

000, local currency, from sales of opium in the colony. [See vol. xvi, p. 805.]

PRESS OPINIONS

Reversing the Dartmouth College Decision.

Dubuque (Ia.), Telegraph-Herald, December 8.—Ever since it rendered the decision in the Dartmouth College case, a decision that unduly exalted the rights of private property, the Supreme Court of the United States has been modifying its position until now, in a case from Kentucky, it has decided that rights conferred by charter are not absolutely irrevocable. In the original charter of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, granted in 1850, maximum freight rates were fixed. For many years the company carried at special rates to and from points within the state barley, malt, corn, rye and other raw material for distilleries. Then it raised charges on these commodities to standard rates. The latter were less than the maximum rates authorized by the charter and, when the State Railroad Commission directed the company to return to the still lower rates, the company pleaded its charter rights. Justice Hughes says in the deciding opinion in the case that, notwithstanding the contention of the irrevocability of a charter, the repealability of charters has been frequently asserted and the contention sustained by the Supreme Court. The Justice also held that "a statute permitting the State Railroad Commission to fix rates potentially repealed that part of the charter which named rates." Unless we mistake the meaning of the court, this decision means that notwithstanding charter rights a corporation may enjoy, with respect to rates these rights may be modified by legislative enactment. This conclusion being warranted, the decision marks a long step forward and puts it within the power of the generation of today to correct injustices imposed upon them by preceding legislatures, and covered in the term, "vested rights."



Have Good Cause to Rebel.

Cleveland (O.), Press, December 8.—Without land, water and air, man couldn't live. Whoever can corner one of these gifts of nature will have humanity at his mercy. The air is free. Private corners on water, once common, are fast ceasing as communities learn to own their own water supply. But land remains largely in private ownership, often with startling results. . . . In Mexico 11,000 landlords own 44 per cent of all the land. Forty-two per cent of all the property in Mexico is owned in the United States, and much in England and Germany. The working masses in Mexico own less than a fifth of the land and much less than a fifth of the other property. In other words, they are disinherited. In the country of their birth, where they and their children must live, they must pay rent for the means of living and are without voice in determining what the rent shall be. . . . In the state of Morelos, before Zapata raised the standard of revolt, there were 28 landlords and 200,000 tenants. Today there are approximately 200,000 landlords and no tenants. The

peons have simply swept the land monopolists out of the way and, by the right of superior numbers and strength, have taken over the land themselves. It is clear that what is happening in Mexico is fundamentally an instinctive refusal of the workers to be pushed off the earth.



Squinting Toward Singletax.

Saturday Evening Post, November 1.—Assessed valuation of real estate in New York increased this year by one hundred and sixty-eight million dollars, but of this increase one hundred and forty million dollars was due to added improvements—that is, to new buildings—and that addition was taxed at the same rate as the land itself. In Manhattan the value of land alone, exclusive of new buildings, increased seventeen million dollars. In Brooklyn there was an increase of twenty-six million dollars, due wholly to new buildings which numbered nearly twenty-four hundred—showing that they were mostly comparatively small, inexpensive residences in the outlying portions of the borough. A great many of them, we may safely assume, were homes built by persons of modest means. Now the twenty-six millions of value that was created in Brooklyn by the effort of men was taxed at substantially the same rate as the seventeen millions that was created for the landlords in Manhattan with no effort or abstinence whatever on their part. Certainly that's no way to tax. Here are ten vacant lots worth a thousand dollars apiece, and the tax rate, say, is two per cent. Nine men buy a lot each and build homes costing five thousand dollars apiece. That improvement makes each of the lots worth three hundred dollars more. The improvers are taxed a hundred and twenty-six dollars each and the non-improver, who has had three hundred dollars' value given to him, is taxed twenty-six dollars. City real estate taxes must be overhauled.



Anti-Imperialist League's Good Work.

Christian Science Monitor (Boston), December 10.—There is ample evidence in the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Anti-Imperialist League, held this week in Boston, that its members regard their purpose as a continuing one with its possibility of constant application to national policies. It is neither a lost cause nor one fully accomplished. . . . In any fair estimate of the changes in prevailing opinion, the stand taken by this group of men in 1898 must be seen to have come to be essentially the attitude of the American people. The demand it then made for the establishment of the independence of the Philippines, winning as it did denunciation as disloyalty, has come to be, we judge, the demand of the people of the country. The doctrine of benevolent assimilation is no longer preached and the policy of holding distant islands either as subject or dependent is not now justified on any of those humanitarian, military or financial grounds which were at first curiously mixed in the defense of the new venture. The violent difference over the independence of the Philippines has been modified to a tempered discussion of the time when it shall be accorded. . . . So long, however, as the soberer thought