

If in general policy and in detail—the project is desirable, why should it languish?

Why should the practical work be indefinitely postponed?

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That the utilitarian and aesthetic ideals are realizable, the plans abundantly testify; that no serious engineering difficulties intervene, the experts assure us; and that differences of opinion as to details, both the politic and the technical, could be readily adjusted is evident from the character of the criticisms and the elasticity of the plans.

Since, then, there are no baffling obstacles in any of those categories, what baffling obstacle can there be except the great cost of the undertaking?

If might be said, of course, that private property interests would stand in the way, and that the necessary legislation would therefore be difficult to get.

Doubtless these interests would interfere. Some of them would interpose objections to the street widening which might sweep away value-increasing thoroughfares; some to the enlargement of the business district, which might lessen site values in congested places; some to the diversion of traffic from accustomed lines and trade from accustomed centers, which might prejudice property values along those lines and in those centers.

But these objections could easily be surmounted by means of fair compensation. Even this obstacle resolves itself into a question of cost.

The great cost, then, is the only baffling obstacle in the way of this grand municipal project, which now awaits the pleasure of the Mayor and his commission.

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Truly the cost would be very great. But is that a serious obstacle to a civic undertaking such as this—an undertaking that would not only confer the highest civic benefits, but would of its own force produce a tremendous addition to the possible municipal income?

Let us see.

The present income of Chicago is indeed insufficient for current expenses; and the limit of the borrowing power of the city has been reached. It is legally impossible, therefore, and ought to continue to be legally impossible, to apply any of the current income or the proceeds of general bonds to this revolutionary municipal enterprise. Nothing more should be done with funds from those sources, in the direction of realizing the project in question, than to adapt their expendi-

ture as closely as practicable to the general plans of the municipal idealization.

But couldn't the expenses be easily met out of the increased ground values which the proposed reconstruction would give to a small class of people, resident and non-resident, who own the site of the proposed Ideal City?

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Henry George? Single tax?

No.

This method for overcoming the only baffling obstacle in the way of realizing an Ideal Chicago, is neither Georgism nor the single tax—not unless every revenue measure that even squints at justice on the moral side or at common sense on the practical, is to be attributed to those "ban-shees" of the land speculators.

Neither is this method a special assessment scheme, to be levied upon property holders in proportion to estimated betterments.

The method we suggest for realizing the Ideal Chicago would not resort to the crude special assessment device, now common and unfair; nor tax all land values, as the single tax proposes; nor appropriate approximately all ground rents, actual and potential, as Henry George contemplated; nor even appropriate the whole increase ("un-earned increment"), as John Stuart Mill advised.

It is not a dream, nor impracticable, nor confiscatory, nor even a reform.

It is a simple square-toed business proposition; a proposition which two business men jointly interested in a piece of property would admit to be eminently fair as between themselves, under circumstances analogous to those of the subject under consideration.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

BALTIMORE'S CONSERVATION OF LAND VALUES.

Baltimore, Oct. 5.

As an outgrowth of opportunity for effecting improvements given by the great fire in Baltimore, an experiment in land tenure is being tried, which is of present interest and may serve as an example for other cities to follow in dealing with like situations.

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In improving one of the important thoroughfares along the Pratt street water front for eight blocks from Light street to East Falls avenue, it became necessary to widen Pratt street into the water and wharf space, requiring for a perfection of the improvement a rearrangement of the docks themselves.

Therefore, the city condemned the docks between these limits and reconstructed them.

Then, and here lies the importance of the matter, the city did not sell in fee simple the new dockage area; but, instead, leased these long strips of land, buttressed by piles and extending out into the water, for the term of fifty years. At the end of the term the land and all the improvements thereon revert to and become the absolute property of the city without compensation.

The rental is fixed at a minimum sum calculated to be sufficient to cover interest and sinking fund charges upon the loan contracted for the purpose of making the improvement, and is subject to increase but not to diminution at each recurring period of ten years during the grant. The increase, if any, is to be fixed by arbitrators, one appointed by the city, one by the grantee, and the third selected by those two.

The leases also contain a provision that the improvements must be insured to an amount satisfactory to the city authorities, the proceeds to be used in case of fire for rebuilding. The grantees must keep clean and properly paved the very considerable street space on the docks, and remove all snow and ice therefrom, and also make good any damage done the docks by collision, and save the city harmless from all nuisance, accident or injury happening thereon. They can not assign without the city's assent. The improvements are expressly made taxable at the regular city rate.

The sites were valuable for use by the water transportation companies, and the city had no difficulty in disposing of the entire space upon the above terms. Valuable improvements have been and are being erected thereon.

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The significant fact about this arrangement is that the entire future increase of value of this land, the unearned increment to come from the growth of population, will not go into the pockets of the grantees; but, at the end of fifty years, will revert in its entirety to the people of Baltimore and become an asset in the city treasury.

This is an example of the kind of conservation of our resources that we need so badly in all our modern cities.

GEO. STEWART BROWN.

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COMMISSION GOVERNMENT.

St. Paul, Oct. 19.

St. Paul has a charter commission, to devise a new and of course a better charter for the city. The desirability of a new charter is universally agreed to, but agreement abruptly ends at that point. More centralized power is desirable in the opinion of most; but the commission form, which gives more energy to a city government has become associated in the minds of the people with the initiative, referendum and recall, and these popular attachments do not find support among many who would welcome a more powerful governmental machine. As a result the commissioners are of varied mind.

JOHN Z. WHITE.

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, October 26, 1909.

The Execution of Ferrer Overthrows the Spanish Ministry.

Demonstrations of protest against the execution of Francisco Ferrer at Barcelona on the 13th, reported last week (p. 1016) as being held in all the large cities of Europe as well as at many points in the United States and South America, have continued. Huge meetings were held on the 19th in New York and Berlin, and interpellations and disorders occurred in the British House of Commons, and in the French and Belgian Chambers of Deputies. On the same day the executive committee of the American Federation of Labor passed resolutions denouncing the execution of Ferrer, in which it was declared that his martyrdom has given "the cause of liberty a great impetus not only in Spain and in European countries, but everywhere that human aspiration for freedom yet seeks attainment." The world-wide indignation over the execution found its reaction at last in Spain. On the 20th King Alfonso, perturbed at the news which was pressing in upon him, was reported as much dejected and as suffering from insomnia. On the 21st, as the result of bitter attacks upon the government by the opposition, Premier Antonio Maura with his Conservative, Clerical cabinet resigned, and the leader of the Liberal opposition, the former Premier, Moret y Prendergast, formed a new ministry, leading it as Premier and minister of the interior. On the 25th the deposed Premier, Mr. Maura, made a violent speech in the Senate, declaring that all the Liberals were anarchists and revolutionists, and predicting an awful future for Spain. According to the Chicago Inter Ocean's dispatches the program of the new government is understood to include the re-establishment of the constitutional guarantees in Barcelona and Gerona (p. 946), the suppression of the censorship, amnesty for political offenses, the publication of the documents in the Ferrer case, and the holding of elections within a few months. Lieutenant General De Luque, minister of war in the new Liberal cabinet, in an interview on the 25th, confirmed the report that the government had decided not to push further the Moroccan campaign (p. 972). He said that if the Liberals