

THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC.

A bit of news in the foreign dispatches, to the effect that Stonehenge had been bought by a public spirited man and presented to the British public, has a close relation to a recent decision of a New York court. The prehistoric temple in Salisbury plain known as Stonehenge which brings to this age a mystic message from the past was carelessly placed by its builders upon land that afterwards came into the possession of a certain Englishman who threw a barbed wire fence about it and charged visitors a shilling admission—presumably to pay for the wire, for the "owner" had done nothing else in the way of service except to "hold" it. The Society for the Preservation of Commons and Footpaths did not approve of this charge to the public for merely holding "the early Cathedral of the British race," and brought suit in the courts to have the fence removed. Twenty thousand dollars were spent by the Society, only to be told by the courts that as the monument was on the owner's land he had a right to exclude the rest of the world. A note of cheer goes to the Society for the Preservation of Commons and Footpaths from the New York courts on the right of the town of Oyster Bay, Long Island, to erect bathing houses on the beach. One Louis C. Tiffany, who owned water front property on Cold Spring Harbor, obtained from the State the right to fill in an acre and a quarter of land below high water in 1905. Suit was begun by the municipality of Oyster Bay in 1908 to establish ownership. The decision, at the end of ten years, virtually is that the filled-in land belongs to the town, and that the State had no right to dispose of it to Tiffany. The New York case does not raise the question of equity, but only of a technicality; for had Mr. Tiffany secured his title from the town, instead of from the State, it may be assumed that the courts would have given him the right to exclude all bathers from the beach. It does, however, when taken in connection with the wire enclosed monument of Stonehenge, bring forcibly to mind the injustice of denying to the public access to things that by their very nature are common property. To permit individuals to exclude the public from beaches, shores, lakes, streams, mountains, and other desirable points of nature, merely because of titles running back to early kings or governments is a travesty on justice.

WHEN A MUNICIPALITY GOES BACK ON ITS INTEREST.

A very significant illustration of the baneful influence of what one small municipality that goes back on its bond interest can have on the standing of the securities of even the province in which the municipality is located, is given in the present bond issue made in London (Eng.), by the Province of Saskatchewan, of £650,000, bearing interest at 5¾ per cent. As this was the first Canadian issue made after the cessation of hostilities, it was fully expected to be fully subscribed. But only 60 per cent. was taken up. The London Times, in commenting on this, suggested that the failure of Prince Albert (Sask.), to meet its interest charges to British investors, and which was given much publicity at the time, had its influence on the securities of the Western province not being taken up as readily as expected.

Such a hint from such a paper cannot be taken too seriously by those municipalities—happily very few—that think somewhat lightly of going back on their bond interest. What is more, such a lesson should not be lost on the Provincial authorities of Saskatchewan, for had this municipality been looked after more sharply by the municipal department, the situation might have been saved for Prince Albert, and the credit of the Province not subjected to the indignity that it was in its issues not being taken up promptly.

NOTES FROM THE PUBLIC.

The N. Y. Legislature is to be appealed to place a limit on the time that unimproved property can be held by church organizations and charitable institutions free from taxes. Jacob A. Cantor, president of the New York Tax Board, has decided to take this action after the discovery on the tax books of hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property exempt from taxes, much of it unused and constantly increasing in value. Some of the property has been held twenty-seven years, and is still unimproved and tax free.

Amos Pinchot, who argues for the creation of a Federal Business Administration for the purpose of freeing the government and the public from the evils of the profiteer, states in a letter to Chairman Kitchin, of the Ways and Means Committee that 287 of the larger business corporations in the United States made excess profits aggregating \$1,559,331,730 during the fiscal year 1917. The 1917 profits of the United States Steel Corporation were \$457,685,000; its pre-war profits were \$63,585.77. In support of his claim that the 80 per cent. tax will not crush business, Mr. Pinchot cites the increase in British trade under an 80 per cent tax. Great Britain's export trade in 1915 was £384,900,000; in 1916 it was £506,300,000; and in 1917 it was £526,000,000.

A new political group, called the Radical Council, and formed by a number of Liberal and Radical members of the British Parliament, has recently issued its manifesto. Its proposals for social reconstruction after the war include a capital levy, retention of the excess profits duty in an appropriate form, a tax on land values, reform in the assessment and collection of income tax, revision of the death duties, and above taxes to be accompanied by complete free trade, and the consequent abolition of the breakfast table duties. The Radical Council also demands "Recovery by the State of the publicly created value of land by (a) taxation of land values and the removal of rates from houses and improvements, leading up to (b) Nationalization and State control of the use of land if found to be necessary." The manifesto may be obtained from the Acting Hon. Secretary, E. W. Morton George, Glenview, North Finchley, London, N. 12.

On July 18 the Johannesburg Council, whose valuation roll shows site values £14,000,000, and improvements £17,000,000, adopted a rate (tax) of 6½d. on site values only. Thus in Johannesburg for the coming financial year the owners of land will pay £382,000 in rates, and buildings and other improvements will go entirely free. Their system is to rate on capital value.

ST. CATHARINE'S WELL.

In giving due credit to the wonderful remedial springs of Europe, we are apt to lose sight of the value of the ones nearer home. About one thousand springs of various medicinal virtues exist in America. Of one of them Hare's System of Therapeutics (1891) page 523, thus speaks: "A number of Saline Springs exist in America and Europe, very strong water of this kind being the St. Catharine's Well in Canada, which contains about 275 grains sodium chloride to the pint, as well as 135 grains calcium chloride. Its prototype in Europe is the celebrated Kreutznach Springs in Prussia, which contains about 110 grains sodium chloride (Kurbunnen)."

Other references are Encyclopaedia Britannica, Appleton's American Encyclopaedia, The Allbutts System of Medicine, etc. The Grand Trunk Railway System's trains run direct to St. Catharines, and further information can be obtained from their representatives.

Learning is not education. A man may possess a vast amount of learning and yet be a fool. Information is not education. To know how to make the right use of information is the only education.—Bruce Calvert.

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