

est land were government land, then, as was explained by Philip P. Wells on page 201 of the current volume of *The Public*, "their ripe timber is for sale to the highest bidder; their pasturage is for rent to the neighboring ranchmen." But a large part of it is owned by lumber companies. So it does not seem that the federal government is any more to blame for such a situation in the State of Washington than it is in any other State. The State of Washington can, if it will, adopt the methods of western Canada, "where a farmer that tries to improve his place is protected." Congressman Johnson can, if he will, be helpful in making such a change. But the place to do it is at the State, not the National Capitol.

S. D.



Prosperous Exploiters of Iowa Labor.

Addressing the House on March 19 Congressman Vollmer of Iowa said: "A pretty good index to the prosperity of the farmer is the price of his land. . . . In my county I have seen it go up from \$50 to \$250 per acre, and still going up. . . . It is a resistless tendency, due to increase of population in the world at large at geometric ratio, while the increase of cultivated area is only at arithmetical ratio." Further on he spoke of the number of retired farmers "who have grown wealthy by reason of the increase in the value of lands." What is there to boast about in all this? Mr. Vollmer plainly shows that what he calls "the prosperity of the farmer" is in fact the prosperity of the land speculator. It is no wonder that the last census shows a decline in Iowa's agricultural population. Mr. Vollmer's speech makes it appear that these farmers would have prospered just as much had they never seen a plow or never worked at all. Their prosperity is not due to labor but to "increase of population in the world at large at geometric ratio while the increase in cultivated area is at arithmetical ratio." In other words, it is due to land monopoly. As long as there is good land unused there is no excuse for increase in cultivated area failing to keep pace with increase of population. That it does not, shows economic injustice somewhere. The retired farmers of whom Mr. Vollmer speaks are prosperous because able to appropriate the labor of cultivators of the farms they have left. That Iowa tenants are not prosperous Mr. Vollmer admits and correctly attributes to "the unearned increment and its tendency in higher rents to absorb the profits of farming as active business." This he further says: "Is not a matter of astonishment to students of the Singletax." Perhaps

Mr. Vollmer could give a more accurate and logical presentation of conditions in Iowa were he not under the mistaken impression that his duty as a Democratic partisan requires him to make a showing of general prosperity where it does not exist.

S. D.



A Progressive Business Body.

The Chamber of Commerce of Oakdale, California, numbers among local attractions the singletax system prevailing in the irrigation district for irrigation revenue. It proudly announces that "Oakdale has abandoned the primitive plan of taxing both land and improvements and has assessed the land alone for the cost of irrigation." It further shows how the adoption of this plan has encouraged improvement while the old plan had the opposite effect. "Many of the settlers in the older districts," it says, "lived in barns because the taxes on improvements prohibited them from living in comfortable houses with modern conveniences."



Does Oakdale realize that it has not only a splendid climate, fertile soil and just taxation as attractions, but something more which the circular could not well mention? It has a rare asset in a Chamber of Commerce that is so progressive as to push a reform which privileged interests oppose. In most cities the opposition of the Chamber of Commerce to progressive measures is looked upon as a matter of course. In Oakdale the business men are apparently as progressively inclined as the rest of their fellow citizens. It is a fortunate community.

S. D.



More Work for Pastoriza.

Texas is not only a state of vast area, but of varied examples of wisdom and folly. Houston, under the guidance of the inimitable Pastoriza, serves as an example of one; Austin, lacking the council of the unique tax commissioner, serves as the other. Houston, as is now pretty well known, has undertaken to encourage enterprise by removing taxes from industry, and placing them on privilege. Austin not only does not do this, but it has recently engaged in an undertaking that displays in all its crudeness the folly of modern government.



Austin is building, at an expense of a million and a half of dollars, a dam for the empounding