

for such peasant holdings as were gained in France by the Revolution, in Germany by the reforms of Stein and Hardenberg, in Ireland by recent land bills and in the Philippine Islands in consequence of laws passed since the American occupation. Merely including the contending elements of Mexico in a conference which aims to settle the present war, affords the best ground of hope for settling this paramount economic question. If the United States makes war on Mexico, the burden of it will fall most heavily on the disinherited peasants. We shall slaughter many, starve many and crush all by unendurable taxation. If no obstacle to a conference is interposed it may be possible to avoid foreign war, to end civil war and to effect a reform of land tenure which will make the Mexican peasantry for the first time really free and place them on a plane of comfort such as they have never enjoyed since the Spanish conquest. This will lay the foundation for a stable and constitutional government. Such a result would be an achievement wholly worthy of an administration which has desired only the welfare of our sister republic and has constantly striven for the maintenance of peace on any honorable and just terms.



A reform of land tenure will not bring peace if it does no more than substitute peasant proprietorship as it exists in France, for the present hacienda system. Such a change would increase the number of landholders, but it would still leave the greater number of Mexican peons landless, and all experience shows that the lot of the landless, when exploited by small landlords, is far worse than when exploited by a big landlord. The reform to be effective in establishing permanent peace must recognize the inalienable right of all to the use of the land.

S. D.



A New Kind of Real Estate Advertisement.

It is not very many years since well-meaning citizens were predicting that the first attempt to apply the Singletax would be met by the farmers with guns in their hands. But so far is this from being true that many rural communities have applied a modified form of the Singletax; and it has proven itself so popular among farmers that it is now being advertised as a means of attracting settlers. The Oakdale and the Modesto Irrigation districts of California are sending out printed matter boasting of the fact that the irrigation tax falls upon the land only, and urging people who are seeking homes to settle there because they do not "tax houses, barns, cattle, personal property or improvements or crops on the land for irrigation purposes." Nor is this statement issued by some rascally malcontent who, too lazy to acquire property of his own, seeks by this means to enrich himself by taking from those who are more industrious

and frugal; but on the contrary it is signed by the president and the trustees of the city of Oakdale, by the president and the directors of the Oakdale Irrigation District, and by the officers of the various public bodies, including bankers and editors. No hint is given of danger from irate land owners. Rather do they boast of the contentment of those already there, and urge their system of taxation as a reason why others should come.



This illustrates anew the peculiar merit that lies in the practicability of the Singletax. Not only is it absolutely just, but it is ideally workable. If the government were to pass a law confiscating all the land now in private hands there doubtless would be armed resistance. But if personal property be exempted from taxes, who is going to take up arms to resist? If homes be exempted, or factories, or any other improvements, at what point will the land owner meet the tax collector with a gun? Clearly at no point. Each step will commend itself and give assurance of the wisdom of the next step, up to the disappearance of the last vestige of Privilege. It should not be inferred from this that all citizens will be equally pleased with the introduction of the Singletax. Speculators who now thrive on the industry of others will be disappointed; but few of them will be willing to confess their cupidity by protracted opposition. Rather will they be disposed to rejoice in the prosperity of all.

S. C.



A Better Way.

To end the southern Colorado trouble Congressman Bryan of Washington has introduced a bill for condemnation and purchase by the Federal Government of a controlling interest in the mines. That is a clumsy and unscientific way of mending the matter, although it may be the only one within the power of Congress to apply. But the people of Colorado can settle the question more cheaply and effectively by applying the Singletax. Had Colorado adopted the entering wedge to that measure in 1902, when the question was before the voters, there would by this time have been no monopoly of natural resources within the State. But it is never too late to mend. Now is a good time for the voters to correct the error they made when they allowed the Bucklin proposal of 1902 to be counted out.

S. D.



Senator Penrose and the Singletax.

No outright declaration was needed to let it be

known that Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania is opposed to the Singletax. He could not otherwise be the open and faithful adherent of monopoly his Senatorial record shows him to be. But his argument on the question is none the less interesting. Speaking at Pittsburgh, on April 27, he said: "The advocate of the Singletax would have the community control the increments to real estate, but he gives the holder of real estate no indemnity for his long period of anxious and often ruinous waiting, or in the event of deterioration and depression of value due to changed conditions in locality." Just what the Senator means by "increments to real estate" and what he means by "community control" of them he does not explain. Real estate consists of land and improvements and if the Senator knows of any case where there is any increment to improvements not due to labor performed upon them he should not keep such knowledge to himself. Increment which Singletaxers would have the community tax is the value of land, exclusive of improvements. The Senator complains that the Singletax would "give the holder of real estate no indemnity for his long period of anxious and often ruinous waiting." Well, if the holder while waiting has been putting the land to proper use he will have his indemnity in what has been produced therefrom, or he would have it if he were not taxed on his labor, as the Senator evidently wants him to be. If the land has not been used then indemnity, if due any one, is due the public which has been prevented by the holder from getting possible benefits out of the land. The Senator's argument about deterioration ignores the fact that the public is not merely entitled to increased value dating from a certain period, but to the entire value of land. So, under Singletax conditions, decrease in value must necessarily be a loss to the public, not to the individual holder.

S. D.



Getting Nearer to the Truth.

William Draper Lewis, dean of the University of Pennsylvania and candidate for the Progressive gubernatorial nomination, comes very close in his speeches to correctly pointing out the foundation of monopolistic power. Dean Lewis sees a valid distinction between monopolies and "combinations which make for efficient business methods and serve the public well." He mentions three proposed solutions of the monopoly question. One is to "regulate the prices of goods as is done with the public service corporations." Another is to dissolve the combination. He endorses neither but approves of a third one: "to deprive those who

possess monopolistic power of the basis or bases on which their power rests." This brings him so near to the fundamental solution that it is a pity to record his failure to suggest any more practical way to apply it than through an interstate trade commission proposed in a bill by Congressman Murdock of Kansas. Upon this commission will rest the duty of finding the basis of monopolistic power and removing it. While it shows a better understanding of the question than is displayed in the administration's anti-trust bills, there is still room for much improvement. All privileges should be unconditionally abolished. No commission should be empowered to condemn some and uphold others. Dean Lewis seems to have been switched off of the right track in endorsing the Murdock bill. He should retrace his way to the point where he discovered the cause of monopolistic power and go straight forward in demanding its complete abolition.

S. D.



Proof Against Experience.

As though the navy we have has not already caused enough trouble and brought us near to an inexcusable war with Mexico, Congress has just voted an appropriation for two more battleships. In disregard of actual occurrences of the past month some Congressmen repeated the threadbare assertion that a big navy guarantees peace. Congressmen Fess of Ohio, Knowland of California, Hobson of Alabama, and Padgett of Tennessee, especially distinguished themselves in this way, making clear that experience teaches them nothing.

S. D.



East Is East and West Is West.

The Indian Social Reformer, published at Bombay by K. Natarajan, and devoted to native interests, makes a suggestive comment on an editorial that appeared in *The Public*, February 27. The editorial in question was called forth by a controversy in the India press over the slaughter of cows for sacrificial purposes, and the regret expressed that the people should stand divided over non-essentials, instead of uniting in defense of their country. This prompts the editor of the *Social Reformer* to explain why the people of Europe and America should assume that the Indian people regard British rule as their enemy and not their friend. "None of them," the editor says, "would regard foreign rule, however efficient and beneficial, in their own cases except as an enemy. That this is not the case in India, that the bulk of the Indian population is sincerely loyal and de-