

Commenting upon the acquiescence of the shippers in this view of the matter the Journal drives home its point:

In the meat rates we have exemplified the force of Senator La Follette's criticism. The shippers have not protected the interests of the public, and the consumer in the East will be compelled to pay the increased rate to the seaboard. With industry centralized in so many directions, and with the ramifications of finance and industry so interwoven and far-reaching as they are, it is futile for the public to expect to be protected against the exactions of monopoly by the Big Business interests. Apparently the railway interests should be opposed to high duties on steel rails and railway equipment, but the same interests that dominate the steel trust control the railway and banking interests. The burden in any event is shifted to the consumer, while the profits of Privilege are reaped by the interests that seemingly may pay them. The beef trust loses nothing through higher freight rates. The consumer will have to bear the burden. But J. Ogden Armour and his associates in the packing industry are large holders of railway stocks. They will profit from higher railway rates. Big Business has things fixed so that whichever way the consumer turns, he is sure to be fleeced.

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#### Alexander Ure and Land Values Taxation.

A personal tribute to Alexander Ure, Lord Advocate for Scotland—an incident of interest wherever the British struggle of the people for their land is appreciated—was paid last month at the opening of new and spacious offices at 20 Tottenham street, Westminster, London, for the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. Among the 50 guests were Sir Alfred Mond, C. E. Price, Josiah Wedgwood, E. Crawshay Williams, Henry George Chancellor, and Alexander Ure, all members of Parliament, and Mr. Ure of the Ministry also. The tribute to Mr. Ure was in the form of an illuminated address, signed individually by the members and officers of the United Committee, and by the chairmen and secretaries of more than 75 meetings in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, at which he had spoken in support of land values taxation. In acknowledging the compliment, Mr. Ure declared himself as at one with his hosts in promoting the taxation of land values, and expressed the hope that he and they would be working together for this purpose as long as there is occasion for it.

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#### Political Leadership.

A magazine writer who thinks the people must be governed by superiors, makes this classification of the governing elements: bosses, demagogues, and genuine leaders. He overlooks a powerful

class, plutagogues. But never mind; when you put his notion under the microscope, you find that all but the "genuine leaders" are bad and that the "genuine leaders" are of "our set." Same old story—lust of dominion; which is all right if it is our lust, but all wrong if it is the other fellow's lust.

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#### POSSIBLE FATE OF "VESTED RIGHTS."

A doubtful compliment at the best, was that of one of the Washington correspondents to the late Chief Justice Fuller's career upon our highest bench. It pictured him as a stickler for old time spelling but a revolutionist as to legal principles.

Nothing could have suffered very much if the Chief Justice had tolerated such spelling as "thru" for "through." But just rights of persons and property may have suffered sadly if he, as this correspondent reports him, is to be "found in the Supreme Court record reversing the applied principles of law which he brought with him to Washington."

The correspondent is Leroy T. Vernon. His doubtful compliment to the late Chief Justice appeared in the Chicago Daily News of July 8.

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We are aware of the prejudice that prevails against court decisions according to precedent; but it is an ignorant or thoughtless prejudice.

The old lawyers were right who insisted that it were better for judges to follow a bad precedent (leaving its correction to the legislature) than to nullify it from the bench. For men deal with one another upon the faith of past judicial decisions. If these are judicially reversed, the reversal is retroactive, and contractual rights and obligations are thrown into confusion, whereas a legislative reversal affects future contracts alone.

It must be admitted, however, that the courts are treating precedent with less and less respect. They are doing what Mr. Vernon compliments Chief Justice Fuller for having done—reversing the applied principles of law which they learned of their predecessors.

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Yet upon the whole this judicial tendency may not be bad in its outcome. Although very largely in the interest now of grasping corporations, and inspired by their lawyers, the tendency may be laying a broad and firm judicial foundation for better things.

When the courts are so constituted as to re-