

questing owners of vacant lots to allow signs to be placed on their property reading as follows:

Everybody works but the vacant lot. I paid \$— for this lot and will hold until I get \$—. The profit is unearned increment made possible by the presence of this community and the enterprise of its people. I take the profit without earning it. What are you going to do about it? The chairman of the taxation committee of the Woman's party of Cook County has the remedy in pamphlet form. Send to Mrs. Hunt, Room 214, Hotel La Salle, city, for a copy, and then get to work.

This is an extension of the methods followed by J. J. Pastoriza in Houston, Laurie J. Quinby in Omaha, Fay Lewis in Rockford, Illinois, L. D. Beckwith in Santa Margarita, California, and probably by other equally candid land speculators elsewhere. But Mrs. Hunt has improved on the idea by endeavoring to enlist land owners to whom such use of their lots would not otherwise occur, or who, if they favor such use, would neglect to attend to the matter themselves. S. D.



### Suspicious Silence.

The City of Chicago has the opportunity to take possession of an automatic telephone system. The system belongs to the Illinois Telephone and Telegraph Company, the franchise of which provides forfeiture of its system to the city whenever the number of its bona fide subscribers falls below 20,000 or whenever it may agree to sell out to another company operating in Chicago. Both of these conditions have come about, but so far from taking advantage of the terms of the franchise the city council is actually considering seriously a proposition to allow sale of the plant to another corporation, and this proposition does not provide any consideration whatever to the city in return for its permission. Why council should consider such a proposition has never been explained. Equally mysterious is the explanation of the silence on this subject of every daily paper in Chicago with the exception of the Day Book. S. D.



### WAR—AND PEACE.

Human nature is prone to magnify the details of war into events themselves of importance—forgetting that war is of importance only in so far as it retards or accelerates the progress of civilization, and that any battle, or any deed in any battle, is of importance only in so far as it contributes to the best settlement of the war in the interest of mankind as a whole. It is this dwelling on the details of war, and the honor

paid to the heroes of war, that is so largely responsible for keeping alive the war spirit in our "human" hearts—that makes so grievously apparent the "thin crust of civilization." When war is done, if only its horrors be remembered, then is the world nearer to lasting peace. And evidence is not lacking, despite the present war, that the masses of men grow always nearer to this belief.

In this war, even though—because, indeed—our sympathies are with all of Europe, we of America cannot but hope for a decisive overthrow of military autocracy, and for a general disarmament. The plea of the military autocrats, for the need of "expansion," in the sense of forceable occupation of additional territory, is only too apparently false. Break down the barriers of race and international hatred that spring from armed "peace", from a constant exaltation of national valor in past wars, and, more than all else, from international trade restraints, and "expansion" will come, as nature intends it should come. Given only a single international or inter-racial marriage annually, and it is only a matter of time until races and international hatred shall disappear. Tear down the artificial barriers that prohibit community of trade-interests, and you hasten the day when Europe shall be as truly one nation as the Caucasian element of our own country is, or is about to be.

Expansion? Has not every German as true a natural right to every foot of French or English soil as any Frank or Briton? And ought not every Briton or man of France beneath God's sunlight, be just as truly at home "where e'er the Rhine grapes purple bloom" as in his own native land? Hasten the coming of peace, Peace!

HARRY W. OLNEY.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### COMMUNITIES IN MEXICO.

Monterrey, N. Leon, September 21.

Mr. B. F. Butterfield of California has ably described the land communities of the Indians in the States of Sonora and Sinaloa. It would be a mistake to suppose that that is the only kind of land communities in old Mexico.

In the State of Nuevo Leon, settled in the beginning mostly by Spanish families, exist large estates, the bulk of their land taking most of the area of the State, which are inheritances handed down for one or two centuries to families and their descendants in common. Their original owners, mostly favored by the Spanish crown, were never careful to make a will relating to their estates. According to Mexican law, as long as the absence of a last will

is not denounced by one of the rightful heirs, the land is continued to be held in common by all heirs. Not all heirs happened to have equal number of children; so, after the second generation, all their heirs had not the same right, many of them began to sell to strangers a part or all of their inheritance, and this unequal distribution of the rights amongst them is made more difficult to determine at the present time, when we consider that there are no precise genealogical trees, no records of the families and their offspring and no documents whatever to throw light on that, but only the word of the eldest among the living ones as to who has a right and how much of it or if none at all.

According to Mexican law, anyone having a right, however small, in a community, is entitled to fence in and use as much land as he desires from the unallotted, and that he holds in the name of the community but for his own exclusive benefit. This has brought into the communities a certain class of land grafters who, buying a small right, fence in a large tract and make exclusive use of it in various ways. The rest of the members cannot protest.

The communities cannot be divided under existing laws, for if a number of the members in one, for instance, decides to divide, only one of them might appeal to Federal courts alleging hurt to his private interests and thus all proceedings are indefinitely stopped. Nevertheless most of the members of the communities are earnestly hoping they will be divided some time, so they can get their rightful share of the inheritance. Accordingly every one of them makes only the absolutely necessary improvements on the land he has fenced in for fear some time or another land and improvements may fall to the lot of another.

Very few of these communities are defined as to their membership. Fewer still have a regulation of their own and an organization. Perhaps out of five hundred communities in Nuevo Leon, not half a dozen are duly organized. They were not instituted by law, but have grown out of the peculiar conditions of the region. Still every one of the right-holders defends his right by all means at his command when it is attacked in some way by others. This fills the courts of the land with the disputes of the communities and their shareholders. Lawyers have grown fat from them. Not only are these fights between one shareholder and his neighbor in the same community, but there are difficulties between one community and another, in many cases limits being undefined and land unsurveyed.

To survey the land and justly divide it among the shareholders would require the herculean labor of a just and wise government and a long retinue of the appropriate employes. It would not take less than ten or fifteen years, and to enforce its decisions it must have the strength of the whole nation back of it.

The actual local Government and its Agrarian Committee are grappling now with this situation and trying to solve the problem. They believe it better to apply revolutionary methods to it and do away with this vexing question once for ever in a quick and forcible way.

Can any Single Taxer suggest an effective and practical remedy for it?

E. S. WESTRUP.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### A HINT TO THE FARMERS

San Francisco, September 24.

Farmers in the Modesto and Oakdale irrigation districts were able, under the Home Rule provision of the irrigation law, to exempt their improvements and personal property from irrigation taxes. That exemption lowers the taxes of the farmers, and raises the taxes of the speculators. That's the reason the farmers in those irrigation districts are in favor of Home Rule in taxation.

A few weeks ago an irrigation district was formed in the southern part of Shasta County, and one of the main arguments used in favor of forming the district was that the farmers could exempt their improvements and personal property from taxation for irrigation purposes.

The Amendment for Home Rule in Taxation will give all farmers in California the same power that the irrigation law gives to farmers in irrigation district. It will give the farmers of any county the right to vote taxes off their improvements and personal property—if they want to do that. How does it help a farmer to pay more taxes on fifty acres of an improved farm than a speculator pays on fifty acres of unimproved land?

CALIFORNIA LEAGUE FOR HOME RULE IN TAXATION.



### MONEY IN RECENT ELECTIONS

Washington, D. C., Sept. 24.

The Lorimer scandal shocked the nation. A Senate investigation showed that Senator Stephenson spent \$108,000 to secure his nomination at a primary election and we were again shocked. The nation is due for some more shocks. Penrose has been nominated in Pennsylvania and Roger Sullivan in Illinois.

Senator Norris has introduced a resolution demanding an immediate investigation by the Senate of the amounts spent in each of these primary elections. It is being strenuously opposed.

Vast sums but in lesser amounts are being spent all over the nation to defeat the people's candidates and to elect reactionaries. The Special Interests are determined to control the next Congress. They care nothing about a candidate's party politics so long as he is secretly or openly for them.

"But," you remind me, "we have a Federal law which prohibits corporations from contributing to campaign funds; another law which requires publicity of campaign contributions and expenditures and which prohibits a candidate for the House of Representatives from spending more than \$5,000 or a candidate for the United States Senate from spending more than \$10,000 to secure his election."

Of course we have. BUT—these laws are jokes. A "corporation" cannot contribute, but a "person" who may be connected with the corporation may spend any amount he chooses. Publicity is required of national party campaign committees operating in "two or more states," but none from state or local committees. A candidate must report the