

constitutional rights of American citizens in Colorado be trusted to protect the rights of American citizens in Mexico? How dependable is such an army in case even of foreign invasion? All the arguments of militarists are overthrown by the disclosures of the use actually made of soldiers in time of peace. That is an existing evil of the present time, while danger of foreign war is nothing more than a possibility of the future. S. D.



Maintaining Our Dignity.

When General Carranza, head of the Constitutionalists in Mexico, made his impudent answer to this country regarding the Benton affair, two courses lay open to us: We could throw an army into Mexico to chastise him; or we could wait a few days till he had time to see himself as others saw him. The first course would have brought war, with all its attendant evils; the second, the flaming of the Yellow Press, and the braying of the Little Congressmen. A war would have lasted months, perhaps years; the second thought of the general who takes himself too seriously required only a few days. And justice is as likely to be meted out under the present accord between Carranza and the Washington Administration as it would have been at the end of a war.

S. C.



"Our" Ships and Panama Tolls.

The argument against exemption of American coasting ships from Panama tolls is as follows: "It is our canal and therefore our ships should go through free." Congressmen who use this argument are well aware that the ships are not "ours," but the private property of certain corporations. They know that to exempt these ships is to give these private corporations free use of public property. Consequently the use of the argument quoted is rank misrepresentation. How fit for their positions are the congressmen who use it?

S. D.



CAN WE ELIMINATE THE CAPITALIST?

Exception is taken by a correspondent to a statement in *The Public* "that Socialists hold that the antagonism between Labor and Capital is of the same nature as that between Labor and Land." The critic says in behalf of the Socialists:

"The antagonism is between Labor and Capitalists. They hold that the Capitalist as such is

no more necessary for the production of wealth than the land owner is for the existence of land. Both are parasites pure and simple. Nor would Socialists eliminate Capital. On the contrary, they would enormously increase Capital, but would eliminate the useless Capitalists."

Had the correspondent interpreted the term "land" as he did the term "capital," there would have been no confusion as to the meaning. As the former term referred to landlordism, so the latter term referred to capitalism.

Singletaxers and Socialists have this in common: They would set up such a system of producing and distributing wealth that the laborer would have the full product of his toil. To accomplish this end the Singletaxer says it is necessary to abolish landlordism, and all forms of legal privilege or monopoly. Socialists insist that in addition to this, capitalism also must be destroyed, because "the capitalist as such is no more necessary for the production of wealth than the landowner is for the existence of land." But the Singletaxer holds that the capitalist, when stripped of all forms of legal privilege, including lands, franchises, patents, and similar legal monopolies, is a legitimate factor in production, and is entitled to a share in the joint product.

Here is where issue is joined. Is this a real difference or an apparent difference? Is the claim of the Socialist valid that the capitalist—that is, the mere owner of the tools used in production—is useless, or is it a confusion of terms? Land, man, and tools are facts. Their relations to each other in the production of wealth are absolute. Applying certain names to these relations no more changes the facts, than would altering the definitions of gravity and chemical affinity change the laws of physics.



If it be true that the capitalist, as a capitalist, performs no useful function, then he should be abolished along with the landlord. Strip the capitalist of the powers that are not capital, of land, of franchises, of patents, in a word, of all forms of special privilege, and he stands forth as the owner of buildings, machinery, and the appliances used in the production of wealth, in short, the tools of industry. As the owner of the tools of industry he assembles them in certain places and employs laborers to use them in turning out wealth, which is divided between himself and the operatives. The Socialist protests that the capitalist is unnecessary, that the state—and by "state" is meant whatever political unit society may form itself into—can do all that the capitalist does, and so leave in the workmen's hands the

share of the product that goes to the capitalist. Is this a legitimate deduction?

To simplify the problem, let it be granted that the Socialist state is in operation; that the state owns the tools as well as the land; and that the whole product goes to labor. It becomes necessary to engage in some new form of production, say, the making of aeroplanes. A building is erected, and the machinery, tools, and appliances required for that form of production are made. Instead of sharing the product with the Wright brothers, as at present, the laborers retain it all. But it is evident that such part of the labor as is devoted to putting up the factory, and making and installing the machinery, will be producing no food, clothing, or shelter. The workmen so employed will have to be supported during this period by the labor of the whole community, and to that extent will lessen the share of all labor.

But the making of the aeroplanes is not simply a question of putting up one factory, and constructing one set of machinery, and turning out perfect machines from the start. The waste must be considered. A number of buildings may have to be erected before the best form is found. And the machinery in the building must be changed and re-built many times. The first aeroplanes are failures. So are the next, and the next, and the next. Many persons become discouraged, and declare it is all foolishness. Flying is impossible. The conservatives object to supporting the labor engaged in such a mad enterprise, and carry the election against the administration. The factory is closed, and the men set at useful employment. But the progressives have faith in flying machines, and agitate until they win an election. New factories and new machinery are constructed, and the experiments are renewed. This may extend over many years. Elections may be lost and won on the question of whether or not labor shall be expended in this manner. Finally, success comes. A practical machine is turned out, and society begins to enjoy the product of its toil.



But what of all the labor that has been expended in the preparatory work? Must not that all be paid by the people? Was not every day's labor expended up to the time of turning out the successful aeroplane wasted? Suppose some man who had done his own experimenting could have presented complete plans for the making of practical aeroplanes; could not the community have paid him liberally, and still have been the gainer? And even with working plans there would still have been the dead labor that went into the con-

struction of building and machinery, as well as its up-keep after it had been constructed.

Contrasted with this we have the Wright brothers, and many other daring geniuses, devoting years to the solution of the problem of aeronavigation. A vast amount of labor and material was consumed before the practical machine was found. And that lavish expenditure of labor and material continues, and will continue, till the perfect machine is made. This labor of hand and brain had to be directed, either by a capitalist or by the state. If by the state, the men would have had to be supported in unproductive labor, and it would have been necessary to assign or elect men to superintend the work. Is there any one so mad as to claim that any system of elections would have chosen better men than the Wrights? Is the record of any city council or state legislature such as would warrant the belief that the Wrights would have been chosen to conduct the experimental work? Or even had it happened by any remote chance that they had been selected to carry on the work, would they, harassed by meddling superiors afraid of losing the next election, and censured by an impatient public, have worked with the same singleness of purpose?



What, then, would be the gain to society by adopting the socialistic scheme? The tools must be made by labor, whether under state or individual supervision; and the makers of the tools must be supported by other labor, under whichever system they live. The making of the tools and their use must be under supervision of superintendents, either state or individual. Who will contend that state superintendence will be as efficient as individual superintendence? Much has been said of late in praise of Colonel Goethals for his splendid work on the Panama Canal. But is not the very fact of this extravagant praise a sad commentary on general inefficiency in government work? Many thousands of men have been engaged on the Panama Canal; two are eagerly sought to take charge of other work.

But, the Socialist protests, think of the wealth that goes to the capitalist; it is out of all proportion to the service rendered. Is it out of proportion? First, take from the capitalist the rent collected for the use of land, and the tribute from franchises, and other legal monopolies—for these would be turned into the public till under the Singletax—and his income will be sadly shrunken. If the amount left still looks too large for wages of superintendence, let it be remembered that the return to the capitalist also includes insurance.

Not every tool made produces wealth. As the aeroplane was preceded by a great amount of waste, so all industry involves waste. Many millions of dollars worth of labor and material were lost in attempting to dig tunnels under the Hudson River before the feat was accomplished. If the total cost of all the failures were added to the cost of the successful tunnel, and a profit figured on that basis, the public would be up in arms about it. Yet had all those attempts been made by the city of New York, the whole cost would have been borne by the people.



The capitalist, in so far as he is a monopolist, is able under present conditions to collect inordinate and unearned charges from his fellows. But stripped of monopolistic privileges—and the Single tax will strip him—his charges will merely be sufficient to keep him in the business. For with business free, all men, individually or collectively, can enter, and the gain will be reduced to just compensation.

Certain activities, such as police service, and the maintenance of highways, are social, and must be performed by the government, even though it be done at a higher cost than competitive service. But these necessary government functions are kept somewhat within the bounds of reason by the fact that the great mass of human activities are on a competitive basis, and serve as a guide, standard, and corrective. Remove that corrective, make all business public, destroy individual initiative, and we shall quickly drift into industrial chaos.

The laws of social being are as inexorable as the laws of physical being. All life is a contest, a struggle, a competition. No human enactment can repeal or suspend the law; society would perish if the law were suspended. The one thing to do is to remove the man-made obstructions to the free play of the law.

s. c.



NATURAL LAW IN THE ECONOMIC WORLD.

PART ONE.

That there are natural laws in the economic world having the qualities of causation and effect as have laws in other spheres of physical or human activity, approaches almost the announcement of a new discovery. But so much as this cannot be claimed for it, since many writers on political economy have recognized it in a more or less perplexed way among those muddlements of artificial

explanations which have so long discredited the science. Confronted with systems built up by legislative enactment, which bore evils which other legislative enactments were intended to cure but which instead called into being other evil conditions, political economists stood perplexed before the intricacies of the problem. Starting out as defenders of one or other of these systems, they could not, even if they would, argue for the existence of natural laws. And this is the explanation why political economy is not only "the dismal science," but why every teacher is a law unto himself.

What could the protectionist know of the laws of trade? The Socialist of the laws of distribution? The defenders of the general property tax of those laws of incidence which point to a true system of taxation? The trades unionist (or those of his class who look no further) of the law of wages? or the advocate of artificial co-operation (looked upon as a final solution of the problem) of those natural laws of co-operation, so powerful and beneficent when left unhindered? In short, what could the advocates of artificial systems know of the natural ones? They were like men building with infinite and laborious pains a dividing and opaque wall between themselves and the outer world, in which all that went on beyond was screened from observation. In this way they were compelled to account for phenomena observed in accordance with their artificial laws, under the rule of which effects could be made to answer readily enough to the dozen or so assigned causes if they were shifted often enough, and in the light of which theories of wonderful ingenuity, infinite in number, seemed all equally plausible.



It has often been pointed out that the discovery of natural laws has not usually been made by men engaged in the practical affairs of life, but on the contrary by those whose investigations have for the most part been confined to library and cloistered study. These sources of inspiration are often referred to in terms of depreciation by those who wish to discredit the results of such investigations. The great majority of the unthinking assume that the conclusions of the theoretical student are of lesser value than those drawn from experience by the practical man. Yet it was such a man as Adam Smith who laid down the laws of trade for the business world.

Not only is it not remarkable that the economic laws of society should first reveal themselves to the student removed from the close touch of prevailing habits and customs, but it is inevitable