

occupant of a \$75 tenement, for instance, would be subject to \$25 in "rates." Sometimes real estate promoters, intending to erect several buildings for renting, agree with the local authorities to pay the rates themselves, whether the premises happen to be occupied or not. They do so in consideration of a discount of 25 per cent on the "rates." In such cases, to use our former illustration of a \$75 occupier, the landlord would charge him a rental of \$100—the real rental value, obviously, no matter who pays the "rates,"—and would pay in "rates," out of that \$100, the sum of \$25 less 25 per cent, or slightly less than \$19. The difference to the locality is that it gets its "rates" easier by making the landowner the collector, and gets them whether the premises are occupied or not; the difference to the landlord is the possibility of a profit on the "rates"; the difference to the tenant is nothing. It is true that Great Britain imposes a tariff on several things—chiefly alcohol and tobacco. These come under the head of "taxes" and not of "rates."

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Self-Reformation in the House of Lords.

Moved by the popular fury rising against the House of Lords, that antique body is proposing to reform itself. And what a revelation of American Toryism the comments upon it by our own newspapers do make, to be sure. They are exceedingly anxious to preserve the second chamber, although the history of second chambers, including our own Senate, is a history of the creation and conservation of privilege; and on that basis they welcome the news of this proposed self-reform of the Lords. They even welcome the plan, which, stripped of its prettily worded disguises, is simply that the House of Lords shall consist of selected peers. This plan would make that chamber more formidable than ever as a buttress for privilege. With all the self interest of a privileged class to serve, it would have the appearance of a representative body, and all the power of a legislative chamber.

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The Growing Army of the Poor.

"My work has carried me all over the world," said the international secretary of the Salvation Army to Chicago reporters last week, "and almost everywhere I find *extreme poverty is increasing.*" Pretty good testimony that, and pointed. Shall we do nothing about it but amiably afford occasional relief to individuals? Is there no explanation of its cause, other than the convenient one that the victims themselves are responsible for their poverty?

Social Wealth for Social Use.

Dr. Hamilton, president of Tuft's College, made an address recently in Boston, in the course of which he disclosed his comprehension of the present strong tendency of American thought—indeed, of the world's thought—with reference to public finance. According to the report of the Boston Sunday Globe of March 6, "Dr. Hamilton in closing advocated a system by which social expenditures would be met by social wealth, somewhat along the line of the German land value tax."

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Conservation of Natural Resources.

A clearer vision than many statesmen, or even the regular run of professional economists, has the Episcopal bishop of Alaska, regarding the conservation of natural resources. He rises above the secondary question of individual criminality in gathering this common inheritance into private hands—a question that inevitably raises doubts,—to consider only the primary question of a communal responsibility regarding which there can be no reasonable doubt. "The sale," he says, "to the Guggenheim interests of land rich in coal and copper, with even great possibilities for agriculture, at \$10 an acre, was a barter for a mere song. I do not say the transfer was fraudulent. For all I know, every step was legal; but the laws must be wrong when so great an injustice is possible. Those natural resources belonged to the whole Republic. It is wrong to dispose of them at any price, much more at that ridiculous price. I favor government ownership of natural resources. Privileges for short periods and under careful supervision can be let at sufficiently liberal terms to attract capital, and the country can be developed without being exploited." Can any one raise the slightest objection to that policy, and support his objection in good faith and with sound reason? No one ever has yet.

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The Single Tax in Vancouver.

The cities of the Canadian west are in the lead in promoting the single tax policy. Vancouver is the latest to be heard from. It was long ago the taxation policy of this progressive city to value land at full capital value and improvements at only 50 per cent, thereby taxing buildings only half as much ad valorem as sites. So satisfactory did this experiment prove that in due time a further step was made in the same direction; the valuation of improvements being reduced to 25 per cent, so as to tax the capital value of improvements only one-quarter as much as that of sites.

And now Vancouver abolishes the taxation of improvements altogether. On the 2d of March, to use the language of the Vancouver World of the 3d, "the Council decided to adopt the single tax system in its entirety."

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This outcome is largely due to the efforts, both within the Council and without, of ex-Alderman Macmillan; but it was supported by Mayor Taylor, who, in the debate on the 2d, just before the adoption of the ordinance, declared that as a believer in the single tax, he stood for "eliminating the taxation of improvements altogether." It is significant that he had been elected upon that issue.

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The Cleveland Traction Question.

And now the Cleveland traction question (p. 207) is at an end, so far as the fight is concerned which ex-Mayor Johnson made so long and faithfully for the public interests of Cleveland, under loss of fortune and failing health, and in which his best hopes were defeated at the end by privileged interests and weary voters. He did, indeed, triumph so far as to secure the universal adoption of three-cent fares; but this was only a step. And even this step may be retraced, now that his official influence has been thrust out of the way of the traction interests, which center at New York and watch their chance. Before the final referendum vote was taken, Mr. Johnson warned the voters, telling them to vote for the ordinance if they were tired of the fight, but to vote against it if they still wished to protect the public interests. They were tired, and they voted for it. Whether his fears of a return to high fares are to be realized, a few months more will disclose; but, however this may come out, his duty has been done. He did not consider it completely done until he had secured protection for all the investors in the movement he had made his own in Ohio for public ownership of public utilities. Even those who sold their stock at a loss, have been protected by his efforts. All back dividends have been paid and all loss from sales of stock below purchase price have been made good. His work in connection with that particular movement is therefore done. It is honorably closed, and no one can justly complain of him, whatever may next occur. But let it not be supposed that his work in connection with the general movement of which that particular one was a part is over. Finishing one piece of work has always been with him but the prelude to beginning another, and so it is still. With health restored and strength renewed, he may be looked for soon

at the head of another and more advanced fight for public rights.

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Ballingerism.

In the testimony of Arthur P. Davis, chief engineer of the reclamation service, the disagreeable true inwardness of Ballingerism—President Taft and all—comes outward in calm and convincing fashion.

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Business Men and Labor Weapons.

The fact that a powerful American speculator in other men's sweat has been driven by business men from the Manchester cotton exchange with a volley of bricks, goes to show that business men are not too good to use the rude weapons of labor strikers, when the subtle weapons of business men are inadequate. Nearly all folks are nearly always "just folks," as "Golden Rule" Jones used to say.

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Police Censorship of Plays.

It may not be generally known, but it seems to be a fact, that the police of Chicago have—unlawfully and therefore quite characteristically—established a censorship of plays. They assume the right to order plays reconstructed, and arbitrarily off the stage if their censorship is not respected. This they already do, but now they ask even greater power. Why they ask it is a mystery, since their usual course is to take, as a thief takes his plunder, whatever power they want. But here is the authority they ask for. We quote the assistant chief, a devotee of the Germanic theory of government, and by name, Schuettler:

It would be a good thing if every show company should be forced to send to us two weeks in advance a copy of the manuscript of the play, and pictures of all the scenes, so we could see ahead of time instead of waiting until after an evil show has been presented to the public. I would favor some sort of a bureau, say where the newspapers might have a representative, to go over the manuscript of all the plays and determine in advance whether a show should be given here. I haven't any earthly use for an evil show, and I won't stand for them.

With Mr. Schuettler evil is as evil seems to him. The American idea of trials for crime, upon indictments and before juries, has never got a lodgment in his bureaucratic brain. His present superior, the chief of police, has put a stop (vol. xii, p. 1256) to police censorship of public speaking, to the manifest advantage of public order; he might find it well to give Mr. Schuettler another primer lesson in the principles of American liberty and law.