

The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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Vol. XIII.

CHICAGO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1910.

No. 654

Published by Louis F. Post

Ellsworth Building, 357 Dearborn Street, Chicago

Single Copy, Five Cents

Yearly Subscription, One Dollar

Entered as Second-Class Matter April 16, 1898, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL

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Land Value Taxation in Great Britain.

Cable dispatches from London tell of a crisis in the Tory party, with Balfour cautious and the protection theorists and landed interests prodding him on to fierce battle in their behalf. The significant and gratifying phase of the matter is that those two interests are "getting together," which is where they logically belong. The protectionists wish to raise public revenues by custom house taxation, which would increase prices on home made goods for the benefit of domestic factory owners and on imports for the benefit of public revenues. The landed interests, on their part wishing to rid themselves of land value taxation, turn hopefully to the custom house exploitationists. Thus protectionism and landlordism advertise the partnership which always and everywhere really exists between them, but is not generally seen to exist. With Protection and Land Monopoly in candid "cahoots," the way is cleared in Great Britain for the equally natural partnership between Free Trade and Land Value Taxation. Not only is the way cleared but the event seems inevitable.

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The great outcry of the landed interests in Great Britain would be pathetic if the landlords and their retainers did not themselves make it so comic. Their papers have been full of piteous bleatings in the "letters to the editor" columns, and an organization among them has issued a

pamphlet, to which the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values has put out a reply. Both pamphlets were described in our notices of "books received" last week (p. 956). The landlords' pamphlet ("Land Union Guide") is pretty serious in one respect. It puts a wet blanket on the British "news" which the New York Tribune has been circulating in this country (p. 924) to the effect that the Lloyd George Budget has increased land values; for that pamphlet distinctly complains that "the value of all the land of the country was depreciated on the passing of the act by an amount equal to the capitalized value of the land taxes" and that "this loss is irretrievable unless and until the taxes are repealed." But think of the owners of the British Isles, whose incomes are increased with every step in industrial progress—think of their complaining of being taxed, of their objecting not to higher taxes but to any taxes at all! A fine opportunity for reply was offered by that pamphlet, and most admirably have the secretaries of the United Committee—Crompton Llewellyn Davies, John Paul and their associates availed themselves of the opportunity.

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"German-Silver" Progressives.

He who would in good faith understand the difference between a genuine Progressive and one of the "German silver" kind, should compare Pinchot with Roosevelt. Any pronouncement of Roosevelt's will do, except his speech at Osawatimie (p. 847) where he was within the Pinchot atmosphere. So will any of Pinchot's do for him; but this quotation reported by the Nashville papers of the 2d, may be taken as a fair sample:

The essential facts in the West, as I see them, are the weakening of party ties, due to a genuine interest in popular government and the spread of progressive ideas. The defeat of such men as Hull in Iowa and Tawney in Minnesota, and the overwhelming victory of La Follette in Wisconsin; the successful fight California is making against the political domination of the Southern Pacific, the demand for direct popular government in Arizona, the repudiation of Ballinger by his own city, county and State, and especially the fact that the conservation idea has swept the West—all these are typical signs of the progressive advance. Men like Dolliver, Cummins, La Follette, Beveridge, Bristow, Murdock and Norris fought the good fight for the people and they won. They earned and they are receiving, in the East and West alike, full credit for the good laws they gave us. Not the least of their claims upon the gratitude of our people is the fact that they destroyed the Cannon-Aldrich legislative ring and drove the special interests from their first line of defense. Of course, there have been and there will yet be reverses in the course of progress, but nothing can

stop or even long delay a movement which is based on insistent demand of the people for honest and open political methods and a square deal for all men. The West is through with the subsidized men and the hole-and-corner methods under which the machinery of government has been steadily misused for the benefit of the special interests and the professional politicians.

Roosevelt couldn't put into those words the sterling ring of conviction that they got from Pinchot. Though he succeeded in framing them as Pinchot has, he would choke if he couldn't add something to the effect that nevertheless "party ties must not be weakened too much," that "direct popular government mustn't be carried too far," and that "hole and corner methods are bully when used by the right men."

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Progressive and Standpat in Duluth.

The renomination for Congress in the Duluth district of Minnesota, of Congressman Miller (insurgent in word and standpatter in deed), opens the way for the election of a democratic Democrat in the person of Alfred Jaques (p. 924), the Democratic nominee. This is another opportunity for citizens no longer party bound to ignore old party lines in their voting and strengthen the progressive movement. As we have already pointed out (p. 915) in reference to Walter Macarthur (democratic Democrat) in one California district and William Kent (insurgent Republican) in another, the present opportunity for progressives of both parties to get together sometimes invites democratic Democrats to vote for Republican progressives, and at others invites Republican progressives to vote for democratic Democrats. It is in the latter category that the Duluth candidacy falls. Republicans up there who are truly progressive will be best represented in Congress, not by the man who has fooled them once, but by Judge Jaques, with whom they are at variance only over party labels.

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The Initiative and Referendum in Illinois.

A Statewide campaign for the Initiative and Referendum and two other reforms—Civil Service reform and Corrupt Practices act—is being made in Illinois by the Committee of Seven of the Peoria conference. This is being done under the advisory initiative or "public policy" law which has been in force in Illinois for several years. It permits 10 per cent or more of the voters to submit, for voting upon at any election, the principle of a proposed law, with the view of advising the legislature of the state of public opinion. The