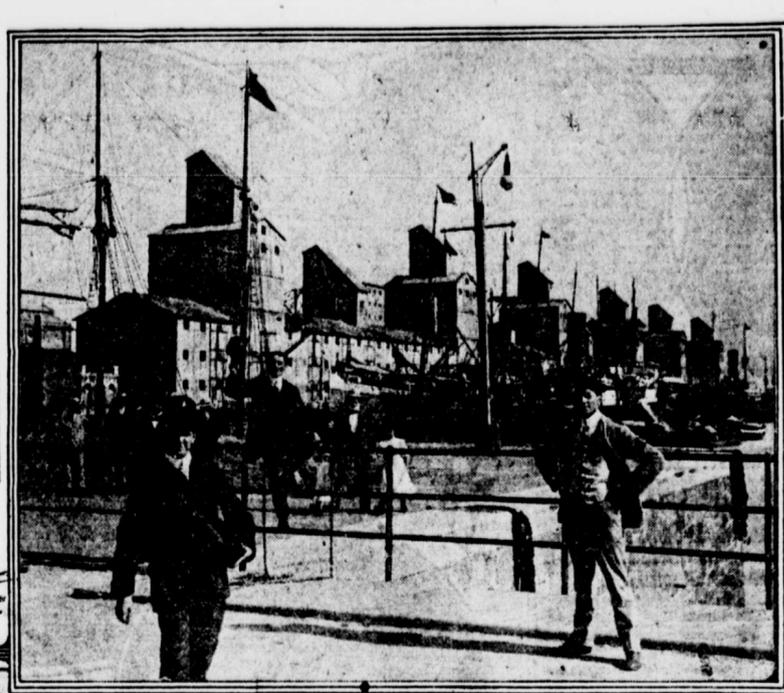
Mayo avenue, Buenos Ayres.

1861, it was suddenly destroyed by an earthquake, causing a loss of life of from ten to fifteen thousand. Now there are two cities, the older ruins and the newer settlement of 45,000 inhabitants, with fine public buildings and a profusion of trees bordering its wide, clean and well paved streets. Irrigation is easy from the Mendoza and two smaller streams, and has been skillfully used, not only to beautify the city, but to render fertile a large tract of land around it. There are streams running along some of the streets, and they have a unique way of watering. Boys with buckets on the end of long poles dip them into the water and throw up the dirt, in a way, a primitive but effective method. This region is especially suited for the culture of the grape and great fortunes have been made in vineyards. I am told that many opportunities still exist. It is said that an economical Italian family can live on the returns from a two and a half acre tract of land. Wine making is the chief industry, and some of the wines from here have received many medals at European exhibitions. Most of the workmen as well as the proprietors are Italians, and they have modern and scientific methods and appliances.

The railroad from here to Buenos Ayres, a distance of 650 miles, runs for hundreds of miles without a curve or a rise or a bridge. This possibly the widest perfectly level plain in the world. Another inland city is Santa Fe, the capital and centre of the province of Santa Fe, which is one of the richest of the Argentine provinces. The city has a population of about 48,000. The price of good land here is about \$50 an acre, compared with \$25 an acre, minus price back of Bahia Blanca, and \$75 an acre, the price at which it sells within a hundred miles of Buenos Ayres.

I gave considerable attention while in Buenos Ayres to the study of land values. I found that in 1907-09 lands were booming and prices were higher than exist in the United States. Since then there has been a drop of 30 per cent. to 40 per cent., so that prices today—although perhaps not low—are reasonable. In fact I believe that if a man with capital is willing to go to Argentina to live he would do well to invest in land.

Real estate and mortgages are still the standard investments of the Argentine. They buy no stocks and the only bonds which appeal to them are the 6 per cent. cedulas, which are the mortgage loan bonds of the Govern-



Ocean steamers loading with wheat for Europe, Buenos Ayres.



Buenos Ayres' mounted police.



Mayo avenue, Buenos Ayres.



Mayo avenue, Buenos Ayres.

Copyright H. C. White Company.

suited to the production of a long list of commodities for which there is a constant and growing demand all over the world. On the other hand, there are not great extremes of heat and cold, for the proximity of the ocean exerts a tempering influence.

The country has been settled largely by a class of foreigners noted for frugality and industry, 60 per cent. of the immigration into the Argentine having been from Italy. In addition to the natural advantages there has been a great influx of foreign capital. In spite of the fact that some of these investments may have been unwise, yet from the Argentine standpoint such investments have been beneficial. The facilities produced by such capital have remained in the republic and have become part and parcel of the tools of trade by which the people may reach a higher plane of development and a greater volume of production.

The first impression received by the close student of conditions is one of surprise that so small a proportion of the natural resources have yet been exploited. For instance, only about one-twentieth of the area available for crops is as yet under tillage. To balance this, in a measure, we find greater proportionate development in certain provinces where wealth and energy have concentrated, as for instance in that of Buenos Ayres. If other sections can be permitted to handle the same favors from the hands of capitalists, Argentina surely may be expected to take very high rank among the producing and exporting countries of the world.

Farmers here are perhaps more generally prosperous than in any other part of the world, yet they have two enemies, either of which may ruin the crops and take away all the profits for the year. One is drought, for a rainfall below the average, in a country where the normal is barely sufficient, means scanty crops and a loss of cattle. The other danger is from the locusts.

These come in such great swarms as to be irrefragable. The newspapers herald their approach, so that all may try to fight them. It is possible to do something in this line when they are on the ground, but when in flight nothing can stop them. As they seem to come out of the wilderness, men have even talked of building great zinc fences to hinder their march.

Although twenty years ago the cattle products amounted to the largest total and agriculture came second in the proportion of about two to one, yet now these two industries have changed places, as has been stated. The changes are due in large measure to the opening up of the country by the numerous railroads and the consequent bringing under cultivation of large tracts of land either formerly used for grazing or not settled at all.

In each of the three great agricultural products, wheat, corn and linseed, Argentina is now in the front rank of producing countries. Great quantities of alfalfa, tobacco, rice, grapes, barley and oats are also raised, and flax to some extent. In the north, semi-tropical products, sugar, manioc, oranges, olives and other fruits are raised. Yerba mate or Paraguay tea is cultivated in considerable quantities.

Though the increase in live stock has been great, yet the limit of the ranching area has not been reached. The export of meat received a great stimulus from the introduction of systems of cold storage and transport, and now an enormous amount of European and North American as well as Argentine capital is invested in the industry. The Central Produce Market of Buenos Ayres is the largest hide and wool market in the world.

The timber regions of the country, mostly in the northern part, are rich in structural and cabinet woods. In the province of Santiago del Estero 30 per cent. of the area is filled with such forests and over 200 sawmills are now engaged in making lumber. The quebracho is the most valuable, and others are tipu, tangu, campy, ligam, etc., algaroba and naubay. The opening of the forests is greatly assisted by the large navigable rivers which penetrate the section.

Mineral sources of the republic must be closed rather as probable sources of wealth than as actual contributors at present. Although mining was carried on in the very early history of the country and gold, silver, copper and borax have been found in paying quantities, yet this industry does not compare with those of farming and cattle raising.

There is also a lack of coal, although

some claim this to be principally on account of the fact that the railroads have been extended rather far into the benefit of the agricultural lands than into the regions of mineral deposits. Antimony, lead, tin, bismuth and sulphur are also found, and petroleum has lately been discovered in sufficient quantities to pay for working. There are four large salt lakes in the province of Rio Negro which are now being worked extensively by an incorporated salt company. However, Argentina has practically no opportunities for money making from minerals.

As regards manufacturing, this industry is carried on chiefly along the line of converting raw products of the fields into finished and half finished products. Here again the lack of coal and the non-existence of rivers furnishing water power of quantities renders the growth of great manufacturing interests. However, some native manufacturing of blankets, rugs, ropes, laces, embroideries, etc., exist and add a little to the wealth producing power of the people. Distich breeding, culture and silk culture are also carried on to a limited extent and must prove profitable investments.

No country has offered greater facilities for the construction of railroads than has Argentina. The surface is almost everywhere smooth and level, and the construction of rails and cheaply built, and they radiate from the capital, extending to every part of the country except the wilderness of Gran Chaco in the north and the wastes of Patagonia in the south.

The central part of the republic within 200 miles of Buenos Ayres is thickly marked with steel arteries, the State of Ohio. Thus far the capital for these railroads has come wholly from abroad and mostly from England. The control of these railroads has therefore given the English great help in selling goods and in securing the construction of elevators and the like which have heretofore gone to the English. Moreover, if we are to gain a foothold in South America, we must accept these opportunities.

To sell goods in Argentina we must invest money there. I am tired of hearing of the opportunities, but of seeing no more evidence on the part of our bankers of willingness to invest there. In plain slang, we must either "put up or shut up." There is no halfway road. Let us not fool ourselves longer.

In addition to the railroads there are many navigable rivers in the country. The Parana, Paraguay and Uruguay, with their branches, are deep enough for large steamers for hundreds of miles. Such of the rivers as the Rio Negro, Rio Colorado, Rio Negro, Chubut, Desado and others, the largest being the Rio Negro, which is navigable for 600 miles to the coast.

There are regular coast lines from Buenos Ayres to many of the cities of Argentina, Brazil, Spanish, British, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian and Swedish steamers arrive and depart regularly from the ports of Argentina to all quarters of the earth. There are fifty lines with agencies in Buenos Ayres. During an average year more than 135,000 vessels register at all ports of the republic, carrying 60,000,000 tons of which 40,000 vessels with 20,000,000 tons usually report to Buenos Ayres.

Regular passenger service is maintained to the various ports of Europe and steamers arrive or leave several times a week. To New York while there are not so many steamers opportunity is offered at least once in a fortnight for the traveller to take a direct steamer. No passenger steamer is allowed to leave the port of Buenos Ayres until it has been inspected by the American flag, and until built on freight boats carried the American flag between the United States and Argentina.

There can be no more logical argument in support of Argentina's claim to commerce. The newspapers herald their approach, so that all may try to fight them. It is possible to do something in this line when they are on the ground, but when in flight nothing can stop them. As they seem to come out of the wilderness, men have even talked of building great zinc fences to hinder their march.

Although twenty years ago the cattle products amounted to the largest total and agriculture came second in the proportion of about two to one, yet now these two industries have changed places, as has been stated. The changes are due in large measure to the opening up of the country by the numerous railroads and the consequent bringing under cultivation of large tracts of land either formerly used for grazing or not settled at all.

In each of the three great agricultural products, wheat, corn and linseed, Argentina is now in the front rank of producing countries. Great quantities of alfalfa, tobacco, rice, grapes, barley and oats are also raised, and flax to some extent. In the north, semi-tropical products, sugar, manioc, oranges, olives and other fruits are raised. Yerba mate or Paraguay tea is cultivated in considerable quantities.

Though the increase in live stock has been great, yet the limit of the ranching area has not been reached. The export of meat received a great stimulus from the introduction of systems of cold storage and transport, and now an enormous amount of European and North American as well as Argentine capital is invested in the industry. The Central Produce Market of Buenos Ayres is the largest hide and wool market in the world.

The timber regions of the country, mostly in the northern part, are rich in structural and cabinet woods. In the province of Santiago del Estero 30 per cent. of the area is filled with such forests and over 200 sawmills are now engaged in making lumber. The quebracho is the most valuable, and others are tipu, tangu, campy, ligam, etc., algaroba and naubay. The opening of the forests is greatly assisted by the large navigable rivers which penetrate the section.

Mineral sources of the republic must be closed rather as probable sources of wealth than as actual contributors at present. Although mining was carried on in the very early history of the country and gold, silver, copper and borax have been found in paying quantities, yet this industry does not compare with those of farming and cattle raising.

There is also a lack of coal, although