

nue that is raised by the land value tax. Most Saskatchewan towns either have not yet adopted it at all or are only now putting it into operation. Rural taxes heretofore have been a flat arce tax, amounting to some \$15 to \$30 per quarter section. This year the ad valorem tax will be applied to farm land.

Provincial revenues are derived from licenses and royalties and from a most vicious system of grants from the Dominion treasury. This latter will furnish a powerful pocket argument for the continuance of the protective tariff after it shall fail of defense on its own merits.

GEORGE W. ATKINSON.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### CONSERVED LANDS OPEN TO USE.

Washington, D. C., February 17.

The Public of January 9 and February 13, recites statements made in the House of Representatives by Congressman Johnson of Washington, from which it seems to draw the conclusion that large areas of land owned by the National Government are held out of use in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific States. Its only defence of the Nation is that it is no worse than private owners and that what is called opening the reserved lands would result in their monopolization by timber barons. This is no more convincing than the "you're another" of boyhood's vocabulary.

There is a better retort to Mr. Johnson in the bright lexicon of youth, which may be adapted to adult conventionalities by saying that his statement is not true. The "reserved" and "withdrawn" lands which make up his totals are not held out of use. They are classified for use. In degrees varying with each class and determined by the Federal statutes relating thereto, they may be used by anybody who is ready to use them. The National Forests, which Mr. Johnson especially loathes, are the most open of all. Their ripe timber is for sale on the stump to the highest bidder; their pasturage is for rent to the neighboring ranchmen; their metalliferous minerals are open to all takers at a nominal price. As for the sites "withdrawn" for water power conservation, every one is open to lease by the first applicant. The coal deposits are for sale in fee simple at the appraised price and their surface is open to agricultural use without price. But for timber, pasturage, water power, and coal the public must be paid some little approximation of their value, and, as to all but coal, the user can get only a leasehold, leaving in the public freehold, which includes the power of regulation by stipulations in the lease and also the power at some future day to take the land value as rental. Hence Johnson's tears! Doubtless he would weep as copiously if the taking were from private landlords by the instrumentality of the Singletax.

The laws should be amended to make possible a better leasehold than can now be had for water power. That they have not been so amended is

due chiefly to the opposition of Mr. Johnson and his kind during the past seven years.

PHILIP P. WELLS.



## HOW HOLLAND MANAGES.

Forestburg, February 5.

Traveling in an unfrequented corner of the Netherlands, going through the commodious Poorhouse of Genemuïden I was assured that the institution not only made excellent provision for its inmates but was a considerable source of revenue to the town through its dairying, mat-weaving and knitting industries but especially through the farm land belonging to it which it rents out. Expressing surprise I was told that at Kampen, a neighboring hamlet through the renting of a hundred farms, wrested originally from the sea by its citizens, all the public works including an excellent public school system are maintained with no taxation whatever.

JOHN VISHER.

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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 Tuesday, February 24, 1914.

### Death of Joseph Fels.

Joseph Fels died on the morning of February 22 in Philadelphia. He had been ill but a short time with pneumonia. His death occurred at the residence of Professor Earl Barnes where he had for some years made his home. The funeral has been set for Wednesday, February 25, and will be private. On February 7 he had attended court in Philadelphia to assist in a suit brought by Samuel Milliken against the Board of Revision of Taxes to compel publicity in a matter of rebates to favored taxpayers. He then left for the seashore. On returning he became indisposed and was confined to the house. On the 17th symptoms of pneumonia developed. A physician with two consultants was in constant attendance, but his weak condition showed the attack to be dangerous from the beginning. On Saturday, the 21st, there appeared to be a change for the better, which later proved deceptive. Death came at 4:30 a. m., Sunday.



Joseph Fels was born at Halifax Court House, Virginia, on December 16, 1854. He was educated in private schools at Yanceyville, North Carolina; Richmond, Virginia, and Baltimore. His business career began in 1870 as salesman for a Baltimore soap manufacturing firm. His own first venture was in establishment of a soap manufacturing business in Baltimore with his father in 1871.

He was married in 1891 to Miss Mary Fels of Keokuk, Iowa. In 1894 he established the firm of Fels & Co., at Philadelphia, in which his brother Samuel became also interested, and engaged exclusively in the manufacture of the "Fels-Naptha" brand. A branch of this business was established by him in London in 1901, since which time he resided there the greater part of the year. There his interest in social problems led him to purchase 1,300 acres at Hollesley Bay to found a colony for the unemployed. This was later taken over by the government. At Laindon he purchased a tract of 100 acres which he turned over at a nominal rent to the local Board of Guardians to be made into a farm colony for the unemployed. He bought 600 acres at Maylands to be cultivated by small holders. He was an active supporter of the vacant lot cultivation movement on both sides of the Atlantic and gave considerable assistance to the colonies at Fairhope, Alabama, and Arden, Delaware. [See vol. xii, p. 953; vol. xv, p. 491.]



It was in 1905 that Joseph Fels became an active worker for the Singletax. His own story of this was told by Lincoln Steffens in the American Magazine for October, 1910, in which he is reported to have said: "I've been a Singletaxer ever since I read George's books. I've seen the cat for years. But I didn't do much till I was converted. And, strange to say, I was converted by a Socialist. Singletaxers and Socialists don't agree: too often they fight. But it was Keir Hardie who converted me to the Singletax, or, as I prefer to call it, Christianity. I came home on a ship with him once and I noticed that he never thought of himself. We were together all the time, all those long days at sea, and we talked about England, America, politics, business—everything; and I talked and I thought of myself. But Hardie didn't talk of himself and I could see that he never thought of Keir Hardie. He was for men. . . . Well, that did for me. I saw that I was nothing and that I was doing nothing compared with a man like that. He saw and I saw, but he worked. He did things, and I saw that that made him a man, a happy man and a servant of mankind. So I decided to go to work, forget myself, and get things done." [See vol. xiii, p. 1098.]



In London he became a member of and active worker in the United Committee for Taxation of Land Values. His activity in this work and the financial assistance given toward a vigorous campaign for parliamentary candidates pledged in favor of land value taxation, finally forced the Liberal government to take note of the land value taxation movement, and to give its assent to the famous Lloyd George Budget in 1909. Thus it was through him mainly that the land question became the principal issue in British politics, and

that the first act by the British parliament in modern times was passed providing for a measure of land value taxation, and for the first revaluation of the land of Great Britain since the seventeenth century. In pushing the work which caused the introduction of this budget, he was also instrumental in stripping the House of Lords of its absolute veto over legislation.



In May, 1909, after months of consultation and preparation, the formation was announced of the Joseph Fels's Fund of America. To this fund Mr. Fels agreed to contribute \$25,000 a year, provided an equal amount would be given by others. He further agreed to match every dollar that others would contribute. A commission to have charge of the work was formed, consisting of Daniel Kiefer, chairman, of Cincinnati, Jackson H. Ralston of Washington, Lincoln Steffens, then of Boston, Frederic C. Howe of Cleveland (now director of the People's Institute, New York), and George A. Briggs of Elkhart, Ind. Tom L. Johnson was made treasurer. Mr. Fels took no part in the disbursement of the fund. Since its formation the commission has been increased by the addition to its membership of A. B. du Pont of Cleveland and Charles H. Ingersoll of South Orange, N. J. On the death of Tom L. Johnson, A. B. du Pont was made treasurer. A similar fund was established at the same time in Great Britain, and smaller ones in Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales, Switzerland and Denmark. During the five years that have since passed Mr. Fels contributed much more in the United States than the \$25,000 a year agreed upon, although the amount raised from others was considerably less. His help to the movement was by no means confined to financial contributions. He was himself the most active of workers. An almost continual traveler, wherever he went he would address meetings of any kind, engage in debates and furnish articles to papers and magazines. The wide publicity given to his activity in behalf of Singletax work, together with frequent misrepresentations by the press of its nature, brought upon him a deluge of applications for aid to all kinds of palliative and charitable schemes. To all of these he had but one answer. He was not a philanthropist. He contributed only to justice, not to charity. He was working to make charity needless, not to perpetuate its need. Charity might properly look for support to those who uphold existing institutions, since these are responsible for the distress which charity seeks to relieve. But those who would establish just conditions must not weaken their ability to help in that work by taking anything from it for charity.



He is survived by his wife, who has been thor-

oughly in sympathy with his work, and an active co-operator.



### English Politics.

The Parliamentary situation seems to have settled down to a dogged determination on the part of the Conservative-Unionist forces to oust the Liberals from power. Talk of compromise over Ulster continues, but the demands of the extremists have been enlarged to such a degree that there is little hope of the friends and opponents agreeing. If the government can be overthrown before the passage of the Irish Home Rule Bill, it will be necessary, even should the Liberals be successful at the polls, to wait three years before the measure can be brought to the present stage. Hence, the Unionists will gain even though they should lose the election. This lends zest to their efforts to foment trouble for the government. The naval estimates, the deportation of South African labor leaders, the Mexican killing of Benton, and every possible item of discord is magnified to the utmost. The Unionists won the bye-election of Bethnal Green by a very small plurality in a three-cornered fight. But as both the Liberal and the Labor candidates stood for home rule, the vote was really an endorsement of that issue. [See current volume, page 180.]



More and more attention is given to Lloyd George and his land program. The London Times began a savage attack on him on the 17th, and has followed it with editorials that are spoken of as libelous. He is charged with "political blackmail," "lying" and of being mentally unsound.



Mail advices indicate that Lloyd George took no backward step in his Glasgow speech on the 4th. Basing his stand on the broad proposition "that the land of all countries was created by Providence for the benefit of all those who dwell therein, and that the privileges, rights, or interests attaching for the time being, whatever their origin may be, to the ownership of land that are inconsistent with this great purpose ought, in the interests of the community, to be ruthlessly overridden," he made this significant statement: "Some desire the whole burden of the rates [local taxes] to be transferred from the structure to the site; while others, on the other hand, object to any part of the rates being put upon the site. Frankly, I consider, having regard to vested interests which have grown up, the first proposition as impracticable, and I regard the second proposition as pusillanimous." He expressed the opinion that the special deputation that the city of Glasgow was sending to British Columbia to study the system of taxation there, would be of great help in formulating practical proposals. The United Committee

for the Taxation of Land Values at a meeting on February 9, declared:

This meeting of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values endorses the official resolution adopted at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's meeting in Glasgow on the 4th of February and hails with satisfaction his declaration that the Government is not only pledged to the rating of land values, but also that it intends to give effect to the principle in legislation as an essential feature of its land reform proposals. While welcoming the Chancellor's announcement, the United Committee again affirms and emphasizes its support of the practical policy laid down in the Land and Taxation Reform Memorial urged upon the Government by the Land Values Group in the House of Commons, calling for a national tax on land values in substitution for the breakfast table duties, and in relief of the burden of those national services which now fall upon the local rates.



### Mexico and the United States.

Maximo Castillo, the Mexican bandit who was charged with destroying the Great Cumbre tunnel on the Mexican Northwestern railroad, resulting in the loss of about sixty persons, six of whom were Americans, was captured on the 17th by American troops near Hachita, N. M. He was taken to Fort Bliss, at El Paso, on the 19th. Castillo denies that he had anything to do with wrecking the tunnel. [See current volume, page 176.]



President Huerta celebrated on the 19th the anniversary of his elevation to the presidency, by a review of the garrison and the formal decoration of the regimental colors of the Twenty-ninth, the organization that placed Madero under arrest. The president also conferred decorations on several of his officers for distinguished service.



All other Mexican news is overshadowed by the killing of William S. Benton, and the possible international complications that may arise. Benton is said to have been a resident of Mexico for 20 years, but to have remained a British citizen. He is reputed to have been wealthy, and of violent temper. On the 17th he went to General Villa to obtain permission to ship 400 cattle to the United States. A quarrel ensued in which Villa charges Benton attempted his life. He was court-martialed and shot. The American Department of State is making an investigation, and the British government has signified its intention of leaving the whole matter in the hands of the American government. The English Tories are trying to make capital of the incident to embarrass the government.



### Arbitration Treaties Confirmed.

The Senate on February 21 ratified eight arbi-