

Still another of Secretary Ballinger's interferences with the forestry service related to the technical training of forest rangers.

Fully trained men for this highly important duty could not be had. Those partially trained were therefore at first instructed in groups by officers of the forestry service who went from place to place for the purpose. Then camp schools were improvised by the forestry officers for courses of eight or ten weeks. Finally the men were sent to agricultural colleges which offered courses prescribed by the forestry service.

"We sent no men to college," Mr. Pinchot testifies, "in the sense in which that term is used; we simply ordered them to go where they could get instructions in their duties, partly from officers of the government and partly from other men; and we did so on the basis of a very considerable experience, and with the foreknowledge that that was the best scheme open to us for raising the standard of the work." Instruction at these colleges was given to the rangers free, and the government paid their traveling expenses but not their living expenses.

This system of ranger education was stopped by the Secretary of Agriculture, after the President had dismissed Mr. Pinchot from the service at the instigation of Secretary Ballinger. It was stopped as illegal, upon an opinion of the Comptroller. Of that opinion the brief of facts before us says: "The matter was presented to the Comptroller without notice to the forest service and without giving its law officers opportunity to present their side of the case;" and "the document submitting the question of legality to the Comptroller is practically a brief against the forest service."

V.

The fifth and final point of this brief of facts relates to what is known as "the Ronald letter," and goes to show that Secretary Ballinger has been untruthful in his public defense.



He had been editorially defended by the Outlook on the basis of President Taft's sweeping and now badly damaged vindication; but with a reservation to the effect that he had acted in "bad taste" in becoming the Cunningham claimants' attorney before the bureau of which he had been the head while that claim was pending there. To that reservation J. T. Ronald, a former partner with Mr. Ballinger, took exception, admitting that it would be just if the facts upon which it rested were true, but asserting that they were not true.

In making this assertion Mr. Ronald relied upon annotations by Mr. Ballinger upon the Outlook editorial. Thereafter and until further developments, the Outlook "maintained an editorial column distinctly friendly to Mr. Ballinger."

From those circumstances it is argued that Mr. Ballinger vouched for the veracity of the Ronald letter, the statements of which are now proved to be false. On the subject of his motive in that connection, the brief makes note of the additional fact that "at the time this happened, no Congressional inquiry was contemplated and the chance that the records of the Land Office disproving Ronald's inspired statements should be made public was remote."

VI.

The foregoing summary of evidence in the Congressional investigation comprises only the evidence against Secretary Ballinger. The committee proceeded with testimony in Secretary Ballinger's behalf, and he himself has been a witness. So far then as oral testimony enters into this summary, it must be taken with the understanding that it may be in conflict with evidence for the defence. But in so far as it rests upon public records and reasonable inferences therefrom (as most of the important facts stated above do), it cannot but be regarded as a strong indictment against Mr. Taft's Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Taft's own conduct in connection with the matter can hardly be characterized more gently than it has been by one of his newspaper defenders which calls it "clumsy."

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

PRICES AND LAND VALUES.

Morgantown, W. Va.

Though it is generally true that high prices make dear land, and not dear land high prices (p. 293), I wish to call attention to circumstances that suspend the operation of that well-proved law. They may be of interest in our present era of high prices.

The market price of an article is determined by its cost of production on the leanest land that must be worked to supply the market's demands, or on what is called "marginal" land by Ricardo, in his law of rent. An increase in the price of an article would thus mean that its cost of production on marginal land had gone up.

On marginal or rentless land only the cost of labor and capital affect the cost of production, and an advance in the latter would mean either a rise in wages or interest or that more labor and capital than formerly had to be exerted to obtain the same output, i. e., that marginal land had become leaner.

As the recent rise in interest has been little or nothing, and as the general rise in wages has been

only a fraction of the rise in commodity prices, we are forced to the alternative conclusion that leaner land has had to be worked to supply the steady increase of market demands during the past decade.

Even then, only the holding idle of the richer land for speculative purposes would cause the price of land to affect that of commodities by artificially lowering the margin of cultivation. For agricultural land there is little available data, but I believe that the area of richer land, held at speculative prices and wholly or partly idle by railroads, land syndicates and speculating farmers, is a considerable fraction of the country's arable area. In the case of timber and mining land the statistics are easier to obtain, and the great speculative reserves of Southern pine and of iron ore are especially noteworthy.

When all the land from which a commodity can be produced is monopolized by one productive interest and offered for sale only at prices which make its commercial development impossible, we have no longer the competition between land owners that fixes the relative value of land of varying qualities. Here Ricardo's law of rent does not hold, and commodity price is independent of the cost of production on marginal land. This condition now prevails nationally for Pennsylvania anthracite and for bauxite (aluminum ore), and locally often for such commodities as lime, bituminous coal and natural gas, where the products of competitive lands are barred by the cost of transportation. In such cases the absurdly high price of land simply indicates its monopolization and that the prices of its products are set on the principle of "what the traffic will bear."

R. B. BRINSMADÉ.

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HEARD ON A STREET-CAR.

Topeka, Kansas.

On Saturday night I happened to be riding on the back-end of a crowded street-car. Near me stood two honest workmen, one of whom was an intelligent Swedish bricklayer. I paid no attention to their conversation until the Swede happened to make a remark about the delivery wagons which were passing.

"How would you like to drive a grocery-wagon at \$9.00 a week?"

"Some of those boys only get \$7.00 a week," said the other.

"Yes, and there are men who are laying cement blocks for three cents a block. And then we wonder where the deadbeats come from. If I only got three cents for a block, I couldn't pay my grocery bill either."

W. S. PROUT.

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How many people think they're good because they've done no crime;

How many think they've won success who merely didn't fail!

How many who're untempted think their virtue is sublime—

And that they'll land in heaven because they didn't land in jail!

—Life.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before, continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, May 17, 1910.

The Political Fight in Iowa.

The Insurgent Republicans of Iowa opened their State campaign on the 10th at Des Moines, Senators Cummins and Dolliver (p. 409) being the principal speakers. The meeting is said to have been tremendous in size and enthusiasm. Harvey Ingham presided, and introduced as the first speaker Senator Dolliver, who urged the election of Warren Garst for Governor, and then devoted himself to national politics. He said he did not intend to get out of the Republican party, but that its present leadership have betrayed its welfare and that of the country and must be put out. He decried President Taft as "a good man surrounded by people who know exactly what they want," and declared that in his Winona speech (vol. xii, pp. 920, 938), President Taft had used as his principal argument in favor of the new tariff a collection of figures which were not only false but had been prepared with deliberate intent to deceive. Taking up the tariff law, schedule by schedule, he denounced it as having been deliberately framed to exploit the people in the interest of trusts. Senator Cummins's speech, which was in the same spirit, arraigned Aldrich, Cannon, Payne and Dalzell as men who look at all vital problems from the corporation standpoint. The defeat of Hull, Smith, Towner and Kennedy, Republican members of the lower House of Congress from Iowa, was frankly asked for. From Washington on the 11th these speeches were reported to have been delivered after and in accordance with the action of a conference of all the Insurgent Republicans in both houses of Congress.

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The President's Railroad Bill.

Events subsequent to our report of last week on the President's railroad bill (p. 441) are indicative of a good deal of demoralization among President Taft's supporters in Congress. After his hurried return to Washington he ran over to Passaic, New Jersey, to keep the only speaking appointment he had not cancelled, and in his speech there he talked hopefully of the possibilities of his railroad bill, while conceding that it seemed then to be in jeopardy in some important respects.