

ought to bear it to those who ought not—from the rich monopoly classes to the middle classes and the poor. The “general property tax” is a system which professedly aims at equality of taxation through the taxation of all kinds of property. In New York, where it is in vogue, and has been made increasingly stringent with a view to reaching intangible personal property, there appears upon the tax returns to have been an enormous falling off since 1870 in the value of personal property, especially in cities. It is absurd of course to suppose that there has in reality been such a falling off. Personal property has in fact increased. The apparent falling off means that intangible personal property is escaping taxation, with the effect of throwing heavier burdens upon the owners of personalty of the tangible sort. The owners of stocks and bonds escape, because they can hide that kind of property; but the owners of horses, cows and the like must pay, because such property cannot be hidden. The same condition that obtains in New York is shown by Mr. Purdy to prevail in the other states named. It is universal and should long before this have taught honest advocates of the general property tax that they are on the wrong scent.

If it is desired to put the burden of taxation upon the classes that profit especially by such property as stocks and bonds—and that certainly is the object of stringent personal property taxation—the way to do it is to abandon personal property taxation altogether, and levy all our taxes exclusively upon monopoly privileges. Taxes upon these privileges, if properly laid, cannot be escaped; and they fall upon the stock and bond classes. The interests of those classes are buttressed by monopoly.

That such taxes can be properly laid is evident. By laying them upon the fundamental monopoly—upon the monopoly of land, which is the monopoly that would absorb all the pecuniary benefits of the abolition of other monopolies—the pecuniary advantages of every kind of monopoly would be subjected to taxation. And this is Mr. Purdy’s view, for he advocates the home rule prin-

ciple of taxation lately indorsed by the Ohio senate, under which every county would be allowed if it chose to confine taxation to land values.

STREET CAR MONOPOLY.

Excitement over war questions may have the unfortunate effect of diverting attention from important municipal problems. This must be avoided if possible. It is of vital concern to the American people that they do not allow the present war, as they allowed that of ’61, to be made the opportunity of monopoly sharks to secure liens upon public rights.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance in all directions; and in no direction is vigilance more urgently demanded at this time than in the direction of guarding street franchises. For more than a generation these franchises have been squandered; and now that the public mind has been awakened to the evil, it must be prevented from going to sleep again.

But we should not be content with exacting compensation. That would be merely to shift the advantages of street franchises from one class of monopolists to another. So long as street car companies get street franchises for nothing, they feed upon the public. Through the value of their privileges they then suck the life blood of our communities. But if they were required to pay for their franchises the public as a whole would be no better off. What street car monopolists pocket for nothing when no compensation for franchises is required would be pocketed by real estate interests if cities exacted compensation.

Upon the principle of dividing to conquer, it may possibly be advisable to attack street monopolies first and real estate monopolies afterwards. But even upon that principle, the true method of attacking street car monopolies is not by demanding compensation for franchises, but by requiring a reduction of fares. Under the compensation system, street car passengers—from the millionaire who rides twice a day between his office and his house to the washwoman who is compelled to use the cars as often or oftener—are taxed for each ride, merely to lessen city taxes which otherwise would have to be borne by real estate owners.

Of what use is it to the public—taking a Chicago instance for illustration—to charge Yerkes a good round sum for his street car monopoly, only to reduce the real estate taxes of Marshall Field? Let Yerkes pay for his monopoly privilege in rendering service for lower fares, and shop girls, mechanics, washwomen and the general public will be directly benefited. That is the direction that reform in the way of abolishing street car monopoly ought to take.

NEWS

At the hour of writing last week, no official news had been received from the American fleet in the Philippines since its departure from Mirs Bay, on the coast of China. The reason for this was that the cable from Manila to Hong Kong had been interrupted. It was known only that a battle had been fought and a victory won in Manila Bay. Notwithstanding the suspension of cable communication, however, baseless rumors and counter rumors were afloat daily, almost hourly, until the 7th, when Com. Dewey’s dispatch boat, the Hugh McCulloch, arrived at Hong Kong with the commodore’s official report. This report, and the cable letter of John T. McCutcheon, staff correspondent of the Chicago Record, who had accompanied the fleet, gave the only trustworthy and complete news of the situation at Manila, down to the 5th. Nothing further had been received at this writing.

Com. Dewey’s official report was in full as follows:

Manila, May 1.—The squadron arrived at Manila at daybreak this morning. We immediately engaged the enemy and destroyed the following Spanish vessels: Reina Christina, Castilla, Don Antonio de Ulloa, Isla de Luzon, General Lezo, Isla de Cuba, Marquis del Duero, Elcano, Velasco, Don Juan de Austria, Isla de Mindinao (transport). The squadron is uninjured, and only a few men were slightly wounded. I cut the cable to prevent Spanish communication. The only means of telegraphing is to the American counsel at Hong Kong. I shall communicate with him.—DEWEY.

In a second dispatch Com. Dewey reported that having taken possession of the naval station at Cavite, he had destroyed the fortifications at the entrance to the bay and paroled the garrison; that he controlled the bay com-