

the Constitution as a means of defeating the Initiative and Referendum and now they are using the same method again. In the same way they are endeavoring to head off and defeat a vote on an amendment in favor of woman's suffrage. If they are successful in this move they will delay the vote upon the Initiative and Referendum until at least 1916 and possibly until much later.

These tricks and devices of cunning opponents of the Initiative and Referendum should deceive no one. The Civic Federation and its backers in this move are bitterly opposed to giving the people the power to veto laws or to pass laws which legislatures will not pass. They are not willing to submit the Initiative and Referendum to the people and make the campaign before them. They are seeking to postpone the vote by confusing the voter. The friends of the Initiative and Referendum should have nothing to do with this plausible plan and should refrain from signing any petition of this sort.

The Initiative and Referendum will not cure all the ills of this State, but they will help our situation. They will make representatives more mindful of the wishes of their constituents, and in that way make them more truly representative.



WASHINGTON TAXBOLTERS.

Louis F. Post in the Chicago Daily Press of August 30.

Congress has made a pretty picture of Washington taxbolters. The camera was operated by Congressman Henry George, Jr. You can get a copy by writing your Congressman for "Report No. 1215 of the Sixty-second Congress, Second Session, House of Representatives." Ask him also for the testimony.

Like their class in every other growing community, Washington taxbolters fatten their private purses from public funds before the funds are in the public treasury. This pays better than "lifting" funds out of it. Also, it looks better. But in principle it is the same thing.

Half the expenses of Washington are paid by Congress.

As that money comes mostly from tariffs on imports, every man, woman and child in the United States who buys anything of foreign make, or anything of home-make containing foreign material, helps pay half of Washington's upkeep. They pay it in higher prices. This makes Washington a city of national pride for all of us. It likewise makes it a city of private profit for taxbolting owners of the site of it—of its building lots.

Washington building lots don't wear out as the houses do. Nor do they lose in value as houses do. While Congress pays half the city's expenses, the value of Washington building lots will increase. These values pay some taxes. But look at that Congressional report and marvel!

Owners of little homes pay on 60 per cent of value; owners of luxurious mansions with spacious grounds in choice places pay on only 30 per cent. And that isn't the worst. Monopolizers of vacant areas, who obstruct building operations with ex-

cessive prices for lots, pay on no more than 20 per cent.

If you are a tenant, you get no percentage favors at all. Your landlord includes in your house-rent enough more than the house is worth to cover what the lot is worth. Not at a 20 per cent rate, either. Nor 30 per cent. Nor even 60 per cent. But at 100 per cent.

There seems to be something wrong about all that.

Why should big owners of the site of Washington keep more out of the public treasury than small owners, in proportion to their respective values? Why, indeed, should anybody "annex" any part of the value of that site? Isn't all of it fairly a public fund?

Such privileges are the worst kind of taxbolting graft. If the law allows them, then this law, as old Bumble said of another law, must be "an ass." And there are places besides Washington where this kind of graft flourishes. If you doubt it, look at home—wherever your home may happen to be.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE FORTUNES OF RETIRED FARMERS.

New York.

Some years ago when I did much bicycle touring, I was often puzzled upon getting into a small town in a fairly rich farming district to learn of the number of retired farmers with comfortable little fortunes. I could not understand how they had acquired them out of such profits from farming as there had ever been in this country. Of course the conditions may have been different in the rich bottom lands of the Middle West, but east of the Alleghanies I doubt whether there has ever been a period when more than a modest competence could be amassed from farming. Yet the men I speak of had accumulated \$30,000 or so.

On one of these trips I turned up at Flemington, N. J., a typical town of the kind, lying as it does in the center of very good farming country. There would have been as much chance here as anywhere of accumulating money. It was populated to a considerable extent by retired farmers, the fiction as to whom was that they had got their money "on their broad acres." I happened to run across a business man who had lived in the town all his life and who was intelligent and well informed. Upon asking him about a number of these retired farmers, he seemed to be posted as to just what each of them was worth. He had the common idea that they had got their money off their farms, but when he came to tell their histories it turned out that in almost every case they had made their little fortunes in other parts of the country when they were young men, while their fathers were still running the farms.

This was just after the Civil War, when there was such a general developing of great natural resources not before utilized. One of the men, for instance, got hold of a coal mine in western Pennsylvania when great activity in coal mining was just beginning and the industry was still in the hands of small individual operators. Another

stumbled into the oil fields of western Pennsylvania at the beginning of their discovery. Another became interested in lumber on the upper Susquehanna when, as even I can recall very distinctly, exploitation of the forests was just beginning. And so on in practically every case.

Those men got hold of natural resources, gathered a good sized nest egg for those times, and then came back to take up their farming just as their fathers were getting older and ready to quit work. They all continued to farm for some years, but, as my informant admitted, while they had the reputation of making big money on the farm because they were well to do, he could not see that there was much chance of their having made more than a comfortable living. The other enterprises that were the real source of their comparative wealth must have been those outside interests.

EDWARD J. SHRIVER.



JOSEPH FELS'S SECOND VISIT TO SWEDEN.

Chicago, Sept. 4.

It is very interesting to read in the Swedish papers about the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Fels to Sweden this summer.

Large and attentive audiences, made up of all classes of people, greeted Mr. Fels everywhere. Twelve hundred tickets of admission were sold for a meeting at Gothenburg, and 100 persons attended without tickets. At Arvika Mr. Fels spoke to a chautauqua of young people numbering 4,000.

As to the attitude of newspapers, it appears that those speaking for the common people were generally friendly toward Mr. Fels—one of them called him "the little man with the big heart"—while the organs of plutocracy naturally attacked him and his work. One of the latter kind (Stockholm's *Dagblad*) "wished it hadn't." This paper praised Mr. Fels highly as a philanthropist (of the common type), and especially referred to the colonies for poor people he had established in England; but belittled him as a land reformer, saying among other things that "it was a chimera if one believed that he (Mr. Fels) in any way furthered a really happy solution of the land question" (that is, I suppose, a solution that did not in any degree or manner lessen the land owners' power to appropriate the earnings of other people). But Mr. Fels called on the editor-in-chief and handed or sent him a reply for insertion in his paper, in which he, in the most lucid manner, showed both the futility and harm of philanthropy, and the effectiveness for good for all kinds of producers, of the land reform he advocated. This reply was duly printed, accompanied by the editor's apology. Mr. Fels, he said, was certainly honestly convinced of the correctness of Henry George's doctrines; he was a man of "unprejudiced amiability" and a "happily great proportion of humor." However, he, the editor, must continue his opposition to his economic theories; Mr. Fels was gazing at one point only—the tax on land values, which he considered as a panacea for all kinds of evils, while "we others" look at many things.

Among utterances of Mr. Fels that must have

struck his Swedish hearers with astonishment were the following:

"The United States could easily feed all the inhabitants of the globe, if they could get at the land there, and used it well."

"Sweden, with its rich resources, could support in abundance 50 millions of people, instead of 5½, its present population. And there would be no need of emigration to America."

"One of the big multi-millionaires of America could easily buy all Sweden, and then—in accordance with your laws—turn the whole population off its surface. What an insane state of affairs!"

All the above concerns Mr. Fels. But Mrs. Fels, who accompanied her husband and shared in his work, also shared with him the attention of newspapers. And for her they all had nothing but praise. Even to Stockholm's *Dagblad* she was "the refined and intelligent little American millionaire wife," who not only in a high degree shares her husband's interest in land reform, and was the one who originally called his attention to social problems, but "whose interests have a much wider range" than his, and embrace among other things, woman's rights.

AUGUST DELLGREN.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, September 10, 1912.

The Election in Vermont.

Complete unofficial returns from the Vermont election of the 3rd show the following results as compared with the Gubernatorial vote in that State two years ago:

	1912	1910
Allen M. Fletcher (Rep.).....	26,259	35,263
Harlan B. Howe (Dem.).....	20,350	17,425
Frazer Metzger (Prog.).....	15,800
Clement F. Smith (Pro.).....	1,443	1,044
Fred W. Suitor (Soc.).....	1,181	1,055

No choice having been made by majority vote, the Governor will be chosen by the legislature, which proves to be strongly enough Republican to assure the election of Fletcher. The Progressive Party claims 50 members of the lower House of the legislature, the total membership of which is 246; and the Democrats poll their largest total vote in the State since 1880. [See current volume, page 848.]



The Election in Maine.

Following less than a week after the election in Vermont, the election in Maine has been looked forward to as a sign in the general political sky; but its value in that respect is greatly minimized by the fact that the Progressive Party had no