exchange for our stocks and bonds. And upon getting these securities back, we could provide for the future by giving them away again. Thus should we keep the export "ball a-rolling" forever and aye, growing richer and richer with every dollar's worth we lost.

The most familiar explanation of the excessive export theory is that the excess is paid for in gold and silver. We have shown the unsoundness of this explanation through Mr. Stern's figures, which include gold and silver along with merchandise, and yet exhibit an enormous export balance. The absurdity of the explanation is well illustrated by George Walker, of Harrison, N. J., who writes:

A sailor on leave of absence from his ship, anchored off some tropical island, wanders upon the seashore and meets a native who offers him a handsome shell for a plug of tobacco which has cost the sailor 10 cents. The sailor makes the exchange, and upon arriving in New York sells the shell for $5. Now, according to the "balance of trade" theory, this transaction would make our imports exceed our exports by $4.90, which sum we would consequently owe and should have to pay in coin!

Or, for a more commercial and complicated transaction, take the case of a New York merchant who ships $100,000 worth of wheat to Liverpool. Selling it there for, say, $150,000, he buys hardware to that value, which he ships to Buenos Ayres, and exchanging it there for hides he sells them in New York for $200,000. According to the "balance of trade" theory, our imports have in this transaction exceeded our exports by $100,000, which we owe and must pay in coin.

But common sense would say that in both transactions, the country had made large profits and owed no other country a cent on account of them.

Is it strange, however, that the ordinary man's mind is darkened by the false "balance of trade" theory, when we find a man like President McKinley making the following statement in one of his speeches?

Notwithstanding the cry that under a protective tariff we cannot sell abroad unless we buy abroad, yet during the last fiscal year we sold abroad nearly $203,000,000 more than we bought abroad. This was the excess in our favor which the foreigner paid to us, and which we have now at home circulating among our people.

The above statement was made despite the fact that, during the fiscal year referred to, our exports of gold had exceeded our imports of gold!

Attention has been called by the English Land Restoration league to the wrong direction in municipal reform in which some of the Progressive members of the London county council have allowed that body to drift, and the evil effects that must necessarily result. The council is devoting itself to the subject of "housing the working classes," a subject which, by its inherent incongruity, suggests some such absurdity as the making of dams for beavers, of nests for birds, of coats for tailors, or of shoes for shoemakers. As if the working classes, who do all building, couldn't house themselves if allowed to by the idle classes. In this work of providing housing for the working classes, the council has been invited to enter upon a policy of acquiring sites for working class dwellings and erecting dwellings of that character thereon at public expense. This policy, as the Land Restoration league points out, cannot solve "the slum difficulty," but "will only change the form, and may easily increase its evils." For while it might succeed in reducing the population of existing slums, the dispossessed tenants would herd in new slums. If "the council buys the land as it must, dear; and builds the houses as it should, well; and then lets them as it is asked to do, cheap," it will benefit only a few tenants at the expense of London as a whole.

That is not empty prophecy. The "memorandum" of the Land Restoration league summons in evidence an actual attempt of the London county council to deal with the housing problem on a large scale—that of the Boundary street area in Bethnal Green. The housing committee of the council in 1890 proved that the slum-owners were coining money out of what was virtually wholesale murder of their fellow citizens. The council thereupon bought up these slums at a net cost of about $1,250,000, and, clearing them, rebuilt at further enormous expense. Yet the slum dwellers are not benefited. The new houses are generally occupied by an entirely different class from that which was displaced. This result parallels that of every similar experiment the world over, and must in the nature of things be paralleled by every new experiment of the same kind. Municipal housing can neither remove nor materially modify the slum cause. The only class to benefit by it in the end is bound to be the class that owns land within the influence of the improvement.

The people of London have long recognized that. In the first London county council, elected in 1889, there was a large majority pledged to the taxation of land values; and each subsequent council has declared for this radical reform. Even the present council, when the resolution in favor of introducing a bill in parliament "whereby the owners of ground values in London can be called upon to contribute directly towards the local taxation of the county," came up last July, not one member voted against it. And so well understood has it been that public improvements under the existing tax systems give the chief pecuniary benefit to ground landlords, that most of the reactionary candidates for the council at the last election were pledged to the policy of making great public improvements at once, while every Progressive candidate was pledged to the taxation of ground values. The Progressive majority in the council had steadily opposed costly improvements that could be postponed, until land value taxation could be secured and the pecuniary benefit of all public improvements be thereby diverted from the landlord class to the common treasury.

But a so-called "forward movement," which in reality is a backward movement, has now got a foothold in the council; and upon the specious plea of housing the working classes a policy of buying up costly land is ad-

vocated. This policy can but put millions into the pockets of the landlords who sell, in the way of purchase money for land which God hath given to the children of men; and millions more into the pockets of neighboring landlords whose holdings would be enhanced in value by the municipal improvements. Not only would that policy, if carried out, enrich landlords at public expense, but it would intensify the deplorable conditions it is intended to ameliorate. The very poor would find it harder than ever, because dearer than ever, to secure a standing place upon the earth.

This housing scheme for the benefit of landlords receives little encouragement, however, from local radical sources. The organ of the London Workingmen's clubs, the Club World, has declared against it; and the council of the Metropolitan Radical federation after a full discussion of the subject has adopted resolutions which, while recognizing the urgent need of better housing for the working classes, express the very sensible opinion "that land monopoly is the principal cause of the low wages and high rents to which overcrowding is mainly due." The resolutions appeal also to the county council to consider "whether an attack upon land monopoly, by means of the taxation of land values, will not, by cheapening the cost of sites, do more to promote the provision of adequate house accommodation than a policy of land purchase, which will have the effect of increasing the value of land and consequently the cost of houses." These views are endorsed and actively supported by the London Echo.

Another judge has harshly exercised the autocratic power which courts long ago assumed and which they reluctantly relinquish, that of arbitrarily accusing, trying and punishing persons for contempt of court. The judge in this case is Judge Sherman, of the superior court at Dedham, Mass.; the victim is Torrey E. Wardner, editor of the Boston Traveler. An engineer of the N. Y., N. H. & H. RR. Co. had been on trial before Judge Sherman for manslaughter. The charge was based upon the facts of a railroad collision. While hauling the second section of a passenger train this engineer had run into the rear of the first section, killing several people. A strong popular belief, which found frequent expression, attributed the prosecution of the engineer to the railroad company. It was believed that the company hoped thereby to avoid responsibility for its own negligence. To this popular opinion the Boston Traveler gave editorial expression in an article which unequivocally charged that the engineer was being made a scapegoat for the company. At the time of the publication of that article the case against the engineer was still on trial, the jury having retired for consultation; and it has since been stated that one copy of the paper found its way into the jury room. Upon these facts Judge Sherman instituted contempt proceedings; and after a hearing before himself, without a jury, he convicted the editor and sentenced him to 30 days' imprisonment in the county jail. The editor was confined accordingly and subjected to all the rigors of imprisonment and discipline which the rules of the jail impose upon common convicts. He was even forced to live upon de-appetizing jail rations, and forbidden communication with friends.

Of the propriety of summary proceedings for contempt there can be no question, when the contempt consists in lawless and disturbing behavior in the actual presence of a court of justice. It is necessary to the orderly conduct of their business that courts should have power to deal with such cases summarily. And since the objectionable conduct occurs within the sight and hearing of the judge upon the bench, no harm can come from giving him power to punish without trial. There are in those cases no disputed facts to try. But a newspaper criticism, lawless though it may be—as when its object is to influence a verdict or decision—is not in the category of contempts in the actual presence of the court. There is in that kind of case not only no necessity nor excuse for summary proceedings, but great danger to freedom of the press in tolerating them. If any judge may, in his own discretion, hale an editor before himself, try him himself, decide the facts and the law himself, and fix the punishment himself, then editors are responsible for their publications, not to the law, but to the discretion of judges. The judge who sentenced Mr. Wardner, of the Boston Traveler, can cite in justification many precedents. Most of them are mouldy, however, or worse; and the whole affair lends great color of truth to the Traveler's claim that the engineer was a scapegoat for the railroad company. It is not an unreasonable inference that the editor was summarily, and it would seem rather viciously punished, more for the protection of the company than for the sake of the law.

To the rigid treatment of the editor of the Boston Traveler by the jail authorities there can be no special objection. It was perfectly right to treat him and the other prisoners alike. But there is an objection to treating any prisoners as the jail authorities have treated him; and it is to be hoped that his experience in the jail may prompt him to make a crusade in his paper against all prison abuses.

The opinion of the Minnesota supreme court in the decision to which we referred briefly in our issue of December 3, is now before us in full, and it quite sustains the view we then expressed that the decision rests upon the wholesome general principle that a legislative body cannot bind the people by creating property rights in franchises for unreasonable periods.

Judge Mitchell wrote the opinion of the Minnesota court. A private grant for a waterworks system had been made by the city of Little Falls.