

be expected, that a tribunal which is the center of observation by the whole world will seek to give and will give a judgment as nearly righteous as may be.

In the whole history of arbitrations, but one has ever been suspected of corruption, and, by joint agreement, its findings were reviewed. Slight criticism may be made of the generality of other like tribunals. Today doubtless even the English will agree that the findings of the Alabama Joint High Commission were just.

Of the four arbitral sentences given by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, but one—that in the Venezuelan Preferential Case—has received serious criticism. Even in this case, judicial settlement, though perhaps erroneous, was immensely valuable.

Let it not be said that the ideas to which I have sought to give expression are too advanced, are impractical. It is only by "hitching our wagon to a star" that we may progress. Let us not forget that there is nothing blinder and stupider, nothing less practical than the so-called practical man, that only among the dreamers of dreams of human advancement are to be found those who the flow of events demonstrates to have had the clearness of vision of the truly practical man.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

AUSTRALIA.

Corowa, N. S. W., May 8.—At the beginning of the year, the New South Wales Local Government Act of 1906 (vol. ix, p. 1161) came fully into force in municipalities. General elections of aldermen, to hold office for three years, were held on February 1st.

The question of land value taxation versus taxing improvements was very much discussed during the elections, especially in the suburbs of Sydney, where the single taxers and other supporters of unimproved land value taxation were very active.

The Act provides that a municipal council must levy a tax for general purposes of not less than one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of all land in its area. If any further revenue is required, it may be raised by taxing either the improved or the unimproved value, at the option of the Council, but subject to the decision of a poll of taxpayers, if demanded.

There is a limit on the total amount of money which a Council may raise by taxation, but this amount is so large that the taxing power is practically unlimited.

Most of the new Councils have now levied their taxes; in the majority of cases on the unimproved value only; the rate varying from one penny to (in one instance) sixpence in the pound. Taxes of from threepence to fourpence are common, and there are

several of fivepence. These high taxes may, however, cause reaction.

In some cases where Councils proposed to raise part of their revenue from taxes on the improved value, polls were demanded, and in nearly every instance the decision was that the unimproved value only should be taxed.

In many municipalities where the double system of taxation has been adopted, the tax on the unimproved value exceeds one penny in the pound; the taxes being twopence to threepence on the unimproved value and one-half penny to one penny on the improved value.

Altogether the taxes levied up to the present show that the feeling in favor of land value taxation for local government purposes is far more general than even the most sanguine supporters of that system imagined.

✦

In the Shires, which were constituted in 1906, revenue for general purposes must be raised by a tax on the unimproved value of the land only; the minimum tax is one penny, and the maximum, twopence in the pound. So that only in a minority of the municipalities, and in the city of Sydney, is there now any taxation of improvements in New South Wales. The suburbs of Sydney are municipalities. The State tax of one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of land, with exemptions, has been suspended in Shires and Municipalities. It is now in force only in the city of Sydney and in the "Western Division" of the State, where there is little population, and which is not under local government.

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In the Federal Parliament the Senate has discussed the tariff bill (vol. x, p. 1062) and returned it to the House of Representatives with a number of requests for amendments, most of them for higher duties. Being a taxation bill the Senate cannot amend it; it can only request the House to do so.

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The Queensland State parliament has passed an act providing that if a bill be twice passed by the Assembly (lower house) and twice rejected by the Council, it shall be submitted to a referendum of the electors, whose decision shall be final.

ERNEST BRAY.

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Better a wrong will than a wavering; better a steadfast enemy than an uncertain friend; better a false belief than no belief at all.—George Elliot, in "Daniel Deronda."

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A hunter accosted a peasant. "My good man," quoth he, "can you show me any lion's tracks?"

"Tracks!" rejoined the peasant. "Why, sir, I can show you the lion himself."

At this the hunter lost his temper and showed it plainly.

"Answer my question, caitiff!" he roared.

N. B.—Errata: For hunter read average reformer. For lion read graft. For peasant read almost anybody who has eyes to see.—Puck.