

"property." If the individual cannot rightfully hold any property until the community confers the right upon him, what right has the individual to produce property without a permit from the community? If all property is a trust for the benefit of the community, isn't it unwise to permit an individual to hold it without bond, and to control and enjoy it until starvation threatens the beneficiaries of the trust? If the individual produces property, by his own exertion, for what social service is he indebted to the community to the extent of that property? How can it be said that the exclusive ownership of a house, a barn, a horse, chickens, a cow, and furniture bears any relation to the deterioration of human life? The Episcopal Joint Commission is probably confused by the custom of regarding one's earnings and one's privileges as equally property. Though the producer cannot fairly be said to hold his product in trust, this may be fairly said of a mere legal privilege. But why not discriminate?

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#### A Ballingerial Compromise.

There seems to be doubt as to whether President Taft's Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Ballinger, has been "vindicated" or "whitewashed." Why not compromise on "vindicquashed"?

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### AN OBJECT LESSON IN LAND MONOPOLY.

It is matter of court record, that there is held in California a single landed estate of 14,500,000 acres. As that acreage amounts to 22,656 square miles, the area of this one holding equals one-seventh of the entire State of California.

Although held in California, the land is not all within the boundaries of that State. Lying partly in Nevada, it extends through California and far up into Oregon. It is known as the "Miller and Lux" estate. Miller is the man of whom it is told that an old acquaintance, meeting him in a Western barroom, exclaimed: "Why, hello, Miller! I used to know you in San Francisco when you had to peddle sausages for a living, didn't I?" "Yes," said Miller, "and if I had been such a fool as you are I would be peddling sausages yet."

Fifteen years ago, more or less, Lux died, and the probating of his estate established by court record the magnitude of this holding. Reputable persons assert, moreover, that semi-legal holdings of the same estate comprise three million more acres from which the public is excluded. So we have an estate of over seventeen million acres.

I could tell fascinating things about that great holding, for I have traveled over thousands of miles of it. For hours I have sat in the fast moving train speeding through strips of it said to be fifty and seventy miles long, and twenty and thirty miles wide. Far as the eye could reach have I looked at some of the richest land made by God for His children—hours and hours of it in the great San Joaquin valley—with nothing on it but cattle, distant barns, pump houses, and herded tramp-men to reap the alfalfa fields.

It is the proud boast of this company that it can drive cattle from Nevada to Oregon through the great State of California, without ever stopping over night on any land but their own; that nowhere in the Golden State, some eight hundred miles long, is there a break in their land-strips more than a day's cattle journey between the ends.

As Rockefeller and Morgan are emphasized because they are at the apex of their particular forms of public plunder, and not because they are necessarily the greatest or worst, so this great estate should be emphasized. Its value as an object lesson is its hugeness.

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And there are other big estates on this Pacific slope.

Besides this one of 14,500,000 acres with its 3,000,000 acre fringe, there are those that range from 10,000 to 40,000, 100,000, and many more thousand acres. The totals would startle thinking people.

Some of these I have been investigating. There are many difficulties in the way of getting exact information, but the facts are coming.

EDMUND NORTON.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### PROGRESSIVE CANADA.

Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Calgary, Alberta, is a rapidly growing city of 40,000 population. Three years ago the municipality decided to build a street railway system. This has been in operation a little more than a year. Last month the net profits were \$5,766.61. This brings the city's profit for the year 1910 up to the handsome sum of \$57,539.97. Question: Since this profit can be made under municipal ownership in a city of 40,000 population what is the value of a franchise in the ordinary city of 200,000 population? What of a city of half a million?

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With a view to the adoption of the municipal single-tax the City Council of Regina (population

10,000, the capital of Saskatchewan) will at the forthcoming session of the legislature ask for an amendment to the city charter providing for the exemption from taxation of all improvements and the concentration of all taxation upon land-values?

Regina is the third city in Saskatchewan to apply to the legislature for this power. Prince Albert and Saskatoon led in the movement last year. Your correspondent is advised from private sources that as a result of these requests it is the intention of Mr. Turgeon, the Attorney-General of the Province, to introduce legislation at the next session of the legislature to enable all the cities and towns of the Province to adopt the single-tax at their own discretion.

ROBERT L. SCOTT.

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Winnipeg, Canada, Jan. 12.

Royalistic Canada is slowly but surely becoming democratic. Remnants of repression still remain in political forms and practices. Property still rules in municipal politics, although manhood suffrage prevails in Dominion and Provincial politics; and plutocracy persists in Dominion and Provincial governments.

The seat of trouble, of course, is in the old royalistic East, near the seat of the Dominion government and of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. The middle west—otherwise, the "Prairie Provinces"—is a boiling cauldron of democracy; while the far West—British Columbia, with Vancouver and Prince Rupert leading the continent in land value taxation—is by all accounts democratic in city and town, but still royalistic or torystic in Provincial affairs.

According to reports in the dispassionate trade journals, Vancouver seems to be reaping the benefits so long expected by the disciples of Henry George to result from the taxing of land values or exempting of improvements. Rev. Prof. Anderson Scott, M. A., of Cambridge, writing to the Manchester Guardian, has the following among other things, to say of conditions in Vancouver under "Single Tax":

"There are nearly a thousand motor cars in Vancouver, and probably not a score of private chauffeurs. That gives a measure both of the abundance of money and the scarcity of labor. The labor offices are advertising for laborers at a wage of ten shillings per day, and skilled workers in many trades can get more. . . . If one were to ask some of the leaders of local politics what were the further causes of its prosperity, they would at once refer to the 'single tax' and the principle of taxing unearned increment on land. . . . The benefit to the city is seen in part in the determination of the owners of land to put it to the best possible use. Undeterred by the fear that the capital cost of improvements will become the basis of future assessment, they build with a new freedom! They readily 'scrap' old buildings, and already much of the old property in the heart of the city has been replaced by structures of a very different kind. On the other hand, those who are not prepared to make economic use of their sites are discouraged from 'holding them up.' Urban land that is unproductive to the community soon becomes too expensive for the owner to keep."

Just about what the Single-Tax doctor ordered,

isn't it? Employment plentiful, wages higher, vacant land put into use, freedom in production, industry encouraged, idleness discouraged. And yet, Vancouver, not at all jealous of its prosperity, nor afraid of its leaking out, as it were, not even afraid to match its just conditions with other cities' unjust conditions, invites all the world to come in and share its bounties; the only injunction being: Work!

What a contrast this "unprotected" free city of our time makes with "protected" "free" cities of the Middle Ages—the logical ideals of the Free Trader and the Protectionist respectively! No walls or moats to protect it from the outside; no towers or parapets or men in armor armed to the teeth, on the inside; it invites all men to it, and the more that come the more it prospers. Is not Vancouver an object lesson to all unbelievers and partial believers in the potency of natural freedom and justice—the impotency of mere artificial protection?

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With its direful consequences—enthroned wrongs and gibbeted rights—Manitoba still maintains property qualifications and plural voting in municipal and city elections. In spite of this—perhaps on account of freer economic conditions—progressive measures have for the last seven years been slowly coming to the surface in a whirlpool of land speculation, which has overshadowed all things else. An instance of this is the lowered assessment on real estate improvements. The assessment is understood to be 60 per cent on the improvements while the land is supposed to be assessed at its full value.

I use qualifying words because the separate valuations do not appear in any printed report from the assessor's office. The reduced improvements assessment was recommended by a tax commission three years ago, and is supposed to be now in force, it having been endorsed by the legislature.

This "assessment value" tax is but a part of the city's revenue, the rest consisting of "special taxes," a "business tax" and various kinds of license taxes.

The above mentioned reduction in the improvement assessment, and a recommendation by the commission to further reduce it to years to come, was due, in the first place, to objections raised to the business tax, which was consequently reduced, and, in the second place, to the logical justice of land value taxation, as presented by correspondents to the newspapers, and single tax advocates who appeared before the commission.

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Alberta and Saskatchewan are the six-year-old members of the Canadian Provincial federation, if I may so express it. They should not be confused with Manitoba, which is much older. It is undoubtedly due to their more liberal charters that their progress has been more rapid. The Western Municipal News, an otherwise lovable journal, in summing up the progressive movement of the year does not make this distinction clear enough to the unsophisticated, although it may be evident enough to its subscribers—the members of the Municipal Unions of the three Provinces above mentioned. It is in Alberta and Saskatchewan that the commission form of government for cities is steadily growing in