

\$14.65. In North Dakota the increase per acre is 70.6 per cent.; in South Dakota it is 65.2; in Oklahoma 76.7; in Florida 57.4, and in Mississippi 58.9. These increases are largely if not wholly in the site value, improvements counting for little or nothing. And to the extent that they are increases in site value, they imply one or the other of two things: Either, advances in productive facilities and marketing opportunities have made the cultivation of these farm lands more profitable; or else, more pressing necessity for farming land has increased the demand for it without its use having become more profitable. On the latter hypothesis, the owner is able to enrich himself at the expense of others—from purchasers in higher purchase price, from tenants in higher rents, and from farm hands in lower wages. On the former hypothesis, the advances in productive facilities and marketing opportunities have been absorbed by owners, whatever goes to them in higher site values being deducted from the actual cultivator. Even the owner himself is no better off for these site value increases—not as a cultivator; for he either loses or fails to get as cultivator what he gains as owner. And when it is considered that as a farm owner the working farmer is very “small potatoes and few in a hill,” it ought to be plain enough that on the whole, agriculturists are not enriched by advances in the site values of farms.

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THE LABORING MAN'S PROSPERITY.

The “tory” idea of “prosperity” is one thing in relation to great corporations, and a very different thing in relation to the common man who earns his income. The tory press is now beginning a “campaign of education,” with the purpose of convincing the common people that they are securing their just share of the prevailing prosperity.

One cries: “Nowhere in the world is the laborer paid as high wages as in America. What, then, are you grumbling about?” Another quotes statistics, showing that wages per hour in a large part of the mechanical industries are 1.6 per cent. higher than two years ago, while the purchasing power of the advanced scale is 1 per cent. higher!

This tory paper, darkly perceiving that a bottle of pop and a stick of gum added to the purchasing power of the wageman would not justify the strenuous industry of the prosperity barker, admits that “the rich men who have large invested interests are known to be growing richer fast. Large dividends are being declared, the railroads are . . . overwhelmed with business, . . . banks make good showings,” etc.;

and adds: “But these things, when looked at superficially, show prosperity for the men of wealth and not for the common people.” Then it goes on to describe as above, the ungrateful laborer, with head thrown back and bottle held aloft, wantonly enjoying the luxurious glugity-glug of his half pint of lemon soda!

Dear! dear! What ungrateful creatures the common people are!

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The intelligent reader will not fail to note with what ease the rich are shown to be “growing richer fast,” yet how painstakingly the straight-edge is adjusted and the spirit level is applied to demonstrate the scarcely appreciable upward slant of the common people’s “prosperity”!

Having, however, triumphantly produced the bottle of pop, our tory cries: “Stay! stay! Don’t drink it now. ‘The situation has its suggestion for the laborer that he use this opportunity to lay something up for the possible time of idleness ahead of him!’”

Alas! it is greatly to be feared that this word of caution from the sympathetic friend of the laborer will be unheeded. History shows that the laborer’s standard of living rises with every increase in purchasing power—that the laborer, having acquired the power, may be expected to purchase a bicycle, just as a tory newspaper-owner, “growing richer fast,” abandons the wheel and buys an automobile! Which serves to show that “we are all poor critters.”

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Now, we concede the pop. We admit that the common people, as a whole, really have a share in the prevailing prosperity. That the railroads, Standard Oil, the United States Steel, and the other great monopolies have not been wholly able to prevent the falling of crumbs from their tables, and that to the extent of the aggregate of these crumbs the condition of the common people is bettered. We are willing to take the tory newspaper’s word as to the total value of said aggregate, namely, that it amounts to a 1 per cent. increase in the purchasing power of the laborer, and we will volunteer the concession that the small business man’s purchasing power is proportionately increased. In short, we are convinced that for every additional palace the monopolist buys in Europe or builds in America, the average individual is able to put “thirty cents” in the savings bank.

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But we beg to ask: How can a newspaper that

makes any pretense to respectability express satisfaction with that situation? Is such a paper worthy of the confidence of the common people? Will such a paper long enjoy the support of the common people? No. The common people are fast coming to understand that they are justly entitled to such share of "prosperity" as they would be able to secure under conditions of free competition in the entire field of private enterprise. They are coming to realize the fact that when the prevalence of unexampled prosperity is not concretely reflected in their own condition the reason for it lies in the irresistible power of private monopoly to capture the greater part of the increasing products of the world's industries. Realizing this, it will not be long till they will come to perceive the fact that the newspaper that preaches contentment with the condition is at enmity with the people, and that the most immediate and effective step in self-defense is to withdraw support from such papers and transfer it to papers which, instead of laboriously correlating statistics to prove that the common people are not entirely forestalled in the hocus pocus of distribution, point to their meager share in the prosperity of the country as incontrovertible evidence of economic misbalance, so extreme in degree as to menace the stability of business, and, for that reason, if for no other, absolutely intolerable. The newspaper that seeks to quiet popular discontent with inequitable conditions is in no better business than the "nigger on the safety-valve." There is only this principal difference, that in the latter case the resultant explosion may destroy but a hundred lives, while in the former a whole nation must suffer the devastation of ruined industries, wrecked fortunes, blighted hopes, and all the train of ills that follow a "lean" year or a deliberate conspiracy of the kings of mammon to wreck the market for the furtherance of their selfish ends.

Centralized power is always dangerous. There is no safety but in equality of opportunity, leading to universal affluence. And while the tendency to pile up unlimited wealth in few hands continues, the moral duty of every man or institution of influence is to intelligently countervail that tendency by seeking out and removing its cause.

EDWARD HOWELL PUTNAM.

I cannot occupy the bleakest crag of the White Hills, or the Allegheny Range, but some man or corporation steps up to me to show me that it is his.—Emerson.

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 Wednesday, September 12.

The Maine Election.

Maine is one of the few States in which elections are held in advance of the general elections of other States. It has therefore long been regarded as a barometer of political conditions. For this reason the election there on the 10th was especially important as foreshadowing results elsewhere in November. The Republican candidate for governor, William T. Cobb (p. 320), was elected by a plurality of about 8,000, in a total vote of about 135,000. Gov. Cobb was elected two years ago by a plurality of 25,800 in a total of 129,714—a falling off in plurality of about 17,000.

National interest in the election this year turned largely upon the candidacy of Congressman Chas. E. Littlefield for re-election in the second district. His hostility in Congress to organized labor had made him the principal object of attack by the American Federation of Labor (p. 465), and to aid him the strongest Republican campaigners went into his district, including Speaker Cannon, Secretary Taft, Senator Lodge, and Senator Beveridge. He has been re-elected by about 1,134 plurality in a total vote of 33,508. Two years ago he was elected by a plurality of 5,419 in a total vote of 33,524. His loss in plurality this year, therefore, is over 4,000.

New York Politics.

The opening of the New York campaign began on the 11th with the assembling at New York City of the State convention of the Independence League (pp. 439, 457), of which William Randolph Hearst is the founder. Judge Samuel J. Seabury was elected permanent chairman. No nominations were made on the 11th, but the convention decided against fusion with the Democrats and in favor of the nomination of a full State ticket, Mr. Hearst himself taking the lead in this demand. Before adjournment on the 11th a platform was adopted which condemned the cheating of Mr. Hearst out of his election as mayor of New York as having "raised an issue upon the right decision of which depends the preservation of the fundamental principle of American government." The platform demands—

A revision of the present dishonest and complex election law, a simplified ballot, and a law providing for a recount in cases of fraud or mistake in terms so plain and mandatory that they can neither be disregarded nor circumvented in the courts. A measure stripping the attorney general of discretionary power in quo warranto