

him personally in Everybody's Magazine by Upton Sinclair, the author of *The Jungle*. Mr. Armour has no right to be silent under these charges. If they are true, the Armour food products can not be safely consumed. If they are not true the public ought to have some assurance of it. This is not a private matter which Mr. Armour can properly treat with contempt; it is a matter of public concern, for Mr. Armour appears before the public as a food caterer. After making his charges circumstantially, Mr. Sinclair adds:

One hundredth part of what I have charged ought, if it is true, to be enough to send the guilty man to the gallows. One hundredth part of what I have charged ought, if it is false, to be enough to send me to prison. If the things which I have charged are false, why has Mr. Armour not sued me for libel? All that I ask of Mr. Armour is a chance to prove my charges in court.

This is a fair challenge, and Mr. Sinclair is right in saying that under the circumstances neglect to prosecute is equivalent to confession of guilt. It may be, however, that a prosecution will yet be instituted by Mr. Armour.

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The Chicago Traction Question.

Mayor Dunne has begun the work of securing the results of the recent referendum authorizing municipal ownership of the traction system, by proposing a procedure which the Council must adopt or else come out into the open for the traction interests, and to which the traction interests must accede or else go to the wall. His proposition is substantially the same as his "contract" construction plan of a year ago. But he now suggests that the present companies be allowed to finance that plan if they show a disposition to come to reasonable terms. The terms he requires include an agreement by the companies to sell their existing rights to the city, immediate improvement by them of the service on plans to be made by the city, purchase by the city as soon as it is financially able to pay the present agreed price of existing rights and the authorized cost of improvement, and operation by the companies meanwhile under a license revocable at any time by the city upon its making such payment. There is no sound objection to this plan from the point of view of immediate ownership and operation by the city. The city could own as soon as it paid for the plant, and operate as soon thereafter as it was legally authorized to do so. Nothing could be more immediate than that. It is to be observed also that the financial ability to pay for the plant would be aided by a sinking fund consisting of part of the profits of intermediate operation.

Site Values in San Francisco.

Hardly had the ink got dry on the editorial in which last week (p. 75) we drew a distinction between those property interests of San Francisco that have suffered by the disaster and those that will profit by it, when the wires confirmed us. We had described the improvement interests as losing and the landed interests as gaining. And precisely that difference is what a staff correspondent of the *Chicago Record-Herald*, Richard Fairchild, reported from San Francisco on the 26th as having already begun to disclose itself. "It has become obvious within the last few days," writes Mr. Fairchild, "that instead of shrinking, real estate values have risen rapidly and will continue to rise." The values that are rising are not improvement values, for the improvement values have been swept away; they are site values, the values of the location on the earth's surface known as San Francisco. The owners of these will profit by the disaster, unless they owned improvements and personal property enough to make their losses on this kind of property offset their gains on the other. And yet the improvers who rebuild San Francisco will be taxed for public purposes as heavily, dollar for dollar, as the site-owners who for a consideration merely allow them to improve!

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"Outwest" and "the Single Tax."

In saying that the people of San Francisco will burden the improvers who rebuild the city, as heavily as the site owners who at enhanced values merely sell or lease the privilege of rebuilding it, we speak advisedly. It sounds foolish enough, to be sure—very much, indeed, like the noodle story of the Negro who gathered driftwood in the Mississippi river on halves with a Yankee whose contribution to the partnership was his permission to the Negro to do the gathering. But even if there were no precedents to judge by, we should know from the blind way in which *the* magazine of the Coast and one of the best in the country, *Outwest*, looks upon the general subject to which the San Francisco instance relates. The method of taxation that will be blindly followed as we intimate above, is known as the "general property tax." It falls alike, in theory, upon the man who earns his income by doing useful things and the man who draws his income by permitting others to do those things, alike upon the builders of cities and upon the appropriators of cities' sites. The obviously fair method would be to exempt the improver, who, after all, only gets the value of his own improvement, and to tax