

system is the most democratic institution in the world's greatest democracy, and that we must keep it so.

S. D.



Sullivan's Opposition to Conservation.

When Sherman and Sullivan condemn Raymond Robins' singletax views they necessarily denounce the principle underlying the conservation policy of the administration, as exemplified in the Alaska coal land leasing law. Yet Sullivan claims to stand for Wilson's policies! If Sherman and Sullivan are sincere in what they say about the Singletax, they cannot consistently support Wilson's conservation program—the most important of Wilson policies yet to be carried out.

S. D.



Significance of New Alaska Law.

At least a partial recognition has been given by Congress to the principle that the rental value of land belongs in the public treasury. Such recognition was involved in the bill that has just become a law providing for leasing of Alaska coal lands. The bill saves these resources for the people. A proper carrying out of its terms will save Alaska from such conditions as now disgrace southern Colorado, and will free Alaska coal consumers from monopolistic extortion. This is a policy that must not stop with one kind of natural resources in an isolated section of the country. It must be extended to all lands still remaining under federal control, and the States must supplement the policy by applying land value taxation to the tracts that have passed into the hands of private monopolists.

S. D.



Free Trade and the Sugar Industry.

Describing business and labor conditions in the English islands of the Lesser Antilles, a writer in the Chicago Herald of October 10, says:

The days of easy fortunes for the few passed with the abolition of slavery. Finding life easy in them the emancipated took it so. The sugar industry might have been reorganized on a wage basis in time, but French and German chemists did tricks with beets, which, with what was perhaps an unduly logical consistency in "free trade" at London, curtailed their market. Since then they have offered little scope to exploiting enterprise, and the sugar "estates" have largely been divided among what is called "a peasant proprietary." Their people are not unprosperous, but their prosperity is of the kind that the average American would find petty and dull.

In other words, free trade, supplementing the abolition of chattel slavery, resulted in breaking up of the big estates, a wider distribution of land,

and the creation of a condition among the workers described as "not unprosperous." Would not such conditions in the sugar districts of Louisiana be a great improvement over those prevailing under a sugar tariff, even though the prosperity should be "of the kind that the average American would find petty and dull?"

S. D.



Missouri's Danger.

The Kansas City Citizen, owned by Judge Wallace, assures its readers that in case of adoption of the pending so-called anti-Singletax amendment—designed to cripple the Initiative and Referendum—no county clerk in the State will be dishonest enough to take advantage of the opportunity, given him thereby, to fraudulently hold up any measure. Nothing is more certain than that, should the amendment carry, Judge Wallace's assurance will soon be proven false. Singletaxers who would welcome an opportunity to expose the many misrepresentations made by Wallace may feel tempted on this account to vote for the amendment. But the injury it will do the State will be too serious to be compensated for even by the expose of one of the plutocratic agents who have urged Missourians to sacrifice their rights. So the temptation had better be put aside. Wallace's misrepresentations will sooner or later be made clear to the voters anyway.

S. D.



British Criticism.

Nothing could give greater assurance of the strength of popular government in Great Britain than the freedom with which everybody criticises the men in power. Members of Parliament feel themselves at liberty to abuse the prime minister, or any other member of the cabinet, with as much freedom as we dissect the motives of a political candidate. Mr. Carson, while supporting the Government in the present war, boldly says that he will at its conclusion call together the provisional government of Ulster to repeal the Irish Home Rule bill. Professional Irish agitators hold public meetings to oppose enlistments in the army. And the press nags the Government for everything, from the censorship of war news to the conduct of the campaign in the field. Yet the march of affairs continues as though no opposition had been offered. Three months ago a superficial observer might have imagined that the world-encircling empire was on the point of dissolution; and there is reason to suspect that certain European statesmen were betrayed into beginning hostilities because of this appearance of national discord. But

no sooner had war been declared than from every quarter of Britain's vast dominions came assurances of allegiance and offers of assistance. Criticism of the Government continued as before, but a united front was presented to the enemy. It was not, indeed, unlike the Englishman's habitual practice for Sir Edward Carson to urge the Ulster volunteers to enlist, and at the same moment to promise he would lead them in rebellion at the conclusion of the war.



It is in this freedom of expression that lies England's strength. Her citizens speak freely whatever comes to mind and this very act of criticism removes the desire for action. What in some countries would be considered treason, is there looked upon as the exercise of an inalienable right; and the disturbing idea that would, if denied verbal expression, lead to armed resistance, comes into the open, where free discussion brings mutual understanding. Herein lies wisdom for this country. A part of our people are too ready to look upon the freest criticism as likely to lead to violence, whereas the very reverse is true. It is impossible to stop a man's thought without destroying him, and as long as he thinks his thought will find expression, if not openly then secretly. If the expression be given openly it will meet the criticism of its ablest opponents. If the idea be erroneous its critics will sooner or later demonstrate the fact. If the idea be sound, its advocates will ultimately prove it, and it will prevail. But if the idea be prohibited public expression, it will pass secretly from one to another, and many persons, fascinated by the charm of secrecy, and denied the restraint of adequate criticism, will be led into wrongful action. If an idea could be destroyed, as a noxious weed, or a dangerous animal, there might be some excuse for attempting censorship; but since that is impossible the attempt is altogether foolish. It is not only foolish, but dangerous. To proclaim the right of censorship is to strike at the very root of popular government, for it is nothing less than the assumption that the people are incapable of individual judgment; and without the freest of individual judgment there can be no permanency of popular institutions.

S. C.



The Cost of Preparedness.

From 1895 to the present year France has spent, according to the Statesman's Year Book, on her army and navy the sum of \$4,533,520,998. This includes no expenditure for the present war.

During the same period Germany spent \$4,600,862,042. Figures are not at hand to show the amount spent by each between the close of the Franco-Prussian war and 1895. These will probably bring the total of military expenditures from the end of the last war to the beginning of the present one to approximately ten billion dollars for each nation. The German people were told that France contemplated revenge and therefore they must keep prepared. The French people were urged to prepare to retake Alsace and Lorraine and to be ready in case of another attack by Germany. And what is the net result? A war in which the casualties on each side are figured in the hundreds of thousands; in which the destruction of property is appalling; in which industry and trade have been disorganized and crippled; and in which frightful misery of women, children and other non-combatants must far exceed injury done to the actual fighters. And the end is not yet. Such is the fruit of militarism, of the fallacy that in time of peace we must prepare for war.



It is evident enough that the war indemnity secured from France in 1871, together with the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, has proven a loss to Germany. She has lost far more in preparations to avert revenge for her harshness than was secured from her defeated antagonist. And France would be better off today had she devoted to peaceful purposes the vast sums wasted in preparing for war. The victor in the present struggle cannot possibly gain from a vanquished opponent more than a small part of what the victory has cost, and, should neither side profit by experience, another period of waste must set in with the possibility of another cataclysm.



It is not France and Germany alone that have need of pondering over these facts. With our own militarists urging us to ignore experience and imitate Franco-German folly it would be well to reflect on the showing that has been made.

S. D.



Like Causes Produce Like Effects.

Military rule is the same despotic tyranny in Germany as it is in West Virginia, Colorado, Russia and Montana. The following notice sent to subscribers of *The Vorwarts*, the leading Socialist paper of Berlin, speaks for itself:

The Military authority of the Marken (District of