

to other passengers every time they buy a seat, no one is a "hog" for keeping the seat he buys. If the street car business were fairly done, and the appeal to courtesy were occasional, we are sure that few persons would sit while weaker or older ones stood. The real "street car hog" is the manager who so conducts the street car business as to pack passengers instead of seating them.

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The Man that Did It.

Mayor Harrison of Chicago is rounding up his part of the local Democracy to give a complimentary banquet (by special request?) to Andrew M. Lawrence, Mr. Hearst's alter ego. A notable figure in the politics, etc., of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, Mr. Lawrence might be an ideal Harrisonian candidate for Governor of Illinois, if—

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The Mystic Shrine.

The amiability of the Masonic order regarding the reputed Masonic character of the Mystic Shrine, is one of the problems of life. Mystic Shriners are indeed Free Masons, but only because the Shrine makes the membership of the Masonic order exclusively its own recruiting ground. In itself, the Shrine is no more a Masonic body, or any part of the Masonic body, than was the Ku Klux Klan. It is in fact prejudicial to genuine Masonry. Drawing its membership from the "good fellows" of Masonry, whose peculiar type of "good fellowship" is tried by frequent "black ball" tests, from initiation in the first Masonic degree on up to the thirty second, or through the Knights Templar (also non-Masonic except for its recruiting ground), the Mystic Shrine is at the best a sort of "Jolly Jumbo." And it may be sometimes worse. With no serious ideals such as Free Masonry has, nor sacred obligations, it is yet excellently adapted to swinging the influence of the whole Masonic order in the direction, from time to time, that a few of the "good fellows" want it swung—whether in business or in politics. This non-Masonic organization, masquerading as the top-notch of Free Masonry, dries up the vitality of genuine Free Masonry, lessens its financial ability to serve its ideals, and diverts its influence from the service of good citizenship (which is one of its tenets) to the putting of "Shriner" Masons into public office for personal reasons. It is an irresponsible cabal of picked "good fellows" who may easily bring Free Masonry into disrepute through subjecting good citizenship to "Jolly Jumbo" influences.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SEVEN GOVERNORS.

The newspapers say that the Governors of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon will meet in Helena, May 3 and 4, to devise a plan to keep American citizens from going to Canada and to induce them to settle in the States named above.

That's a pretty fair-sized job, even for seven Governors. A Winnipeg dispatch of March 21 says that Immigration Commissioner Walker reports that the immigration into Canada "during the last ten months was 261,000, of which the United States contributed 102,000." So in those ten months Canada got 39 per cent of her immigration from the United States.

More than that I found last January, in the week I spent between Winnipeg and Vancouver, that good citizens are emigrating to Canada from every border State west of Indiana. I met some of them; met a man from Fergus County, Montana, whom I knew when I lived in Montana.

So the problem of the Governors is not only to get new settlers, but to keep old settlers.

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It is estimated that the individual citizen is worth \$1,500 to the state. I admit that I wouldn't buy a carload of "sorts" at that figure, but that's the estimate: so we have boosted our "favorable balance of trade" with Canada \$102,000,000 in ten months by exporting citizens,—for all orthodox protectionists say that an excess of outgo over income swells the national pocketbook.

From that point of view the Governors are on the wrong track. If they want real protectionist prosperity they should swap at the ratio of five good citizens for one Cree Indian, and thus bankrupt Canada.

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I feel a sentimental interest in the coming Gubernatorial Immigration Congress at Helena, chiefly because of my fear that the Governors may "go too far," as "we conservative business men" say, and thus "destroy confidence and paralyze prosperity."

What I fear most is that one of the Governors may accidentally propose a plan that will work, and thus upset and nullify the schemes and hopes of the land speculators who are skillfully concealed at the bottom of this keep-'em-at-home conference. Of course, you Governors don't know that the real object of your meeting is to help land speculators by getting flocks of settlers to come

in and boost the speculative value of land. It's just as well that you don't know; if you did know you might do something rash.

If the \$153,000,000 worth of American citizens who went to Canada in ten months had distributed themselves evenly over the seven northwestern States, that would have meant an average of \$21,-857,143 worth of citizens to each of those States, which would have meant great prosperity for land speculators. I am not objecting to that, but merely stating a fact. We should protect our land speculators, not because they are an infant industry but because they make us work and thus keep us out of mischief. One way to protect our land speculators would be to put an export duty on citizens. Some "radicals" may say that it is better to offer inducements for them to stay in this country than to enact restrictive laws; but that is evidently the wrong way because it is the natural way. We fine men for bringing good things into the country; why not fine them for taking good things out? Canada puts an import duty of \$500 apiece on Orientals; why shouldn't we put an export duty of \$1,000 a head on citizens?

The State of Victoria (Australia), is getting settlers by supplying 80 per cent of the capital necessary to enable the settlers to get settled. So it is said. That is fine for the land speculators, and the settlers think it's good for them; they pay that much more for land, but don't know it. That is one way the Governors could help the land speculators. Another way is to take all the taxes off land, "which is the basis of all wealth and therefore should not be taxed," we are told. Besides, the higher the taxes are on buildings and other products of labor, the harder and the longer hours will men have to work—except land speculators, who should be exempt from taxation and work; and the harder the common man has to work, the less time he has to think of the politicians and other sins.

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You may be interested in knowing that those foolish people in Canada—in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where most of the American emigrants are going—don't tax the personal property and improvements of farmers; and the farmers of those Provinces like that plan so much that a large percentage of them, probably a majority, favor the single tax on land values. But I may add that those foolish farmers are in favor of putting land speculation out of business, and thus "ruining the country."

When I was in Calgary, in January, the United Farmers of Alberta were having a convention.

I heard five speeches made to them by single tax "cranks"; and (would you believe it?) those farmers applauded instead of throwing the speakers out of the window.

Last fall the farmers of the prairie Provinces sent 800 of their best men down to Ottawa to tell Premier Laurier that they wanted free trade and direct legislation. And when Mr. Laurier asked them how they would raise the revenue now raised by the tariff pickpocket game, they didn't hesitate a minute, but answered: "By the single tax."

Possibly you Governors won't be so anxious about American emigration to Canada when you know that the departing brethren are saturated with such crankery. In fact, you will rejoice when you reflect that if the land speculators are put out of business in Canada, they will flock to our border States and add to our prosperity. And then what will the foolish Canadians do? "The price of land will be so low that nobody will live on it," as the speculators say.

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You see, I fear that some excited and irresponsible Governor among you seven will breathe so much of that pure, rarefied Montana air that he will propose a sensible, workable plan for bringing settlers into the seven northwestern States. There may not be much ground for my fear, but no one knows what a Governor might bring forth. Some one or more among you may be a prying and inquisitive Governor, interested in investigating taxation, and so have discovered that every farmer who is not a land speculator would save money if he were exempt from taxation on his personal property and improvements and were taxed only on the unimproved value of his land.

That has been proved to be true in Oregon; proved by actual assessment and tax figures.

The farmers want to save money; settlers want to save money; home owners want to save money. But if the tax laws are so meddled with that producers can save money, what on earth will the land speculators do? Has society a right to demand that they go to work and thus upset the divine law?

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Of course, if the crooked tax system in vogue in the seven northwestern States were abolished, and a sensible tax system adopted, it wouldn't be necessary for Governors to meet in Helena or anywhere else to devise ways and means to keep American citizens from going to Canada.

If improved farm land were assessed no higher, and taxed no higher, than equally good speculative land next to it, we should have no such

thing as "the problem to get settlers." But that would mean the awful iniquity of taxing land held out of use by speculators as high as the unimproved value of adjacent improved farm land. That is, the ungrateful people would tax according to the value that they themselves have added to the land, and would not tax anything else; they would actually take for their public purposes the annual value that they create, and thus iniquitously deprive land speculators of the "vested right" to get something for nothing.

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Perhaps my fears have no foundation. It may be that you Governors will save the country by meeting and proposing something that won't work.

W. G. EGGLESTON.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SINGLE TAX IN CANADA.*

Winnipeg, Canada, April 18.

Henry George, Jr.'s, word of warning in reference to Vancouver is opportune. Prior to my residence in Winnipeg my home was in Vancouver, and for that reason I feel qualified to speak about conditions there.

Since the city adopted the single tax it has bulked large as an example of an application of the Georgean theories of taxation, and some of our friends have made claims too preposterous to go unchallenged. Vancouver has slums, or at least a lower quarter—perhaps not so bad as many cities of no greater population—but at any rate such as should not be tolerated in any city. Vancouver has many unemployed at certain seasons of the year, particularly when the logging camps are closed. More general employment there than in many other cities is partly due to causes unrelated to taxation of land values and exemption of improvements, although some increased employment is due to increased building activity and general industry which can be traced directly to exemption from taxation. But hundreds have gone from Seattle and other coast cities to Vancouver in search of employment, and this process must again produce unemployment in Vancouver. Seventy-five per cent of the working men of Vancouver may be nominal home-owners; but I think that figure too high, and I believe strict investigation would reveal the fact that a large majority of nominal home owners own only an equity of from \$300 to \$1,500 in homes worth from \$2,500 to \$3,500. I doubt if there is another city in the whole Northwest where the price of building lots of all kinds is as high as in Vancouver. This is a natural sequence of increased building activity. Another great factor is the geographical limitations of the city. On the north and west Vancouver is bounded by water, and water-front land is naturally higher in value than other land. From the water

front the city has grown south and east, instead of radiating in four directions as in cities where physical conditions do not hamper. There is much greater demand for land in Vancouver than in Winnipeg, a city of but little greater population; and in Vancouver speculators experience much less difficulty in maintaining a land monopoly. Still another factor is the fact that many men who accumulate a competence on the Canadian prairies retire to Vancouver and there invest considerable of their capital in land. They have "confidence in the city" and want a portion of the unearned increment.

These conditions must tend to boom land values, unless the single tax is drastic.

But the application of the single tax to Vancouver is elementary and diluted. The actual rate of assessment upon the selling value of land, as Congressman George points out, is only about 15 mills, or 1½ per cent on capital value, which absorbs only a fraction of annual value. Is it strange that land values boom in Vancouver, when improvements are not assessed at all and land value escapes with 1½ per cent? Added to rapidly increasing population, great commercial advantage of location, mild climate and limited area, so mild an application of the single tax cannot fail to stimulate all the value of Vancouver land both normally and speculatively; and the normal value has in fact been accentuated by an almost unprecedented era of speculation.

The present degree of the single tax in Vancouver is not sufficient to be a corrective of land monopoly. There must be a much larger measure of the socially created annual value of land. If the people of Vancouver wish to secure the benefit the single tax is capable of yielding, they will follow up their initial action by issuing short term bonds to provide funds for municipal expenditure, and then increase assessments on land values to provide for speedy bond redemption. This would tend to check the present era of speculation and would augment general prosperity in the city.

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There is absolutely no desire on the part of the citizens of Vancouver to return to the general property tax, nor do I think there will be any such danger in the event of depression following upon the present period of inflation. The people of Vancouver are beginning, through their experiment, to realize the moral basis of the single tax; and I feel confident that they will insist upon an increase of the tax instead of a return to the old system to cure undesirable conditions.

There is a civic pride in the fact that the city has attained world prominence as the largest city to have gone so far in the single tax direction. This spirit is evident everywhere, and among men who have never read a word of the Georgean philosophy nor so much as heard an intelligible exposition of it. The experiment itself has made them think, and they are thinking along lines of moral justification.

I asked a citizen who had got millions in land speculation and knew nothing of Henry George, how he liked the single tax? "I like it fine," was his reply "But isn't it unfair to tax the man who owns a fine house and has plenty of money, no more than

*See The Public for March 31, pages 290, 294.