During the early autumn, it was reported through the regular news channels that William Waldorf Astor had won a bet by giving a dinner party in London to 27 guests, all of whom found table accommodation around a single section of a California redwood tree. It now appears that the story was manufactured out of whole cloth. Mr. Astor has brought suit for libel against the London paper which first gave it currency. For having done so he is to be commended, and it is to be hoped that he will succeed in punishing the guilty persons. Some of the London correspondents are making fun of Mr. Astor for taking what they call "a palpable fake" so seriously. But the fake was not palpable. And whether it had been or not, newspapers are not the appropriate channels for disiminating fakes, palpable or otherwise. Both in defending his personal right to security against having his name coupled with fakes, and in defending the right of the public to security against being victimized by fakes when it is paying for news, Mr. Astor's course in bringing suit deserves public approval. It is a little curious, however, that the crusade upon yellow journalism should first take legal shape in a suit brought by an American against a London newspaper.

Charles T. Yerkes, the Chicago street car magnate, has unwittingly given the inhabitants of that city one of the best of reasons for refusing to deal with him for franchise extensions, upon any terms. He has placarded his cars with the following information:

Length of grants and compensations paid in the larger cities of the United States:

Cities.	Years.	Compensation.
New York..........	999..	Nothing to 3 per ct.
Philadelphia..	999..	Pave the streets.
Washington..	99..	4 per cent.
St. Louis............	50..	2 per cent.
Cincinnati..	50..	5 per cent.
Boston	Perpetual..	Nothing to 4 per ct.
Chicago "L" roads	50..	Nothing.

If other cities have by dickering with street car monopolists been induced to give away the rights of unborn generations in this style, Chicago would do well to demand of her public agents that they do no dickering at all. We cannot think of a stronger argument against street franchises than the possibility of their being extended for a period of 999 years. This is corrupt and fraudulent upon the face of it. Soon or late those franchises must be repudiated.

A letter received by Max Hirsch, a prominent man in public affairs who lives in Melbourne, Victoria, from the town clerk of Brisbane, Queensland, throws satisfactory light upon the operation of the single tax principle in Queensland. Prior to 1891 real estate was assessed for taxation upon the rental basis. That is, the selling value of land was not considered, but only its annual rent, which was taxed at the rate of one shilling tax to the pound of rent—about 5 cents to the dollar. But in 1891 the selling value of the land alone was considered, improvements being exempt, and the tax rate was fixed at three-fourths of a penny tax to each pound of selling value—about three-tenths of a cent to the dollar. This rate of taxation is low, but low as it is it has in Queensland had the effect measurably of equalizing taxes and forcing improvement. The town clerk of Brisbane in writing to Mr. Hirsch of the change, says:

> The object of this legislation was primarily to more equitably distribute the incidence of taxation, and this result has in the main been attained. The old system of taxing improvements was undoubtedly defective, as being calculated to retard progress, and I certainly think our present system a distinct advance. Vacant lands, and lands whose improvements are not in keeping with their situation, are now more heavily rated than was formerly the case, and this has a decided effect in urging on building operations.

Continuing he explains that "fully improved properties have benefited by the change, and likewise house properties." In other words, the taxes of improvers have diminished while those of land speculators only have been increased.

The old adage about honest men getting their dues under certain circumstances not necessary now to specify, finds new verification in the petition to the American-Canadian commission made last month by the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. This association, comprising 157 daily newspapers, mostly protectionist, and representing according to its own statement "the bulk of the total consumption of print paper," begs for free trade in paper and paper pulp. It makes a good case, too. Its petition shows, among other enlightening and interesting things, that paper can be manufactured cheaper in the United States than anywhere else in the world, and that the American manufacturers are now supplying foreign markets in competition with foreign manufacturers. This very instructive petition explains also that the paper manufacturers are combined in a trust, which controls 80 per cent. of the entire American output; and that the common stock of the trust, though admitted by the trust to represent no investment, pays dividends and is selling at 60 cents on the dollar in the stock market. For these and other reasons it is urged that a continuation of the paper and paper pulp duty would be a tax upon American newspaper readers for the benefit of the paper trust, and that it ought to be abolished. When it is remembered that most of the papers back of this petition are on record as arguing that under protective tariffs the foreigner pays the tax, the admission here that taxes on paper and paper pulp are paid by newspaper readers and enrich the owners of paper trust stock is a little startling. Nevertheless, the petition of the newspaper trust against the paper and pulp trust is a sound free trade document and entitled to respect as such. In the form of a special plea it sets forth and exemplifies a general principle which leaves nothing for protectionism to rest upon.

President Harper, of Rockefeller's Chicago university, delivered an address not long ago in which he described the university—not referring to Rockefeller alone, of course, but