

and as violently as possible. It is a perfectly right and proper thing that the English aristocracy, who deliberately destroyed the democratic possession of land, should appear before the world with their crime hung around their necks."—GILBERT CHESTERTON.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES.

On Saturday, March 27th, we had a general election for the House of Assembly in our State Parliament, and the Labor Party have been returned to power with a majority of six, the figures being: Labor, 26; Liberals, 20. Our upper chamber, the Legislative Council, has 13 Liberals and 7 Labor members, so it will be interesting to see how that chamber will treat the measures sent up by the Labor government.

The result of the election proved a great surprise to the Liberal Party, but they have only themselves to blame for their defeat. Although the party is known as a liberal party it is really a conservative body, masquerading under a Liberal name. Three years ago when they defeated the Labor party and secured the reins of government, it was mainly because Proportional Representation was one of the main planks of their platform. This secured for them the floating vote which gave them a majority. Instead of giving effect to their hustings pledges to put proportional voting upon the Statute book, as soon as they were elected they dropped it from their policy and gerrymandered the districts with the object of securing for themselves a long lease of life. When the bill providing for an alteration of the electoral boundaries was forced through Parliament, practically all the Liberal newspapers commented adversely upon the action of the late Premier, Mr. Peake, in forcing such a measure upon the House; and now the people have shown their disapproval of it by placing Mr. Peake at the bottom of the poll in his own gerrymandered district. The Attorney-General of the late government, Mr. H. A. Parsons, has also been defeated in what has always been regarded as a safe district. In some of the country districts, owing to the wave

of patriotism now sweeping through the land, several Liberal members of German descent have been badly beaten in what have hitherto been sure Liberal districts.

The new Labor government will be led by Mr. Crawford Vaughan. The policy put forth by him was one that appealed to the electors at the present juncture. There is a shortage of wheat here, owing to the effects of a very dry season, and on account of this shortage, the price of bread has advanced to 5d. cash for a 2 lb. loaf, 5½d. if booked. The Labor people said this high price was due entirely to the fact that the late Liberal government refused to fix the price of wheat, and they promised cheap bread if returned. The bad season was also responsible for many of the men employed on the railways and in the government workshops being placed on short time. The Labor party also promised that full time should be the order of the day if they were returned. Naturally these promises gained many votes. There was also a liberal number of socialistic measures on the Labor programme: State steamers, trawlers, brickyards, firewood and timber yards, etc., all for the alleged purpose of cheapening the cost of commodities to the people. It is not likely that any of these things will have this desired effect, judging by the experience of other States that have tried some measure of Socialism. The experience elsewhere has been to put a bigger burden of taxation upon the people, but the rank and file are carried away with rash promises, and do not stop to examine facts.

On the question of taxation the policy of the Labor party is the best they have offered up to date. It provides for an all-round tax on land values instead of the progressive tax with the £5,000 exemption as previously advocated. It contains a provision for the reduction of railway freights and fares by charging the interest on the capital cost of construction to land values. There is also a proposal to lift the income tax exemption from £200 to £300 and to abolish certain stamp duties. These taxation proposals of course met with the hearty approval of Single Taxers as being a step in the right direction.

The Labor party has also pledged to put Proportional Representation upon the Statute book, and as this system of voting will give to every section of the community that share of representation to which it is justly entitled, the inclusion of this plank captured the votes of the democratic section of the community.

We shall now await with interest the effort of the Labor party to give effect to their proposals, and trust they will not disappoint the people in the same manner as the Liberal government did.

In addition to the elections, there was a referendum taken on the question of the early closing of liquor bars. Those for reform urged six o'clock as the hour, whilst the liquor interest fought to retain eleven, the present hour of closing. There was fierce fight and the temperance party won. The figures were: for six, 95,614; for eleven, 59,711. An Act of Parliament is now necessary to give effect to the will of the people. It is rumored that the Legislative Council will refuse to pass same.—  
E. J. CRAIGIE, Secretary.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

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#### TAKES ISSUE WITH MR. BASTIDA.

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##### EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Dear Sir:—You invite opinions on Mr. Antonio Bastida's article, "Emasculated Single Tax." Here are mine. We must take human nature as we find it with all its prejudices and ingrained habits of thought and state our case accordingly.

As Buckle says in "History of Civilization in England," "The great enemy of knowledge is not error but inertness. All that we want is discussion, and then we are sure to do well no matter what our blunders may be. One error conflicts with another, each destroys its opponent, and truth is evolved." . . . "In ordinary minds association of ideas, if firmly established, become indissoluble; and the power of separating them, and of arranging them in new combinations, is one of the rarest of our endowments. An average intellect, when once possessed by a theory,

can hardly ever escape from it. . . . Theories which they have once heartily embraced, they can hardly ever get rid of, and they often dignify them with the name of essential truths, and resent every attack upon them as a personal injury. Having inherited such theories from their fathers, they regard them with a sort of filial piety, and cling to them as if they were some rich acquisition which no one has a right to touch." . . . "If in any civilized nation, two men, equally gifted, were to propound some new and startling conclusion, and one of those men were to defend his conclusion by reasoning from ideas or general principles, while the other man were to defend his by reasoning from particular and visible facts, there can be no doubt that, supposing all other things the same, the latter man would gain the most adherents. His conclusions would be more easily diffused, simply because a direct appeal in the first instance, to palpable facts, strikes the vulgar with immediate effect; while an appeal to principle is beyond their ken, and as they do not sympathize with it, they are apt to ridicule it. Facts seem to come home to everyone and are undeniable. Principles are not so obvious, and, being often disputed, they have to those who do not grasp them, an unreal and illusory appearance which weakens their influence." . . . "An immense majority of mankind, even in the most advanced countries, are, by the constitution of their minds, incapable of seizing general principles and applying them to daily affairs, without serious mischief, either to themselves or others." . . . "For one person who can think, there are at least one hundred who can observe."

I think that most propagandists will agree with the above. Preach the idea to the observers and their prejudices take but a firmer hold. Work on their powers of observation—show them the absurdity and injustice of taxing the improver and producer and encouraging the with-holder of natural resources, and by discussion, if not by thought, their own intellects will act on their own prejudices, uprooting them one by one.