

dated" at an up-town office in New York within two hours of boarding trains, some of which were distant from that office a good proportion of two hours.

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Financial Benefits of the Panama Canal.

Early though it is, indications are already abundant showing the direction of the natural flow of the financial benefits of the Panama Canal. Building lots in the business district of New Orleans are booming. Why? Because it is expected that upon the opening of the canal New Orleans with its nearer proximity to this great water course, will become a great seaport. But why should that make a boom in New Orleans building lots? Because, if New Orleans does become a great seaport, its building sites must be availed of for business purposes. Hence the owners of these lots, with an eye to the growth of the city, are discounting the future by holding their property at values based upon expectations of growth. Already the prices of sites in the business district of New Orleans are so high that a very great growth must take place to enable their users to earn enough to pay interest on the price. This is not an isolated instance. It is typical of the effect of all improvement on the locations financially affected by it. Financial benefits tend to go to the forestallers of sites.

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Competition and Monopoly.

One of the new magazine writers who is making a strong impression—we refer to William Hard—recently pictured labor conditions in the Chicago stockyards in this vivid fashion: "The Bohemian is willing to work for 18 cents an hour. But beside him stands a Lithuanian. The Lithuanian is willing to work for 17 cents an hour. The two men are equally strong," etc. "Which of the two men ought Mr. Armour's timekeeper to hire?" Mr. Hard writes of this illustration that it "is the bottom of the labor question in the stockyards of Chicago." True enough. But not that alone; it is the bottom of the labor question everywhere. Mr. Hard's interpretation of it, however, that the bottom of the labor question is competition, falls to pieces. Competition for a job, indeed it is; but competition for a job is caused, not by general competition but by restraint of general competition,—in other words by monopoly. To the extent that general competition is repressed by this monopoly or that, to the same extent and with even greater intensity does competition for jobs arise.

Labor and Land.

The builders of San Francisco are keeping wages down with imported strike breakers. If they could import vacant lots they might keep the landlord's blackmail down, but they cannot literally import vacant lots. Yet they could produce the same effect by exempting buildings from taxation and correspondingly increasing the tax on lots. This would import into the market a large supply of vacant lots which, while literally in San Francisco, are held at prices so exorbitant that for building purposes they might as well be thousands of miles away.

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Bryan's Baggage.

On his baggage upon returning to this country, Mr. Bryan is reported to have made a full and frank declaration (something that nobody is expected to do, although it is the law, but which he did because it is the law), and the custom officials fined him \$500, which he had to pay. It would be interesting to know how much Congressman Longworth paid in duties on his baggage. The comparison might furnish an entertaining object lesson in tariff protection.

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ROBERT BAKER.*

The name of Robert Baker is inseparably identified with the history of the abolition of railway passes. To him belongs the credit of having stirred up public sentiment on the subject and thereby of having brought about the suppression of this insidious mode of bribery. But his service in that particular is not the only public service he has rendered. Both in Congress and out of Congress he has for twenty years or more missed no opportunity to help in the cause of genuine democracy.

His fitness for this service may be inferred from a characterization of him which was recently made by Gov. Lind of Minnesota, who served with him in Congress. When introducing Mr. Baker to an audience in the Universalist Church at Minneapolis on the 22nd of last April, Gov. Lind said:

I told Mr. Baker a few moments ago that I would not have come into Minneapolis from my farm today to hear any other man on earth, and I repeat it. For I have never known but one man in all my political experience that always spoke the whole truth as he saw it under any and every circumstances, and that man is Mr. Baker. I admit that I do not always state all that I believe in, although I never deny my faith; but I never knew Mr. Baker to hesitate or

*A portrait of Mr. Baker accompanies this issue of The Public as a supplement.