gold standard law enacted by congress last winter. The government guarantees the payment of national bank notes. Its security for this guarantee consists of government bonds deposited by the banks to the value upon their face of the amount of the guarantee. That is, a bank depositing in the government treasury government bonds of the face value of, say, $100,000 is entitled to issue $100,000 in circulating notes guaranteed by the government. These bonds are not secured by any pledge or deposit of money. Their value depends entirely upon government credit. So far, therefore, as the guarantee by government is concerned, national bank notes are not one whit more secure than the same amount in greenbacks would be. But as the banks are themselves primarily responsible for their notes, bank note circulation is more secure than greenbacks, other things being equal, to the extent of the financial responsibility of the banks. Inasmuch, however, as the financial responsibility of national banks for their notes would be more nominal than real under circumstances which destroyed the credit of the government, national bank notes are practically no more secure than a greenback circulation would be if of equal amount. In our judgment, therefore, the redemption with non-interest bearing greenbacks of interest bearing bonds to the amount deposited by banks as security for their circulation, and the replacement of national bank notes with these greenbacks, would provide as safe a currency as the bank notes do, while saving to the people the difference in interest and cutting off the power the banks now have of arbitrarily diminishing or increasing the money volume. Of course the government would lose the trifling tax on circulation, but that would doubtless be offset by lost greenbacks. The objection urged against this policy is that the greenback system is inflexible—the volume being fixed regardless of demands for currency. That objection is sound only against abuses of the system, and not against the system itself. If greenbacks were made easily interchangeable for bonds and bonds for greenbacks, the volume of paper currency would adjust itself automatically to demand.

There is pending before congress a bill for the regulation of patents, the principle of which ought to have the support of every anti-monopoly congressman in either house. It is known as bill 2941 of the lower house, and is pending before the committee on patents. It is to come up in the house for consideration next winter. The object of this bill is to alter the patent laws so that any person may manufacture patented articles upon paying a limited royalty for the privilege. Whether the specific provisions of the bill are the best possible for the accomplishment of its purpose we do not pretend to judge. But of the principle there can be no doubt. Under the patent law as it exists, the owner of a patent can wholly prevent its use by the public. In many instances this is actually done. To do so would at first blush appear to be contrary to the self-interest of the owner; but what if the owner, wishing to prevent competition, buys up patents on competing machines and then refuses either to use the improved machines or to allow anyone else to use them? Here is a suggestion of one of the many motives for the well-known practice of suppressing inventions by abuse of the patent privilege. The purpose of the patent law is to promote invention and the use of inventions. It offers inventors protection on condition that they give the public the benefit of their discoveries. If it in fact operates to obstruct that purpose, if it enables inventors to violate their part of the contract by keeping their discoveries from the public, then it needs readjustment. To that end the bill in question seems to be well adapted at least in principle and as an initial step. While it protects the inventor, so as to secure him compensation for the labor and expense involved in inventing, it withholds from him power to make an oppressive monopoly of his improvement. He is guaranteed a fair royalty, but subject only to that compensation he must allow the public the full and unrestrained use of his discovery. This modification of the patent laws might fall short of making them ideal, but it would be in harmony with the principle of patent laws and would go far toward putting an end to the monopolies that rest upon patents.

A tax bill which went by the board for the present year upon the adjournment of the legislature of New York, but which will certainly claim the attention of the next legislature of that state, commends itself to the friendly consideration of students of taxation everywhere. We refer to the bill introduced in the New York senate last winter by Senator Nathaniel A. Elsberg. This bill would secure in methods of taxation a fundamental reform of great importance by means of a few simple amendments of existing laws. In the first place it has a local option feature. It would authorize county legislatures to prescribe by uniform rule the class or classes of property which alone should be subject to taxation. But in the next place, and this is what makes the bill unique, it contains a provision for apportioning state taxes among the counties upon the basis of their own taxes respectively laid for local uses. For that purpose the bill would empower an appropriate board to—

> apportion the taxes on the assessed value of the property, for the general purposes of the state in the ratio of the gross amount of taxes for all purposes (except state and school purposes) laid in each county in proportion to all the counties, on assessed values of property, during the tax year immediately preceding the imposing of such taxes.

This measure if adopted would completely do away with the inequalities that are now caused by equalization boards. The state board's duties would be only clerical. It would have to ascertain merely the gross