

bitterly partisan against him, as a self-seeking man.

In his Chicago speech, which rang round the world, this press could see nothing but a bid for the presidential nomination to gratify personal ambition. In his extraordinary round of campaign speeches in behalf of silver coinage, it could detect nothing but overweening ambition supported by a superabundance of animal energy. His courteous telegram to the successful candidate after election, a telegram which at least sounded like a generous expression of patriotic good feeling, was treated as another bid for popular notice, and the reply of scant courtesy as a merited rebuke. When he offered his services to the country without reservation, in any military capacity in which the president thought he might be useful, he was again pictured as a notoriety hunter; and the president, who was at the time appointing callow sons and nephews of political and social favorites to positions in which they have proved more dangerous to our troops than the enemy, was commended for the insulting manner in which he ignored Bryan's offer.

Then, when Bryan enlisted among the volunteers of his state as a private, he was sneeringly described as a man with an itch to get into the muck somehow, for the sake of attracting attention to himself; and when he was chosen by his comrades to be their colonel, the sneers were renewed in aggravated form. At last, when the war was virtually over, when nothing remained to do, except garrison duty in conquered countries which we had no right to subjugate and the subjugation of which was never contemplated as an object or result of the war, when, in other words, the intention of all patriotic enlistments had been accomplished—when this time had come, and Col. Bryan applied for the release of his regiment, or rather, when it was reported, truly or falsely, that he had made such application, a new variety of sneer broke out. He was now a soldier who wished to lay down the sword of war in order to resume the jaw of politics.

An ambitious, self-seeking politician, without political principle, and

restless for notoriety; such is the picture that Bryan's plutocratic enemies have drawn of him. Whether it is a true picture of the man, we shall not now stop to inquire. We have for the present a different purpose in view. What we wish especially to call attention to is the fact that the picture of Bryan as his enemies paint it is a perfect picture of Roosevelt as he paints it himself.

Consider Roosevelt's career. To become a member of the legislature, he pretended for a term to change his residence. His own counsel tells it, by Col. Roosevelt's authorization. And in support of what political principle did he do this? None. There was nothing in the episode to indicate a better motive than personal ambition.

Then he became a reformer in politics. Here was an indication of his possession of political principle in some sort; but, when the reformers were defeated in national convention by the boss, he abandoned his reform associates. His reward came two years later, in the form of a boss's nomination for mayor of New York. This he accepted at a time when, according to the present authorized statement of his lawyer, he was not a resident of New York. What could have been his motive but personal ambition?

Next we find him again pretending to remove to New York so as to accept an appointment as police commissioner, returning to his old residence upon vacating the office. And he vacated it, not because his term had expired, nor because there was not as good work to do there as anywhere, but because he had successfully solicited an office at Washington which, while offering him no greater opportunities for usefulness, did offer opportunities for a more ambitious career. At a critical moment he abandoned that office too, in order to take the field in the spectacular role of the most sensational officer of a spectacular cavalry regiment. Here he made a dashing record. It was just such a record as an ambitious and reckless man overflowing with animal spirits might have been expected to make—just such a record as a magazine article which he had

published two or three years before, indicated his ambitious desire to make.

Largely on account of this record, the independent republicans, regarding him as one of themselves despite his former desertion, hopefully looked to Roosevelt as the man to overthrow boss-ship in the republican party of New York, by running as an independent republican candidate for governor. But that would have savored of fidelity to political principle, and Col. Roosevelt ignored his independent friends to dicker with the boss of New York himself, whereby he became the accredited candidate of the machine. Thus, at the present climax of his career he again subordinates political principle to personal ambition.

Col. Roosevelt has not only never given the slightest indication of any ambition for aught but his own selfish advancement, but he has distinctly shown by his conduct, and though guardedly yet not ambiguously, has at times shown in words, that his own glory is his chief concern in life. Even what he would call his political principles—frequent war to foster the military spirit, expansion of territory to make the nation great, and an enormous navy to make it mighty—are but a magnification of his own personal ambition. He thinks of the nation as his greater self.

All that Bryan is by his meanest political enemies described to be, that is Roosevelt proved to be by Roosevelt himself. His whole career testifies, directly and positively, without reference to the judgment of his enemies, without reference to any motives which he has not himself frankly revealed, that, utterly oblivious of political principle, he is dominated by an intensely personal and selfish ambition.

CALIFORNIA FARMERS AND TAXATION.

In the state election now in progress in California the issue is the legitimate interests of the people as a whole against the plundering interests of the combined monopolies.

On the one hand the nomination of Congressman Maguire for governor was forced by the rank and

file of his party at the primaries, so that the democratic bosses, whom as a rule the monopolists control, were powerless to prevent it; on the other hand, the republican nominations were made from top to bottom at the dictation of the monopoly "combine." Maguire is committed, both by his pledges and his record, to clip the claws of the monopolies to the fullest extent of his power if elected, whereas the republican candidate is silent upon that matter.

Monopoly is the issue, but the monopoly managers have tried to shift it to the question of the single tax, hoping thereby to confuse voters.

Now, the single tax is a reform under which all improvements upon land, and all personal property, would be exempt from taxation. It is the reform that was advocated by Henry George during his life time, and which, in his world famous book, called "Progress and Poverty," is fully explained and eloquently defended as the means of protecting from the encroachments of monopoly all those who work, whether in city or country, whether as hired men or as employers. If this reform were adopted, public revenues would be derived exclusively from one kind of tax. This would be levied upon the owners of land—city land and mining land as well as farming land. And it would be levied not in proportion to the area of land, but in proportion to its value as a site, in proportion, that is, to what the land would sell for if its improvements were swept away by fire and cyclone.

This being the nature of the single tax, every intelligent Californian knows that if Judge Maguire were elected governor of California he would have no more power to put it in operation there than in Illinois or Great Britain. Unfortunate as that is for the people of California, and especially unfortunate as it is for California farmers, it is nevertheless the fact. For the constitution of California expressly forbids that kind of taxation; and existing circumstances are such that there is greater probability of California's sliding down the mountains into the Pacific than of Judge Maguire's being able, during one term in office, even to

put the machinery in motion for amending the constitution.

Inasmuch, however, as the republican party of California, under the dictation of those of its managers who are regularly employed by the monopolists, has seen fit to hold the single tax up to the gaze of California farmers as a sort of fiscal monster to excite their fears, they will do well to take advantage of the opportunity to find out exactly how it would operate with reference to their interests. This is something which the farmers must do for themselves. No one can do it for them. All that anyone can honestly do for them is to suggest a line of thought for their candid consideration, and that task we willingly undertake.

As Judge Maguire has said, there are two kinds of farmers, those who farm the farm and those who farm the farmer. The kind that farm farmers might as well understand that the single tax would not promote their peculiar industry; and unless they have minds above plunder, they might as well give the single tax a bad name and done with it. It has nothing in it which they could welcome. But the farmers who farm farms will profit by further examination.

Let the latter class of farmers consider the present tax system of California. That system is intended to make everybody contribute to the public revenues in proportion to the value of the property of all sorts that he owns. But in fact it does nothing of the kind. Like the systems of other states, it allows rich men and great corporations to escape their taxes in enormous degree, and puts the heft of the burden upon farmers.

Attempts to tax personal property must always produce that result. The reason is obvious. The personal property of rich men consists mostly of money, credits, stocks, bonds, and the like, which can be secreted easily; whereas the personal property of farmers consists mostly of crops, cattle, implements, furniture, and the like, which cannot be secreted at all. The rich, therefore, easily escape a very large part of their share of personal property taxation, while farm-

ers not only do not escape their share but are forced to bear in great degree the evaded share of the rich. That being so—and every California farmer who is half alive knows that it is so—the abolition of taxes upon personal property could not hurt farmers. On the contrary, it would help them. They, also, would then be exempt from a burdensome tax from which the rich are virtually exempt already. In connection, therefore, with personal property taxes, the single tax would benefit working farmers, for it would abolish all taxation upon personal property.

Having thus seen that in abolishing personal property taxation, the single tax would not injure but would benefit him, let the working farmer next consider the question of taxes upon real estate improvements.

Is it not true that the fixed improvements upon farms are as a rule worth more than the value of the farming site or location? In other words, do not farming improvements, such as buildings, fences, clearings, drainage where necessary and irrigation in arid places—do not these and kindred improvements cost more as a rule than the bare land would be worth? And is it not also true that in the exceptional cases in which the bare land would be worth more than the improvements, that it is not farmed at all or is poorly farmed? that it is a speculative holding or the great ranch of some rich man who farms farmers instead of farms? or that it is located so near to some city that the land is valuable for lots and ought to be used not for farming but for buildings? There can be but one answer. Not only in California but everywhere else, real farming land, when owned and farmed by real farmers, and properly utilized, is almost if not quite invariably worth less than the fixed improvements upon it.

But how is it with idle farm land held by speculators? how with great ranches owned by monopoly landlords? how with the mines, and with railroad real estate? how with city lots? The reverse is the case with all that kind of property. Great ranches are only slightly improved; they are in the main vast areas of

monopolized virgin soil, the improvements upon which are of little value in comparison with the value of the naked land itself. Land held idle for a rise in value is totally unimproved, and of course all its value is land value. Railroad values are chiefly the value not of buildings or tunnels, of embankments, cuts or rails, but of the bare right of way. With mines, the greatest value is not in the machinery and the timbering, but in the mining opportunity. And as to city lots, though the improvements upon some of the least valuable are worth more than the site, yet in the choicest locations the most costly buildings are worth less than the narrow spaces of land they rest upon; while the value of vacant lots is nothing but land value, and that of those with "shacks" upon them is nearly so.

To abolish taxes on improvements, therefore, would benefit the owners of such property in far less degree than it would benefit working farmers. For their exemptions, in proportion to their land value, would be much less than the exemptions of the farmers.

Thus the single tax, which would abolish taxes on real estate improvements, would be a relief to the working farmer instead of a discrimination against him.

But the single tax does not stop with exempting personal property and real estate improvements from taxation. It shifts the burden of all taxes to the land, measuring the amount of tax in each case not by area but by selling value.

Since so much property would be exempt, the tax on land would of course be increased. But observe how the increase would be distributed. Though working farmers would pay higher taxes for their bare land than they do now, yet inasmuch as their improvements are worth more than their land, they would lose less by that than they would save by the exemption of these improvements, so that their total real estate tax would not be as high as now.

Not so with rich ranchers, with land speculators, with railroad and mining corporations, or with city

landlords. Since their land values are as a rule of greater value than their improvements, their exemption would be less than the increase in their tax; and instead of paying a lower real estate tax than now, they would pay a higher one. The net result would be a shifting back upon corporations, land speculators, and the wealthy of cities, of the burden of taxation which they have been and still are throwing off upon the shoulders of working farmers.

These fiscal advantages of the single tax to farmers are easily seen upon a little thoughtful consideration. But the economic advantages would be still greater. By taxing land values alone and exempting everything else—that is, by taxing monopoly and exempting labor—the single tax would encourage every form of labor and discourage every form of monopoly.

To hold land idle would then be unprofitable, and in consequence everyone who owned land would have to use it to its full capacity. This could not be done without tremendously increasing the demand for workers in every grade of employment, and thereby multiplying demand for the products of the farm. Not only would the single tax lessen the taxes of working farmers, but it would also widen and strengthen the working farmer's market. What that would mean to him, every farmer who for lack of a strong market is compelled to sell his produce at prices which leave him but a bare living, ought to know without being told.

The condition is well understood by the combined monopolies of California, and that is why they fear the single tax. It is not from love of the farmer whom they have plucked so long that they are solicitous, but because in the advent of the single tax they shrewdly see the end of their plucking opportunities.

NEWS

The coal strike or lockout in central Illinois culminated on the 12th in a riot, in which many persons were killed and wounded. The number has not yet been ascertained. This

riot was not at Pana, the principal seat of the difficulty, but at Virden, in the northeast corner of Macoupin county, a little north of west from Pana, and about 35 miles away. The coal mines at Virden are operated by the Chicago-Virden Coal company. As at Pana, the strike, or more properly the lockout, has been on since last April, and the operators have been importing negroes from Alabama to take the places of the local miners. This importation of labor was the immediate cause of the riot.

The Virden riot will be better understood if we begin the story at the beginning. For mining coal in Illinois, the joint convention of operators and miners had agreed upon a state scale of 40 cents per gross ton. This rate the Virden and Pana operators declared they could not pay, as their mines were unfavorably situated with reference to the coal market. Acknowledging the justice of the operators' claim, the local miners offered to take 35 cents. But the operators were still dissatisfied, and on the 1st of last April they closed their mines. Thereupon the miners appealed to the state board of arbitration to determine a fair scale. The operators refused to join in the appeal. Nevertheless the board investigated the matter and decided that a fair scale would be 33 cents. This decision had no legal value, however, as the operators had refused to join in the arbitration. Neither did it produce any moral effect upon the operators, for they continued to keep the mines closed. Affairs were thus at a standstill and peaceable, until the operators began to import negroes from Alabama, upon representations that mining labor was in great demand at Pana and Virden.

This movement on the part of the operators excited the local miners, the more especially as it was attended with hostile preparations on the part of the operators. A stockade was built around the Virden mines, and armed private detectives were hired and quartered there. From this time on the village of Virden was in a ferment. The local miners armed themselves and declared that the imported negroes should not be taken into the stockade, while the operators, appealing to the sheriff for a posse and to the governor for troops, declared that the negroes should be brought in at any cost.