

for a fortune on the ruin of friends rather than on the downfall of enemies.

Other crowned heads have set the example. The grand duke of Luxembourg is said to be indebted for the larger part of his fortune to the percentage paid to him by the farmers of the public gambling tables of Wiesbaden. And whatever fortune his sister, the queen of Sweden, possesses was obtained from the same source. The reigning family of Baden is reputed to have derived their large wealth from the profits received as landlords and proprietors of the tables at Baden-Baden, the most celebrated in Europe until they were abolished in 1866.

Queen Victoria's second son had been reigning duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha only six months when he decreed the establishment of a state lottery to enrich himself, a course followed by several other of the petty German sovereigns.

The business evidently pays well, and the effects of it on people who are accustomed to look to court circles for social and moral patterns are of course no factor in the calculations.

THE INHERITANCE TAX QUESTION

The supreme court of California has decided that an inheritance tax is unconstitutional because it is an extra tax. A short time ago the supreme court of Illinois held it to be constitutional. Pennsylvania has decided to assess an inheritance tax in that state, and although the last Utah Legislature rejected a proposition of that kind, the idea is likely to come up again, with a possibility of adoption. It being admitted that in many respects the poor are taxed too heavily in proportion to the rich, it is interesting to note the summing up of James A. Roberts, controller of the state of New York, who is an adept on the inheritance tax question. He shows now a vast amount of personal property in the hands of the wealthy escapes taxation in the absence of an inheritance tax, and taking the case of New York he figures out as follows, after deducting the exempted government and refunding bonds of cities, the already taxed stocks of corporations, real estate mortgages, etc.:

There is still left \$5,231,686,940 of untaxed personal property (considerably more than the entire assessed value of all New York's real estate and personal property) which, according to every principle of justice and fairness, ought to be taxed. The burden of taxation on real estate is, therefore, at least double what it should be; and a large portion of this burden falls upon our farmers, our mechanics who own their own homes, and our men of moderate means. Is this right, or is it good public policy?

MR. KING'S LAND BILL.

The bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman King of Utah, asking for a cession of public lands to this State, is calling for considerable adverse criticism on that part which provides that the State shall have ceded to it the mineral lands within its borders.

The vigor with which opposition is urged to the cession of mineral

lands especially, presents a rather peculiar phase of the situation. It is urged that to place the mineral lands of this State under the control of the people of the State would be to "blight" the mining industry in this State. In fact that sentiment is the chief burden of the outcry against the bill. At present, as in the recent past, there has been no protest against ceding agricultural lands to the State; and nobody comes forward with the accusation that because of such cession, the people of the State will be sure to take advantage of an opportunity, and "blight" the agricultural and stock industries. Would the people of this State be more unfriendly to the mining industry than to the others? It would seem to us that the accusation, that if the people of the State of Utah had control of the mineral lands within the State boundaries they would use their power to blight the mining industry, rests upon very peculiar grounds, to say the least.

We cannot concede the point that with the possession of timber, agricultural or mineral lands, the people of this State would deliberately injure or destroy either the timber, agricultural or mining interests of the State. They have shown no disposition to do so in the opportunity given in their limited experience. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that so far as matters have gone, the State has shaped its land policy for the mutual interests of the State and its inhabitants. The welfare of one is the welfare of the other. It is only fair to presume that it would be the same with mineral lands. Therefore the distrust of the people, displayed in the charge that they would discriminate in favor of a policy to injure so important an industry as that of mining, does not seem to have its force in any desire for the public welfare.

No doubt exists that the possession of public lands, mineral and otherwise, has been and is a source of immense revenue to the general government. Would it not be to the great advantage of this State to be the direct recipient of that proportion of that revenue? Would it not be to the permanent material advantage of the people of the State for Utah to have ceded to it all the public lands therein? And cannot the people of Utah, by their legally chosen representatives, be trusted to use or dispose of those lands for the mutual good of the State and its inhabitants? We are inclined to think that the State would be about as fair to all parties concerned as the general administration is now—a most excellent administration, but yet subject to grave uncertainties as to mineral lands, an illustration of this being given in the still unsettled contest relative to the Uncompahgre reservation.

As to the King bill, the News is not prepared to say it endorses it, in the absence of the full text of the measure to give it critical consideration. But it does call attention to the inconsistency of the antagonism thereto declaring that the people of this State should not be permitted to receive from the general government a grant of very great value financially, lest they should use it to their own injury.

It may be pointed out, however,

that Congressman King's bill is in line with the present governmental tendency regarding the public lands, and anticipates that which appears to be coming in the near future. The policy heretofore has been for the general government to dispose of its public land holdings direct to individual owners. But with the general distribution of state governments over the whole country and the shrinking quantity of public land, the later expediency is to apportion this land to states, to dispose of the same to settlers. This is shown clearly in the extensive grants made to this and to other states, and indicates that before long there may be only the state land offices for such business. The older commonwealths as well as those of more recent growth, seem united upon this, and Judge King's bill is merely an effort to get Utah early on the list, foreseeing what the future must bring. There is also the inclination, strongly noticeable in the other states, and shown in a pronounced manner in the Uncompahgre amendment proposition to Congress, to have the government retain title to lands not ceded to the states or already disposed of to settlers, and to make a profit therefrom by leasing the same. If this is to be done, then it would be far preferable to have the lands distributed to the various states and sold to the inhabitants thereof upon the liberal terms that have marked the disposal of public lands in the past.

ST. GEORGE, Utah,
May 18, 1897.

I notice in the DESERET EVENING News of the 13th inst. a song entitled "Fifty Years Ago," purporting to be the composition of Brother S. L. Adams of St. George. I wish to state on unequivocal authority that the entire song was manufactured from a song "Marching Through Dixie," composed by our townsman Brother Walker over twenty-five years ago; and that the first verse and the chorus, with the exception of a word or two Mr. A. has substituted, are identical with the original in my possession; also parts of the other lines are true to the old song. Now Mr. A. certainly must be aware of this flagrant piece of plagiarism, as he has sung the song many times in public and private; and as he is a blacksmith I would kindly suggest, let him that steels, steel no more. Fair play is a jewel.

With kindly feelings to S. L. A.,
OBSERVER.

[We do not understand that Brother Adams claimed the authorship of the song, but forwarded a copy to the Jubilee commission, probably without saying who the author was; but it has been commonly known as a piece of Brother "Charlie" Walker's composition, among those acquainted with that lyric poet. Brother Adams was the songster and offered to attend to that part of the Jubilee. The introduction to the item as published, and which contained the error as to authorship, was not made by the NEWS, but was furnished by the Jubilee commission bureau, which is not perfectly informed on Pioneer matters, as witness several corrections that have been made by the Pioneer correspondents of the NEWS.—ED. NEWS.]