

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