
EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

BRITISH POLITICS.

London, June 29.—On this side of the water the fight is going on right merrily; the enemy are at last being forced into the open, and, despite the weakness of their position, are making a good fight with the best talent that their millions enable them to command.

Their entrenched position in the House of Lords, which as you know is composed almost entirely of bishops, land holders, railway and other franchise-holders, may enable them to thwart any legislation on the lines of change in our present system of assessment for local-taxation, which during the past few years the weight and influence of the great municipalities have forced to the front of the battle. Over the budget, however, these privileged gentlemen have no control; hence, in order to be true to their repeated pledges, the present Government will practically be compelled to make use of the budget to give the country the first installment of sound radical economic and social reform, on the lines of a uniform, national tax on land values, which may probably be made to include all privately held franchise values.

Hence you need not be surprised that, in truth, the land values taxation question is now everywhere to the front wherever practical politics is seriously discussed, more especially in Scotland and the north of England.

In the House of Commons Henry H. Whitley, member for Halifax, forms with Charles Trevelyan, J. Dundas White and Josiah Wedgwood, an active, keen, energetic and well-equipped fighting body it would be difficult to beat; and it will not be their fault if during the next few years the continuous work for land value taxation of the past twenty-five years does not materialize in the shape of a good installment of sound taxation reform.

Of course, the English League for the Taxation of Land Values (376-77 Strand, London, W. C.,) continues as active as limited means permit, and demands for its literature steadily increase. Necessary expenditure in connection with the general election has again forced it into debt; so just now, though there is much urgent work to be done, it has to be very careful about assuming expenses. However, besides the central London work, the Yorkshire branch, under the competent guidance of Mr. Fred Skirrow, continues active and flourishing; and a branch in Lancashire, with headquarters at Manchester, may be looked for before the end of the coming winter.

LEWIS H. BERENS.

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AUSTRALIA.

(See vol. viii, p. 780; vol. ix, p. 78.)

Corowa, N. S. W., Australia, June 7.—When in 1904 the Reid ministry was formed (vol. viii, p. 307), about a dozen protectionists deserted Deakin and formed an alliance with the Labor party. For this the Labor leaders promised that these members should not be opposed by Labor candidates at the

next Federal election. Both the Political Labor League conference of New South Wales, and the Political Labor Council conference of Victoria have refused to endorse this agreement, in spite of strong protests from Mr. Watson; they also condemned alliances with any other party. So Mr. Watson is left in the unpleasant position of being unable to fulfill his promises.

It is probable that at the next election some of these protectionists will be displaced by Labor members, and that other followers of Deakin will join Reid rather than make any further concessions to the Labor party, so that the Deakin party, already the smallest in the House, will be further diminished.

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There has been a great deal of platform speaking during the recess, and the three leaders have announced the policies they will advocate at the next election.

Watson (Labor) will support a graduated tax on land values, old age pensions, and the nationalization of the tobacco and sugar industries.

Deakin (Protectionist) advocates increased protective duties, and probably he will also support the graduated tax on land values.

Reid (Free Trade) has issued a long programme the principal planks being anti-socialism, a fiscal truce, old age pensions, repeal of a clause in the postal act prohibiting colored labor on mail steamers; repeal of clause in the immigration act against contract labor; repeal of the union label provisions; efforts to encourage immigration and to assist settlers on the land. It is not an inspiring programme.

My description of the Commerce Act (vol. viii, p. 780) was incomplete. The act applies to the following articles used for food or drink or in their preparation: Medicines, manures, apparel, jewelry, seeds and plants.

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The Federal parliament opens for the last session to-day.

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Mr. Max Hirsch has just returned from his trip to Europe. It is reported that he is greatly benefited in health, which means, I am afraid, that he is not completely restored.

ERNEST BRAY.

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ITALY.

Rome, June 30.—On my return from Naples yesterday it was at once evident that the threat of the strike of the tramway men had gone into effect. The strike had begun that morning—St. Peter's Day, a great holiday, when shops are all closed and thousands throng to the great church across the Tiber. The orthodox newspapers this morning are strong in denunciation of the strikers, especially for beginning the strike on such a day. There can be no denunciation on the ground of disorder. The cabs, which have taxed themselves ten cents each to help the strikers, are busy, and one line of cars is being operated by policemen without interference. The only sign of activity on the part of the strikers is a