

## THE LEADVILLE EXPERIMENT.

Leadville, Col., is perhaps the first city in the United States to be able to conduct its municipal government without taxation and to pay a dividend to the people who live there.

This remarkable condition of affairs comes from the fact that the streets are underlaid with silver ore. By a recent decision of the Supreme Court the city will derive from this property \$2,000,000 annual royalty, for the ore extracted from the streets and alleys. A private corporation had first made claim to the ore because it held adjacent rights, but the courts have decided that it belongs to the people of Leadville.

This immense sum will enable the citizens to revel in free lighting, free water, free paving and many other city conveniences. After all normal needs have been satisfied there will remain from \$200,000 to \$500,000 to distribute among taxpayers every year.

How this distribution will be made has not been explained. If it is divided among the property owners, the non-property class to receive nothing, it will be manifestly unfair, as all the people of Leadville give added value to the streets, and a natural product like silver ore is no more the heritage of those who happen to own real estate and personalty than those who pay rent or their board. All of the people pay taxes in some form, directly or indirectly, hence are entitled to dividends from the riches found underneath the streets.

Not all cities have ore under their streets, but all public streets have an increased value which is as substantial as ore or any other raw material. This value is known as franchise value. This value, strange to say, is given away to private corporations, and by them made an asset, as if it were a part of their real capital.

These corporations have escaped taxation on franchises because they are intangible, but since the people have come to see that a franchise is the most important part of what goes to make a public service corporation, they are insisting upon some return for it.

This popular awakening has been manifested to some extent through the Taxation Conference now in session in Buffalo. The special purpose of many of the delegates appears to be to devise some practical plan by which corporations, holding special privileges, shall be made to pay their equitable share of taxes.

Municipal ownership advocates would summarily solve the question by requiring the people to manage these privileges for the public good. Franchises would not then have to be taxed. As the streets belong to the people this would seem to be the common sense method of dealing with them.—*Buffalo Enquirer*.

## NO ROOM AT THE BOTTOM.

(Chicago Tribune.)

"And I want you to remember, men," said the distinguished visitor, who was addressing the crowd, "that there's plenty of room at the top."

"That won't do me no good!" spoke up a shock-headed man in the audience. "What I want is plenty of room here at the bottom!"

## EXTRACT FROM LETTER JUST RECEIVED FROM SYDNEY.

"I think they are far ahead of us here in thinking in the right direction. I do not hear such remarks as I grew accustomed to in New York, such as, 'well, if I had a chance to make money out of my political influence or my vote as a legislator I would do it.' People here have a much higher political ideal.

"Single taxers haven't a large organization, but there are several who are doing great work. One man by the name of Fisher, another named O'Riley, speak Saturday nights, just outside of one of the markets here, to big crowds. They also speak Sunday afternoons. They also hold forth in the Domain, in Hyde Park.

"Next week the Duke of Cornwall will be here, and there is a grumbling discontent at the great cost of the public decorations, which will become more outspoken after our visitors depart.

"The signs so familiar in the parks of New York, 'Keep off the grass,' are unknown here. Here the grass is free, and children and their attendants lie at will upon the public green, sometimes bringing their little oil or alcohol stoves to cook their dinner. And there is no lack of parks; everywhere you go you find them, and they are often very beautiful, for the liberties allowed are not abused. How rarely such liberties are abused anywhere, indeed!

"The Government owns and controls all the railroads and street car lines, but when the Government wants to take any strip of the parks for its roads a protest goes up, and the Government backs down. So different from the custom in New York! On the water front one may stroll for hours without seeing any sign, 'This is private property!' How different from Coney Island, where all the shore front is privately owned. The people here are far more jealous of their privileges than we.

"Before I left New York I heard that the single taxers here were protectionists. But this is not so—all are free traders and helped the free trade party to win its splendid victory. Even Victoria, strongly protectionist under the influence of the example of New South Wales, held its protectionist ground only by a reduced majority. The belief is general that the free traders of Victoria are on the eve of a great victory.

"Coming back to the street car lines or tramways, they charge a fare of one penny for about every two miles, and the government makes a big profit, the employees working eight hours a day."

Brooklyn Workingman's Wife (in 1901)—  
What's happened, Danny?

Her Husband (desperately)—Well, I've been fired by J. P. Morgan and there's nobody else in the world to work for!—*Brooklyn Eagle*.