

to private capital." It goes even so far as to imply, with some lack of prudence we should suppose, that this strike has a bearing of great importance on subway extension (vol. xiii, pp. 1071, 1154), which is needlessly delayed by "an obstinate but merciful minority," that "wants municipal ownership and operation at any cost." That kind of comment goes far to confirm the opinion of President Healy, of the National Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen, that the ferry strike was instigated by the agents of the Interests in order "to aid the people who are fighting against municipalization of the subways."

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One might suppose that the Wall Street Journal had never heard of a strike on public utilities developed by "private capital." Why are those strikes of so little importance in comparison with strikes on public utilities publicly operated? Is there a difference? Indeed there is, and it was illustrated in that Staten Island ferry strike. When there is a strike on privately operated public utilities, the owners refuse to arbitrate, refuse to confer, refuse to be "dictated to," by anybody in any way; and so the strike drags on, be it a fair one or not, week after week, to the great annoyance of the public.

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Contrast that situation with the Staten Island ferry strike. When the firemen complained, the Commissioner of Docks, Calvin Tompkins, arranged with them for a conference. Without waiting for this, they abandoned their posts, thereby causing a few hours' interruption to the service. Temporarily adjusting the difficulty as soon as he learned of it, Mr. Tompkins addressed a committee of the men, explaining the situation fairly as man to man and declaring it to be the policy of his Department "to freely and at reasonable notice at all times confer with its employes regarding all matters," adding: "I believe that many mistakes and misunderstandings are the consequence of precipitate action which may be obviated by publicity and freedom of intercourse." At a subsequent conference he dwelt upon the importance of discipline, and the desirability of justice, instead of "privileged generosity," and on the necessity for mutual confidence and loyalty, he said:

If there shall be free and frequent opportunity for conference, and if both public and private interests shall be accorded full public consideration—with the City ready and willing to establish fair and reasonable conditions of employment at good pay—there should be no misunderstandings and no

hasty, ill-advised action. To place the Commissioner in the position where he can secure for the men conditions at least as favorable as those existing in outside private or public employment, he must be able to assure the public that they are dealing with loyal and efficient public servants.

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Not only was there no long stoppage of service, but the incident and the attitude of Commissioner Tompkins brought out this assurance from the national president of the labor organization concerned, he who had intimated that the strike was instigated in the interest of subway development by "private capital":

As a representative of organized labor, and one who has taken a deep interest in municipal ownership, I thoroughly agree with your sentiments as expressed here. We are going to have municipal ownership. We must have discipline and the employes must be allowed to assemble. I regret very much that the stokers took the step that they did the other day. They did it not knowing the enormity of the thing themselves. I have talked with many of them, and they all realize that they owe something to the public; that they should not have tied up thousands of people over in Staten Island that morning. It has been hinted here and there that the like is going to occur any time on these ferry boats. I don't think that is so. The men I talked with assured me that there would not be any other strikes. If they have any grievance, real or otherwise, they will take it up with you.

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Which is preferable, so far as the convenience of passengers is concerned when employes in public service have grievances—such a disposition of the matter as that of the Staten Island ferry under municipal ownership, or the stubborn conflicts that arise in similar circumstances under private ownership? As an object lesson, the Staten Island ferry strike is an argument for, not against, municipalization of subways.

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### Human versus "Property" Rights.

Very significant is the recent utterance of the Joint Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church on the Relations of Capital and Labor:

Property is a trust held for the benefit of the community. The church must throw her chief emphasis upon the value of human life. The property right is merely one conferred upon the individual by the community. Morally it exists only in return for social service. It must in every case yield to the needs of humanity. No business interests, no profit, however great, can warrant the deliberate deterioration of human life.

That is obviously a well-intended utterance. But there is a confusion as to the meaning of the term

"property." If the individual cannot rightfully hold any property until the community confers the right upon him, what right has the individual to produce property without a permit from the community? If all property is a trust for the benefit of the community, isn't it unwise to permit an individual to hold it without bond, and to control and enjoy it until starvation threatens the beneficiaries of the trust? If the individual produces property, by his own exertion, for what social service is he indebted to the community to the extent of that property? How can it be said that the exclusive ownership of a house, a barn, a horse, chickens, a cow, and furniture bears any relation to the deterioration of human life? The Episcopal Joint Commission is probably confused by the custom of regarding one's earnings and one's privileges as equally property. Though the producer cannot fairly be said to hold his product in trust, this may be fairly said of a mere legal privilege. But why not discriminate?

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#### A Ballingerial Compromise.

There seems to be doubt as to whether President Taft's Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Ballinger, has been "vindicated" or "whitewashed." Why not compromise on "vindicquashed"?

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### AN OBJECT LESSON IN LAND MONOPOLY.

It is matter of court record, that there is held in California a single landed estate of 14,500,000 acres. As that acreage amounts to 22,656 square miles, the area of this one holding equals one-seventh of the entire State of California.

Although held in California, the land is not all within the boundaries of that State. Lying partly in Nevada, it extends through California and far up into Oregon. It is known as the "Miller and Lux" estate. Miller is the man of whom it is told that an old acquaintance, meeting him in a Western barroom, exclaimed: "Why, hello, Miller! I used to know you in San Francisco when you had to peddle sausages for a living, didn't I?" "Yes," said Miller, "and if I had been such a fool as you are I would be peddling sausages yet."

Fifteen years ago, more or less, Lux died, and the probating of his estate established by court record the magnitude of this holding. Reputable persons assert, moreover, that semi-legal holdings of the same estate comprise three million more acres from which the public is excluded. So we have an estate of over seventeen million acres.

I could tell fascinating things about that great holding, for I have traveled over thousands of miles of it. For hours I have sat in the fast moving train speeding through strips of it said to be fifty and seventy miles long, and twenty and thirty miles wide. Far as the eye could reach have I looked at some of the richest land made by God for His children—hours and hours of it in the great San Joaquin valley—with nothing on it but cattle, distant barns, pump houses, and herded tramp-men to reap the alfalfa fields.

It is the proud boast of this company that it can drive cattle from Nevada to Oregon through the great State of California, without ever stopping over night on any land but their own; that nowhere in the Golden State, some eight hundred miles long, is there a break in their land-strips more than a day's cattle journey between the ends.

As Rockefeller and Morgan are emphasized because they are at the apex of their particular forms of public plunder, and not because they are necessarily the greatest or worst, so this great estate should be emphasized. Its value as an object lesson is its hugeness.

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And there are other big estates on this Pacific slope.

Besides this one of 14,500,000 acres with its 3,000,000 acre fringe, there are those that range from 10,000 to 40,000, 100,000, and many more thousand acres. The totals would startle thinking people.

Some of these I have been investigating. There are many difficulties in the way of getting exact information, but the facts are coming.

EDMUND NORTON.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### PROGRESSIVE CANADA.

Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Calgary, Alberta, is a rapidly growing city of 40,000 population. Three years ago the municipality decided to build a street railway system. This has been in operation a little more than a year. Last month the net profits were \$5,766.61. This brings the city's profit for the year 1910 up to the handsome sum of \$57,539.97. Question: Since this profit can be made under municipal ownership in a city of 40,000 population what is the value of a franchise in the ordinary city of 200,000 population? What of a city of half a million?

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With a view to the adoption of the municipal single-tax the City Council of Regina (population