

the franchise was granted. Should the courts uphold this outrageous contention then every clause favorable to the public in every contract with a public service corporation may at once be considered as a "mere scrap of paper." It is a foolish city that will, with such an example before it, confer any more franchises on public service corporations, no matter what kind of agreement may be offered as an inducement. It would be little less than a reflection on Chicago's Council to intimate that it may not insist on strict compliance with the forfeiture clause.

S. D.



### Explaining Some Ohio Election Results.

Referring to The Public's comment on page 1084 on the recent futile effort of the Ohio State Board of Commerce to block Municipal Ownership, the organ of the Board, The Ohio Journal of Commerce, in its issue of December 1 says:

The Public is not up-to-date as a Singletax organ when it worries about municipal ownership. The well grounded Singletaxer knows that if any benefits are derived from municipal ownership the land owner absorbs that benefit.

To be charged with failure to be up-to-date or well-grounded is a cheap price to pay for the Journal's admission that the land owner absorbs the benefits to be derived from municipal ownership. That admission logically involves other admissions. The means whereby the land owner is able to absorb the benefits of municipal ownership enables him to absorb, through increased land values, the benefit of all improvements. And that admission leads logically to the position that the proper way to pay for these improvements is through taxation of the land values they create. The Public gladly pays the price for this admission of an important truth by the Journal of Commerce.



Not so candid is the Journal of Commerce in trying to explain the defeat of the tax amendment which it championed on the ground that it would "make the Singletax impossible." It says now that "people in the country districts voted against the amendment because they believed it made the Singletax possible." The only reason they had for holding such belief was the Journal's assurance to the contrary. So it would seem that to get the Singletax in Ohio is easy. It is but necessary to put a Singletax measure on the ballot which, of course, the Journal of Commerce and the State Board will oppose. Voters who know nothing of Singletax will be guided, as the Journal says they

were at the late election, to believe the contrary of what it tells them and hence will support the measure. Voters who understand the Singletax will support it regardless of the Journal, and the result will be an almost unanimously favorable vote for the Singletax. There is but one reason to question the genuineness of this glowing prospect—the Journal of Commerce may be wrong in its explanation of the defeat of the State Board's measure.

S. D.



### A Pensioner of New York City.

There died at Santa Monica, California, on November 30, John G. Wendel. Mr. Wendel's chief claim to fame is the fact that the people of New York City insisted on presenting him with millions of dollars, although he had done nothing for them, was not incapacitated from useful labor, and had even injured many persons by shutting them out from opportunities to earn a living. What is still more strange is that although these relations undeniably existed between Mr. Wendel and the people of New York, yet he probably did not realize it, and a great majority of the people were equally ignorant. This was on account of the form in which the people bestowed their benefactions on Mr. Wendel. He inherited from his father and grandfather large holdings of land on Manhattan Island. He added to these by purchases of his own. The people of Manhattan Island by their presence, industry and enterprise bestowed value on these lands without getting anything in return. Many of these people would have liked to produce wealth on Mr. Wendel's property. But he would not have it so. He never improved his property nor permitted others to improve it. On a lot assessed at nearly \$2,000,000 he maintained until the day of his death improvements worth but \$5,000. The \$2,000,000 value of the lot implied that there were men willing to pay that much for the privilege of employing labor thereon at work which would produce wealth far in excess of a \$5,000 house. But Mr. Wendel is said to have stated that his sister needed the lot as a playground for her pet dog. So while the pet dog was enjoying this playground men who might have been usefully employed upon it walked the streets of New York in a vain search for work, and others obtained work only by consenting to accept low wages. Because this lot and others like it were kept unused house rents in New York City have soared, and the poorer part of the population are forced to herd in crowded, unsanitary tenements. Besides this, men with capital must search vainly for a chance to profitably use it. For