

date for Mayor. Each can vote at his own regular election voting place, and his vote will be counted by election officers. This is an opportunity, then, for the public spirit of the Democratic party of Chicago to demand that the fidelity of a man who has given his best in service to the city, whose honesty of purpose and action even his worst enemies concede, and whose efficiency only those whose efficiency is at the expense of their honesty are inclined to dispute, shall be recognized by the rank and file of his party. Dunn is the kind of man they should wish their party to honor and trust.

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Champ Clark's Policy.

The only way the Democratic party can reasonably hope to win in 1912, says Champ Clark in Bryan's Commoner of February 17th, is "to keep faith with the people absolutely." That sounds like leadership, good democratic leadership. And what Mr. Clark added, sounds like democratic leadership of an exalted order. It should be done, he adds, not alone in order to win, but "as a matter of principle, simply because it is right." Like the profound democrat he is, Mr. Clark considers that—

the masses of the people of all parties are honest in their political opinions, and deserve to be treated honestly, fairly, and candidly. They are entitled to that square deal of which we hear so much and see so little. They will not be mocked. . . . Men should say what they mean and mean what they say. Normal minds dissent from the immoral dictum that everything is fair in war, love and politics.

And the promises which he regards as having been most frequently made and therefore as calling for immediate redemption are these:

To revise the tariff down to a reasonable, or revenue basis; to abolish Cannonism; to submit a Constitutional amendment providing for the election of United States Senators by popular vote; to cut appropriations to the needs of the government economically administered.

If Champ Clark as Speaker can lead the Democratic party along the path he here points out, it is a fair prophecy that he will have higher responsibilities thrust upon him.

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Senator Martine Gets Ready.

Senator Martine "makes good" in his first official act—the choice of a secretary. He has appointed William W. St. John of Trenton, editor of the Elizabeth (N. J.) Evening Times in its best editorial days, and a democratic Democrat of pronounced personal and political honesty. Mr. St. John has been editor of the Plainfield Daily Press

and the Plainfield Courier News, and is now managing a legislative news service at Trenton. The importance to a genuinely democratic Senator of a genuinely democratic as well as efficient secretary, is greater than the unsophisticated might guess; and in making his selection, Senator Martine has paid a tribute to his own judgment as well as a deserved compliment to Mr. St. John.

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Crompton Llewelyn Davies.

The February issue of Land Values, that always serviceable, almost venerable, and constantly improving organ of the Henry George movement in Great Britain, announces the marriage of Crompton Llewelyn Davies, a most helpful man in the British movement, one whose practical service to it and the circumstances that impelled him to volunteer, will some day make a bright page in British history. "Crompton Llewelyn Davies," says Land Values, "is a household name in single tax circles, and in all other land reform circles; while his influence as an able and level-headed politician is widely recognized in the larger field of Parliamentary effort. As one of the joint secretaries of the United Committee he has rendered service to the movement for the taxation of land values which cannot be too highly praised. His one weakness is his habit of quietly keeping in the background. This is mainly due to his busy professional life as a prominent solicitor. Only those who are his colleagues know now he is behind so much of the work carried out and inspired by the committee. His wife is widely known as a gifted speaker on democratic platforms. She is a keen student of social problems, and an enthusiastic supporter of our policy. Mrs. Davies came into the democratic movement with good credentials, and fully equipped as the daughter of Mr. James O'Connor, who was M. P. for West Wicklow from 1892 till his death about a year ago."

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Mayor Fitzgerald and the Unearned Increment.

We commend to the thoughtful attention of progressive citizens everywhere, the efforts of Mayor Fitzgerald of Boston to recover for the public treasury some of that "unearned increment," all of which as he clearly sees and definitely declares belongs to the community and not to the persons on whose land it happens to swarm. His appeal to Governor Foss to try to secure the appointment of a tax investigating commission (p. 179), not to make some inconsequential report or other, but

to formulate an "unearned increment" tax measure, is probably the most he could ask for with hope, if indeed he can hope for that much. There are difficulties, however,—not merely on the surface of politics but economically inherent—in any attempt to tax the "unearned increment" of land occasionally, and Mayor Fitzgerald evidently appreciates them. They could be avoided by a general annual plan of land value taxation, such as Vancouver has adopted. Exempt all improvements, and tax all land values annually, and you get at least part of the "unearned increment" for the public in the way the public ought to get it—as an annual ground rent instead of a haphazard share now and then in increased capitalizations of ground rent. It would fall on anterior capitalized values also, but are they not "unearned increments" too? Better such movements as Mayor Fitzgerald's, though, than none at all or timid ones. The economic and the moral principles are involved, inadequate and awkward though the method be.

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THE SOMERS SYSTEM OF TAX VALUATIONS.

The condensation of Lawson Purdy's speech at Philadelphia on the subject of taxation, which, as verified by Mr. Purdy appears this week in our department of Related Things (p. 184), concludes with a paragraph that necessitates editorial explanation and comment. Explanation because the paragraph alludes in general terms to a fiscal controversy which has become specific in several cities, notably in Philadelphia; comment because, although such fiscal criticism from a source so high and trustworthy (vol. xii, p. 1203; vol. xiii, p. 691) ought not to be excluded from *The Public*, yet its publication here without comment might be misinterpreted.

The specific controversy rises out of a valuation contract of the Manufacturers' Appraisal Company of Cleveland with the City Councils of Philadelphia. In so far as they relate to land, the valuations were made according to the Somers system to which we have frequently called favorable attention. Buildings as well as land were valued, but as we oppose the taxation of buildings, our interest in the controversy relates only to its bearing on land values.

I.

The appraisal company appears to have arranged with the originator of the Somers system for his private collection of valuation data, his rules for estimation, his computation tables, etc.,

and his services as an expert; and thereupon to have offered the aid of the Somers system in making tax valuations. It is its contracts in that respect with public authorities to which Mr. Purdy objects (p. 185) that (1) if it were possible to procure even a perfect assessment of city lands by paying outside parties to make it, it ought not to be done; and that (2) no office rules for the valuation of city land can take the place of intelligent field work. Interpreted with reference to the Cleveland company and the Somers system, those objections resolve into an expression of two opinions: (1) That if there were even a perfect tax assessment system, it ought not to be applied through the employment of non-official persons; and (2) that no system can reduce the work of fairly valuing land in cities to mathematical rules on the basis of units of value ascertained by intelligent field work.

Both objections are at variance with the claims of Mr. Somers and the Cleveland appraisal company that (1) the Somers system has in fact demonstrated in Philadelphia and other cities, and will demonstrate in any city offering the opportunity, that the work of fairly valuing land in cities can be done by mathematical processes on the basis of intelligently ascertained units of value; and that (2) the advisory use of such a system for tax valuations through the employment of non-official persons is analogous to the employment of non-official persons to audit public accounts or otherwise to check up the competency or faithfulness of bureau officials or assist them in their work.

II.

The essential claim for the Somers system is stated as follows by the company in question:

When the value of a unit foot has been fixed on the four sides of a city block, the exercise of judgment of the value of land in that city block is complete. The Somers system provides a method of applying that judgment accurately and scientifically to all the land in that block.

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This method of land valuation first attracted our attention early in the year 1901 (vol. iii, p. 815), through a pamphlet by W. A. Somers of St. Paul, Minn., in which we find this explanation of the system:

Site value is fixed and determined by local opinion. . . . As this opinion is the basis of all purchases and sales, it is evident that it is the true measure of the value of the land, and is the measure which must be used in any successful effort to find the true and full cash value of each piece of property. This opinion may be designated, for convenience, Community Opinion. . . . To take advantage of Community Opinion . . . the work must