tax campaigns in Oregon and Missouri are at this moment promoting.

In Missouri the proposal is for a partial exemption of all property from taxation except land values progressively. In 1920 and thereafter land values would bear the whole tax burden. In Oregon there are two proposals—one in three counties for locally taxing land values exclusively; the other throughout the State, for a graduated super-tax on land values exceeding $10,000 in value in a single holding. While no one can predict the result, and while success on proposals so radical would be extraordinary at the first battle, especially when resistance from the great land monopolists is so vigorous and in many ways so subtle, there are nevertheless straws in the wind. The most considerate and therefore the most significant, is the following from the enemy, which we find credited to the Mexico (Missouri) Intelligencer:

As a member of the executive committee of the Missouri Anti-Singletax League, the editor of The Intelligencer has spent much time during the past fortnight at the League's headquarters in Kansas City. His observations of the Singletax situation briefly stated are as follows:

Union labor is almost to a man favoring the Amendments.

Singletax sentiment predominates in St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Joplin and Springfield. Jasper county, including Joplin, is overwhelmingly in favor of Singletax.

Socialist spellbinders in southeast Missouri have made votes for the Singletax.

State headquarters fear the "silent" vote of cities like Mexico, Columbia, Moberly and the smaller cities throughout the State. It is the men who won't express themselves on whom the result will depend.

Land Speculation in British Columbia.

What seems upon its face to be a correct statement of some of the effects of the Singletax in Vancouver and Victoria, appear in the California Outlook of September 21, marred though it is by a plainly erroneous inference.

According to this statement there is in Vancouver and Victoria a surprising difference in the effect of the Singletax upon business centers as compared with outlying residence sections. "In outlying districts," so the California Outlook's informant says—

where there is room to spare, the system of exempting improvements and placing the whole burden of property-taxation upon the town lots whether occupied or not, works to the advantage of those who want homes of their own. They get building lots cheaper than they otherwise would, and they do not have to pay taxes on the houses they build.

That is precisely what thoughtful Singletaxers would expect to happen—*"where there is room to spare."*

But, proceeds the Outlook article from which we are quoting—

in the business districts, where the area is limited, only those who have abundant means are able to own building lots at all. The tendency of the land tax is either to prevent any building at all or to induce the construction of the largest and tallest buildings that demand can be found for, inasmuch as the taxes on a ten-story building and lot are no greater than the tax on a two-story building and lot. While waiting for the growth of a demand for further buildings, well-to-do holders add their tax bills to the selling price of the lots and, by and by, get it all back with a wide margin of profit. A rate of taxation that would devour the substance of a small investor only adds to the profits of the capitalist who can wait for the growth of commercial demand. This is not in accord with the land tax theory, but is, I am assured, the way the system works in Victoria and Vancouver.

That, too, is precisely what any thoughtful Singletaxer would expect to happen—*"where the area is limited" and the tax burden is light.*

The California Outlook's erroneous inference rests upon a thoughtless assumption that the principle which operates "where there is room to spare" is different from the principle that operates "where the area is limited." There is, however, no difference at all in the principle. That this is so may be easily seen by considering the inevitable effect if the land value tax were heavy enough to take approximately the entire annual value of all the land of a given community—both "where there is room to spare" and "where the area is limited." If, for illustration, the tax were high enough to take, say, 75 or 80 per cent of the annual value, who could afford to "wait for the growth of commercial demand" in the one section any more than in the other? And if the land-value tax increased in weight as advancing commercial demand increased the value of the land, how could "well-to-do holders add their tax bills to the selling price of the lots," or in any other way "by and by get it all back with a wide margin of profit"? To conceive of such a result under those circumstances would be preposterous. The inevitable effect would be an abandonment of unused building lots by all but persons who were putting them to full use—and this "where the area is limited" as well as

"where there is room to spare." The land market would be glutted. But this which would manifestly occur under those extreme circumstances would occur also where the tax was lighter, provided the tax were not so light as to fall considerably short of the increase in values.

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Recurring to Victoria and Vancouver, if the Singletax works to the advantage of home owners in the residence sections there, "where there is room to spare," but to the advantage of big investors in the business sections, "where the area is limited," the reason is not far to seek. It will be found not in any variation of principle, but in the fact that the same rate of land-value tax is heavy in the former section and light in the latter, *as compared with the intensity of the land monopoly in each.* "Where there is room to spare" a light land-value tax will discourage land monopoly, because values are likely to advance too slowly to make an investment in tax bills "look good"; but "where the area is limited," payment of the same pro rata tax may amount to a reasonably good bet that the land values will rise so much faster than the tax as to leave "a wide margin of profit."

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If the facts about Victoria and Vancouver are as the California Outlook reports them—and its report certainly accords with what Henry George taught and Singletaxers believe, the California Outlook's hint to the contrary notwithstanding—then the harvest which business-section land monopolists may be reaping in Vancouver and Victoria is not because those cities have got the Singletax. It is because they haven't yet got enough.

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The Singletax in Ohio.

As a rule, the editorials of the Saturday Evening Post of Philadelphia are as accurate as they are compact, and no higher tribute could be paid to their customary accuracy than that. But one of them in the issue of October 19, 1912—the one on recent amendments to the Ohio Constitution*—is an exception. We refer to this part of it:

> **Singletaxers in Ohio, however, had been agitating for Initiative and Referendum. It was feared they might Initiate by popular petition and pass an act embodying Singletax principles. So the new Constitution provides that Initiative shall not be used to classify property for the purpose of taxation or for laying any single tax on land values. This new Constitution is, indeed, a radical and democratic document. It permits the people of Ohio to govern themselves, within certain limitations, pretty much as they may see fit—thus marking a great advance over most State Constitutions; but it carefully specifies that they cannot govern themselves to the extent of taking back, for the uses of the community that created it, the unearned increment in land values, or of appropriating for the public benefit further unearned increments.**

This is a mistake insofar as it implies that the Initiative cannot be used in Ohio in behalf of the Singletax.

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Precisely those powers of self-government which the quoted editorial says the people of Ohio are denied by the Initiative for which Singletaxers agitated, are in fact conferred upon the people of that State by the Initiative that has been adopted there. What *is* denied them—and this probably accounts for the error in the Post's editorial—is the power of adopting the Singletax by *legislative* Initiative. There are two kinds of Initiative in the new Constitution—one for legislative laws and the other for Constitutional amendments. Under the former, nothing can be Initiated which the Constitution forbids the legislature to adopt; under the latter, anything can be Initiated which the prescribed percentage of petitioners demand. The only difference between the two, so far as Singletax measures are concerned, is a difference of 4 per cent in the number of petitioners prescribed. The legislative Initiative requires 6 per cent, the other 10 per cent. Once Initiated, the popular vote required for either is the same—a majority of the votes cast on the question itself. The Saturday Evening Post has so large a circulation, and is so seldom in error, that it may be reasonably asked to examine into this matter anew.

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Political Hysterics.

If Mr. Taft or Mr. Wilson or Mr. Debs or Mr. Chafin or Mr. Roosevelt had been bitten by a mad dog while on his way to make a campaign speech he would have been an object of friendly sympathy with everybody, and properly so. No matter how one might regard him or his party, or what one might believe and have said of his previous conduct and future purposes, every person of decent mind would have been sincerely sorry for his misfortune, sincerely hopeful for a speedy recovery, and sincerely sympathetic with his followers in their loss of leadership. But what would any self-respecting person have to think, of the Republican or Democratic or Socialist or Prohibition or Progressive candidate if

*See Public of September 13, page 867.