

the first of these, which was before the Canadian legislature, last session, is to be introduced again; this time its author, Mr. Kirkpatrick, hopes, with a fair prospect of success. On another point the commissioner says: "The Canadians should allow our vessels, permitted under our laws to visit their ports for commercial purposes, the privileges usually given by foreign governments in such cases, or very decided measures should be taken to lay a burthen at least as heavy on Canadian business in the United States." Without further explanation than is contained in the telegram, this statement is incomprehensible. We are not aware that American vessels of the class mentioned have anything to complain of; this is the first time a whisper of complaint has been heard. If Mr. Morton means that American fishing vessels should be treated in all respects as the commercial marine, he will do well to remember that their limited privileges on the prohibited coast was suggested by the American negotiations in 1818, and was conditioned on their getting a right to fish on a part of the Labrador coast and part of that of Newfoundland, which they had lost by the events of 1812-15. It would be reasonable to concede to these vessels the right to re-ship or transport their fish overland, from our ports, but to allow them general trading privileges would be something altogether different.

#### CONFISCATION IN INSTALMENTS.

For some time past there has existed in Toronto, as well as in many American cities, a society whose avowed object is the confiscation of the annual value of all the land in the country. This means, in plain language, that every farmer who enjoys a freehold is to be stripped naked, and every owner of town and city property sent out into the street in like plight to bear the farmer company. An appropriate name for such an association would be "A Society for Producing Universal Poverty." But, as if desirous of presenting a false front to the public, these people by a curious perversion of language call themselves the "Anti-Poverty Society." But if you pauperize every land owner in the country, the farmer would from necessity cease to produce, and the fund destined for the payment of wages would be in danger of depletion. A good illustration of what would happen may be found in the unchecked increase of the rabbits in the North-West. It is intended to take the annual value of land from the individual owners and to give it to the general public, under the misnomer of a tax. When the whole mass of the population was invited to consume the property of individuals, the means of reproduction would be so reduced that general poverty bordering on famine would be the certain result. Just as the unchecked increase of rabbits in the North-West causes all the food of these animals to be consumed, so that nearly the whole race dies off. If the Anti-Poverty Society wished to bring about a similar result among mankind, it could not devise a better plan than the scheme of confiscation which it never ceases to laud.

These socialistic confiscationists, while so candid as to let their ultimate aim be known, are considerate enough to propose to allow their gospel of confiscation to be gradually applied. Reversing all wholesome maxims of taxation, they propose that there shall be ultimately but one tax, and this tax is to swallow up the whole annual value of all the land. They want to begin by exempting other things. And they ask the City Council of Toronto and the Government of Ontario to help them. The first things proposed to be exempted are all buildings to the value of \$600 each. The City Council listened almost in silence to the deputation. The Ontario Government gave no sign of coming conversion to the confiscation programme. Though members of the deputation which honored Mr. Mowat with a visit have publicly stated that their ultimate intention is the confiscation of the annual value of all the land, in other words the rent, under the pretext of taxation, they did not unfold their whole scheme to the Government, but confined themselves to asking this new exemption. Mr. Fraser tried to probe a little below the surface, and to get some confession of what was behind the proposal. Mr. Drury was willing to show a teachable spirit, but he wanted a month or two to study some standard work, if the deputation could point to one, by which the reader could be enlightened on the subject in hand. Mr. Mowat, who, like Mr. Fraser, evidently took in the situation, suggested that a year or two would not be too much. These gentlemen, we do not doubt, are too busy to have read Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, the text-book of the Anti-Poverty Society, in which the modern gospel of confiscation is worked out. They will find the avowal near the end of the book, and it is not worth their while to read what leads up to this conclusion.

It is somewhat anomalous that an organization so deeply imbued with the candour of philanthropy as the Anti-Poverty Society should have kept back, on the occasions of these two official visits, the ultimate aim of the society, which they do not scruple elsewhere publicly to avow. But these ingenious gentlemen evidently foresaw that the Minister of Agriculture was not yet ready to receive the sublime doctrine of universal confiscation, in the region over which he presides. He might not be able to see the justice of stealing, under a plausible pretext, the annual value of every farmer's land. It is just possible that Mr. Drury is not ready to be convinced that the time has come for abandoning the doctrine that taxation should bear some proportion to ability to pay and to the protection received; that he is not likely to accept the new Georgian gospel of exempting every class except the farmer and other landowners, and throwing on them not only all the necessary taxes, but a great many times as much as can ever be necessary. It is just possible that the farmer might decline the honor and the privilege of paying, with other landowners, all the taxes. A doubt of this kind would probably find access to the minds of farmers' representatives. They might not see the advantage of confiscation in the

same light as the luminaries of the Anti-Poverty Society see it. They might even object to the doctrine of confiscation, sublime and beneficent as it appears to the Anti-Poverty philanthropists to be. People of that kind have been heard irreverently to remark that philanthropy at other people's expense is a virtue easily practised; and so long as it is uncertain whether the average farmer is prepared to accept certain ruin as a means of trying the experiment of confiscation, the consequence of this oppressive doubt must be endured. But let not this be charged as a fault of the Anti-Poverty Society. These gentlemen are quite willing to offer on the altar of their country the sacrifice of all their farmer cousins; a test of patriotism and humanity which, it must be allowed, is not without a touch of the magnanimous. Let no unreasonable objector say that they ought rather to sacrifice themselves. These men, it is fair to remember, have a mission in the world—the extirpation of poverty—and cannot be spared from their special work. Just think what a happy world this will be when poverty has been vanished from it! True, one generation may have to be sacrificed; but this prospect, uninviting as it must be admitted to be, does not discompose the unterrified Anti-Poverty Society. Seldom have such robust faith and such undaunted courage appeared among men; their union is the crowning glory of the nineteenth century.

The exemption of a small income from taxation is recognized as a reasonable thing; for when it is no more than will support life, nothing can be taken for any other purpose without in some sort endangering the owner's existence. At present our municipal law fixes this limit at \$200 a year. Any exemption of this kind should be on the income, not on any specific item of consumption. The money spent on a house is only part of a man's expenditure. A man can expend in house rent, only a small part of his income. The ground on which the present exemption is based is the only one that can be admitted. The proposed exemption of every house worth \$600 would put the occupant of every such house in the position of a pauper, a distinction as odious as it would be artificial. There can be no good reason why persons who live in such houses should not bear a share of municipal burthens; they cannot all be unable, and unwillingness to bear a just share of public burthens cannot be recognized as a justifiable plea. The tax on the land on which the house stands would have to be increased, so that one part of the exemption would fail to exempt.

Henry George's plan of confiscation was sure to be enlarged by his disciples. And this we find is in fact taking place. Wednesday's Toronto daily papers contained the following telegram, dated Rochester, December 11th:

"Prof. T. H. Garside, the Socialist organizer, in addressing a meeting here said: 'We ask for the land. If it is not given to us the whole universe will cry with one great shout for liberty. It is ours and we will have it, and no man shall stand between us. We want the machinery and all property we have made. It belongs to