

GENERAL ELECTION IN DENMARK

Justice Party Gains Ground

IN the Danish General Election which took place on October 28th, the total vote for the Justice Party, *Retsforbundet*, was 94,477, an increase of 56,018 over that attained at the general election in 1945. Representation of the Party in the House of Commons has increased from three to six.

The successful candidates are: Dr. Viggo Starcke, Copenhagen County; Bue Bjørner, Odense; Knud Tholstrup, East Storkreds (a Copenhagen constituency); Hans Hansen, South Jutland; Funck Jensen, Aarhus; and Evald Christensen, Hjørring County. We greet the victors, and among the newcomers we are particularly glad to welcome Mr. Bue Bjørner, former President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. Dr. Viggo Starcke and Mr. Knud Tholstrup are among the three members of the previous Parliament, their then colleague, Mr. Søren Olesen, who was also a candidate, having dropped out. Mr. Hans Hansen returns after having been a Justice Party Member in an earlier Parliament.

The general results of the election were as follows:—

	1947		1945	
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats
Justice Party ...	94,477	6	38,459	3
Social Democrats ...	834,035	57	671,755	48
Moderate Liberals ...	529,156	49	479,158	38
Conservatives ...	264,146	17	373,688	26
Radical Liberals ...	144,133	10	167,073	11
Communists ...	141,047	9	255,236	18
Danish Union ...	24,917	0	63,760	4

It will be observed that the Moderate Liberals won eleven seats and the Social Democrats won nine seats; the Conservatives lost nine; the Radicals, one; and the Communists, nine. The loss by the Communists is particularly noteworthy. The small "Danish Union" was a party that arose during the war period and has now virtually disappeared.

The election was occasioned by a vote of no confidence in the Moderate Liberal administration, because of its attitude to the Danish-German border problems in North Slesvig. That was a matter which, many insisted, particularly the Justice Party, should have been submitted to an independent plebiscite whereas it was merged in all the political and economic questions affecting the country's welfare. So far, therefore, as the burning topic of North Slesvig border is concerned, the election has brought no decision.

After many negotiations, the Social Democrats have accepted office, the new Cabinet consisting of members of that Party with the exception of Mr. Rasmussen, who has kept his office as Foreign Minister.

The Justice Party, led by Dr. Viggo Starcke, fought a determined and intense campaign for Land Value Taxation "in its fulness," for complete Free Trade (no matter what may be the fiscal policies of other countries), against all restrictions and controls and the State domination of industry—in a word their Goliath was the "planned economy" and the stone they have flung has certainly shaken his influence over the minds of the people. Their "free economy" is not that of Conservatives or Whig Liberals or of those Individualists who would merely go back to pre-1914 "liberties." It is to establish a freedom that has not existed and has never had a chance—liberty based on equal rights and opportunities, on the freeing

of the land from monopoly by the public collection of its economic rent, the sweeping away of the tariffs and all obstructions to the freedom of trade, the abolition of all taxation "on the work of man's hands."

The state of the parties leaves it an open question whether a workable coalition can be formed to conduct the Government for any length of time, but the Justice Party intends to go ahead with its independent cause, in which it is tremendously encouraged by the swing of opinion in its favour, and which can be regarded as a significant sign of the times.

It is interesting to look at the programmes of other parties or at statements made on their behalf by representative candidates. From two of the newspapers which published special election editions, giving generous space to all the parties, we take the following extracts bearing on taxation, fiscal policy, etc. These extracts, of course, speak for themselves:—

Radical Party. Amendment and improvement of the tax on land-value increments cannot be delayed any longer. With every year that passes under the existing legislation, millions that rightly belong to the public go into private pockets; at the same time building is made more difficult and dearer whereas it should be encouraged in every possible way. The creation of small holdings, under the system of land-rent for the State, must be pushed forward. Retail traders and the co-operatives must compete on an equal footing; base tax-legislation on the principle that there shall be easement of taxation on labour and consumption and that socially created values shall be collected for the benefit of the community. (The Radical Party has long had land-value taxation on its programme. In association with the Social Democrats, it was the pioneer of the 1922 and 1926 legislation, which enacted the land valuation and both the national tax and the local rating of land values which were steps in the right direction.)

The Social Democrats. Everything to be done for a "planned encouragement of buildings." Rent restriction for all new buildings. Rational control of building material. Attack on land monopoly. Effective taxation of land speculators' gains. Stoppage of the "one-sided" indirect taxation. Effective price control. Relax the (State) import monopoly, and let the merchants compete. Necessity of a thorough monetary reform which will produce stability. Inflation is the great menace. Direct taxation, including the taxation of land values.

Moderate Liberals. Vote for a sound Liberal policy, preservation of democratic government, against socialisation and other economic coercion, against all tendency to dictatorship. (Yet they stood by policies of the late government of seeking better trade agreements, promoting saving, taxing luxuries to limit spending, and pushing the export trade to secure greater supplies of foreign exchange.)

Conservatives. Defend Danish democracy against the danger it is menaced by, the Communists on the one hand and the ever-growing restrictionist system on the other hand. The economic crisis is not to be met by multiplying the number of prohibitions and orders, but only by introducing a sound money system. Industry, arts and crafts and trade can only flourish under freedom.

The election has certainly been a great national debate

on principles and policies for ensuring the country's welfare. Press articles, manifestos and speeches provide a wealth of valuable material. In the election symposium of the *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Copenhagen's Christian daily paper, Dr. Starcke spoke for the Justice Party. These are some of the passages:—

"The earth was created by God as a gift for all people, not only the old but also the young, not only the rich but also the poor. The relation between man and nature, its working place, its raw materials and its forces, is the most important fundamental question which lies beneath most of our social troubles. It has long been the case that our poorer neighbours have meekly accepted their poverty, their lack of house room, their tax burdens and their deprivation. But it is written that the meek will inherit the earth.

"Denmark is not poor. But our thoughts and ideas so blunted that we torture ourselves and each other with our whole misguided taxation system and our complicated restriction apparatus. Perhaps that is done with the best intentions but the common people are being slowly helped to death.

"We have our good land, our favourable geographical position, our industrious population. Our export goods are in demand and are of high quality. There should, therefore, be every possibility of raising ourselves, if we only set about it sensibly. In the material sense, we could better our living conditions with increased production and greater importation. But production is hampered partly because the land and the working places are monopolised and partly because tax methods have made it punishable to be capable, energetic and thrifty. Importation is limited partly by the shortages in the world market and partly by our own restrictions and import prohibitions which result in our obtaining less in goods as payment for the exports we can provide.

"We do not obtain more goods by taking food and clothes from each other and dealing them out in public assistance. Subsidies are an emergency help, but they are a bad resort, a kind of inverted Christianity, if we allow the causes to persist which makes that succour necessary. So long as we are content to cry, 'With what shall I be fed and with what shall I clothe myself?' we shall never put things to rights. Yet it is sure that without food and clothing the people perish. If, however, we start with justice and order our land and our realm according to its clear command, then it will be shown that existence is so rich and good that there is enough of these things for us all.

"Justice says that I cannot have any privilege to enjoy what no one has created—it belongs to all of equal right. But that which the individual produces by his own labour belongs to him of right. How could it possibly be otherwise? Therefore justice is more than a word. It is the first, if not the only, thing. I believe it is true that all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be satisfied when it is attained."

2s. 6d. LAND VALUE RATING. Theory and practice; a handbook for all interested in municipal finance and the rating question. By F. C. R. Douglas, M.A.

2s. 6d. PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE. The tariff question considered with especial regard to the interests of Labour. Carries the discussion to a point not dealt with in other books on this question. The most popular and most scientific exposition of the subject which has ever been written. Lord Snowden. By Henry George. Abridged. Red cloth 2s. 6d. Paper covers 1s. 6d.

LET TRADE BE FREE

From an article by Mr. S. W. Alexander, Editor of the CITY PRESS, in EVERYBODY'S of August 9th.

THE closing of the British ports to foreign competition has been a direct cause of the growth of vast combinations of capital and of labour. In the closed market, price rings of all kinds have flourished, and in the past ten years over two thousand price rings of one kind or another have been formed. It is a natural thing for well-intentioned people with little knowledge of economics, to say that it is wrong that the profits of monopoly and special interest should go into the pockets of sections of the community. Their answer to the so-called private monopolies is to nationalise them, to make them State monopolies.

But a State monopoly is just as evil as any other form of monopoly. In fact, it is worse—because it has behind it the power of the State. We say that the answer to monopolies is to eliminate the primary cause of them—the closed market-tariffs.

Closely allied with this question of Free Trade and anti-nationalisation is the question of the freedom of the individual. We are an island nation of 47,000,000, brought on to this small piece of land by free trade with all peoples of all colours without discrimination. Once we stopped Free Trade, we set in motion powerful forces which have contributed more and more to our present desperately serious condition. We created the Totalitarian "climate" in Britain.

First—duties at the ports required more officials. Then we set up organisations to decide how much and from what countries we should buy certain things and how much of certain articles we should produce ourselves. So we set up marketing boards. That required more officials. And, to-day, we are, as it were, completely gummed up. We find Conservatives and others fighting for freedom and at the same time approving of County Agricultural Committees.

These ideas are completely and utterly inconsistent. The Agricultural Committees are pillars of national Socialism. They are the very reverse of the free market, and of freedom.

Power is given to these bodies to take over the properties and livelihoods of men on the assumption that they are not good cultivators. And yet we have seen terrible mistakes made by such organisations. No man who believes in freedom can support policies which approve of County Agricultural Committees.

All these tariff developments have been a prime cause of the immense growth of the size and power of the bureaucracy, and in its fundamentals the tariff policy is a Socialist policy.

It is contended by some that the days of Free Trade are over and that it is impossible for us as a debtor nation to return to the Free Trade policy. But as a debtor nation it is imperative that we should make use of every device to enable us to return to a sound condition and pay our way—and those devices can only come into operation as a result of Free Trade which in an island nation is the key-stone of all free enterprise.

An aspect of the protectionist policy which to-day is much open to discussion is that of Imperial Preference. We are told that this preference on imports from the Empire is to-day more desirable and that it will bind the Empire together. But we Free Traders consider ourselves to be amongst the strongest supporters of the British Empire. We believe that the British people have ren-