

## J. W. MACMILLAN.

The proposal is that the new system be taken out of possible political patronage by its being given to a commission to manage. If my memory is correct, and I am writing where I cannot get at the reports which tell about it, this was the method adopted by New Zealand when the railways first came into state control. It was afterwards abandoned, because the administrators could not rid themselves of "business" prepossessions, and thought less of the service they gave the community than of making the railways pay. It may indeed be wise for the elected and directly responsible authorities of the country to sacrifice their power for the sake of avoiding graft and pull, but there is something to be said for a more direct and responsive mode of administration. It is certain that, under the fire of capitalistic criticism, there will be a constant temptation upon the managing commission to keep the surplus always in the foremost place. Whereas, it may very well be that the convenience and development of Canada require the production of a deficit. The highways could supply surpluses if there were a system of toll-gates on them, but we have passed the stage where we want dividends from the highways. The

--the railways are but highways of a ~~different sort~~ kind.

One can make a fair guess at the amount of poverty in Canada. Careful and detailed investigations in

Some day the pernicious habit of one generation binding all succeeding generations by its foolish bargains will be put a stop to. The legal device of cypres is a step in that direction. So is the practice of collecting death duties on large estates. The ancient Levitical law provided for a return of the estranged land once in fifty years. It is so obviously just and necessary, that a parent generation should not impoverish its children, that it is bound to come. In the meantime, while we wait for its slow approach, government ownership of those various sorts of monopolistic holdings which are accustomed to waylay the abundant to-morrows is an excellent substitute.

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Briefly, if China wants her terms, she must pay the stipulated price, there is no ambiguity about it, and it is, as has been justly said, ridiculous to insinuate that the Allies have broken their promises when China had not taken the measures stated to her as the consideration for these promises. Regret has been expressed that the Chinese Government should not have been able to take a larger view of the situation. The argument of the best friends of China, during the negotiations which preceded the present crisis, ran somewhat as follows: The Allies are defending the cause of international law, as solemnly subscribed to by all the civilized nations of the world. From the beginning of the war Germany has flouted that law, and if she and her friends were to be victorious the rights of every nation in the world would be subject to German might. China, rich but weak, of all countries, depends for her integrity upon the observance of law. It is a question of minor importance for the Allies whether she goes into the war or not; but for herself it is a question of enormous importance. She would then range herself according to her ability with those who are standing for law; she would become entitled to a place at the great Peace Conference that will determine the future of the world for probably generations to come. At a time when the Military Governors of eleven of the eighteen provinces have formed a Provisional Government with Hsu Shi-Chang as dictator, the fact should be recalled that these are the same Governors, or Provincial Tsuchuns, who were summoned to Peking on April 20, that they might be fully informed as to the Government's motives in breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany, and that they might give their endorsement to the Gov-

A fortnight after the conference of April, and while the Cabinet was still discussing the Sino-German question, there came to Peking the Military Governor of Anhui, the Tuchun of Shantung, the Tuchun of Kirin and the Tuchun of Fukien—generals all—and requested an interview with the Premier. The spokesman, General Ni Shih-chung, delivered himself as follows: "We must declare war against Germany without further delay. We must go to war without asking conditions from the Entente. I, voicing the sentiment of the military leaders of the country, urge the Government to abandon its colorless policy of negotiations with the Entente for the increase of the Customs tariff, revision of treaties, etc." The generals apparently recognized that if China's prestige was to be upheld there could be but one course of procedure. China had protested to Germany, and in the same breath told the United States that she was entirely with us, and would take all possible steps to secure the observance of international law. The Chinese protest, like our own, was disregarded, but we have declared war against the defiant enemy of civilization, while China still hesitates. There is thus a good deal more than meets the eye in the summary measures taken by the Military Governors to compel decisive action at Peking. Back of it all, there must be reckoned the irrepressible conflict between North and South, and the stubborn attachment of the Cantonese contingent to the spoils of office. The Northern men have by no means a monopoly of that sadly lacking commodity in China—administrative honesty—but experience has shown that they are more liberally endowed with it than the Southern leaders, from Sun Yat-sen downward. After all, the disturbance is one which does not make more than a ripple on the vast surface of Chinese life and activity, and in spite of its military origin, there is some ground for the hope that it may result in bringing China a stage nearer to honest, responsible and capable government.