

only from an increase of their economic efficiency and improvement in their personal character, and not a word about the economic inefficiency and personal character of the non-working class!

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#### VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

On December 4th the Municipal Rating (Unimproved Values) Bill was passed through the Legislative Council. On the same evening, however, the Watt Ministry by whom the Bill had been brought in, was defeated in the Assembly upon a proposal to increase the number of members from 65 to 70, and the Ministry resigned. The result was that the Municipal Rating Bill was, temporarily at least, shelved. Whether under the circumstances that have arisen it may ultimately be restored at the stage at which it disappeared, or whether it will have to be reintroduced, and passed again through both Houses, I am not sure.

The reason for the resignation of the Ministry seemed inadequate, and their proposal for the increase of members was only defeated by two votes and did not involve any great question of principle, but the *Argus* and probably some of the country party among his supporters, had for some time been trying to force a reconstruction of the Cabinet, and Mr. Watt probably felt irritated at the pressure.

The leader of the Labor Party, which only numbers 20 in a House of 65, was sent for, and rushing in, undertook to form a Ministry. He did so and his folly became apparent, for the Liberals closed up their ranks and re-elected Mr. Watt leader of the party. He immediately moved a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry, the members of which, having vacated their seats on acceptance of office, and not having been re-elected, are not even members of the House. The decision will be taken today, and the result is a foregone conclusion.

A Liberal Ministry will be reinstated. We hope the Municipal Rating Bill may be in the same happy position. If not, it is unfortunate that at least one member of the country party, W. McLeod, who

may be taken into the Ministry, is an opponent of the measure, and he may be able to delay its reintroduction.—A. C. NICHOLS.

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#### ROOSEVELT'S GUARDED ENDORSEMENT OF THE SINGLE TAX.

We believe that municipalities should have complete self-government as regards all the affairs that are exclusively their own, including the important matter of taxation, and that the burden of municipal taxation should be so shifted as to put the weight of land taxation upon the unearned rise in value of the land itself, rather than upon the improvements, the buildings; the effort being to prevent the undue rise of rent.—Theodore Roosevelt, "The Progressive Party," *Century*, October 1913.

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#### HOW NEW YORK CITY IS ROBBED.

A very large number of franchises were procured by persons who had neither the means nor the desire to operate them, simply for the purpose of holding them in case at some future time the privilege would have value. There is a case on record of a franchise to construct a bridge across the East River having been awarded to a company by the legislature. No limitation of time was imposed and no steps ever taken to construct the bridge under the franchise. Nevertheless, when the City of New York decided to construct a bridge at or near the same point for which this franchise had been secured, the city was compelled to pay a considerable sum to the owners of the franchise in order to compensate them, and for which they had made absolutely no return to the State.—John J. Murphy, *Franchise Grants in the City of New York*, *Annals of the American Academy*, 1908.

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I HOLD that the earth was meant for the human race, and not for a few privileged ones.—MAX O'RELL.