

week, he has decided to support Taft as "the least of three evils."



### Getting After Land Grafters.

The George report on taxation in the District of Columbia, described in the News Narrative this week, is of vastly more importance to "non-tax-payers," as the classes that pay most of the taxes are usually called by those that pay least, than can be made to appear by description or summary. A suggestion or two, however, may be made. In the first place, this report demands *just assessments* at the seat of our national government. If only that much were done, some taxes that now weigh down little homes at Washington would drop off. The difference would be paid by owners of valuable land in the business and fine residence areas and of speculative tracts, all of which are now grossly under-taxed relatively to little homes. In the second place, this report centers attention upon a highly important fact regarding taxation, by showing that improvements deteriorate. No one ought to need this reminder. Yet a good many do. Although improvements deteriorate, we go on taxing them as if they were new; and although their sites grow in value, we hold the brakes hard down on every effort to lift tax burdens from buildings. The common attitude toward taxation is upside down. We hunt out useful land-improvers to fine them, and parasitical land-grabbers to reward them. On that point, the George report on the District of Columbia is full of lessons for everybody.



### A Trick in Rhetoric.

"Industries decline as land values fall." The quotation is from the campaign organ of the land monopolists of Oregon who are fighting the Oregon movement for just taxation of land values. For an instance of ingeniously making statements of fact falsify the fact, we commend this example. "Industries decline as land values fall." Of course they do; and equally true would it be to reverse the statement so as to say that "land values fall as industries decline." Yet the two statements may carry a diametrically opposite implication. Although both are true, one may imply that land values fall *because* industries decline, whereas the other may imply that industries decline *because* land values fall.



If those Oregon land monopolists had said that industries decline *because* land values fall, everyone would have detected the lie instantly. It is

evident that industries are promoted, other things being the same, by low land values. No one goes to a place of high land values to start an industry, unless that place offers exceptional inducements. But make the statement true in form while false in suggestion, and you "get away with the lie." So the Oregon land monopolists proclaim that "industries decline as land values fall." It is like saying that "the power stops as the engine slows down," or "the wind falls as the sailboat loses headway," or "the rain comes as the drought ends," or "the spring opens as the flowers bloom." Substitute "because" for "as" in any of those statements and the rhetorical trick is exposed. Who would be gulled by a statement that "the power stops because the engine slows down," or "the wind falls because the sailboat loses headway," or "the rain comes because the drought ends," or "the spring opens because the flowers bloom"? And wouldn't it be just as absurd to say that "industries decline *because* land values fall"?



Of course it would. And that is why the Oregon land monopolists, wishing to fool folks, phrase their absurd suggestion in terms that mislead. That is why they say that "industries decline as land values fall." Reverse the statement and you get the truth whether you use "as" or "because." If you say that "land values fall as industries decline," you do not mislead; for it is manifestly true not only that land values fall as industries decline, but that they fall *because* industries decline." And this is an excellent reason for taxing land values instead of industries. If you tax industries you tend to discourage them, thereby making them decline and consequently causing land values to fall; but if you exempt industries you tend to encourage them, thereby making them flourish and consequently causing land values to rise. Thus the taxation of land values instead of industries tends to give a growing income for public use, and at the expense only of land monopolists to whom industries would otherwise have to pay it.



### A Natural Affiliation.

There are reports of an affiliation between the Civic Federation of Chicago and the brewery ring of Illinois. The reports appear to be well founded. They put the brewery ring and the Civic Federation in the position of having bargained together to secure a "public policy" referendum, to head off woman suffrage in behalf of the brewery ring, and to recommend extra taxation of homes and