

In a few years from now, after the public lands have passed into private hands, and after the government road, by making the land accessible, has increased its value, the question of taxing that unearned increment into the public treasury will again come up. Then shall we hear repeated the same old excuse: "While it might have been well enough to levy a tax on land values had we started that way it must be evident that since we began as we did it would be unjust now to make the change." It is easy for some people to do justice at any time save when the opportunity offers.

s. c.



Trespassing on the Earth.

A press dispatch of March 20 tells of the arrest in Los Angeles of fifty unemployed men "charged with having violated an ordinance prohibiting encampment on public land." Encampment on private land without permission of the owner is, of course prohibited also. Where, then, under the laws of California, may a landless, moneyless man stay—not by sufferance, but as a matter of right? Any place at all outside of a jail or almshouse? Moreover, is not the situation the same in all other states?

s. d.



Whom the I. W. W. Imitates.

Offers of jobs were reported turned down by some unemployed Industrial Workers of the World in New York City. The offered jobs paid lower wages than they considered their labor worth. They had appraised their value at three dollars a day. Until they could get their price they decided not to sell their services. Were they wrong? Before one decides let him consider this: Some owners of unused lots in New York City were offered considerable sums to permit labor and capital to be employed on these lots. They refused because the price offered was less than what they thought they should have. Were they wrong? In both cases there was withholding from use for a price. The Industrial Workers voluntarily withheld their own labor. The vacant lot owners withheld the labor of others anxious to work. Each unemployed labor speculator withheld the labor of but one man. Each vacant lot speculator withheld the labor of many men, to say nothing of the capital he kept from productivity. If the public good requires suppression of the industrial workers, does it not require still more the suppression of land speculation? If there is nothing harmful in holding vacant lots out of use, then what is there objectionable in holding one's

own labor out of use? Is not the land speculator far more injurious economically than the mere labor speculator? Why suppress the small offender and let the greater one flourish?

s. d.



One of the Advantages of Home Rule.

The federal form of government, and the principle of home rule, have seldom appeared to better advantage than during the present search for an ideal system of taxation. It is not necessary, in order to test new methods and theories, to submit the whole nation to the hazard of experiment, nor even a whole state. By the simple plan of home rule, or local option, any city may determine for itself the correctness of a general principle without disturbing other cities. This is a great labor-saving device; for while it takes a vast amount of agitation to convince the nation, a comparatively small amount suffices to capture a city. And even when the nation as a whole does adopt a general policy, there are often localities that are so determined in their opposition as to bring about conditions that resemble those of Ulster and Irish Home Rule.



Certain men and newspapers in New York City are at present making much ado over the proposition to effect a gradual reduction in the tax on improvements, and a corresponding increase in the tax on land values. Although the bill for this purpose reduces the tax on improvements only ten per cent a year, and stops when the reduction reaches fifty per cent, it has aroused bitter opposition from the landed interests. That is their privilege. It illustrates the beauties of local self-government. Retention of present methods is New York's right. Pittsburgh, however, looks upon the matter differently, and has already entered upon a course of gradually shifting taxes from improvements to land values. Other cities, doubtless, will follow the example of the Pennsylvania city. Philadelphia or Boston may adopt the idea; and each is a live competitor of the great metropolis.



If New York finds that she can tax capital while other cities do not, and is still able to maintain her prestige, well and good. But if she finds as the result of experience that her capital begins to slip away to more favorable locations, it will not require an invading army to compel her to adopt the same system. It is possible that the people of New York have so little understanding of economic truths as to be stampeded by the cries of

the real-estate men, and so defeat the pending Her-
rick-Schaap bill; but they cannot stop the work in
Pittsburgh, or Houston, or Pueblo, or any of the
host of cities that are on the point of trying the
experiment of untaxing industry. And though the
defeat of this bill at Albany may hold New York
City a little longer in bondage, the triumph of the
principle elsewhere will in time sweep away all
opposition.

S. C.



Hearstism Unsafe for Senators.

The latest innovation of President Wilson's is
calling to account the congressional buncombe
spouter who quotes jingo organ statements as facts.
His first victim is Senator Jones of Washington
who voiced the usual misrepresentation of the
President's Panama policy, that it was the result
of a deal with the British Ambassador. Senator
Jones further appealed to prejudice by saying that
a plan to recompense holders of confederate bonds
was also involved. Usually such demagogic utter-
ances are treated with deserved contempt, and Sen-
ator Jones probably expected similar treatment of
his own remarks. He was disagreeably surprised
on being requested by the President to name his
authority for his statements. He had to admit that
he had none. He had only taken for granted the
word of newspaper gossips, and he was forced to
confess openly in the Senate the true nature of his
statements.



What a lucky thing it is for William Randolph
Hearst that he is not now a member of Congress.
President Wilson might keep him busy each day
denying assertions made in his papers and
apologizing for them.

S. D.



**Should We Commit More Criminal Aggres-
sion?**

A summing up of all the arguments advanced
in behalf of a policy of criminal aggression against
Mexico and a complete refutation thereof has been
presented by Professor William E. Dodd of the
Department of History of Chicago University.
These were contained in a letter to the Chicago
Tribune answering an editorial in the issue of
March 16. The last two paragraphs were not pub-
lished. It follows:

Editor of the Tribune, Sir:

In the last Monday's edition of The Tribune you
pronounce the Wilson policy in Mexico a failure and
recommend the annexation of that distracted coun-
try to the United States. Some people have already
been influenced by this drastic proposition, possibly
without thinking of the consequences.

If Wilson has failed who has suffered? The inter-
ests of the great majority of the people of this coun-
try are bound up with peace. If war comes it will
cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and, what is
more important, many thousands of lives. The peo-
ple would have to bear this heavy cost. But who
would profit? Some hundreds of American residents
of Mexico who refuse to heed the warning of their
country, and leave their possessions until the war is
over, and some thousands of others who hold prop-
erty in that country.

Does the Tribune intend to lead the hundred mil-
lion people at home into a war, the end of which no
man can predict, in order to take care of such a
minority or of the property of a few thousand citi-
zens?

What would likely be the outcome? At enormous
cost we would annex and pacify Mexico. But what
would be our status? In Europe we should have no
friend and in South America, where Messrs. Bryan,
Roosevelt and Root have been "courting" favor ar-
dently these ten years past, we should have bitter
enemies. Why throw away all that has been done in
South America and lose a commerce that counts in
hundreds of millions per year?

From the purely economic standpoint, we should
be exceedingly foolish to follow such a course. But
there are reasons of civilization, as the Tribune in-
sists. Possibly; still we have none too good a record
in matters of this kind. There are some who insist
that more people meet violent deaths each year in
our country than have been killed in Mexico since
the overthrow of Diaz. Besides, it is not a question
of good government but of national existence. Have
not the Mexicans a right to bad government? If
not, have we any right to deprive them of their ex-
istence in order to improve their manner of living?

Is it not best to support the President, as the
Tribune has been supporting him during the last
year, in his purpose to give the Mexicans every op-
portunity to settle their difficulties in their own
way? For, is not Wilson serving the greatest num-
ber faithfully in his waiting policy? If he is doing
this, what more can we ask? Mexico's sins are not
our sins, for which we may be duly thankful. Be-
sides, the United States has a higher mission than
the despoiling of her neighbors.

WILLIAM E. DODD.



There are, in short, the same reasons against
intervention in Mexico as should have withheld us
from the overthrow of the Philippine Republic.
Criminal aggression is always indefensible.

S. D.



Why a Standing Army?

A standing army may be depended on to pro-
tect a government as long as privileged interests
control. But should the government become
progressive and meet with violent opposition from
Privilege then the fidelity of the army becomes
open to question. See recent events in Ireland.

S. D.