

it has been conducting its work for fifty-seven years. And after these fifty-seven years of work what is the result? A widespread state of appalling poverty and destitution. Is it not time to devote to justice some of the money and efforts so clearly wasted on charity?

S. D.



If Justice Prevailed.

The Chicago Tribune of December 31 shows that the total of charitable gifts and bequests in the United States during 1913 amounted to \$169,881,442. In the November-December number of the Single Tax Review Albert Firmin shows that in 1912 Manhattan Island alone paid as tribute to land owners \$156,392,623. So that the tribute exacted by a monopolistic class in one division of one city nearly equalled the alms bestowed by charity throughout the nation. How much need would there have been for this charity had justice prevailed?

S. D.



Public and Private Conservation.

That desirable public lands are being withheld from use was urged in criticism of the government's conservation policy by Congressman Albert Johnson of Washington in a speech in the House on November 22. Assuming the statement to be correct, Mr. Johnson is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. All over the country, including Mr. Johnson's own city of Tacoma, land is being "conserved" by private individuals in the very way that he complains the government is doing. If these private "conservers" would be forced to let go no one would care about the far less valuable land held by the government. If it is a good thing for private parties to hold valuable land out of use, why is it not an equally good thing for the government to do so? If it is not a good thing for the government to conserve land in that way, why do not Mr. Johnson and the others who bewail that policy work for the opening of privately conserved lands as well? As a matter of fact, is it not possible that government conservation is only made necessary by the delay of Congress, including Mr. Johnson, to enact legislation that will prevent public land, after being opened, from ever becoming subject to private conservation?

S. D.



Paying for Government.

A correspondent in Dallas, Texas, in an earnest, but kindly, criticism of The Public's commendation of Houston's plan of removing taxes from industry and placing them on privilege, asks this

question: "Do you think that any one should insist on enjoying the benefits that come to him through organized government without contributing something in a direct way to the support of that government?" And adds: "We have a few singletaxers in Dallas, but they have not yet convinced me that any one who enjoys the privileges and protection that our society and activities afford should even desire to be exempt from contributing a mite in return for the good things that flow from the government to the individual."



Most assuredly The Public does not "think that any one should insist on enjoying the benefits that come to him through organized government without contributing something in a direct way to the support of that government." Government serves all the people, and every individual, rich or poor, should pay for all the service he receives. The Public not only thinks that the citizen should pay for all that the government does for him, but it believes that he does pay for it. The problem, indeed, is not how to compel these citizens to pay for the service rendered them, but to prevent their paying twice for the same service. For, when one citizen receives service without paying for it, another must pay without receiving the service; or, conversely, if one citizen pays twice, another must escape without paying at all.



The difficulty with our Dallas correspondent seems to lie in the fact that he still harbors the old notion that taxation comprises nothing more than the payment of a sum of money by the citizen for the keep of a policeman to guard his house and person. The policeman does guard the house and person of the citizen, and the citizen, according to all the canons of reason and justice, should pay for that service. That, however, is not a complete statement of the case. When the citizen pays the grocer for a pound of sugar, the transaction, so far as these two persons are concerned, is complete. Neither is obligated to the other, nor to any one else. But the tax paid by the citizen for the keep of the policeman is merely the beginning of a long chain of causes and effects; and judgment should not be passed until the final effect has been traced.



The service of the policeman—and the police service may stand for all government service—must be rendered somewhere. No matter how efficient the police of Boston may be, they are of no direct service to the people of New York. The

citizen of New York can enjoy the service of the Boston police only by going to Boston, and then only so long as he remains within its jurisdiction. But the jurisdiction of Boston embraces a definite area of the earth's surface. In other words, the police service of Boston occupies space, and the would-be beneficiary of that service must place himself within that space.



But the area of Boston is fixed. While houses and goods may be multiplied indefinitely, the ground upon which to set the houses and goods cannot be increased, and all that land is privately owned. Consequently, any one who goes to Boston to enjoy the protection of its police must first make terms with those who own the land. Houses can be had for the cost of construction. The same is true of food and clothing, and all kinds of goods. The price of houses and goods will be similar to that of other cities in that part of the country, either with good or with bad police service; for it costs no more to build a house, or to produce goods under good protection from the police than under poor protection. Should there be any difference the cost will be less under good protection. But the land upon which these things stand, and upon which the citizens must move and have their being is limited in extent; and any increased demand results inevitably in an increase in value.



The tax collector excuses his demands of the newcomer by saying, "We have a fine police service in this city, and we look to you to pay your share of the expense." "Certainly," the newcomer answers, "I came here in order to get good service, and I'm willing to pay for it." And turning to the land owner he inquires, "Isn't your price for this lot a little steep?" "Not when you take into consideration the service you get," answer the owner. "We have the finest service in the country, and a man should not expect to enjoy such benefits without paying for them." "But," protest the newcomer, "I have just paid the tax collector for that very thing. If I must pay you because of this service why do not you pay the tax for its maintenance. Must I pay twice for the same thing?" "Ah," says the landowner, recalling the words of the Dallas critic, "do you think that any one should insist on enjoying the benefits that come to him through organized government without contributing something in a direct way to the support of that government?"

S. C.

The National Singletax Conference.

Under the most auspicious circumstances since launching of the movement will be the national conference of singletaxers to be held at the Hotel Raleigh in Washington on January 15 to 17. It will be the first one to be held with legislation on statute books within the United States, putting into effect an application of the principle. This is the case in Pueblo, Colorado, and in Pittsburgh and Scranton, Pa. In addition to this is to be noticed the spread of the Houston plan of taxation to other cities of the State, and its favorable consideration by many localities especially throughout the South. Most important of all is the growth of public sentiment in its favor made evident by the steadily increasing number of editorial endorsements where silence or hostility had prevailed before.

S. D.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

PASTORIZA'S WORK IN HOUSTON.*

Houston, Texas, December 27.

The following is from a recent editorial in the *Houston Daily Post*, a somewhat conservative publication:

Assistant Attorney General Cureton, who spent Tuesday in Houston, thinks that the State ought to adopt the policy of taxing unimproved farm lands so highly that they will have to be sold to small farmers who will improve them. He advocates the broadening of the tax system, as in operation in this city, so that it may be made to apply to agricultural lands as well. This system is but the entering wedge for the Henry George system of taxation of land values, known as the single tax plan of raising revenues for the support of the government and of giving to each individual his rightful participation in Nature's free gift to humanity—not to one generation, but to all generations—of land, air and water, without which, it is claimed, there can be no equality of opportunity. There is too much land monopoly in Texas, hence with the unearned increment evidenced by the rising values of unimproved land appropriated by those who hold title to it, there is growing dissatisfaction with the State's policy of land taxation.

Twenty-five years ago this same paper, under the same editorial management as at present, published in full, with editorial headlines and introductory remarks which were hardly courteous, the address delivered by me at a Knights of Labor celebration, which Henry George afterwards named the "Case Plainly Stated." I had announced myself a Henry George man and was severely berated by the editor for such a brazen avowal of faith in his teachings. It was even mildly intimated that dangerous personages like myself ought not to be tolerated among honest citizens. The Chicago Haymarket bomb had exploded but a short time before, and as I walked to my office that morning, after having read what the *Post* thought of me, I wondered how many of the

*See *Public* of November 7, 1913, pages 1061 and 1065; and December 19, 1913, page 1202.