

certain percentage of value as compared with the unit value. For instance, a lot fifty feet deep from the front has 72½ per cent of the value of a lot one hundred feet deep, the widths being the same. But a lot one hundred and fifty feet deep has 115 per cent of the value of a lot one hundred feet deep, widths being the same. Mr. Somers has worked out the value of each foot so that any depth may be computed.

When two streets intersect, the values in both rise as the intersection is approached. This upward tendency has been called, for want of a better term, the "corner influence." Mr. Somers has found that this "corner influence" extends not to exceed 100 feet from the corner on both streets—not evenly nor by jumps, but in a rapidly falling curve from the corner, the course of the curve being entirely dependent upon the effect of one value upon another. Therefore, every time there is a differing relation of values on the two streets there will be differing conditions as a result. Scarcely any two corners, especially in the business section of a city, are alike, and no percentage rule will fit. If, perchance, one should by accident hit upon the proper percentage to add to the ordinary value of a given lot because it is on a corner, it would be found that the same percentage would not apply in the case of any other corner lot.

By dividing each corner influence into 100 squares of 10 feet each, and diagramming all the lots at a given corner upon these 100 squares, the values of each owner are distinguished. By adding up the values of each of the squares in the assignment to each owner, the values are properly and equitably distributed; provided, of course, that it is possible to find out in any way the value of each square when the unit value on each contributing street is known. It is exactly this information that Mr. Somers has worked out.

Each combination of two unit values necessitates its own table, and to work out this computation access must be had to these tables, several hundred in number. Other tables based upon the same underlying principles have been devised for the purpose of computing the values of irregularly shaped plots, of corner lots with acute or obtuse angles.

Mr. Somers has also devised an equitable plan of assigning additional values to lots abutting upon alleys or public places that are not thoroughfares and that are used for purposes of light, area and access for merchandise.

To value buildings, Mr. Somers divides all buildings into four classes in accordance with their use, and each of these classes is sub-divided into divisions in accordance with their construction. It is a comparatively easy matter to measure each building to be valued, and ascertain by investigation the cost of material and labor to produce a square foot or cubic foot, as the case may be, for any one of the divisions referred to. The calculation to ascertain the total value of any building is thus found to be very simple. From this reconstruction of value must of course be taken an agreed amount for age, condition and lack of utility, if any.

I have attempted to describe as briefly as possible and in a very general way the practical side of the application of the Somers unit system. It is a scientific and mathematical tool by which values of prop-

erty, largely intangible, may be ascertained easily, satisfactorily and quickly.

E. W. DOTY.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

WE HAVE SINNED.

Chicago.

One day, now many years ago, I found John P. Altgeld reading a copy of *The Public* in which was given an account of a banquet held in New York city by the "get together" Democrats, who are always for harmony when they can lead the procession and dictate party policies. Bryan had been defeated twice, and they believed that he surely would not trouble the party again. The slogan was: "Get together, you lean hungry Democrats—so long out of office—and unite on some acceptable candidate, and drive the Republicans out of power." Midnight approached and no discordant sound had been heard. The knowing ones winked at each other, as if to say, "All's well." Finally our friend C. E. S. Wood of Oregon got up and discharged such a fusillade of anti-monopoly material that these representatives of predatory wealth were dismayed. "Oh, Schilling," said Altgeld, "I can't tell you how glad I am to know that the time has finally come when these pirates can't meet anywhere any more without some one's getting up and exposing their designs."

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I thought of all this the other day when I learned that the Evanston Congregational Church Club had been discussing the subject of graft as manifested by the last legislature of our State. Some of these church members confessed their shame in having worked and voted for the member who is accused of having distributed the "jack pot;" others regretted the lack of strength and moral fiber that make up the characters of many of our public men. "Graft everywhere!" they exclaimed. "Graft in San Francisco, in Pittsburg, in Chicago and Springfield! Graft in the nation, in the State, in the city! O Lord, deliver us: what must we do?" Finally our friend A. P. Canning got the floor and said:

"Brethren, the fact of nation-wide graft is admitted, ranging from small amounts to the gift of a nation's natural resources by political puppets. The request of the first speaker, that he be considered a transgressor, because he aided in the election of one of the officials under charges, is a hopeful sign. No doubt the man was honest when you elected him, and surely the people are not guiltless when they turn into the political arena millions of dollars in franchises and special privileges as prizes for Big Business and weak politicians. I am glad we are approaching this graft problem today in the attitude of sinners, and not of pharisees; the spirit of the 'publican' will work wonders in politics, just as it does in religion. Is it any wonder so many of our young men of excellent reputation go to our legislative halls fired with an ambition to serve the country, but return dishonored and disgraced? Honesty and integrity will accomplish much if you give it a chance. But vice becomes very alluring when the only key that opens the door to dignity and fame is

in the hands of those who desire or possess special privileges under the law. I am glad you men and women realize the dangers to which you expose your sons when you send them to legislatures to tinker with tariffs and to grant franchises and subsidies.

"Surely there must be a better way to handle public property and escape these dangers. Perhaps those who oppose government control of railroads, and municipal ownership of municipal property, are not as wise as we think they are. We ought also to remember that lying is as easy as bribery. Government by the people is a dream and the 'Revolution was indeed fought in vain,' unless we can remove this source of corruption which is destroying the Republic. The wish was expressed here today that the heads of corporations might see the dangers that threaten our nation, and resolve to quit buying legislation. That is a splendid suggestion, and I would like to offer another: That we, the people, help them to keep their good resolution by giving up our foolish and vicious custom of selling the sovereign powers of government for small cash payments, given by Big Business to those who misrepresent us, and by equitable taxation, the taxation of privilege—not industry and thrift—undo as far as lies in our power the mistakes of the past.

"As to remedies, give the people control of legislation, let them take again the power which should be theirs only, to initiate legislation, to O. K. or reject laws that have been passed, to call back their servants from Washington or Springfield when they doubt their honesty and efficiency; then our graft problem could be easily solved. How much money do you think corporations would pay for legislation that had to be O. K.'d by the people? Do you think certain mid-night transactions relative to school land leases and street car franchises in Chicago would have been consummated if the O. K. of the citizens had been necessary to validate these deals? When we have the initiative and the referendum we will have government by the people, and not till then. And if we study carefully the causes which have destroyed republics in the past, and profit by their mistakes, we may yet have a republic here greater than any the world has yet seen—a country like that described by Isalah, 'where those who build houses shall inhabit them, and those who plant vineyards shall eat the fruit of them'—a nation in which the possession of wealth shall be an evidence of good work, well done, by those who possess it."

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I am glad to note this discussion because, after all, it's a splendid sign when the church clubs take up for discussion and consideration such vital questions. The majority of their members will, I am sure, do the right thing when they know what to do and how to do it; and for that reason I wish that every reader of *The Public* who is also a member of a church would aid in organizing such clubs for the discussion of such questions.

GEO. A. SCHILLING.

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The question is not how much prosperity the tariff will produce, but how much tariff the prosperity will stand.—Kansas City Post.

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, June 28, 1910.

Congressional Corruption.

An exposure of gigantic corruption in Congress in connection with sales of Indian lands was made on the 24th in a speech in the Senate by Senator Gore of Oklahoma. Under existing law, tribal contracts must be approved by the President and the Secretary of the Interior; but these officials have no authority over individual contracts with Indians. To protect the Indians in both respects Senator Gore had secured an amendment in the Senate to the deficiency appropriation bill when it came from the House, whereby contracts with the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations and by individual Choctaws and Chickasaws, were required to be approved by Congress as a condition of their validity. But when the deficiency bill came out of conference committee of the two houses, Senator Gore's protective clause had been altered.

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Senator Gore did not learn of this until the Senate had adopted the conference committee's report. He was then assured by Senator Hale on the floor of the Senate that the matter had been properly safeguarded. This explanation he accepted, though with a monitory statement that John F. McMurray (the representative of the two Indian nations for several years) would receive graft to the extent of \$3,000,000 from individual contracts and that improper influence had been used by a representative of McMurray's to defeat the protective amendment.

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Upon examining the substitute provision later, Senator Gore found it unsatisfactory and moved to recall the conference report. Senator Gallinger moved to lay this motion on the table, which was done. Senator Gore thereupon stated, as matter of personal privilege, that on May 4th last he had offered a resolution similar in terms to the protective amendment he had afterward had placed in the deficiency bill in the Senate, and that his resolution, which had now been struck out, had been referred to the committee on Indian affairs; that on the following day Senator Hughes had been di-