

the values resulting solely from the growth of the community. In order to remedy this evil we would gradually favor the reduction of assessments on such improvements at the rate of 10 per cent a year for a period of five years, thereby reducing taxes on all improved real estate and somewhat increasing them on land held out of use. Such a policy would tend to reduce rents and to cause the improving of unused land, to the great benefit of all the people.

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#### Progress of Singletax Sentiment.

An editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle of August 6th is one of many indications that a boom is setting in for the Singletax. The San Francisco Chronicle was more likely, perhaps, to be the last rather than the first of the leading newspapers of the far-western metropolis to declare that "the exemption of personal property which cannot possibly be located and equitably assessed and of structures which are constantly deteriorating and may burn before the tax is paid," is a "matter well worth considering, whatever the conclusion may be;" that "land is in sight and cannot get away;" that "its value is more easily determined than that of any other class of property;" that "the upward tendency of rentals" would "be checked by the desire of owners of taxed land to derive revenue from it by the erection thereon of untaxed buildings;" that "it would discourage speculation in land and secure to the public more of the increment not 'unearned,' but earned by the public and not by any individual;" and that it might to that extent "reduce taxation of those not owners of land not put to beneficial use." Editorial comment or any kind of notice by the press of Singletax progress has been remarkable for its absence. The time is here, however, when those newspapers which continue to ignore it will be considered as not up to date by readers who wish to be enlightened on what is doing. It is to be hoped that Singletaxers of California may have printed in large type copies of the leading points of this editorial for distribution.

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#### A Singletax Anniversary.

The next issue of The Public will bear the date of September 1, 1911, precisely twenty-one years after the opening of the First National Singletax Conference, which met at New York. We intend, therefore, to make a special anniversary number of that issue. One feature will be a supplement portrait of Henry George as he appeared at that period. Another will be a medallion portrait by Hinton of William T. Croasdale (organizer of the Con-

ference), photographed by Cox. A section of the group picture of delegates will be given, and this will be supplemented with a similar section of the delegates to the Conference at Chicago three years later. Reminiscences of the first Conference, by the chairman, and an editorial on Croasdale, by Edward N. Vallandigham, together with portions of the recent Singletax speech in Congress by Henry George, Jr. (a member of the first Conference), will be among the other features.

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### ARCHAIC RHODE ISLAND AWAKES.\*

The foundation period of Rhode Island, the age of Roger Williams, of John Clarke and Samuel Gorton, was an age of liberty, religious and political, of democracy, of toleration, of manly independence, of character, of radicalism, of idealism. Yet a government less popular than that of Massachusetts developed in Rhode Island.

The explanation is a paradox. The Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies were founded upon principles of orthodoxy in religious faith, while Rhode Island was founded upon the principle of religious freedom. In Massachusetts and Plymouth, church membership was everything; in Rhode Island it was nothing, so far as civil rights and political power were concerned. In early Massachusetts, church membership was the sole qualification for voting. But with the growth of liberal ideas, Massachusetts ceased to have a state church, and passed easily and naturally from a theocratic to a democratic commonwealth. Republican Massachusetts based suffrage on manhood. Rhode Island, on the other hand, was driven by her religious freedom to have a property test for the suffrage, if she had any.

The Royal charter of 1663 did not specify the suffrage qualifications. The charter gave full power in this matter to the General Assembly, and the Assembly voted to admit as freemen those of "competent estates." An authoritative historian says: "Solvency has at all times held the same place in Rhode Island which Puritan orthodoxy once held in Massachusetts." The acquisition of property was regarded as the test of virtue and intelligence.

The General Assembly, in colonial times, conferred the suffrage on landholders and their eldest sons only. The landholding qualification gradually stripped the majority of the people of the right to

\*This informative and stirring editorial is by a Senator of the Rhode Island legislature, who is a lawyer by profession and occupation. No question of his democracy and competency will occur to any reader of the editorial.