

What the best interest of both employer and hired man requires—those of both classes who earn their own living—is that they get together on the basis of a genuine purpose to do the fair thing all round. There would be no difficulty, so far as the labor organizations are concerned, for they for the most part want to be fair. As a mass they are composed of fair minded men and women; more so in dealing with employers' organizations, candor compels us to say, than employers' organizations are in dealing with them. Neither would there be any difficulty so far as the employers' organizations are concerned, if the membership in general would put aside such influence as their own little special privileges may exert, and close their ears to the unfair suggestions of overbearing monopolists among them. Employers' organizations that wanted only a square deal with workingmen would find no other difficulty in co-operating with labor organizations upon a basis of justice, than the difficulty which they themselves have fostered—the difficulty that would naturally arise from distrust by labor organizations of the good faith of employers' organizations.

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Isn't the time nearly at hand for employers' organizations to take a more considerate view of labor organizations? Hasn't the day for vituperation gone by? Are there not enough fair minded men in the employers' organizations to turn them back from their monopolistic tendencies and toward friendly intercourse with workingmen? What if it should prove for a time that the labor organizations won't respond in the same spirit? Isn't the responsibility upon the employers, considering their greater opportunities for cultivating the amenities of life? Let them set an example before they condemn workingmen for spurning it. And first let them oust their own monopolists.

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#### **Butcher and Hunter.**

Minnie Maddern Fiske is to be credited with an exceptionally keen criticism of those strenuous men who enjoy killing things. One finds it difficult to think of a brutal-minded and bloody-handed pig sticker as noble; but Mrs. Fiske thinks him nobler than the hunter. For "the hunter owns to a thrill of rapture as his bullet pierces the plumage of the bird or tears through the heart of the doe;" whereas "we may at least say of the butcher that he is indifferent." Mrs. Fiske evidently lacks the strenuous element. She seems to appreciate none of that joy of living which

springs from demonstrations of skill in killing. Her ideals are commonplace, or she would not thus contrast the exuberant joy of the hunter with the stolid indifference of the butcher. She should rather inspire the butcher with the joy of the hunter, and thereby elevate the bloody monotony of his daily grind to the higher levels of sanguinary passion. Think of the ordinary butcher, what he might be if his indifference to killing were but turned to enthusiasm! He might find ebullient joy, as hunters have done, not only in killing hogs, but possibly in killing men. Many of us little realize how much of life is lost to those who view it in sentimental ways. Yet there does seem to be sense in Mrs. Fiske's notion. May it not indeed be true that he who slaughters stolidly for food is less ignoble than he who slaughters enthusiastically for fun? Nay, nay; let us put her evil notion aside. Such teachings threaten the manhood of our nation. They are calculated to make molycoddles of us all. One skillful in epithet might almost venture to characterize them as immoral.

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#### **IMPERIALISM FOR PORTO RICO.**

If any one principle of popular self government is more securely imbedded in American tradition than any other, it is the principle that the people's representatives shall hold the public purse strings.

This is of the very essence of popular government. For if public expenditures may be made without the consent of the representatives of the people to be taxed, then those people can be taxed without their consent and be consequently governed by arbitrary power.

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Precisely this is what the Stuarts tried to do at a critical period in English history.

Asserting the divine right of kings to govern "their people," they undertook to levy taxes directly and without the consent of the people's representatives in Parliament. It was his resistance to this usurpation that opened an historical career to John Hampden. It was Charles I's insistence upon it that lost him his head.

Since those days, the British Constitution has necessitated appropriations by the Commons as the unalterable condition of levying taxes.

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And we of this country have inherited that Constitutional principle.

Our war for independence was waged upon it. The founders of this Republic identified their cause with the tradition of British freedom

that there shall be no taxation except such as is authorized by the representatives of the people to be taxed.

Following further the unwritten Constitution of Great Britain on this point, our written Constitutions, Federal and State, provide not only that taxation and expenditures shall be subject exclusively to the legislature, but also that all revenue bills shall originate in the most popular branch.

There is no escape from the conclusion that the American doctrine of popular government, inherited from Great Britain as one of the results of the long struggle for Anglo Saxon liberty, against foes without and foes within, demands that the representatives of the people to be taxed—they alone, and not only alone, but in their uncoerced discretion, subject only to popular approval,—shall appropriate the revenues that are or are to be derived from taxation.

To deny this is to deny a vital principle of self government. To neglect it in a conflict with arbitrary power is indicative of some incapacity for self government. To assert it in defense of popular rights is evidence of qualification for self government.

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President Taft's attitude toward Porto Rico (p. 467) must therefore be an event of peculiar interest to all self governing peoples.

Presumably he cherishes the old British and American tradition. Presumably he honors Hampden for his resistance to fiscal usurpation. Presumably he regards those provisions of American Constitutions which give the representatives of the people to be taxed absolute control over appropriations, as a sheet anchor of American liberty. It is not to be supposed that a President of the United States would tolerate the thought of depriving Congress or any State legislature of the power to coerce an executive by withholding appropriations, no matter to what degree the power might have been abused. As a Constitutional lawyer, and therefore presumably a student of the history of American liberty and the Anglo Saxon liberties out of which it sprung, it is inconceivable that he, though a Hamiltonian, though an imperialist since the Spanish war, though a colonial administrator, would abrogate the one power by which the people can guard their rights against oppression—the power of making or withholding appropriations at their own will.

Yet President Taft has solemnly asked Congress to do this very thing with reference to the Porto Ricans.

Over those people we are exercising autocratic power. We name their executive, and though we let them elect their legislature we authorize the executive to veto its legislation. Nevertheless we have accorded to the Porto Ricans the mild but effective protection against usurpation which the British Parliament revived in the time of Charles I, to which our own States appealed in colonial days, and which is embodied in all our Constitutions—the power, namely, of withholding appropriations when an arbitrary executive vetoes popular legislation.

This right of self government has now been exercised by the people's representatives in Porto Rico. They have said, as the British Commons said to Charles I, and as the American Colonies said to George III, If we may not make laws which our constituents demand, we will not authorize their taxation.

What the proposed laws were is not clearly reported. But whatever they were, the people's representatives have acted in accordance with the best precedents to be found in the history of popular self government.

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Yet President Taft cites this action of the Porto Ricans to prove that they are "too irresponsible" to enjoy the power of making or withholding appropriations.

That is what Charles I thought of the Commons of England. That is what George III said of the colonial legislatures of what is now the United States. That is what baffled autocratic power always says or thinks of stubborn democracy.

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Probably President Taft does not realize his offense against the best traditions of popular government. Influenced by a temporary dilemma of colonial administration, he has, thoughtlessly perhaps, taken the autocratic short cut to a solution, not appreciating its reactionary significance. All the worse. An intentional attack from such a source would mean no more than that a traitor to popular self government had got himself for a little while into power. There would be no danger in that. But when the head of a self governing republic thoughtlessly strikes it in a vital spot, not realizing that the spot is vital, because his mind has become accustomed to a tendency away from self government, then we have a danger sign.

That such a man as President Taft should in this way propose the destruction of so much of self government as he has found the Porto Ricans in possession of, is full of sinister meaning. It

indicates the distance we have drifted away from our racial and national ideals of self government and the traditional guards against autocracy, since the advent of that policy of American imperialism with which Mr. Taft's distinguished career began.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### THE BRITISH BUDGET\*.

London, May 3, 1909.

While the Liberal budget, introduced by Lloyd George, April 29th, disappoints some of the radical single-taxers in this country, it really marks a revolution in British politics. For it recognizes the difference between land and other forms of wealth, and begins the appropriation by society of that which society itself has created.

Socialists, Radicals, Liberals and Conservatives, alike recognize the real significance of the proposals. No one is deceived into believing that this is merely an emergency proposal. It is "the thin edge of the wedge" of land nationalization.

Even Lloyd-George recognized the evils of land monopoly and its blighting effect upon industry and life in his budget speech. He frankly said: "The growth in value of urban sites is due to no expenditure of capital or thought on the part of the ground owner, but is entirely owing to the enterprising energy of the community." Then he went on to show how the healthy development of cities is strangled by land monopolists who withhold land from use in the hope of a speculative rise. He later said: "If the landlord insists on being a dog in the manger, he must pay for his manger."

The budget proposes to value all the land in Great Britain.

This is the revolutionary element in the budget. It is not three kinds of taxes which are estimated to yield only \$2,500,000 a year; it is the valuation of the naked, unimproved land of the kingdom that marks this budget as a revolutionary proposal, and lays the foundation for the local as well as the imperial taxation of land values.

The Tory land owners might accept the taxes with a protest. They will writhe in apprehension to see their land valued and its colossal proportions held up before the community as a treasure to be still further tapped by the towns.

They may reject the budget altogether, although this has not been attempted for centuries, and all the traditions of the British Constitution repose the budgetary power in the Commons. But the House of Lords is a house of landowners, and they may be willing, Samson-like, to bring down the Constitution itself about their ears rather than see their dear privileges touched.

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In brief, the budget provides for—

(1) A tax of 20 per cent on the increment of value accruing to land in the future from the growth of the community. This tax of 20 per cent

\*See The Public of May 7, pp. 434, 443; of May 14, pp. 458, 462, 472; and of May 21, pp. 481, 487, 494.

is to be taken on transfer, death, sale, or otherwise. It is not an annual tax, and is expected to yield \$250,000 the first year.

(2) A tax of one half-penny on the pound (equivalent to an ad valorem rate of two mills) to be imposed on the capital value of the land. The same rate is to be imposed on mineral lands. This tax, however, is limited to land which is undeveloped, or is not used to its best advantage. It does not apply to land of less than \$250 per acre, and really exempts agricultural land altogether.

(3) A duty of 10 per cent upon the value which accrues to the landlord on the reversion of a lease. Almost all of the land of Great Britain is held under lease for long periods of time with the provision that all improvements revert to the landlord on the termination of the lease. This tax aims to take 10 per cent of the improvement value as well as the increase in land values, which revert back to the large landowners when the leases fall in.

These form the land tax proposals. They are not the proposals of The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, which stood for a straight tax of a penny in the pound on all the land in the United Kingdom. This would have produced from one to two hundred million dollars, whereas the budget proposals will yield less than three million dollars. But the valuation will be secured.

Hereafter it will be easy to impose a straight tax upon pure land values for local and Imperial purposes. Propaganda will be greatly simplified and the movement will have a firm foundation, in that a demonstration will have been made of the possibility of valuing land separate and apart from improvements, which the Conservatives have insisted could not be done.

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This is a revolutionary budget.

It is impossible to attribute its achievement to any one man. The seed sown by Henry George has been growing during the past quarter of a century and has gradually infiltrated into the public consciousness. But from a three weeks' stay in England and rather close contact with the radical movement, I think it is fair to say that the movement has been invigorated and crystallized into form by the work of Joseph Fels, who has not only given unsparingly of his time, but has promoted by every conceivable means a general knowledge of the taxation of land values and made it a practical political programme.

FREDERIC C. HOWE.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### A FAR SHOUT OF REJOICING.

Topeka, Kan., May 15, 1909.

My Dear Public:—I am always delighted to see you; to-day you bring me information which renders that famous song, the "Nunc Dimittis," even more enlightening. I hear it, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation";—there is the organ and the voices of those Pure Democrats. Our religion, the real "id quod religat," that which binds, is beginning to prevail. I am transported to the Strand, where is the