

measure of ability is a public thing. It is as well known to all his neighbors as to the owner himself. It is easier to ascertain by assessors than the insurance value of the improvements upon it are by insurance agents. The title to a piece of land is the first of all monopolies. It is the fundamental source of revenue enjoyed under the protection of the state. It is, therefore, the most fitting thing for the state to tax.

JOHN GREGSON.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

BACK TO THE LAND.

Westover, Md.

We are all well, and as happy as a busy tribe could expect to be. I finished cutting 50 acres of wheat this p. m.; drove the machine part of the time myself. Had to rig it up with the help of a Negro employe, and lay on my back under it with a lantern till 10 p. m. the night before we began cutting—quite automobile style but a heap more fun. With barns to get ready for hay; late crops to prepare ground for—potatoes, cowpeas, buckwheat, rape (for hog pasture), silo corn, etc., etc.; with a neglected (not "a deserted") garden, to bring up to date; with stock to get acquainted with, a regular crusade of errands to this town and that for these things and those—I have been kept jumping sideways.

But I am having the time of my life. Have landed in a most hospitable neighborhood, and am sure to become better acquainted as time goes on.

An institution here is the "Cooperative Produce Exchange" composed of farmers, ostensibly. Majority of stock, however, gradually passes into hands of bankers, lawyers, agents for commission houses, with natural results—line between "farmers of farms" and "farmers of farmers," as you so forcefully phrase it.

Another institution is Negro labor. I am threshing out that problem practically. I find them (I have three) most exceedingly human: so mature and sophisticated in some ways, so like children in others. I am making no deductions yet, and have much to learn about and of them.

But the heart of the problem is visible instantly. My men do all the work on the place. They raise and harvest crops for wages. Then they come to me to buy straw for bed; milk, butter, eggs, meal, corn for a pig or chickens if they have them. Outside of my legal title to the land on which they labor, under a privilege I allow them—to work on it at a fraction only of what they produce—they would own it all and I would have to buy of them unless I produced as they do.

The farmer is going to be slow to give up this legal privilege he enjoys, of land monopoly; and not until the landless far exceed, numerically, the land-owning farmers, will they change the system.

WESTERN STARR.

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The single eyeglass is worn by the dude. The theory is that he can see more with one eye than he can comprehend.—United Presbyterian.

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 29, 1909.

The Cleveland Traction Fight.

In connection with the Cleveland traction fight (p. 612) the committee of the whole of the City Council, to which the Chamber of Commerce franchise grant to the old company, drafted by Judge Tayler, had been referred, finally disposed of it at a meeting on the 21st by deciding by a vote of 23 to 0 to report against it. The introducer of the ordinance, Councilman Walz (a Democrat), refused to vote, as did Councilman Horner (a Republican). Councilman McClain (a Republican) voted for the adverse report. The other four Republicans were absent. Mayor Johnson and City Clerk Witt, ex-officio members of the committee of the whole, voted for the report.

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A few hours later, on the evening of the 21st, a meeting held under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and at its rooms, began the organization of a "citizens' committee" of 100 to oppose the adoption of the Schmidt ordinance at the referendum of August 3. Mayor Johnson on the 22d challenged the committee of 100 to a series of debates. No reply had been made at the time of the tent meeting for the Schmidt ordinance that night. The audience at this meeting is described by the Plain Dealer report as one of the most interested yet, hostile questions being asked by a member of the committee of 100, and answered by Mayor Johnson. No reply to the debating challenge had been given on the 23d, and many of the committee of 100 were reported as opposed to accepting. Their reported objection was that Mayor Johnson is an expert on traction technique and this would place anyone who attempted to debate with him at a disadvantage. "If that is given as a reason why the challenge should be declined," said the Mayor, as reported in the Cleveland Press, "I am willing to be barred from participation in the debates. We have five or six others who can hold their own with any representatives the other side may have." "It has been charged in the past that you packed the meetings when you were to debate," he was told. "If the other side thinks there is danger of that, I am willing admittance should be by ticket, and I will give them all the