

twentieth of an acre in extent and its only improvement is a decadent frame building.

A real estate man told me yesterday that no one would lend exceeding 30 to 40 per cent on a mortgage on Vancouver lots.

The next progressive step for the city to take is the adoption of the Somers system of assessment. There is considerable clamor for a more equitable assessment, and the current year will see commendable efforts in that direction on the part of the civic administration. Mayor Baxter declared recently that if Vancouver land values were assessed on a straight 60 per cent basis, the assessment would reach \$300,000,000, or double what it now is. In other words, the Mayor estimates Vancouver land values at \$500,000,000, whereas the assessment is only \$150,000,000.

Editor Taylor is doing a good work. His editorials are scholarly and on a high plane. Few days pass that he does not call attention to the Singletax in his editorial columns. His paper, the World, is quite easily the peer in all respects of the average daily in American cities of equal size, and far superior editorially. Its price has been reduced to 2 cents.

Considerable active opposition to improvement exemption in Vancouver was in evidence the past few months. It was led by F. C. Wade, K. C. president of the Burrard Publishing Company, publishers of "The Sun," the morning Liberal (?) organ. Mr. Wade is a heavy land gambler. The Balkan war caused a temporary tightness in the money markets. This was all that was needed to prick the highly attenuated Canadian land boom bubble. The suckers ceased to bite. They rarely even nibble now. Hence the wild ravings of such as Wade.

In Calgary, Alderman William Ross led the fight on exemption until the local faithful got a proper line on him. They dug up his assessments and found him to be burdened with the ownership of \$400,000 worth of city lots. That was a few months ago. Since then he has been gathered to his fathers.

A. FREELAND.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### HOW NEWSPAPERS MISREPRESENT FACTS.

Chicago, May 23.

There is abundance of evidence to be found in the late Governor Altgeld's, "Live Questions," containing reprints of his state papers, and in the report of Carroll D. Wright made after his enquiry here as United States Commissioner of Labor, to disprove almost every statement in the Chicago Record-Herald and Inter Ocean by John Howard Todd dealing with the great strike of 1894. The only authorities he can muster are the news columns of the daily papers comprised in the so-called Publishers' Association, which included all the English dailies of Chicago with the exception of the Times. These, let me say from personal knowledge, completely gave over their functions as disseminators of correct intelligence to the general managers of the railways centering in Chicago, who established a news bureau from which all the information printed was derived, even when staff reporters on the trust papers presented

to their city editors personally gathered facts completely contradictory.

Let me cite a personal experience. I was then the labor reporter of the Herald, in the fourth or fifth month of service as such. Returning one night from a Debs meeting on the west side with another reporter, we observed a disturbance on the Panhandle tracks under the viaduct we were crossing on the Lake street elevated road. We left at the first south side station and ran back. Descending to the tracks we heard the locomotive engineer of a passenger train roundly berating a green switchman, who had so mismanaged his apparatus that the forward wheels of the engine were on the main track, and the rear wheels on a switch—a preliminary to an accident, avoided in this case by the presence of mind of the engineer. I duly presented to my office a written report of the occurrence, which showed that the railway authorities were imperiling the lives of their passengers by employing switch tenders wholly unskilled in their important duties. The next morning, on opening my paper, I saw that my report had been killed, and there had been substituted for it the report written by the news agent of the general managers, which stated in effect that the strikers had deliberately derailed the train in question, thereby placing the lives of all on board in danger. It was an absolute misstatement, known to be such, put forth to deceive by both railway and newspaper authorities.

Similar gross perversions of fact were the ordinary daily babulum of all newspaper readers at a time when telling the truth was imperatively necessary if justice was to be done. I say all the papers, for even the Times, which was seeking to present the cause of the strikers, found the general preservation of order throughout the city so dull, in comparison with the sensational accounts of disorder presented by its contemporaries, that it, too, was forced into similar sensationalism nearly every day. The truth can only be learned today from men, like myself, who were personally familiar with the facts, from Wright's official report, and from Altgeld's pages, which contain first-hand information supplied from wholly disinterested sources for the purpose of enabling him to do his sworn duty as Governor in preserving order. From this last may also be obtained the official reports of the Chicago post office on the movement of mails, which completely strip from the federal authorities the pretense that they sent detachments of the regular army into Chicago for the purpose of securing the prompt disposition of the mails.

It is men like Mr. Todd, who prefer to disregard authentic and unprejudiced sources of information for gross lies made maliciously and for personal gain, who write the capitalistic histories from which American children obtain their information about the past. I do not see that this offers any excuse for Mr. Todd's similar perversions of fact, nor do I see why the new management of the Herald should care to maintain its ancient attitude toward the truth.

Allow me, also, to set your editorial comment right in a minor particular or two. The right of cross-examination was not denied the defense in the contempt proceedings before Judge Woods, and the

witnesses were ably cross-examined by Mr. Clarence Darrow, for the strike leaders. The criminal proceedings actually went to trial and a jury had been selected for the purpose. One of the jurors fell ill, however, and the case was never brought to a second hearing. I was, by reason of my newspaper connection, the principal witness for the government, and I wish to add, as a former member of the Chicago bar, my belief that my testimony, though the most important and essential upon which the prosecution had to rely, was wholly insufficient to warrant either the verdict as given in the contempt proceedings, or any verdict except that of acquittal in the criminal case.

WALLACE RICE.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Monday, May 25, 1914.

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### English Politics.

The Home Rule bill passed the House of Commons on May 25 by a vote of 351 to 274. The Unionists refused to debate. Having passed the House twice before in separate sessions, it now becomes law without consent of the Lords.

The Welsh church disestablishment bill passed the House of Commons on the 20th by a vote of 328 to 251. This bill, which has been a source of bitter contention, enjoys the distinction of being the first bill, aside from the budgets, to go upon the statute books under the new parliament act, which permits a bill, when passed three times by the Commons, to become a law in spite of the opposition of the Lords. The non-conformist denominations in Wales have long outnumbered the church people, but the national government has up to this time maintained the state church. [See current volume, page 487.]

The Unionists gained a seat in the Commons for Northeast Derby on the 20th. The Unionist received 6,469 votes, as against 6,155 for the Liberal, and 3,669 for the Laborite. This was a victory for Home Rule, but a defeat for the party. The bye election at Ipswich on the 23d resulted in a clear majority for the Unionist candidate. The Unionist received 6,406, the Liberal 5,784, and the Socialist 395.

### Mexico and the United States.

Representatives of Mexico and the United States gathered at Niagara Falls, Canada, on the 20th, under the auspices of the A. B. C. Mediators, the

Ministers of Argentina and Chile, and the Ambassador of Brazil. The Mediators presented to the American delegates for consideration a plan involving: 1. The elimination of Huerta, Carranza and Zapata from the government of Mexico. 2. Creation of a provisional government of a commission character in which shall be represented all the factions to the present conflict. 3. Agreement for a cessation of hostilities. 4. An election to be called and held under the auspices of the provisional government, at which none of the leaders of the factions now contending shall be candidates. [See current volume, page 488.]

The American delegates were disappointed that the land question had not been included. But the Mediators held this to be an internal question with which they had no concern. They were willing to make it a part of the subject if the American and Mexican delegates could agree upon a solution. President Wilson's general directions to the delegates are interpreted in the light of a published interview in which it was said the settled policy of the President in regard to Mexico includes: First. The United States, so long as Mr. Wilson is President, will not seek to gain a foot of Mexican territory in any way or under any pretext. Second. No personal aggrandizement by American investors or adventurers or capitalists, or exploitation of that country will be permitted. Third. A settlement of the agrarian land question by constitutional means—such as that followed in New Zealand, for example—will be insisted on.

The first full conference of the delegates was called on the 23d by the Mediators, at the request of the Mexican delegates. No definite conclusions have been arrived at, but there is a growing feeling of confidence that tangible results will follow. The Mexican delegates seem eager for an early agreement, before the Constitutionalist menace the Capital. All negotiations are conducted in a friendly spirit. The elimination of Huerta, and the inclusion of the land question, seem to be taken for granted.

General Villa, commanding 4,000 men, defeated 4,500 Federals at Pasadon on his way to Saltillo. Nine hundred prisoners were taken, together with 9 pieces of artillery and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition. The casualties were 49 killed and 109 wounded. Saltillo was evacuated by the Federals on the 20th, after looting the city. Reports are to the effect that the Federals will gather at Queretaro for a final stand. Queretaro, a city of about 40,000, and 110 miles northwest of the City of Mexico, was the scene of Emperor Maximilian's overthrow and execution. It was there also that