

to "students of taxation" to "form their own estimate of the justice or injustice" of his foot note "comment on this measure." Just that and nothing more! It is almost inconceivable that the author of the Nock articles in the American should himself have written that answer to the Oregon criticism.

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Consider it. In his questioned foot note Mr. Nock had said that the Oregon amendment under consideration abolishes the poll tax; so it does, but his critics may fairly ask who the "students of taxation" are that would criticize abolition of the Oregon poll tax? In his foot note he had said that the amendment authorizes county option in taxation; so it does, but does Mr. Nock see anything in that for "students of taxation" to oppose? In his foot note he had said that the amendment prohibits tax legislation unless ratified by the people; so it does, but what "students of taxation" would have it otherwise, and why? And a more important point remains. In that questioned foot note Mr. Nock had said that the amendment "awaits an enabling act." This statement is specifically denied by his Oregon critics. Yet he answers them only by quoting the amendment, asking them to let it "speak for itself," and submitting this question of Oregon law, not to Oregon lawyers, but to "students of taxation"! Had Mr. Nock said in his foot note that the amendment is not self-executing, he would have been right; and had his critics denied it, his answer would have been conclusive against them. But this is very different from his assertion that it "awaits an enabling act"—as every lawyer knows, however it may be with "students of taxation." A Constitutional amendment does not "await an enabling act" merely because it is not self-executing; it may have been so drawn as to come within appropriate executing statutes already in force. Therefore, by merely quoting the amendment, Mr. Nock does not meet his critics' point. He must go further, and show not only that the amendment is not self-executing, but that the necessary legal mechanism for executing it does not already exist. Mr. Nock's reply to his Oregon critics must be admitted, then, to disclose serious reasons for questioning his competency as an investigator of civic conditions. But his main work must after all be

measures approved by the people declaring what shall be subject to taxation or exemption and how it shall be taxed or exempted whether proposed by the legislative assembly or by initiative petition; but the people of the several counties are hereby empowered and authorized to regulate taxation and exemptions within their several counties, subject to any general law which may be hereafter enacted."

tested upon its own merits, and so tested it is supported by facts easily confirmed and by political tendencies that are daily gaining volume and force.

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His latest article in the American—we trust it is not the last on this general subject, though it apparently is the last of this series—fitly climaxes the preceding ones with an appeal to "nature's way" as the best in taxation and in the tenure and use of land as in everything else. We do live in a world of law, of universal natural law, to which municipal law must conform in order to be of service, and Mr. Nock proves this by facts of actual experience. In Canada, where land value taxation is locally in use, as those Progressives of Oregon are hoping and expecting to have it in their State under the Singletax amendment to which Mr. Nock took his foot note exception, the proof is ample in support of his observations. No better material could be desired for use in the Singletax campaign now about to open in the counties of Oregon and to continue until the November election of 1912, than Mr. Nock's explanations in the American for July, with Canada as his object lesson, of "Why Nature's Way is Best." Its final words are an inspiring campaign cry: "Whoso speculates in land speculates in men's lives as truly as the slaver did, for he is speculating in the prime necessity of their physical existence, and also appropriating the fruits of their labor without compensation." Such speculation would be impossible in any community under the tax system that Mr. Nock finds flourishing in Canada, and which the Oregon amendment has paved the way for in the United States.

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### Singletax Sentiment in Washington State.

Mr. Nock's article in the American Magazine for July, mentioned above, is having a pronounced beneficial effect in the American northwest. "The Chamber of Commerce," writes a Spokane correspondent, "is now 'boning up' on the July American; but as many of the members are engaged in the 'unearned increment' business, I predict they may have to go through on a 'horse.'" But every one in Spokane is not so narrow-spirited. Here for example is C. M. Fassett, one of the Commissioners in the city government (Spokane is making a record for successful operation on the commission plan), who told this very Chamber of Commerce at one of its luncheons last month that they had better "get a move on."

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Taking Mr. Nock's American article for his

text, Commissioner Fassett explained that "it compares the tax systems of Washington and Oregon with that of British Columbia," and urged its reading so that the situation may be understood. As reported by the local press—

City Commissioner C. M. Fassett to-day [June 27] urged upon the members of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce at their luncheon careful consideration of singletax doctrine. This is the Commissioner's first public statement of his leanings toward abolition of the general tax system, though he has not denied to personal questioners that he favored tax reform. Albert J. Nock's article in the July American Magazine, "Why Nature's Way Is Best," was the propaganda to which Commissioner Fassett referred. "This is a matter which is well worth the careful attention of every member," said the Commissioner. "It compares the tax systems of Washington and Oregon with that of British Columbia. The situation should be understood by all." Mr. Fassett also took occasion to cite two local examples of low appraisements for tax purposes which went to show a change in taxation method as necessary. "The city recently had to condemn 23 per cent of a piece of property, the whole lot of which was appraised for \$2,160," he said. "The 23 per cent portion cost the city \$4,500. A railroad condemned a piece of property appraised at \$840 for taxation. The court assessed the value of the property at \$30,000."

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#### That Arizona Constitution.

Arizona's Constitution is said to have in it a provision which probably worries the Interests more than its provision for recalling judges. We quote it as it has been quoted to us: "*No law granting irrevocably any privilege, franchise or immunity shall be enacted.*" That is as wholesome a clause as could be written into any Constitution. Every franchise would be subject to it. Consequently any franchise would be subject to repeal at any time—provided it had been granted after the adoption of the Constitution. Franchises granted by the Territorial government would of course be invulnerable. May it be that the plutocratic outcry against the Arizona Constitution is inspired less by the Recall provision than by this franchise reservation?

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#### The Referendum.

Persons whom names mislead, both British persons and Americans, may find in the recent debates in the British House of Lords a perfectly clear showing of the difference between the referendum which American democrats advocate and that which is proposed by British Tories. The Tory referendum could never be invoked by the people; the American referendum always can be. The Tory referendum would have no vitality except

when the House of Commons and the House of Lords could not agree upon a measure; and inasmuch as they would always agree when the Tories were in power, and never on important disputes when the Liberals were in power, the British referendum would enable the Tory party to force a popular vote or to prevent one at its own sweet will, regardless of the popular wish. No wonder the British Liberals oppose the referendum; as presented to them it is a political bunco game. No wonder the American democracy favor the referendum; as presented here, it is destructive of political bunco games.

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#### Advice.

A writer in the July Century offers some excellent advice. "What the workingmen most need at the present time," he explains, "is to bring forward as leaders their conservative, intelligent, law-abiding men—leaders who will set their faces against violence, men with apostolic devotion to their fellows, and with a clearness of vision to see that their cause cannot be advanced by injustice to others, whether workingmen or capitalists, or by flying in the face of human nature." Isn't it just beautiful—that counsel of perfection? You can almost see the author of it sipping mint juleps in the shade, as in the intervals he tells the serfs of society, driven frantic with overwork and overheated and underpaid and dreadful anxiety for their families, how good they ought to be. Evidently it is not workingmen to whom this deliciously cool dog-day advice is really offered. It isn't advice at all. It is literature for the delectation of the economic parasites that infest workingmen. Not ill-meaning folk, to be sure; parasites are not necessarily ill-meaning; but folk ignorant of industrial conditions—as ignorant as the French princess who revealed her pathetic misunderstanding by asking why the suffering breadless didn't relieve their hunger with cake. Oh, "the vast unconscious cruelty that goes with a perfect lack of imagination"!

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#### The Queen of a Carnival.

San Diego is to have a carnival next week with a queen, and a dispute is reported between the friends of a waitress and those of a society favorite over "the delicate question which." The election of each is claimed as Queen of the Carnival. At that election money talked. So much for a vote, with cash on the nail. Near the close of the polls the waitress was far in the lead. But at this critical moment a rich man's check for \$150