

roads centering here in Washington some \$6,000,000 of public money, it would be interesting to hear his explanation of why he sent this enormous number of books into his district during this weighing period.

As the pamphlet has been circulated in the House during the past three weeks, and some 20,000 have been distributed in his district, Mr. Babcock is unquestionably advised of its existence and has pretty good information of its authorship. One would naturally, therefore, have expected that, if he was careful of his reputation as a legislator, he would either have replied to the specific charges therein set forth or have initiated criminal proceedings against both its author and its publisher. In view of the fact, however, that these charges were printed in the Milwaukee Free Press, four months ago, we need not expect any steps will be taken which will attract attention to such serious charges. Those who care to become fully informed on the subject can obtain a free copy of the pamphlet by applying to the Free Press, Milwaukee, Wis. Excerpts therefrom appear in the Congressional Record of Saturday, March 19, page 3603.

That the people, the young voters especially, are giving increasing attention to economic questions is evidenced in the continued requests for copies of a "Compensating Wage" which Congressmen from different parts of the country are turning over to me. On one day this week I received letters from Wisconsin and Georgia, and from Honolulu, where it is stated that the speech has been translated into the native language. The writer, an American, asks for a large number for distribution among the English-speaking population. The Wisconsin gentleman assures me that the speech is well received by young Republican voters there, those who are not yet firmly wedded to the idol of protection and who are anxious to learn something of the real solution of the labor question.

The Pingree-Hall plan of cultivating vacant lots is about to be tried in Washington—this paradise of a city for land speculators. Many will, no doubt, remember that when the plan of utilizing the vacant lots in Detroit for the cultivation of garden truck was inaugurated by Mayor Pingree it was dubbed "Pingree's potato patch" plan. In Detroit, as in Brooklyn, where it was subsequently tried at the suggestion of Bolton Hall, it was shown that the poor will industriously cultivate land when it can be obtained at little or no rent and where they are assured of retaining the entire crop. The opportunities here for a demonstration of this character are numerous, as—owing to the 79,700,000 other people in the United States paying one-half of the expenses of its municipal government, and by reason of the large expenditures for buildings for the various Federal departments, and the consequent rapid increase

of land values—the assessment upon the land here is at a lower rate than in any other city in the country. This, of course, means that vacant land bears the very minimum of taxation, on an average probably not to exceed one-tenth of its rental value being paid into the city treasury. As graft is so universal here under the Federal government, the landlords probably consider that for them to put nine-tenths of that which the community produces—land values—into their own pockets, is but their proportion of "graft." As new departments are frequently created and old departments extended, the number of employes of the Federal government is ever increasing. This, and the fact that Washington is becoming more and more a residence city for the extremely wealthy, its social atmosphere appealing to their desire for exclusiveness and snobbishness, there is a constantly augmented demand for land with the consequent and inevitable increase in its capitalized value. The cost of "carrying" vacant lots in this city is really limited to the loss of interest upon the amount invested; and this loss of interest is but a fraction of the annual increment in value which attaches to the land both from the reasons before specified and because of the large expenditures for opening, grading, sewerage, paving, lighting, cleaning and policing of its streets.

A committee of philanthropists, those who are ever willing to aid the poor except by "getting off their backs," has been formed with a wealthy real estate dealer as chairman. The charitable will, no doubt, provide the funds required to put the plan in operation. The experiment has an added interest from the fact that two of the committee, Charles F. Nesbit and Jackson H. Ralston, are well-known single taxers, the latter having acquired national fame a few years ago through his unflagging, persistent and aggressive attempt to put the single tax in operation in the adjacent town of Hyattsville, Md. Let us hope that these two gentlemen will instill into the minds of those "philanthropists" an understanding of the basic cause of the existence in this city, as in every other, of the hovels of the poor alongside the palaces of the wealthy.

The Republican party has definitely adopted the policy of its recent greatest exemplar. The orders to "stand pat" have gone down the line. Congress has its orders to "do nothing and go home!" With an exhibition of the proper submissive spirit it is getting ready to obey orders. After May 1—or even April 15, if its master shall so decide—the calcium light will be permanently concentrated on the White House, and will no longer, as during the last four months, be deflected occasionally towards the capitol.

ROBERT BAKER.

AUSTRALIA.

Corowa, N. S. W., Feb. 20.—No parlia-

ment is sitting now, so political matters are quiet. But Mr. Deakin, the Federal prime minister, recently made a speech in which he said that the present situation of three nearly equal parties in the Federal parliament is intolerable, and that some combination ought to be made to reduce the number to two. He indicated no intention of making any move in that direction himself, and made no hint of what side he would take. Nothing has yet been done, but it seems likely that before long the issue here will be Individualism versus State Socialism. This will be embarrassing for real democrats, who will probably have to join the conservatives, in opposition to the Labor party, with whose aims, but not its methods, they are in accord.

ERNEST BRAY.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, March 24.

The rumors reported last week (p. 791), that the Russians had evacuated Port Arthur are now known to have been false; but there is nothing more to report with certainty regarding the progress of the war. The excitable headlines which have appeared daily in the newspapers have related only to rumors. Some of these have since been disproved; others are still unverified. The most important report in the latter category comes by way of St. Petersburg from Russian official sources. It is to the effect that the Japanese attacked Port Arthur on the 22d, beginning early in the morning with torpedo assaults and ending with a bombardment by cruisers and battleships. The fight is reported to have terminated about noon by the Japanese withdrawing and to have caused but little damage to the Russians.

A vigorous prosecution of the American war upon the Moros of the Philippine Islands (p. 758) is reported from Manila. Under date of the 20th a Manila despatch tells of a report from Gen. Wood to the effect that—

the allied dattos in the island of Jolo drove the recalcitrant Datto Pangliman Hassan, the last of the hostile Moro leaders, from the place where he had been hiding since his defeat near Siet lake. One of the dattos, says Gen. Wood, killed two of Hassan's sons. A detachment under Maj. Hugh Scott of the Fourteenth cavalry surrounded Hassan on a mountain on March 11, and Hassan