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THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY IN AN IDEA

BY

ALLEN RIPLEY FOOTE,

Member of the American Economic Association, and of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

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THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY IN AN IDEA.*

BY ALLEN RIPLEY FOOTE,

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DEFINITIONS.

Webster defines the term "property" in part as follows:

"*Property.*—(3) The exclusive right of possessing, enjoying, and disposing of a thing; ownership; title. (4) That to which a person has a legal title, whether in his possession or not; thing owned; an estate, whether in lands, goods, or money.

"*Literary Property.*—Property which consists in written or printed compositions. The exclusive right of publication as recognized and limited by law."

INTRODUCTORY.

The avowed object of all honest anarchists, socialists, reformers of every class of opinion and degree of intelligence; the dreams of all philosophers, poets, and prophets: the teachings of every professor of ethics, morals and economics; the mission of all governments and of all religion is to cause men everywhere to understand the principles of justice, to incarnate them in their lives as a controlling motive power and force, inspiring and guiding their thoughts and actions. All efforts of the past; all agitations of to-day, all hopes for the future having as an objective point the betterment of the whole of humanity, morally, socially, and economically, may be rightly interpreted as a demand for justice. Every cause for discontent; every political issue will be permanently and satisfactorily removed or settled when all men recognize that so far as human agencies in the affairs of men are operative, justice is done. A review of the past, a careful summary of the present aspect of all public questions teaches and emphasizes one fact: *The people want justice, but they do not know how to obtain it.*

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* A lecture delivered before the Franklin Institute, November 26, 1897.

Justice is born of honesty and intelligence. *Honesty* is the image of God in the hearts of men. *Intelligence* is a condition of mind. Granting the presence of honesty in the hearts of the people, their lack of knowledge as to how to obtain justice and their failure to secure justice must be ascribed to defective intelligence. Honesty will cause all men to wish to do justice, but the degree of justice which they do will be measured by their own standard, by their conception or understanding of the principles of justice. If the action of any man is unjust, the cause of the injustice must issue either from a deficiency in honesty or a defective intelligence. As all whose opinions are worthy of consideration claim a full measure of honesty, attention need be directed only to their mental development.

Close observation will disclose the fact that in their attempts to obtain justice those who have directed the thought and energies of the people have centered attention upon efforts to formulate and enforce demands for justice, rather than upon efforts to so educate men as to cause each one to do justice, under any and all conditions, whether his action is directed towards a fellow-man, a family, a municipality, State or nation, or the universal society of humanity. The universal demand for justice can be satisfied by each man doing justice, and in no other way. The problem of how to obtain justice for all men, individually and collectively, will be completely and correctly solved by causing the actions of all men, individually and collectively, to be just. When individual action is just, collective action will be just also. Just collective action is impossible so long as collective society, large or small, is composed of men whose conception of the principles of justice is defective. It is the duty of all who study the welfare of humanity from the view point of the rights and duties of the individual or from the rights and duties of collective society, any grouping of individuals, large or small, to give the problem of how to cause every individual action to be just their most serious attention. This question once solved, all other problems for the moral and economic betterment of the people will become simple and easy of solution or cease to exist.

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THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY IN AN IDEA.

The best test for the correctness of a person's conception of the principles of justice, or of his honesty, is his willingness to recognize, and, recognizing, to give compensation for the right to property in an idea. This is true, because ideas, being the most intangible of all products of labor, are the most difficult to protect by the requirements and punishments possible to enacted law. Many persons whose moral sense of right and wrong is sufficiently clear to protect them from any desire to steal anything protected by enacted law feel no restraining influence from their conscience to retard them from taking anything not so protected and appropriating it to their own benefit without tendering compensation to its author, even when they know the author, and know he has need of a just compensation for his labor. The necessity for plainly-stated enacted laws, defining what may and what may not be freely taken for the exclusive use or enjoyment of individuals, singly or collectively, is created by the inability of many persons clearly to perceive the principles of justice, to understand their requirements, and to govern their actions in accordance therewith. Compensation is due from each individual for every intellectual benefit received, to some person or group of persons working collectively for educational, charitable, religious, or industrial economic purposes; or for the proper government of a municipality, State, or nation, or for all of humanity.

Defective moral vision causes those who are benefited by society and government to feel no rebuke of conscience when they neglect their civic duties. The most important function of society or government is the protection of individuals in their just right to life and property. The necessity for such protection is the basis of the right of governments to exact the payment of taxes for their support. This necessity, and the taxation caused by it, will become less and less arduous as enacted laws become more just and are honestly and intelligently obeyed or executed.

An idea unexpressed is in the undisputed possession of him who conceives it, but it has no tangible existence. It cannot be communicated to others without being given a form, more

or less tangible, in words or signs voiced or written. When given a tangible existence, by what rule of justice can it become, without compensation, the property of another not its author. In so far as society fails to give to an author the protection necessary to enable him to enforce his right to property in his own ideas, society permits every one to take and use them freely, without rendering compensation for them. It permits those who will to be legally unjust. In this way the interests of authors are sacrificed for the common good. A law clearly securing to every author the right to property in his ideas will not prevent any author from becoming a public benefactor. He can voluntarily relinquish his right, by deed to the government, and thus enrich all to whom his ideas are of value, and by the same act prevent others from claiming a property right in them.

THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY IN DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS.

The right to property justly adheres to the acquisitions of close observations resulting in the discovery of gems, precious metals, useful natural materials and mechanical principles; and in the invention of devices for controlling and utilizing the resources and forces of nature. In every department of thought a mind may project itself beyond the boundary of the discovered and broaden the sphere of knowledge by making clear that which had not previously been understood, or bringing to view the hitherto unknown. The right to property in ideas that lead to such results, and to the results obtained by them, is as just as the right to property in the things produced by manual labor employed to mould the idea into a concrete form that can be offered for sale as a new creation. It is the duty of society to do justice by protecting every author, discoverer, and inventor in his right to property in his ideas as well as in the products of his physical labor.

AUTHORS MUST PAY THEIR DEBTS.

While every person should be protected in the ownership of all that is justly his own, no person should be protected in the ownership of more than his own. Every useful idea, dis-

covery or invention is based upon the work of those who lived before. Every person who now makes a tool or writes a philosophical statement is assisted by the work of those who have passed to a sphere where rights to property are unknown, and also by the labor of his contemporaries. By that order of nature which sets a limit to the life of the body, the results of the work done by those who once lived, and which they once rightfully owned as their property, become the common heritage of all the living. The dead cannot own property.

Improvements, additional adaptations, new ideas and inventions, are suggested to the minds of careful observers. In this manner are induced all improvements in industry; facilities of every kind; comforts of every description; entertainments of every class, and the power more perfectly to utilize the resources and forces of nature. Out of the stock of common knowledge ideas spring. The known suggests that which may be known.

If ideas, discoveries and inventions are suggested by observation of what others have done, what is due to society from authors, discoverers, inventors, in fact, from all owners of property? If society had failed to protect the laborer in his right to own the results of his labor; if the author, discoverer or inventor had been denied an opportunity to observe existing things, to draw upon the resources and forces of nature which are the property of no one, but are a part of the common inheritance; or, if they had been debarred from all access to the stock of common knowledge, is it conceivable that the product of labor would have been saved, or that the idea, discovery, or invention would have been his?

The principles of justice operate with impartial force upon the conduct of individuals towards society, as upon the conduct of society toward individuals. The requirements of justice which confirm to each person all that is rightfully his own, require that he shall have no more than his own. More than is rightfully his own no one can have without doing an injustice to another. To do justice every person must give to society full compensation for the benefits he receives from society, not only for its protection of his right to property, but

for the assistance he obtains from existing things, from natural resources and forces, and from the stock of common knowledge. The man who causes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, and keeps both blades for himself, together with all knowledge of how he accomplished such a result, is not a benefactor of his race. His benefaction, if any, is in proportion to the division he makes with others of his extraordinary increase, and the extent to which he permits his valuable knowledge to be diffused, without compensation, through the stock of common knowledge, thus making it a free heritage of all.

The reimbursement to society, voluntarily or exacted, for benefits received, intangible or tangible, is a requirement that cannot be determined with exact justice. The human mind is not yet sufficiently endowed with the power of intelligent judgment and honest action to enable it to do complete justice under all conditions. It must be content with doing substantial justice, being guided thereto by the demands of equity.

COPYRIGHT AND PATENT LAWS.

Copyright and patent laws are framed on the principles of equity. They should give equal recognition to the rights of individuals and of society. They should divide an accruing benefit for a brief period between an author and society, and beyond that transfer the entire increment of information to the stock of common knowledge from which all may take freely. The life of an individual is brief. The life of society is continuous. It is good policy to offer a proper inducement for the desired achievement. The highest good of society, of any collective group, as of individuals, requires that it shall develop itself to the best of which it is capable. This is its right and its duty. If, by securing to an author, discoverer, or inventor of a useful idea or thing an opportunity to realize for his own a profit, during a part of his life, no matter how large, profit cannot be out of proportion to usefulness, society can stimulate all minds to do their best, it will not only enrich itself by the activity of the living, it will inherit rich endowments from those who pass beyond the jurisdiction of its enactments.

If there were, however, never a question as to the right to property in an idea, discovery or invention, there would be a necessity for copyright and patent laws, and for the system of administration founded upon them. On account of the fact that all ideas, discoveries and inventions are outgrowths of suggestions from the known, it is a common occurrence to have several persons, almost simultaneously, honestly claim to be the original and only pioneer to lead and advance in literature, science, art or industry. To make and keep correct records whereby conflicting claims so arising may be justly settled, is as important, and, if the judgment of all men were perfect, would be the only function of government in such cases. Founded and administered to do justice, society can better afford to broaden than to restrict the application and scope of its copyright and patent laws.

WHAT IS PROPERTY?

The inquiry may now be made in its broadest sense, what is property?

Property consists of all things of value which may be owned by the consent of society, given in recognition of its conception of the principles of justice, by an individual, or by any collective group. The *property quality* of things of value is created by the consent of society practically expressed through the means it employs to protect owners in their right to possess, enjoy, and dispose of that which they may legally own. I say *consent of society*, because there can be no property where there is no social consent or contract to protect anyone's right to possession.

If no one recognizes a thing as having value, no one wants to own it, therefore, no protection is required to make possession of it sure. It is not property. A thing recognized as having value, ownership of which is not confirmed by the consent of society, cannot be exchanged for other things having value. because all are permitted freely to take it, therefore no protection is granted to make possession of it sure. It is not property. Things of value, the ownership of which is not confirmed by the consent of society, are these things upon which

no labor has beeen expended. Justice requires that every laborer shall be unmolested in the possession and enjoyment of the products of his toil. In recognition of this demand, society grants protection for the right to own all things created by labor. This protection constitutes such things property.

THE BASIS OF THE RIGHT TO OWN PROPERTY.

It is now necessary to examine the basis upon which the right to own property rests.

The consent of society to the ownership of things of value is based upon its conception of the principles of justice. This conception of justice is expressed by enacted law. The divine law is the moral and the enacted law is the legal basis to all right to own property. This right is founded on the natural right of a creator to possess the products of his creation, his labor. This is the demand of justice. This right is conceded by all who honestly and intelligently demand or seek to do justice. This is the basis of the title to all property whether owned individually or collectively by two or more persons for their private use and benefit, or by associations, municipalities, States, or nations for the common use and benefit of all members, citizens or subjects.

Protection is assured by the operation of moral and physical forces. The most effective protection is given by a correct understanding of, and a desire to obey moral law. Moral law teaches honesty as a principle. Economic law enforces honesty as a practice. Man must understand and willingly obey the principles of moral law before he can understand and correctly apply the principles of economic law. When no person will permit himself to be unjust there will be no injustice. Barring the factor of knowledge, the absence of which may render one unable to determine to whom a thing of value rightly belongs, the right to property will be completely protected without the presence or the use of enacted law, or of its representative physical forces, when the moral law is correctly understood and universally obeyed.

Once, when walking in Central Park, New York, I chanced to hear a few words exchanged between two young girls who were walking near me:

"Let's pick some flowers," said one.

"Oh! I daren't," answered the other.

"Come on, the policeman won't catch us, he is around the turn in the walk behind the bushes," persisted the first.

"I daren't catch myself stealing," replied the second, as she passed on, admiring but not touching the flowers.

If the high sense of honor, the clear-sighted self-respect of that little girl controlled the actions of every person, stealing would be an unknown vice, the protection of property by physical force would be an unknown burden upon the industrious.

In proportion as self-respect is strong or weak, asserting and maintaining a high standard of honor in individuals and in society, is the right to property respected or disregarded. Regard of the right to property determines the position of an individual in the scale of moral development, from vicious brute to conscientious man. In proportion as regard of the right to property is strong or weak in individuals and in society are men civilized or brutal, and in proportion as men are civilized or brutal, do they recognize and respect the sacredness of life and property.

A clear recognition of the right to property is necessary to the protection of life. This is illustrated daily by the acts of men engaged in robbery or the wanton destruction of property. When so engaged they do not hesitate to take life to save themselves from capture. It is conceded that the right to life is valued above all other rights. It is clear that protection of the right to life and property is based on justice, and is made most effectual by a correct understanding of and disposition to apply the principles of justice. The intelligence to recognize these principles, the power to incarnate them and to make them a governing force guiding his every action, raises man above the brute and constitutes him another and a higher order of being. There can be no moral or economic government among brutes.

Whenever a change occurs in the popular conception of the principles of justice, either through a clearer understanding or a misinterpretation of moral law, and by reason of such change society withdraws its consent to the ownership of any

class of property, all things so affected cease to be property. Against the destruction of property by such a cause property owners have no defense. When a popular verdict has once declared that the right to own a certain thing or class of things shall cease, owners of such property are powerless to maintain the right to ownership even though they defend it with their lives. This fact has an epoch-making illustration in the destruction of property in slaves caused by the withdrawal of the consent of society to such ownership, voiced by the emancipation proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

LIMITATIONS ON THE RIGHT TO OWN AND USE PROPERTY.

The natural right of every person to own and use as he pleases the products of his labor, his ideas, discoveries and inventions can be fully exercised only when he is isolated. In a state of isolation there is no property. As soon as a man associates with another his natural right to do as he pleases with his own is modified by a due regard for the similar rights of others. By association society is formed. The welfare of society requires that protection to the right to property it grants for individual good shall not be used to the injury of anyone, or of society. Should it be, it is the duty of society, in defense of its welfare, to withdraw consent and thus destroy the property. The fundamental principles of justice require that all property shall be owned and used with a due regard for the similar rights of others. Rights to the ownership and use of property are not vested rights. They are not absolute. They are qualified by the principles and conditions that give them existence.

The expenses of government incurred in behalf of the protection it affords to the ownership of property must be collected from the property it protects. Government frequently exercises its sovereign power and dispossesses the owner of property, by public sale, to satisfy its claims for taxes, giving title to the buyer. Rights to property that can be thus annulled are not vested rights. They are not absolute. They are created, and may be destroyed by the consent of society.

In a final analysis it is clear that the ownership of all property is protected, not by constitutions, enacted laws or decisions of courts, but by the consent of society based on its conception of the principles of justice. Changes in the popular conception of these principles or of their proper application may cause existing constitutions, enacted laws and court decisions to be out of harmony with the popular belief as to what is just and right. Such a change will cause existing conditions to appear unjust. A people stung to the quick by a sense of injustice, believing themselves to be the victims of unjust laws, an unjust administration of laws, or of an unjust industrial, commercial or financial system, will not cease to agitate, nor ought they to cease to agitate, until every change is made that is necessary to bring the constitutions and enacted laws upon which court decisions are based into strict accord with their conceptions of the principles of justice.

Such changes are steps of progress in civilization when in the right direction. They are steps of retrogression when in the wrong direction. When they come by the peaceful processes of evolution, the new absorbs and utilizes all of good that can be found in the old with injury to none. When they come by the destructive processes of revolution the suspicions, prejudices and discontent of the people, having brewed an anger that cannot be controlled, it bursts forth in a wild fury and destroys the old in order to secure an opportunity to create a new government or an industrial system that will accord with their conceptions of justice. It is not in the power of any man or class of men permanently to prevent the oncoming of these changes. Delayed they may be. Directed they can be. No power can stop them absolutely. The life of nature finds expression in change. When changes cease, humanity and all nature will be dead. It is idle to resist a tendency to change. It is the highest wisdom to guide it in a right direction.

These truths should cause everyone to realize that all rights to property, of whatever kind, depend upon the correct moral and economic education of the people. Every property owner should realize that the protection of his right to ownership depends primarily upon a correct conception of the principles of justice by the people, not upon the use of force. When

an appeal to force is made sufficiently drastic to arouse all of the people, it will be found that millions who toil wield the balance of power, and that they cannot wield it justly when they are not guided by a correct conception of the principles of justice. A state of inaction cannot be maintained. History is repeating itself. Conditions are rapidly developing, such as lead to revolution. Men can remain free only by recognizing the correct principles of justice and properly applying them in every detail of their affairs. Happiness cannot exist without freedom. Freedom cannot live when justice is not done. The time has come when the American people must make progress by means of correct moral and economic education or by revolution.

THE ECONOMIC LAW OF LABOR AND PROPERTY.

The natural law of labor and property is founded on the principles of moral and economic law. Being a natural law it is universal in its application and binding upon all men. In discussing this subject elsewhere I have said:

"In isolation a man has undisputed possession of the surplus products of his labor. * * * The natural right of the isolated to the undisputed possession of the product of his labor and to be unrestricted in the use or disposition he may make of it cannot be enjoyed by associated men except as it is qualified by a due regard for the similar right of others. This is the foundation of the natural law of labor and property.

* * * * * * * * * *

"If, prompted by an ignorant self-interest, one man decides to take more than his just share of the joint product of himself and others, because he is stronger and has the brute power to do so, such a violation of natural moral law removes the transaction from the domain of economic science and carries it back to the domain of moral science. The brute must be taught the moral law, and have intelligence enough to understand it and honor enough to obey it before he can be dealt with as an economic factor."*

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* "The Law of Incorporated Companies, Operating Under Municipal Franchises." See chapter under the title of "The Economic Law of Labor and Property." Robert Clark Company, Cincinnati, O.

The laborer and the capitalist must yield obedience to the requirements of justice if justice is to be established. Neither can secure a permanent gain by violating the economic law and taking an unjust share of their joint products. Justice cannot permit any person to be a permanent gainer by his own acts of injustice.

THE NATURAL LAW OF JUSTICE.

The natural law of justice is superior to all constitutions, all enacted laws, all court decisions. It is uninfluenced by the opinions or actions of men. It is the only correct ideal. It is the only changeless standard. Rightly understood and obeyed it will enable all men to realize the highest attainable good. Disregarded, whether through ignorance or through vicious selfishness, it punishes with imperious and merciless exactness every step of divergence from a true course. In no age have the ablest men comprehended all there is of wisdom. In every age the toiling masses have failed to understand and to utilize all the wisdom formulated for their guidance and the betterment of their condition. Slowly and painfully they have been working their way towards the realization of higher and still higher ideals, sometimes helped and many times hindered by their trusted leaders. The entire experience of mankind confirms the correctness of the theory that man is ennobled or degraded by the truth or error contained in his beliefs. Whenever a clearer understanding of the natural law detects an error in a conception of the principles of justice, and the affairs of men are re-aligned in accordance with the requirements of the new light, civilization and human happiness make a distinct gain. Whenever a conception of the principles of justice is clouded by suspicion, prejudice or vicious selfishness, and the affairs of men are blindly aligned by false standards, civilization receives a disastrous blow. Happiness is stabbed in its heart.

In this aspect of the subject it is a solemn duty to direct attention to the fact that thousands of advocates are ceaselessly working to miseducate the people. They are poisoning the minds of the people with sinister suggestions and prejudices founded on falsehoods, to which they give currency in the

guise of facts. They are creating a sense of injustice by magnifying imaginary wrongs. They are preparing the way for a widespread destruction of property through the dissemination of false conceptions of the principles of justice. If their work is not promptly and thoroughly counteracted by correct moral and economic education, a disaster, such as the cause of civilization has not suffered since the dark ages, will come. Political development has reached a point at which choice must be made between doing the work of correctly educating the people or suffering the disaster of a revolution.

This is neither the time nor place to amplify this note of warning. But I beg to assure everyone to whom these words may come that they are written with a full knowledge of their serious import based on facts that admit of no doubting. These facts have been made possible by the activity of the dishonest and of the misinformed; and also by the apathy of those who rely upon enacted law and the use of force to protect them in the possession of that which they call their property. Unless property owners perform their civic duties far more perfectly than they have done in the past, the day will come when this reliance will fail them. Millions of workmen are being taught that the property of the wealthy has been acquired by robbery, and that, "*When a man is robbed, the way for him to get money is not to work for it but to fight for it.*" When that idea has taken possession of a sufficient number, the power of existing enacted laws to protect the right to such property will fail. The destruction of one class of property to satisfy demands not correctly based on the natural law of justice will not satisfy, it will only stimulate the anger of the misguided. A well-defined movement in a wrong direction cannot be stopped until it has gone far beyond the limits originally assigned for it by those through whose ill-judged work its inception and momentum are due. On the day when those having false conceptions of the principles of justice gain control of the government, municipal, State or national, calamity will come. The falsity or correctness of any person's conceptions may be shown by his ability or disposition to recognize the right to property in an idea. This is the kind of property most difficult to protect by law,

therefore it is the most easily stolen. A man who will steal because he safely can is honest or just only when he must be. A man who is honest or just only by compulsion has not the spirit of honesty or justice in him.

AN ECONOMIC DELUSION.

All men are endowed with equal natural rights but not with equal natural conditions or capabilities. The teaching that "All men who do their best do the same"* is an economic delusion. No one more readily recognizes differences in capabilities than honest-hearted, clear-headed men who work under the direction of others.

Whatever a person may justly claim is his by right, not by favor. Less than this no man should be permitted to demand or receive. What one cannot give in justice to himself another cannot justly take from him. Justice to self is a true measure of justice to others. The Divine command is, "*Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.*" This command requires every man to be sure that his own acts are just, rather than to be the judge of the actions of others by demanding justice for himself. No man can comply with this command without doing justice. No man can obey this command who fails to recognize the differences in natural or acquired capabilities existing between himself and others.

The history of mankind presents a panorama of the rise and fall of civilizations. Men have ever been reaching after but have never fully grasped and comprehended the great truth which teaches the two-fold character of the products of life—character and property. The greater always includes the lesser interest, yet men for ages have blindly sacrificed character for the sake of property. Every feature of the economic law of labor and property must be correctly understood and rightly obeyed before a person can develop the best possible character. Moral law is the foundation of economic law. Economic law completes moral law. One cannot be rightly observed while the other is being violated.

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*"Equality." Edward Bellamy.

All that has been said pertains to ideas that may be made tangible, imprisoned in concrete forms and offered for sale in the market place. They are of the earth. Beyond them, enveloping them, as the earth is enveloped by its atmosphere, is the realm of thought. There the society of mind exists; a society in which property is unknown. There the wise of all ages hold communion. There consent is given not to own but to freely take all that any one is capable of receiving. None can hear the conversation of the wise who cannot understand them. In that society the property values for which men so earnestly contend have no meaning. The treasures of wisdom need no guarding. They elude destruction. They increase by being shared. In the realm of the society of mind it is clearly understood that the things of greatest value are priceless. There no one will sacrifice character for property. There one would be known as a loser who should give his character, his soul, in exchange for the whole world. What infinite folly is it then for practical business men to risk an impairment of character to gain even the largest wealth anyone has ever been able to grasp. No man can be unjust to a fellow-man and wrong him out of the enjoyment of anything that is justly his without blindly sacrificing the greater for the lesser good. All so inclined should know that it is impossible for the justice of God, which overrules the affairs of men, to permit anyone to be a permanent gainer by acts of his own injustice. In the name of all who labor, justice is demanded by all who wisely, or unwisely, work for social reforms. For the welfare of all who toil with hands or brain let everyone be taught to be just. When all are just, the right to property in ideas, or in any other form, will need no guarding, no affirmation.

Law of Incorporated Companies Operating under Municipal Franchises

WHAT IS THOUGHT OF IT

(From the *Legal Intelligencer*. Review by EDWARD P. ALLINSON, Editor.)

The above work is a bulky one in three volumes. The subject is one of gravest importance. The book has been compiled with exhaustive labor and at immense expense, and is edited with great skill. It has seldom been our province to call the attention of our lay and professional readers to a work more worthy of their careful study, whether as lawyers or citizens. In speaking thus warmly we desire, however, to be credited with deliberately weighing all that we say, and we conclude our exordium by reference to the work itself as vindicating our claim that "this we are ready to verify."

This book ought to receive attention, not only from judges and lawyers, but from officers and shareholders of the public service corporations of every kind, from bankers and brokers, from the officers of State and municipal governments, and from members of the State legislatures and municipal councils. Every city and State could well afford to buy a copy for every member of the legislature and councils, if they could have any assurance that such members could be induced to read the first 258 pages and the chapter on their respective State. The book is so clearly written that even the average member could not fail to get far more than one new idea on a subject upon which he is called almost daily to help legislate. A knowledge of underlying principles, such as members must acquire from a study of this work, would go far to save the public from much crude and costly legislation. It might not be amiss to amend the oath of office so as to include an affirmation that the member elect has read the first 258 pages of Foote on the Law of Incorporated Companies.

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Law of Incorporated Companies Operating under Municipal Franchises

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