

of taxation proposed is two shillings of tax to the pound of site value—about 50 cents to five dollars, or ten per cent. It is to fall exclusively upon the value of sites, improvements being exempt; and unoccupied property is to be taxed for site value as if it were occupied. The burden is fastened upon the owner, tenants who pay it being allowed to deduct it from their rent. This precaution was necessary in order to reach the owners of land under lease. Economic conditions would, in new transactions, make the owner bear the burden better than legislative provisos could. Though ten per cent. of site value has a confiscatory sound on this side of the Atlantic, where site value means selling or capitalized land value, it is really a very light tax; for in London site value means annual site value. If the bill becomes a law it will yield about \$8,000,000, the estimated site value of London being about \$80,000,000 annually. And there is strong probability that it will become a law. At the conclusion of the debate upon it, mentioned above, a hostile motion to refer the bill back to committee was defeated by a vote of 63 to 27, and thereupon it was adopted without dissent. So the bill will be introduced in parliament at the next session with the backing of the county council.

Still other signs of a single tax ground swell are observable. One of these is a long and thoughtful editorial in the Detroit News-Tribune, perhaps the most influential paper of Michigan, under the initials of its proprietor, Mr. J. E. Scripps. Mr. Scripps strenuously urges the abolition in Michigan of all taxation save upon land values—the abolition, that is, of all taxes on personalty and improvements—doing so not as a follower of Henry George, a distinction which he is at pains to disclaim, but as a hard-headed business man speaking for and appealing to his class. The article, which appeared in the News-Tribune of December 23d, is calculated to command serious considera-

tion. There is, to be sure, no thought on Mr. Scripps's part of readjusting general economic conditions by this method. He is not an adventurer upon the billowy sea of social reform. For that reason some of us who want the world made over completely and immediately may be disposed to see nothing significant of radical economic progress in his business-basis advocacy of land value taxation. We may even wish to doubt its efficacy for social reform because a business man advocates it for business reasons. Such a disposition, however, is a pious temptation that should be sternly resisted.

There are but two ways of achieving social reform. One is by revolution; not violent revolution necessarily, but revolution. The other is by steady, patient, commonplace advances in the right direction. Now, revolution seldom finds its opportunity. It almost never finds it except in violent commotions. And when it does find it, whether in peace or war, conditions slip back after the climax almost or quite to where they were before. Somehow, the race seems incapable, when advancing by leaps and bounds, of holding to the advances it makes. Social progress, like vegetable growth, to be firm and enduring must be slow and persistent. The plant that grows up in a day withers in a night. The oak, hardening as it grows, endures. No small matter, then, are these uninspiring indications of deliberate progress along the lines that Henry George laid down, even though made by men who are out of sympathy with his ultimate purposes and for reasons that could never have appealed to his higher aspirations. It is from such men, moved by such reasons, that the popular support necessary for the first practical steps in any enduring economic reform will have to come.

There are disquieting rumors from Washington to the effect that our government contemplates forcible interference with the government

of Venezuela in behalf of a private American corporation. A concession of asphalt deposits had been made by the government of Venezuela to this company. Later the government revoked that concession and made a new one to another American company. The original concessionaire, arming its employes, defied the government; and in the expectation that the government of Venezuela would attempt to enforce its decrees of revocation, our government is preparing, according to the Washington rumors, to support the original concessionaire with the army and navy. Though this story rests upon rumors, there is nothing improbable about it. No one need be surprised, after our imperial experience of the past two years, if the Washington government assumes the function of forcing weak nations to keep improvident contracts with American monopolists. Yet nothing could be more reprehensible. When Americans obtain concessions from foreign powers they take them at their own peril, knowing full well that repudiation, be it immoral or not, is one of the inherent and necessary rights of national sovereignty. To enforce their repudiated claims by making war upon the repudiating country is to make war wantonly in defiance of one of the first principles of international law and of every principle of morality whereby war can at all be justified. Making public war to enforce private contracts or collect private debts is as infamous an excuse for getting glory by slaughtering people as could well be conceived.

Though ex-President Harrison's article on colonialism, which appears in the North American Review for January, is not open to the criticism of incoherency which he preferred against the "verbatim" newspaper report of his Ann Arbor speech of last month, being in point of literary workmanship fully up to its author's well deserved reputation, it is in sentiment neither weaker nor stronger than the speech. Like the speech, the