

of the New York landholder to raise the price whenever he finds the tenant may want to purchase. The owner of the building also has to pay all the taxes, which in this case amount to nearly \$30 a year.

Any student of human affairs can see that the owner of this land did not create its value, as he did not create the land. He did nothing to improve it; he put up no buildings, and doesn't even pay the taxes. This growth of the city and the increase of population give to the land its value. He has a large area with a great many buildings on it, and his vast income is wrung from the toil and sweat of industry. The \$45 a year which this workman pays him should somehow or other be diverted into the city treasury, where in natural justice it belongs.

If the city took these site value rents, no taxes would be necessary. These rents would furnish the city with funds to give the workman's family better schools than there are now. In front of the row of houses is a nasty cobblestone pavement; the city should take these funds and make a good street, or else compel the man who owns the land to pave it. The city sewerage runs in the open gutter along by the sidewalk; with the ground rents in hand the city could give these home-dwellers a good sewerage system. It could supply their children with good parks and playgrounds, and do many other things for the comfort and welfare of the people. All of this could be done without levying one dollar in taxation.

Better yet, land being free from private monopoly, the working people would save the many millions which they now contribute to support land owners. These would also have to work for a livelihood, thus adding their quota to the general prosperity. Thus the general wealth would be greatly increased, for it is labor that produces all the wealth of any nation. And the rich idlers would be much better and happier if engaged in honest, useful work.

"What fools we mortals be." God gave us the land to benefit all, but we refuse to use it for this purpose. We permit a few to have it, consigning the others to varying degrees of poverty.

GEORGE WALLACE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

LAND VALUE TAXATION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN.

"Land Values" Press Bureau.

20 Tothill Street, Westminster, December 26, 1909.

I see from *The Public* that you are following the political situation here closely, and that you appre-

ciate it accurately. I have reproduced your "British Revolution" article* in the January issue of "Land Values." It deals very happily with that view of the situation, and we shall look with interest to your further treatment of it.

We are fully occupied in turning out campaign literature wholly on the land question, endeavoring to make it the outstanding issue. There is a tendency on the part of some leaders to deal with the constitutional issue apart from the question which has raised it. Lloyd George and Winston Churchill counteract this tendency brilliantly in their attack on landlordism specifically. They are the recognized leaders of the radicals, just as they are particularly hated by the Tories. I think we shall win handsomely again, and the amount of educational work that is being done will make a great step in our direction possible within a few years.

JOHN ORR.

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On Board R. M. S. "Adriatic," January 6, 1910.

I have for more than a month been visiting the important cities of Great Britain and have to a considerable extent been in touch with the political situation there. I tell you, it made one's soul stir within him to hear "The Land Song" sung as I heard it at one of the Trafalgar square demonstrations.† At last the people, at least in one great country, are awake, to a great measure, to the vital importance of taxing the land values. Just the outcome of it all at the coming election is hard to determine; but that the Liberals will go back with at least a small majority the most arrogant Conservatives are inclined to believe.

JOHN H. ALLEN.

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TIMBER LAND TAXATION.

Bow, Washington, December 21, 1909.

In this county and State the question of taxation is acute. Not only have taxes risen greatly in the past year but there is such glaring inequality that were it not so serious it would be ridiculous. There are not only absurd inequalities in the taxation of men of the same business and occupation, but also in the taxation of different classes of property.

To illustrate, there is a timber company owning thousands of acres of choice timber lands in this county, and also some first class land for agricultural purposes which they have logged off and are holding for speculation. Of this latter class, there is a piece of some thirty acres near here, which is now covered with second growth timber and older, and for which they have been offered \$5,500 cash. They are taxed on \$10.00 per acre, while a rancher across the road who has spent hundreds of dollars clearing and improving his place is assessed on \$25.00 per acre. The logged off lands require an expenditure of from \$75 to \$150, and even \$200 per acre, to put them in shape for the plow. The man who does this and spends many a weary year among the stumps and logs is taxed to the last hair of the dog's tail, while the timber barons who impropriate the wealth created by Nature, and in so doing de-

*In *Public* of December 10, page 1181.

†See *Public* of December 3, page 1161, and this *Public*, page 45.

vastate our forests by wasteful methods of logging and deplete our resources, are allowed to escape with taxes on half the valuation of the rancher. A piece of logged off land is, until slashed and cleared, almost worthless for any purpose—even for grazing, in a few years after logging operations have ceased. With these things before a man's eyes, it is little wonder if when "blowing in" money, "a blowing out" stumps, and digging, chopping, pulling and sometimes swearing in grubbing out roots, a man's gall will flow and he feels very much like a rebel.

Not only this, but the ranchers here have practical illustrations of the law of rents. As the price of shingles goes to the sky, we find men able to work poorer and poorer lands, until they are now, even while good available cedar is going into the market, sawing down cedar stumps and making them into shingle bolts—these often or usually for small mills whose owners cannot get hold of the good timber held for speculation, or by big milling companies who "have beaten them to it."

Still I feel no bitterness toward the lumbermen. Let the people be as alert, energetic, vigorous, determined, practical and business-like in defending and advancing their interests as the mill men are in caring for their concerns, and they will have no cause for complaint and will need no sympathy; and until they do show some disposition to adopt this character, sympathy is misplaced and absolutely of no avail. We want more of the old revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, and less whining, blubbering and looking for outside help.

G. W. CHENEY.

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PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IN SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco, January 4, 1910.

Thursday, December 30, the voters of San Francisco went to the ballot-box in a pouring rain and decided to issue bonds for \$2,020,000 to take over, rebuild and operate under public ownership what is known as the Geary Street Railway line, and to extend it from its present terminus at Market and Kearney streets, down Market street to the ferry. That's the way the voters rang out the old year, and they did it by a vote of 31,185 for public ownership and operation, to 11,694 against. The total vote was the largest ever cast at a special election in the city, being 43,081, of which 70 per cent was for the bonds.*

Thus, after fourteen years of discussion and three previous special elections on the question of municipalizing the Geary street line, the matter has been decided by a clear two-thirds majority of those voting on the question.

Fourteen years ago, or seven years before the franchise of the Geary Street company expired, an attempt was made to have the Supervisors extend the term of the franchise. It would have succeeded but for that "troublemaker," James H. Barry, as members of the San Francisco Plunderbund delight to call him. He not only protested in the Star, but organized a mass meeting, paid for the hall and produced a small riot; but one large enough to stop the proposed action of the Supervisors.

*See last week's Public, page 12.

In 1902, soon after the company's franchise expired, the question of issuing bonds for a municipal road was submitted, but was lost on account of the provision requiring a two-thirds majority. The question was submitted again in 1903, again received a majority, but did not get the required two-thirds majority. Last June it was submitted the third time, and came within less than 500 votes of receiving the necessary two-thirds majority.

It seems to be poetic justice, if not a "dispensation of Providence," that the present terminus of the line to be operated by the city is within fifteen feet of the front of the Chronicle building, for if there is one thing that gives M. H. de Young a pain it is the proposal to pry private monopoly loose from public property. In the Chronicle he seriously and almost tearfully advised the voters not to load themselves up with a huge debt for an experiment that was bound to fail. The Chronicle and the Evening Post, which is said to be the property of the United Railroads company that monopolizes street railway transportation in San Francisco, were the only daily papers that opposed the bond issue.

The United Railroads made an active and expensive campaign against the bonds. The billboards blazed with huge posters, paid for by the United Railroads, advising the dear people not to issue bonds for "a white elephant," but it was well known that the United Railroads wanted that white elephant for its own profitable menagerie. Its property is worth about \$20,000,000, but the monopoly is "capitalized" at \$80,000,000. It wanted a \$2,000,000 Geary Street Road to capitalize at \$8,000,000, which it could do without getting the consent of two-thirds of the voters. The handful of directors of the corporation bonded the people of San Francisco for \$80,000,000, but the people can't bond themselves for \$2,000,000 except by consent of a two-thirds majority.

The municipally owned and operated Geary Street Line will be the entering wedge to split the street railway monopoly in this city. The franchises of other lines will expire at intervals, and the last franchise will expire in 1929. There is scarcely a doubt that the city will take the different lines as the franchises expire.

The really noticeable feature of the bond election was the fact that most of the votes against the bonds were cast in the "smart set" and slum districts. Glorious larceny and petty larceny got together on the C. D. Q. message of the United Railroads monopoly. The labor unions were for the bonds; the Merchants' Association was against them.

W. G. EGGLESTON.

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NO DUKES IN HEAVEN!

The following satirical epigram was written by Dr. Samuel Clarke, who had just seen the inscription, "Domus Ultima" (the Final Home), on the vault belonging to the Dukes of Richmond in the Cathedral of Chichester.

Did he who thus inscribed the wall
Not read, or not believe, St. Paul,
Who says there is, where'er it stands,
Another house, not made with hands?
Or may we gather from these words
That house is not a House of Lords.