

only a fraction of the rise in commodity prices, we are forced to the alternative conclusion that leaner land has had to be worked to supply the steady increase of market demands during the past decade.

Even then, only the holding idle of the richer land for speculative purposes would cause the price of land to affect that of commodities by artificially lowering the margin of cultivation. For agricultural land there is little available data, but I believe that the area of richer land, held at speculative prices and wholly or partly idle by railroads, land syndicates and speculating farmers, is a considerable fraction of the country's arable area. In the case of timber and mining land the statistics are easier to obtain, and the great speculative reserves of Southern pine and of iron ore are especially noteworthy.

When all the land from which a commodity can be produced is monopolized by one productive interest and offered for sale only at prices which make its commercial development impossible, we have no longer the competition between land owners that fixes the relative value of land of varying qualities. Here Ricardo's law of rent does not hold, and commodity price is independent of the cost of production on marginal land. This condition now prevails nationally for Pennsylvania anthracite and for bauxite (aluminum ore), and locally often for such commodities as lime, bituminous coal and natural gas, where the products of competitive lands are barred by the cost of transportation. In such cases the absurdly high price of land simply indicates its monopolization and that the prices of its products are set on the principle of "what the traffic will bear."

R. B. BRINSMADE.

\* \* \*

## HEARD ON A STREET-CAR.

Topeka, Kansas.

On Saturday night I happened to be riding on the back-end of a crowded street-car. Near me stood two honest workmen, one of whom was an intelligent Swedish bricklayer. I paid no attention to their conversation until the Swede happened to make a remark about the delivery wagons which were passing.

"How would you like to drive a grocery-wagon at \$9.00 a week?"

"Some of those boys only get \$7.00 a week," said the other.

"Yes, and there are men who are laying cement blocks for three cents a block. And then we wonder where the deadbeats come from. If I only got three cents for a block, I couldn't pay my grocery bill either."

W. S. PROUT.

\* \* \*

How many people think they're good because they've done no crime;

How many think they've won success who merely didn't fail!

How many who're untempted think their virtue is sublime—

And that they'll land in heaven because they didn't land in jail!

—Life.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before, continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, May 17, 1910.

### The Political Fight in Iowa.

The Insurgent Republicans of Iowa opened their State campaign on the 10th at Des Moines, Senators Cummins and Dolliver (p. 409) being the principal speakers. The meeting is said to have been tremendous in size and enthusiasm. Harvey Ingham presided, and introduced as the first speaker Senator Dolliver, who urged the election of Warren Garst for Governor, and then devoted himself to national politics. He said he did not intend to get out of the Republican party, but that its present leadership have betrayed its welfare and that of the country and must be put out. He described President Taft as "a good man surrounded by people who know exactly what they want," and declared that in his Winona speech (vol. xii, pp. 920, 938), President Taft had used as his principal argument in favor of the new tariff a collection of figures which were not only false but had been prepared with deliberate intent to deceive. Taking up the tariff law, schedule by schedule, he denounced it as having been deliberately framed to exploit the people in the interest of trusts. Senator Cummins's speech, which was in the same spirit, arraigned Aldrich, Cannon, Payne and Dalzell as men who look at all vital problems from the corporation standpoint. The defeat of Hull, Smith, Towner and Kennedy, Republican members of the lower House of Congress from Iowa, was frankly asked for. From Washington on the 11th these speeches were reported to have been delivered after and in accordance with the action of a conference of all the Insurgent Republicans in both houses of Congress.

\* \*

### The President's Railroad Bill.

Events subsequent to our report of last week on the President's railroad bill (p. 441) are indicative of a good deal of demoralization among President Taft's supporters in Congress. After his hurried return to Washington he ran over to Passaic, New Jersey, to keep the only speaking appointment he had not cancelled, and in his speech there he talked hopefully of the possibilities of his railroad bill, while conceding that it seemed then to be in jeopardy in some important respects.

But on the 10th the House passed the bill with the pooling and merger clauses struck out and amendments objectionable to the President inserted. A motion of one of the President's supporters to restore the merger clause was defeated by 169 to 160. The bill as altered passed by 200 to 126, receiving the solid support of the Republicans and the votes of 14 Democrats.

✱

On the 13th the President's supporters in the Senate were forced to accept an amendment prohibiting any railroad's charging a lower passenger or freight rate for a long haul than for a shorter haul until the Interstate Commerce Commission, after a thorough inquiry, determines that the two hauls so differ in circumstances as to warrant a difference in passenger or freight rates. This amendment was adopted in the Senate by 56 to 10. Senators Aldrich and Elkins had assured the President that they could rally a sufficient vote to prevent the adoption of any "long and short haul clause." They depended upon 15 Democratic Senators whose votes however they were unable to command when the test came. In a vote on the 16th upon the Court of Commerce clauses of the bill, Senator Cummins having moved to strike them out, 8 Insurgent Republicans—Borah, Crawford, Beveridge, Bristow, Clapp, Cummins, Dooliver and La Follette—and 20 Democrats were defeated, the vote to strike out standing 37 to 28.

✱ ✱

#### President Taft's Letter on the Ballinger Case.

A letter dated the 15th from President Taft to Senator Nelson, chairman of the Congressional investigating committee in the case of Secretary Ballinger of the Department of the Interior (pp. 83, 272, 413), has created a sensation of historical magnitude. This committee has been engaged in its inquiry for several weeks. The prosecution, conducted by Louis D. Brandeis, of Boston, as counsel for Louis R. Glavis (vol. xii, pp. 921, 922), had closed its case before the committee (p. 460), and Secretary Ballinger had entered upon his defense. At various times it had appeared vaguely that President Taft's opinion of last September (vol. xii, pp. 920, 922) exonerating Mr. Ballinger, had been written by one of Secretary Ballinger's subordinates; also that a report upon the case by Attorney General Wickersham, upon which President Taft acted, had not been written and filed at the time it purported to be, but was written several weeks later and antedated. On the 12th Attorney General Wickersham's admission that his report had been antedated was brought before the committee by Secretary Ballinger in the form of a letter from Mr. Wickersham, in which the latter said he had discussed the matter with the President and supplied him with a mass of information

bearing on the subject, but that the summary "necessarily was made up afterward and properly bore the date upon which the matter it contained was presented to and considered by the President." Then there was published in a Washington newspaper a statement by a stenographer in the Department of the Interior (whom Secretary Ballinger has since dismissed for "treachery"), who said that Mr. Lawler, Assistant Attorney General in the Department of the Interior, and therefore Secretary Ballinger's subordinate, had drafted the opinion which President Taft afterward revised and used as his own in deciding the Glavis-Ballinger controversy last September. Thereupon President Taft wrote to Senator Nelson, chairman of the Congressional committee, the letter which is mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

✱

Beginning with a reference to his decision of last September in favor of Secretary Ballinger, Mr. Taft says:

The majority of the committee have decided that my action was not within the jurisdiction of the committee to investigate. In spite of this ruling, references to the matter have crept into the record. For this reason I deem it proper to write you and state with such accuracy as my memory permits what the facts are.

The President's letter then relates interviews on the Glavis charges between himself and members of his Cabinet, including Secretary Ballinger, and tells of his having read the whole record at Beverly, Mass., on the 6th and 7th of September and come then to the decision he subsequently made. Mr. Ballinger and Mr. Lawler were at Beverly together on those days. They had come on September 6 and conferences were had on the 6th and 7th. The letter then proceeds:

In the discussions of the second evening Mr. Lawler, who was present at my suggestion, discussed the evidence at some length. I said to Mr. Lawler that I was anxious to write a full statement of the case, and set out the reasons for my decision, but that the time for my departure on a long Western trip, occupying two months, was just one week from that day; that I had six or seven speeches to deliver at the beginning of that journey, and that I could not give the time to the preparation of such a detailed statement and opinion as I would like to render in the matter. I therefore requested Mr. Lawler to prepare an opinion as if he were President. During the 8th, 9th and 10th I gave such consideration to the Glavis record as was consistent with previous engagements, but paid no attention to the speeches. On the 9th I telegraphed the Attorney-General to come to Beverly in order that I might consult him in respect to the case. He arrived there Saturday afternoon, Sept. 11, and, pursuant to an appointment made by telephone, he came to my home on Sunday morning, Sept. 12. He then delivered to me the draft of opinion prepared by Mr. Lawler and said