

LAND & LIBERTY

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Choice of Evils

By securing 344 of the 629 seats in the House, the Conservative Party and its supporters led by Sir Anthony Eden emerged victorious from the General Election, held May 26, with an overall majority of 59. At the dissolution their majority had been 25 in a House comprised of 624 seats and the Speaker.

The composition of the new Parliament and the votes polled are shown in bold figures in the following table. The italic figures relate to the 1951 General Election.

| | Conservatives and allies | Labour and Co-operative | Liberals |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Seats ... | 344 | 277 | 6 |
| | <i>321</i> | <i>295</i> | <i>6</i> |
| Votes... | 13,000,311 | 12,369,000 | 722,395 |
| | <i>13,724,000</i> | <i>13,948,000</i> | <i>730,000</i> |
| Percentage of votes polled | 49.8 | 46.2 | 2.7 |
| | <i>48.04</i> | <i>48.73</i> | <i>2.53</i> |

Two Sein Fein candidates were also elected.

The percentage of the electorate that voted was 76.8. In 1951 82.6 per cent voted. Nearly one in four voters stayed away from the polls. Doubtless apathy and various fortuitous circumstances such as sickness were responsible for some abstentions, but beyond question many resulted from the inability of serious-minded electors to decide which of the two major parties was the "lesser evil." Particularly will this have been the case with hundreds of thousands of Liberals, and especially free traders, in the 520 constituencies where no Liberal candidate stood, for generally speaking a vote cast for either Conservative or Labour was a vote cast for protectionism.

An unusual degree of wisdom was required of those who support the taxation and rating of land values and the free economy. As we show elsewhere, many Labour candidates claimed to support those policies, and the party manifesto included a guarded promise to *consider* the possibility of rating land values, but at the same time they stood for a policy of further nationalisation and governmental interference in the economic life of the country. On the other hand, while the Tories are relentlessly opposed to the public collection of the economic rent of land, even in the smallest degree, and are lightly tarred with the Socialist brush, nevertheless within circumscribed limits they do support a measure of economic freedom, and may be relied upon not to indulge in further nationalisation. Many of our readers abstained from voting.

Where a Liberal candidate "intervened," if we may use the expression bandied about by the Tory press, the choice for some was easier. Even so, if we may judge from the election addresses we have seen, it was not always readily apparent that the candidate stood for our policy. The vital

question of securing equal rights to land and the only feasible alternative to crippling taxation was often poorly presented by candidates who thereby failed in their duty to the electors and missed a golden opportunity to offer an alternative to worn out platitudes about peace and plenty. Some contented themselves with an obscure and tepid reference to rating reform. Others blinked the subject of land values completely.

Major questions have been burked and the British electorate has been obliged to choose whether or not to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. On balance the decision taken has been wise. But if instead of having to choose between varying degrees of economic and political servitude the people of this country had been able to vote for a programme of true and equal freedom to produce and to trade, and to acquire the social, cultural and political benefits which flow generously from economic freedom, who can pretend that the result would have been the same? Do the British people really desire the present pattern to remain unaltered, comprised as it is of inequality and sectional privilege in every guise, with food and clothes and homes and incomes taxed, with people searched as they enter and leave their own country, with some robbed and others endowed with the fruits of governmental plunder? We doubt it. There are few who do not feel disquiet at some aspect of present economic policies, but these evils are tolerated because all too few are aware that a practical alternative exists, and those few are silenced by the grossly unfair voting system by which the two main parties are enabled to ride roughshod over the deepest aspirations of the people they pretend to serve. Study of the Conservative election manifesto shows conclusively that it is fruitless to look to the newly returned Government to restore more than a crumb or two of our lost freedom.

P.R.S.

**WE USED TO BE A FREE TRADE COUNTRY
NOW WE HAVE HEAVY TARIFFS
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY ARE?**

**Do you wonder that the COST OF LIVING is so high?
DO YOU KNOW WHY HOUSES COST SO MUCH?**

LOOK AT THESE FIGURES

FOOD TAXES

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Condensed Milk 6s. per cwt. | Apples4s. 6d. per cwt. |
| Oatmeal5s. per cwt. | Strawberries 4d./6d. per lb. |
| Butter 15s. per cwt. | New Potatoes 9s. 4d. per cwt. |
| Cheese15% | Cauliflowers 6s. to 8s. per cwt. |

and many other food taxes

BUILDING MATERIALS

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Iron and Steel Work...33½% | Metal Doors and |
| Woodwork15% | Window Frames.....15% |
| Hardwood Floors.....17½% | Roofing Slates and |
| Baths20% | Tiles15% |
| Stoves and Grates.....15% | Drain Pipes.....20% |

See How THEY TAX WHAT YOU USE in the HOME!

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Clocks and Watches....20% | Silk or Artificial Silk |
| Toys 25% | Wearing Apparel....33½% |
| Linoleum20% | Silk or Artificial Silk |
| Baskets30% | Bed Covers, etc.....43½% |
| Brooms and Brushes...20% | Hot Water Bottles.....20% |

And on Top of Import Tariffs—PURCHASE TAX

Woollen Cloth ... 50% on all above 21s. per yard
is hitting Botany qualities for six
Stationery ... 25% Trunks, Bags, Suitcases ... 50%
and scores of other classes of tax.

Tory and Socialist Chancellors say you must not have too much of your own money; they can spend it better for you. They can spend it all right!

**VOTE FOR MITCHELL
AND RETURN TO FREE TRADE**