

## NEWS FOREIGN

## GREAT BRITAIN

**PREMIER ASQUITH'S TRIBUTE TO SIR CAMPBELL BANNERMAN—THE COMING BILL FOR LAND VALUATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES—SINGLE TAXERS BELIEVE MR. ASQUITH WORTHY OF THEIR CONFIDENCE—THE PREMIER'S SPEECHES SHOW NO BACKING DOWN.**

My last news letter had only just been posted in time to catch the outgoing mail when news came of the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Referring to the sad event a good Single Tax friend wrote me. "What a dreadful blow our cause has met with in the death of Bannerman? Not since the loss of Henry George has the cause been hit so hard. I feel utterly depressed and saddened by the heartbreaking news which has just come to hand as I write." This was the feeling of all our friends who had learnt to love and trust the man whose courageous utterances and transparent honesty had done so much to promote our cause. A little story told by the parliamentary correspondent of the *Daily News* shows how Campbell-Bannerman had set his heart on giving us legislation. On nearing the end he tells us that the one item of the Liberal Policy over which he seemed to brood was the land valuation bill.

At the time of his death Campbell-Bannerman was the father of the House of Commons, having represented Stirling Burghs continuously for forty years. Nothing could better show the true character of the man than the following extract from a speech delivered by him a few months before being elected in 1868.

"I am the son of a staunch Tory. I am not here to say a word in excuse for that fact, or to apologise for being the son of my father. On the contrary, there is nothing I am prouder of than my close connection with one who has always been respected in Scotland, even by those who have been most bitterly opposed to him. But if you wish to draw any augury from my close connection with Sir James Campbell, this I would have you believe—that possibly

the staunchness may run in the blood, that I may inherit his tenacity without inheriting his principles, and that as my father, through a long public life, through good report and through evil report, in fair weather and in foul, has stuck to his party and his principles, so his son in like manner will stick to his."

Mr. Asquith paid a magnificent tribute to Sir Henry in the House of Commons, from which I make a few quotations:

"For example, he was singularly sensitive to human suffering and wrong-doing, delicate and even tender in his sympathies, always disposed to despise victories won in any sphere by brute force, an almost passionate lover of peace; and yet we have not seen in our time a man of greater courage—courage not of a defiant and aggressive type, but calm, patient, persistent, indomitable. Let me, Sir, recall another apparent contrast in his nature. In politics I think he may be fairly described as an idealist in aim, and an optimist by temperament. Great causes appealed to him. He was not ashamed, even on the verge of old age, to see visions and dream dreams. He met good and evil fortune with the same unclouded brow, the same unruffled temper, the same unshakable confidence in the justice and righteousness of his cause. And, Sir, as we knew him here, so after he was stricken down in the midst of his work, a martyr, if ever there was one, to conscience and duty, so he continued to the end."

In matters of legislation we are not moving along as Single Taxers would like. We are disappointed to see the government frittering away its time and strength on measures which will be useless without the taxation of Land Values, and which very likely would be unnecessary if we had a good instalment of our measure. Nevertheless, we have got to remember that the party in power is made up of all sorts of Reformers, each section looking at the Social problem from its own point of view. We have good friends in the House of Commons, in close touch with the government, and I am sure that everything is being done that can be done with the limited resources and backing that we possess.

Last month the House of Lords dealt with the Scottish Valuation Bill in such a

manner as to make it certain that the government will not accept their amendments.

"The purpose of the bill has been negatived by the amendments passed yesterday" said Lord Halsbury on May 14th. Replying to a question on June 22 the Prime Minister said that the government did not see their way to take any further steps in regard to Scotch Land Legislation this year. This points to determination on the part of the government to find other means of making the will of the Commons prevail. The English Valuation Bill will very probably be introduced in the House of Commons within the next few days. The probability is that it will meet the same fate as the Scottish Bill. The government will then be put upon its trial.

If the Liberal party then fails, the United Committee of the League for the Taxation of Land Values will be put upon its trial.

In the meantime the Committee, and its officers, in close touch with our friends in the House of Commons, are doing all that can be done to promote our cause, and they are fully entitled to the support and confidence of Single Taxers everywhere. It is sometimes said, by those who ought, and do know better, that we are tied to the Liberal Party; that we advocate Single Tax in the interest of Capitalists. There is as much reason for the one statement as the other.

On May 12th replying to an amendment to the Housing and Town Planning Bill Mr. Asquith made it quite clear that he sees the relation of valuation, etc., to this question. He said:

"The government was quite as much alive as they to the necessity of accompanying legislation of this kind with a proper system of valuation. They could not include everything in one Bill, but his right hon. friend would introduce at an early date a valuation Bill for England and Wales with two objects—first of all to simplify and methodise and make, as far as possible, uniform the system of valuation throughout the length and breadth of England and Wales. The second object would be to provide for a separate valuation of sites and buildings."

Again, the Prime minister speaking at a great meeting of the National Liberal

Federation held at Birmingham on the 19th of June, after dealing with the Education Licensing and Old Age Pension Bills said:

These three great measures were only a part of the social programme of the Government. They hoped to make progress this session with the Children's Bill and the Housing Bill, and almost a necessity of the latter was a reconstruction and revaluation of our rating system. Cynics would tell them that this was done to carry on the ignoble sport of angling for votes. Liberals knew better. The object which ran through all this was to diffuse, and so far as might be, equalise burdens, to make life brighter, easier, richer, more fruitful to the bulk of our fellow countrymen; to break through and to break down the great environment of squalor and of temptation, and to banish, if they could, and so far as they could, the shadow of anxiety for the future, which to so many darkened at every stage the journey from youth to old age (cheers). That, as Liberals believed, was the way and the only way in which to make the best of each in the interest of all, to create and to sustain, in the only worthy sense of the word a community of free men in a free State." (loud cheers).

Mr. Asquith's speeches lead one to think that he is a better radical than many have credited him with being in the past. He has it in him to do much good if he sets himself the task, and until he has had a reasonable opportunity he is fairly entitled to our confidence and support.

Whatever politicians may do Single Taxers will carry on their work of propaganda in the future as in the past, believing with Henry George that the important thing is not how men vote but how they think.

F. SKIRROW.

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#### NORWAY.

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The Mayor of the city of Christiania, the capital of Norway (p. 1019), H. E. Berner, at the request of the financial department, of the Norwegian government, has worked out a new plan for the taxation of real estate. This plan provides for the separate assessment of lots and buildings, and for the suspension of the tax on build-