

In a public statement commenting on Mr. Melville's suit, E. B. Gaston, secretary of the Fairhope corporation, said:

The question of greatest interest to Singletaxers in this suit is whether or not there can be a substantial application of the singletax under "laws which deny its essentials." The essential feature of the singletax is the taking of land values for public purposes instead of levying upon wealth due to individual efforts. We claim that we accomplish this under our authority as landlords by taking as rent the annual rental value of the land and out of that paying the taxes not only upon the land but upon the improvements and personal property of the lessees.

The complaint of injustice because under the Fairhope plan the poor man has only small improvements relieved from taxation, while the rich man's much more valuable improvements are relieved, is exactly the same argument used by opponents of the singletax to its application by law. Rich and poor are alike benefited by the removal of taxes from their improvements. The poor man in fact receives the most benefit, because, not having money to "invest" in land, he could not, under ordinary conditions, be a beneficiary (even though wrongfully as we hold) by land speculation.

To the claim that our corporation should be dissolved because trying to "practice and enforce certain theories of government contrary to the established policy of the state" we reply that we have nothing to do with policies of government at all; that our corporation is simply a private, land-owning corporation, administering its property upon terms mutually entered into with those who desire to participate with it, and that we should be commended and encouraged rather than hindered, both because we are giving people, many of them unable to buy, access to our land, upon terms, which make them equal sharers in the increasing value of the land, rather than ourselves appropriating it for our special benefit as owners; and because, without interference with the laws, and at our own expense and instance, we are endeavoring to show the benefits which would follow the adoption by government, of a policy which we believe would be for the advantage of all men.

As to the actual results obtained by our policy and management we claim that instead of being oppressive to individuals and tending to "retard progress and create stagnation" the facts are exactly the contrary; that every lessee making such use of his holding as it is reasonably best suited for, is an individual beneficiary of our policy, and can be proven to be such to any man capable of understanding a business proposition—eliminating, of course, any benefits which might have accrued to him as a land speculator, from the increase in land value during the time he may have held it; and that our town has notoriously outgrown all other towns affording anything like a fair measure of comparison; and further, that this is conclusively shown to be the result of our policy, by the fact that though our corporation owns but about 40 per cent of the land within the limits of the incorporated town of Fairhope, every business institution in the town

is on our land, save the postoffice and one small "soft drink" stand; the ice plant and creamery, two sawmills, a brick yard, all the hotels, etc., are on the Colony land. In the country the difference in conditions of development on Colony land as compared with adjacent privately owned land, is equally marked in favor of the Colony land.

Instead of discouraging the erecting of factories upon Colony land, the Colony management is eager for the erection of such upon its land, and is the most active force for the upbuilding of the community today existing. As singletaxers its members have no fear whatever, but that the building on its land of such factories or other business institutions as the population and facilities will give reasonable hope of success (without which no one will put up the same) will add a land value which will easily take care of the taxes upon the same.

Further, the rentals for the last two years have been such as were fixed by the lessees themselves, regardless of membership; the corporation having gone beyond even its contracts with its non-member lessees, and agreed to submit the question of the rents for 1912, to a vote of the lessees and abide the result; the lessees themselves, at a formal election, after previous full discussion, voting for a ten per cent increase over previous rents by a very large majority and the rents thus fixed having remained unchanged until this year, when the lessees have again established the rent, under the Somers system and assisted by Mr. Somers himself and again increased the same substantially 10 per cent over the last year.

In regard to the payment of a deficit in operation of water works and telephones out of ground rents, it is the very policy advocated by Tom L. Johnson. Our telephone is now self-supporting, while the deficit in the water works is not greater than the advantage accruing to the people from free use of water for fire protection, for public watering trough, and for water furnished without charge to the public and organic schools.



Taxation in Alberta.

In an interview in the New York Times of May 15, Premier Sifton of Alberta says:

Alberta is growing rapidly. The towns are spreading out at a rate which some think is a little too fast. One of the things a new country wants to avoid, if possible, is too rapid growth of its towns. But we have not had a real estate collapse in Alberta. Prices have not gone down. There has been merely a cessation of speculative sales. I do not think any good property could be bought for less than it brought in the midst of what has been referred to as "the boom," but land is not selling except for use. . . . Americans are going to Alberta from the Dakotas and Minnesota, and we are getting some from Illinois and Indiana. We welcome them, as the bulk of them make as good settlers as any in the world. Most of them have families, and want more land for their sons, so that they sell out their land in the States at a good price, and buy three or four times as much over the border. What I have said about American settlers does not necessarily apply to

those who go to the towns. They are apt to go back, or to go further on. We have not gone in for woman suffrage in Alberta, but we have the Single-tax, and it is working out well. The bulk of our towns have had it a number of years. Calgary and one or two others had special charters, and have only lately begun to adopt it in principle. In Edmonton the total tax is 2 per cent of the value of land. There is no local government direct tax in Alberta. We get a grant from the Federal Government. That is to say, we receive out of the Federal revenues a sum in proportion to our population. This pays about half of the expenses of our local government. The rest comes from licenses and similar sources.



Washington Doings.

The House Committee on Inter-State Commerce reported on May 16 the Rayburn bill for federal control of railroad stock and bond issues. This completes the number of anti-trust bills to be pushed for passage at this session. [See current volume, page 393.]



Although the Democratic House caucus eliminated rural credits from this session's program the rural credit bill was introduced in both Senate and House on May 12, after prolonged hearings by a congressional sub-committee. It provides for rural credit banks to be governed by a federal board in a manner similar to national banks. Besides providing for loans on farm lands it requires annual purchase by the federal government of rural credit bonds to the amount of \$50,000,000. President Wilson is said to oppose the latter feature since it amounts to loan of government credit to private individuals.



The Department of Agriculture issued on May 12 new regulations for manufacturers and packers of foods. These require that henceforth labels on packages and bottles must give the net weight or volume of contents. Where a numerical count gives accurate information the contents may be stated that way.



The House passed on May 12 the Senate bill providing temporary machinery for the conduct of popular elections of United States Senators in those States where the legislature has not yet acted.



Representative Neeley of West Virginia introduced on May 11 a resolution directing the House Judiciary Committee to investigate the conduct of Federal Judge Alston G. Dayton of West Virginia. Charges relating to his actions in labor cases have been filed against him.

Senator Gore's poll of the delegates to the National Democratic convention of 1912 on the Panama tolls matter had resulted up to May 17 in receipt of 867 replies—702 are opposed to toll exemptions, 127 favor them, and 38 are non-committal. [See current volume, pp. 387, 439.]



The declination of Harry A. Wheeler of his appointment on the federal reserve board was announced on May 15. This leaves two vacancies on the board to be filled. [See current volume, page 465.]



Charles S. Mellen, former president of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad appeared before the Interstate Commerce Commission on May 14 to testify in the investigation of that road. He told of the acquisition of the New York, Boston and Westchester railroad through giving its stockholders 8000 shares of New Haven stock in exchange for 24,000 shares of Westchester stock, although he considered the latter worth only "ten cents a pound." Former Police Inspector Byrnes of New York arranged the deal, he said. The Westchester shares were held "by people who had influence," and he "wanted to reach the devil or anybody that it was necessary to reach." Mr. Mellen was excused from further testimony until May 19. [See current volume, page 465.]



The Labor War.

The court martial at Denver, assembled May 11, to investigate charges of murder, arson and robbery brought against thirty-nine members of the militia. The court consists of three militia officers. Captain Edward A. Smith is judge advocate. The taking of testimony began on May 13, when Lieutenant Benedict of the militia told of finding the charred bodies of women and children in a pit. He said that the strikers had fired the first shot and that he had heard no order from Major Hamrock to burn the tents, and expressed the opinion that an overturned lamp started the fire. On May 14 Captain Linderfelt and Lieutenant Bigelow testified that soldiers did not enter the tent colony until the fire had started, that they only did enter to engage in rescue work, and that there was no looting. But Lieutenant Bigelow admitted that the fire was due to firing upon the tents by the militiamen. Testimony was heard on May 15 concerning the death of Louis Tikas and two other strikers, while held prisoners by the militia. Sergeant Cullom and Private Mason declared that the prisoners had been shot while attempting to escape, but could throw no light on the identity of those who did the shooting. [See current volume, page 466.]