

derived from this land, the *Globe* says, the city would presently be able to "buy the rest of the privately held territory—some 5,859 acres—so that the city will be its own landlord." This would give the city an opportunity to experiment. "The proponents of the Singletax," says the editor, "have always urged that the heavy hand of the private landlord laid upon enterprise is one of the most sinister influences in our latter day civilization, and if ground rents were paid to the state population would be distributed more evenly, vacant land would be brought into use, and industry and agriculture greatly encouraged."

Unfortunately the Huddersfield experiment would not be a test of the Singletax. The principal advantage that might accrue to the tenants would be the future increment as the city grows. There would still be interest on the capitalization to pay, regardless of whether it went to city bond holders or to the former heirs of William Ramsden.

A better course for the citizens of Huddersfield to follow lies within their own power. Instead of depending upon the benevolence of their former citizen, which would be far less than at first seems, they might help themselves to something more substantial. Though they are suffering from poor and insufficient housing, and notwithstanding a large part of the 12,000 acres within the city are unused, they are pursuing the very policy most likely to perpetuate that condition. Unused land they leave untaxed. Buildings are assessed heavily and all industry is taxed to pay for the service of government. This policy encourages the owners of the idle land to wait for the increment that comes through the growth of population, rather than to build upon it. By reversing the course, by removing taxes from the buildings and putting them upon the land, the opposite effect would be produced. Land heavily taxed would have to be put to use. Buildings and other improvements untaxed would multiply. The rest is a matter of supply and demand: The more houses, the lower the rents.

The housing question is not primarily a matter of ownership. It matters little whether buildings are owned by the city or by an individual if the city will collect from the owner of the land upon which they stand the full value

of the service it renders. And this the citizens can insist upon doing without the aid of millionaires. It is not a question of benevolence; it is merely a matter of taxation.

Helping the Young Professional Man

A UNIQUE union is that proposed by Thomas P. Kimball, president of the American Institute of Architects. Mr. Kimball has an exalted idea of his profession, and in order that its members may devote the full strength of their creative years to the service of society he wishes to have the way of the young man made easier. He would have them earn a living and acquire a competency before they reach the point in life where they begin to grow stale.

To this end he proposes a union, "a real hidebound, hardheaded trade union." He would include the lawyers and doctors and "everybody who serves the public and his clients before himself." And these would see that the young man gets his feet on the ground without years of soul destroying drudgery.

But will this really solve the problem? A union actuated by the high ideals of the president of the American Architects could undoubtedly save the young professional man much wasted energy. But what of the new members that would flock to a profession that promised so much? Young men as they reach the time of life for choosing their career are inclined to occupations that hold out the attractions proposed by Mr. Kimball. And while his union might succeed in setting on their feet those who are now struggling for recognition, the probabilities are that he would soon be overwhelmed. His experience might be similar to that of the Jewish society in Chicago that undertook to aid indigent members by establishing them in small shops, only to find that the new tradesmen crowded to the wall those already in business.

If a profession can obtain such a monopoly that it can control admissions to its ranks it may be able to push its way ahead of others. Failing this it will be difficult to better the condition of any without improving the lot of all.

To put the matter plainly: as long as one man is out of a job, or has a poor one, he is a menace to every man who has a better job. In other words, raise the lowest stratum of society and the whole social structure will be raised.

Muddling the Railroad Question

THE fatal defect in our railroad policy, as in our street car management, lies in the method of financing their construction. Aside from stock jobbing, and the juggling of accounts incident to speculative ventures, we have laid upon one set of men the cost of building the roads, while permitting other men to reap the benefit.

It is now universally recognized that the construction of a road or street enhances the value of the land served by that road or street. If the highway be paved or otherwise improved the enhancement is still greater. If it be railed, as for street cars, there is an additional increase in value; and just as the service is bettered the value of the land mounts. What is true of lots on a city street is true of acres in a territory served by a railroad.

It is a fact of universal experience that whenever a railroad has been extended into territory in need of transportation there has been a marked advance in the value of farm lands, city lots, and manufacturing sites, as well as in mining and timber lands. Yet the cost of building the road has been paid by capital in no way interested in the land, save in the case of a few roads that received land grants from the Government.

Street pavements and improvements were once paid for in the same way; but up-to-date cities now assess the costs against the lands ben-

efited. The assessment is not upon the buildings, or upon the personal property in them—for they are worth no more upon a paved than upon an unpaved street—but upon the land, which alone is enhanced in value by the improvement.

This false method of financing railroads has brought about the present confusion. Had they been paid for as the street improvements are there would now be a very low capitalization, and only low rates to pay for the cost of operation.

Whatever may be the course chosen to correct the mistakes already made, there is no reason why the error should be repeated in future road building. Yet this is the very thing that both House and the Senate permit in the Esch and the Cummins bills, and there is little reason to expect a correction in the conference committee. The Esch bill provides for "fair and reasonable" rates. The Cummins rule for rate making guarantees six per cent. return to the carriers. The bills are alike in basing rates on the capitalization of the roads; and that capitalization is made up partly by fictitious issues of stock, and partly by bonds that should have been based upon the lands benefited, and made payable by the owners of those lands. Neither bill makes any pretense of meeting this point in future road building, or attempts to recover alienated land values created by the roads already constructed. There are many details involved in the railroad problem, and questions of executive procedure; there may even be a question as to whether the roads should be publicly owned and operated; but the question of requiring the owners of lands benefited to pay for the cost of construction is as fundamental in the case of railroads as in street improvements.

Suggestion for Constitutional Amendment

By Harry Gunnison Brown

Professor of Political Economy, University of Missouri

IT is hereby enacted that all taxes on buildings, machinery, cattle, growing crops and all other taxes except taxes on land shall be immediately reduced 20 per cent. and thereafter by a like amount each year until they are com-

pletely abolished, and that the necessary revenues for state, counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts and other units shall be secured by increasing to whatever extent may be necessary the tax rate on the value of land exclusive