

lated the enslaved people on "our marvelous prosperity," and honestly believed what they said. It seems that Ohio is about to be represented in the Senate by a statesman whose ideas are about as advanced as those of the Pharaoh of Joseph's day.

S. D.



Commercial Inconsistencies.

One of the many things that disposes a man to think better of his kind is the interchange of commercial courtesies at the falls of Sault Ste. Marie. Upon one side of the river is a great lock and canal built by the Canadian Government, and on the other side is a still greater lock and canal, built by the United States; and the ships that pass up and down the lakes enter whichever lock offers at the moment the quickest service, for both are free. Now the New Welland canal is to make a still further extension of this commercial friendship. The new canal, which is to be ready for use in 1918, will have a capacity for the largest boats. It will be 25 miles long, 200 feet wide at the bottom, and 310 feet at the water line. There will be seven locks, each 800 feet long, with 30 feet of water on the sills. Each lock has a lift of $46\frac{1}{2}$ feet, or a total of $325\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The cost of the construction will be \$50,000,000. The most remarkable thing about the canal, however, and the best, is the fact that it is to be free to the shipping of both countries.



When will these two peoples, living on opposite sides of an imaginary line, tear down the artificial commercial barriers that they have erected? Why offer these inducements to trade, and then, when the trader brings in his goods, fine him for it at the custom house? How long will it be before the statesman will supplement the work of the civil engineer?

S. C.



Curtailing Property Rights.

Those ultra-conservative individuals who object to the Singletax because it has been proposed after present property rights were established; who complain that since they have paid "good money" for their titles nothing can now limit their rights; and who further maintain that to introduce such a radical change in our system of taxation would in fact be a destruction of their property rights, will be shocked by a recent decision of the Illinois Supreme Court. The City Club of Chicago, in its campaign for the city beautiful, secured an ordinance from the City

Council limiting the use of billboards in residence districts. The lower court decided against the right of the city to pass such an ordinance; but upon the appeal of the City Club the Supreme Court has reversed the decision, and upheld the law.



This is a direct limitation of the right of ownership of land to the extent to which it goes. It takes from the owner the right to say what use shall be made of his property. It also deprives him of the revenue that he might receive from the rental of the billboard. But this decision is really in keeping with the interpretation of the laws governing the ownership of land. Years ago it was the custom for municipalities to make street improvements by a general tax on all property, and land was bought and sold with that understanding. About a hundred years ago there began a practice of making certain street improvements by means of a special tax on the land only, and that according to its frontage instead of its value, as theretofore. Thus it happened that the man who had bought the land with the understanding that pavements, sidewalks, sewers, etc., were to be put in by a tax on all property, was compelled to pay for these improvements out of his own pocket, which to that extent limited the value of what he had bought. If property owners quietly accepted the shifting of the cost of street improvements from labor products to the land, will not they accept with equal grace the shifting of the cost of police, schools, and other branches of government from labor products to land values?

S. C.



The Right to Slavery.

Answering the question as to what he meant by "The right of every man to work where, for whom and upon such terms as he sees fit," Mr. J. F. Welborn of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company wrote as follows on December 10 to Mrs. Celia Baldwin Whitehead of Denver in answer to her question on page 1139 of *The Public*:

I want and in a modest way have been endeavoring to uphold the right of workmen to take employment with the company, of which I am an officer, on such terms as are satisfactory to both employer and employed, without the interference of a labor union to which the workmen do not belong and are opposed to joining.

The strike in Colorado has been called off, and the coal mine employes, representing a large majority of those working in the mines before the strike was called, have established their right to

work without molestation from the union seeking to dominate them and the coal mining industry.

Clearly then Mr. Welborn's position was not correctly stated in the pamphlet signed by himself, from which Mrs. Whitehead quoted. Although his language is different, Mr. Welborn's reconstructed statement explains his position to be exactly as Mrs. Whitehead described it:

You mean that you want every man free to take any job you offer him, on such terms as you see fit, without any dictation from a labor union.

The right of men to become slaves without molestation from the union seems to have been vindicated in southern Colorado. But as Mrs. Whitehead assured Mr. Welborn, he is within his rights in insisting on this travesty on freedom "so long as the men composing the labor unions vote to let you and a few others own the earth." If the loss of the strike impresses this fact on the labor unionists of Colorado, it will have done more for Labor's cause than a dozen strike victories could have accomplished.

S. D.



Good Advice from the Health Department.

The Department of Health of Chicago issues a monthly bulletin of advice concerning matters relating to public health. In the December issue it shows the relation of the Science of Political Economy to the Science of Health in the following: following:

If you have a vacant lot what are you doing with it? Has it occurred to you that there is some better use it may be put to than to let it lie idle and pay taxes on it? Of course, this is not the growing season, but next spring will be; and then what are you going to do? If your lot lies out on the west, northwest or southwest sides of the city, the soil is good and it will grow all kinds of vegetables. Why not, then, put the vacant lot to some good use? A great many thousands of bushels of potatoes alone could be produced on Chicago's vacant lots. Man is dependent on the soil for his living. Let us then make the land productive.

Calling attention to this fact is probably as far as the Health Department has power to go. But in doing this it makes clear the need of legislation to force holders of valuable unused land to either improve it or let go. Pending such legislation the possibility of vacant lot cultivation as a means of partial relief of the unemployed problem is indicated. Where this method has been tried with some success, the greatest difficulty has been in securing permission for use of land from landowners who presumably suspect the presence of a Singletax object lesson. The opposition of these landowners has in many places made such use of lots impossible. That

their suspicions are not without foundation may be readily admitted, but whether or not opposition is thus justified is another question. Perhaps if Chicago's United Charities would take up this sound suggestion of the Department of Health and use some of its vigorous campaign methods on the city's vacant landowners, Chicago might not be so deeply disgraced next winter as it is now by the presence of so much undeserved poverty and distress.

S. D.



Wasting the Earth.

The report of Vice Consul Thomas H. Bevan, of Tampico, Mexico, telling of the waste by fire and accident of large quantities of oil in that district, calls attention again to the enormous losses suffered by society through human carelessness. A well, said to be the largest in the world, and having a capacity of 150,000 barrels per day, is afire, and the company is making vain efforts to extinguish it. Another well with a capacity of 45,000 barrels per day, broke loose and poured 500,000 barrels of oil into the river before it was recapped. This is but a repetition of what has occurred in our own American oil fields, in the natural gas fields, and in the great timberlands of the north. Everywhere the eagerness to secure the largest profit in the smallest space of time, and with the least outlay, and the absence of all control and regulation by the public, led to many avoidable accidents that resulted in the destruction of vast quantities of the natural resources of the earth. Carelessness has allowed oilwells to catch fire and burn for long periods. Gas wells have been fired, without any means of shutting them off. And some have burned for years uninterruptedly. This is not as waterpower, that continuously replaces itself, but is fixed in quantity; and once gone it is gone forever. Men allowed natural gas to burn continuously, rather than pay for shutting it off, because it was cheaper. Cheaper perhaps it was to them, considered from the momentary advantage, but it cost society the loss of a large quantity of stored-up energy. The great timberlands were cut over in a way to invite fires, and to cause denudation; thus preventing the regrowth of the forest, and spoiling the lands and rivers besides. The conservationists, both nationally and internationally, have a great work before them.

S. C.



A Merry Christmas!

You who take life seriously, who see its deeper meaning, who realize its greater possibilities, and who believe in its triumph, rejoice. Be not bowed